
Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) for People with Disability – 7 April 2021

Key Outcomes

The Department of Health (the Department) updated members of the Advisory Committee on the COVID-19 vaccination rollout for people with disability. This included an update on:

- the Commonwealth-led rollout in disability residential settings, in-reach and hub vaccination models for people with disability and disability support workers, and
- strategies for vaccination data collection for people with disability.

The Department also provided an update on some items under the COVID-19 Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability. This includes the publishing of outbreak guidelines for disability residential services and efforts to improve COVID-19 surveillance data for people with disability.

The Advisory Committee raised a number of issues for consideration, including:

- Concerns over the safety and efficacy of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. The Advisory Committee suggested further communications to address these concerns in people who might be vaccine hesitant. This includes developing communications for young disability support workers.
- Proposals that the Australian Government provide a choice of vaccines for people with disability who are at a higher risk of serious illness. This includes the choice of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for full protection sooner.
- Vaccine hesitancy in the disability support workforce, and the need for better strategies to ensure strong uptake in this group.
- Ongoing confusion around eligibility and evidence required for early phases of the vaccination rollout, particularly for people with intellectual disability. Committee members sought further clarity on assessing eligibility in phase 1b for 'significant disability'.
- In-reach options for vaccination, especially for:
 - people with disability who live alone and are not able to leave their home or attend a busy vaccination clinic, and
 - people with disability living on the margins of urban areas and in rural and remote areas.
- Opportunities for improving data on the vaccinations of people with disability, including a suggestion of administrative data linkage. The Advisory Committee also suggested health professionals collect information on people with disability's experience with vaccination.
- Proposals for more disability-accessible communications regarding consent, patient experience and adverse event reporting.

NEXT STEPS

- The Department will provide clearer, accessible communications on:
 - Where and how people with disability, disability support workers, and allied health professionals can access the vaccine, including in-reach options where applicable.
 - Eligibility and evidence required for people with significant disability seeking vaccination in phase 1b.
 - Safety and efficacy of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.
 - Vaccine side effects and adverse event reporting.

- The Department will update the Advisory Committee on vaccination figures for disability residential settings.
- The Department will consider options for expanding existing helplines to better support people with disability to access information about vaccination.