
**Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus
(COVID-19) for People with Disability
Meeting 26 October 2021 – Summary of Outcomes**

The Department of Health (the Department) provided updates on the COVID-19 vaccination rollout for people with disability and disability support workers, including:

- vaccination rates among:
 - National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants, and
 - disability workers who have undergone NDIS worker screening
- the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee's consideration of mandatory vaccination of disability support workers and states and territories publishing related public health orders
- Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation's (ATAGI's) advice on the use of sedation to support vaccination
- the forthcoming publication of the Vaccine Acceleration Plan for NDIS Participants and Workers, and
- the first meeting of the Committee's COVID-19 vaccine communications working group.

The Committee requested the Department report on actions taken in response to the issues raised by the communications working group at future Committee meetings.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission reported on:

- COVID-19 cases and related deaths among NDIS participants and workers
- service provider reporting and standard of care requirements, and
- incentives for providers to support NDIS participants to receive vaccination.

Committee members raised concerns about the NDIS Commission data representing a potential under-estimate of COVID-19 cases among people with disability. Members emphasised the role of improving public health data collection and data linkage in providing more information on COVID-19 prevalence among people with disability.

The ATAGI COVID-19 Working Group presented on:

- ATAGI's current recommendations on COVID-19 vaccine third primary doses
- its consideration and development of advice on COVID-19 vaccine boosters, and
- processes for the approval of COVID-19 vaccines for children under 12 years.

The Committee also discussed:

- waning immunity, particularly for people provided with a second dose of AstraZeneca before the 12-week optimum wait time
- continuity of care responsibilities in the context of disability workers' rights to decline work
- ways to address perceptions that people with lived experience of disability are not adequately represented on the Committee
- the accessibility of COVID-19 vaccine passports, and
- the need for guidance on:
 - primary and secondary contact scenarios, and
 - the use of rapid antigen testing for people with disability and disability support workers.

NEXT STEPS

The Department will:

- circulate the Therapeutic Goods Administration's current guidance on COVID-19 rapid antigen tests (RAT)
- schedule a discussion about RATs and additional guidance for the disability sector at the next meeting
- seek the Committee's input on an updated public listing of the Committee's membership to include:
 - the lived experience, and
 - expertise of members of the Committee
- invite more participants with lived experience of disability to participate in a Committee's session on lessons learned throughout the pandemic. The session is to be held before the end of 2021.
- follow up with relevant areas on vaccine passport accessibility issues
- invite to the next meeting the communicable disease area of the Department to report on:
 - the epidemiology of COVID-19 among people with disability and improvements to public health data collection, and
- the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Australian Bureau of Statistics to report on data linkage work, give a verbal update on key action items arising from the second meeting of the Committee's COVID-19 vaccine communications working group at the Committee's next meeting.

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee is scheduled for 3 November 2021.