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

23 August 2021 – Summary of Outcomes

The Department of Health (the Department) held an extraordinary meeting of the Advisory Committee to provide updates on:

- vaccination rates among:
 - NDIS participants living in residential care settings
 - NDIS participants 16 years and over, and
 - disability workers who have undergone NDIS worker screening.

Participants discussed:

- options for collecting data on reasons for COVID-19 vaccine refusal, and
- work to produce communications tailored to specific cohorts.

The NDIA and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission reported on:

- risk management tools used to monitor and ensure continuity of support for NDIS participants during lockdown
- access to PPE, and
- communication materials for NDIS providers promoting vaccine uptake.

States and territories reported on:

- measures to vaccinate people with disability living in assisted boarding houses and supported residential services
- COVID-19 outbreaks linked to schools and disability services in NSW and the ACT, and
- lockdown measures in place.

The Advisory Committee discussed:

- vaccination rates among people with disability and disability support workers
- decision making about reopening communities
- priority access for people with disability in phases 1a and 1b of the vaccine rollout and non-NDIS participants
- measures to prioritise vaccination appointments for the above groups
- uptake of Medicare flag-fall arrangements intended to encourage GP home visits for vaccination
- extending second dose appointments from three weeks to six weeks in Victoria, and
- processes and supports in place when substitute decision-maker refuses vaccine consent.

NEXT STEPS

The Department will:

- put forward the Advisory Committee's concerns for reopening plans, while vaccination rates for people with disability and disability support workers lag those for the general population
- work with Primary Health Networks to improve uptake of Medicare flag-fall arrangements supporting home visit appointments for COVID-19 vaccination, and
- develop messaging and support outreach targeting substitute decision makers who have withheld consent for vaccination.