
**Advisory Committee on the Health Emergency Response to Coronavirus
(COVID-19) for People with Disability
Meeting 18 January 2022 – Summary of Outcomes**

Members of the Committee expressed concerns about the impact the current Omicron wave is having on people with disability. These included:

- concerns around disruption of disability support services due to the number of support workers isolating and potential breakdown of essential supports
- difficulties accessing in-person medical care for non-COVID related issues
- concern about isolation rules for support workers
- the need for access to, and recommendations on, the use of rapid antigen testing (RAT) for support workers, and
- concerns about the safety of at-risk children with disability in the return to school period. Vaccination timing, eligibility and access are impacting the decisions of families on when their children will return to school.

Members also stressed the importance of:

- tailored guidance and frameworks for people with disability, and disability support workers on testing, tracing, isolating and furloughing, and
- accessible and affordable RATs.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission provided updates on emergency workforce arrangements and other measures to ensure continuity of supports. Members noted the importance of strategies to meet the needs of self-managing National Disability Insurance Scheme participants (NDIS participants) and non-NDIS participants.

The Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer Division presented on current infection prevention and control settings guidance, including:

- the importance of using personal protective equipment as part of a wider infection control strategy. This includes physical distancing, isolation, monitoring for symptoms, the use of RATs and the vaccine and booster programme
- the Infection Control Expert Group's guidance on the use of masks, and
- recently released [interim guidance on permissions and restrictions for essential workers](#).

In response to a recent leak of committee-in-confidence data, Australian Government agencies will further consider ongoing arrangements. Members acknowledged the importance of maintaining the confidence of confidential information shared. The Committee will develop recommendations for consideration by Government on what COVID-19 vaccination data should be in the public domain.

NEXT STEPS

The Department will:

- provide new confidentiality agreements to Committee members and request returned responses
- produce an updated resource on infection prevention and control measures for people with disability and disability support workers, and
- host a webinar on COVID-19 for people with disability on 20 January 2022.

Committee members will:

- provide recommendations about what data should regularly be put in the public domain.

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee is scheduled for 1 February 2022.