
Advisory Committee on Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) for People with Disability

Tenth Meeting: 25 August 2020

Key Outcomes

The Department of Health (the Department) updated members of the Advisory Committee on the progress of priority items, including:

- the use of the Health Professional Disability Advisory Service
- advice on continuing access to allied health services under stage 4 restrictions
- the new easy read resource hub on the Department's website.

An update to the Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability has been circulated to the Advisory Committee for comment. The Department sought the Committee's input on obtaining baseline data for the Plan's evaluation.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission updated the Advisory Committee on COVID-19 surveillance data for NDIS participants.

Each state and territory representative provided an update on the current actions in their jurisdiction to support people with disability.

A representative from the Department of Home Affairs discussed visa issues for disability support workers.

The Advisory Committee discussed a range of topics including:

- trauma and mental health impacts of the pandemic for people with disability;
- provisions for temporary visa holders working in disability care. This included the need to look at workforce conditions to ensure the right workforce in the disability sector;
- health surveillance data for people with disability. This included the complexities of defining disability and the need for improved data sources;
- outbreak guidelines for residential care facilities. This included the need for separate guidelines to capture specific needs of the disability sector; and
- implementation and evaluation of the Management and Operational Plan.

NEXT STEPS

- The Department will invite a Mental Health Division representative to the next meeting to discuss the mental health impacts of the pandemic.
- The Department, with interested members of the Advisory Committee, will develop a plan to improve health surveillance data for people with disability. This will be provided to the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA) for consideration.
- The Department will discuss potential data sources in the disability sector, with other peak agencies.
- The Department will pursue the development of separate outbreak guidelines for residential disability support settings with the CDNA.
- The Department invited Members of the Committee to submit out of session comments on the updated Management and Operational Plan. The Department will review the feedback and present the revised Plan to the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).
- The Department will make reference to the Human Rights Commission *Guidelines on the rights of people with disability in health and disability care during COVID-19* in the Management and Operational Plan.
- The Department will bring these Guidelines to the attention of the AHPPC. This will support states and territories to apply human rights-based approaches in their responses to COVID-19 for people with disability.

- The Department will work with other Commonwealth agencies and states and territories to update the implementation tracking document for the Management and Operational Plan. The updated document will be provided to the Advisory Committee.