
Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) for People with Disability – Extraordinary meeting 14 July 2021

Key Outcomes

The Department of Health (the Department) held an extraordinary meeting to:

- discuss the outcome of National Cabinet’s announcements on 9 July 2021 about vaccination requirements for disability support workers; and
- receive state and territory updates on COVID-19 vaccination roll out arrangements for people with disability and disability support workers.

In addition, the Department provided an update on the COVID-19 vaccination rollout for people with disability and the disability sector, which included:

- vaccination rates among people with disability living in disability accommodation and disability support workers;
- recent communication activities to the disability sector; and
- the commencement focus groups to gain better insights into vaccine sentiments among disability support workers.

States and territories updates on measures to support COVID-19 vaccination of people with disability and disability support workers focused on:

- specialised vaccination pathways for people with disability, and support workers;
- efforts to prioritise vaccine access for disability support workers and people with disability eligible in phases 1a and 1b of the rollout; and
- the availability of Easy Read and plain English vaccination resources at state hubs.

The Advisory Committee discussed:

- the need for ongoing efforts in relation to priority access for vaccination appointments and communication products that support uptake of vaccines among disability support workers;
- the rights of a person with disability to decline support from an unvaccinated worker; and
- the need for consideration and guidance on approaches to sedation (or alternative strategies) to support COVID-19 vaccination.

NEXT STEPS

The Department will:

- present findings from the disability support worker focus groups when they are available
- seek further clarification from the National Disability Insurance Agency on the rights of a person with disability to choose vaccinated support workers
- provide further advice to the Advisory Committee regarding choice of vaccine for people with disability and disability support workers, regardless of age
- seek further input from the Advisory Committee on the development of advice for AHPPC regarding vaccination requirements for disability support workers, and
- provide the Advisory Committee with a written summary of the state and territory updates.

An extraordinary meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held on 20 July 2021, which will be attended by Lieutenant General John Frewen, Co-ordinator General of Operation COVID Shield.

The Advisory Committee will consider approaches to sedation or alternative strategies to support COVID-19 vaccination at a future meeting.