

COVID-19 and the particular risks for people with disability – Roundtable

13 OCTOBER 2020

Minutes and Actions Arising

The Chair opened the seventh meeting of the Roundtable and invited people with lived experience to discuss their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. A representative from Deaf Australia presented on the experiences of the deaf community.

Commonwealth, state and territory representatives provided an update on the COVID-19 response across the country. Representatives from the Victorian Department of Education and Training updated the Roundtable on return to school arrangements in Victoria. They outlined the supports:

- available to help students with disability transition back to school in a COVID-safe way;
- to assist school leavers to transition to post-school options.

Issues discussed:

- Ensuring communications about COVID-19 are accurate and accessible, particularly to the deaf community, and the importance of having visible interpreters in public broadcasts.
- Concerns about people with disability:
 - experiencing physical deconditioning and skill loss due to extended lockdown
 - needing re-training and additional therapies (particularly speech therapy and occupational therapy) to assist with mobility training and transport safety.
- Concerns about education including:
 - reassuring children with disability that it is safe to return to school;
 - ensuring deaf children or families with a deaf parent have equal access to information;
 - support for children and young people transitioning through school levels;
 - the need for data on how children with disability progress through the education system.
- Pandemic guidelines for group homes, and supporting staff to continue working and being confident in safety and infection control practices.

Key actions:

- The Department will contact the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to discuss Deaf Australia's proposal on the use of interpreters during public broadcasting.
- The Department will talk to colleagues in Mental Health Division and the NDIA about increased out-of-pocket costs for people accessing additional mental health sessions.
- The Department will ask the NT Department of Health about their considerations for people with disability during hotel quarantine.
- The Victorian Department of Education and Training will consult with Deaf Australia on supported communications for deaf children.
- The Department will seek advice from Commonwealth, state and territory education departments on plans to support children and young people with disability who have been adversely affected by COVID-19 restrictions.
- The NDIA will consider support for families in reassessment of NDIS packages, to consider inclusion of additional supports that may be required following prolonged isolation.

- The NDIA will investigate concerns about restricting visitation to group homes in areas that do not have community transmission.