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

Meeting 12 April 2022 – Summary of Outcomes

Committee members raised the following issues:

- low vaccination rates among National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants aged 12 to 15 years, and
- availability of data on:
 - vaccination rates for NDIS participants under 12 years, and
 - deaths among people with disability with COVID-19. There was particular interest in data on vaccination status, age, disability type, and vulnerabilities.

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) presented on its development of [recommendations on winter booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine](#). ATAGI also addressed:

- how long COVID-19 vaccination should be delayed following infection, and
- the use of the Novavax vaccine for booster doses.

The Committee requested ATAGI's consideration of several factors in the development of its recommendations on COVID-19 vaccination. These included:

- risk COVID-19 poses to people with limited lung function
- high rates of comorbidities and early biological aging in people with disability
- evidence that people with intellectual disability are at greater risk from COVID-19
- avoidable deaths from respiratory illness among people with intellectual disability
- the diverse medical needs of many people with disability in the community, and
- risk structural disadvantage poses to people with disability.

The Department of Social Services portfolio provided an update on the COVID-19 disability response. This covered:

- research and insights on:
 - communication and engagement with people with disability
 - uptake of in-reach vaccination
 - data sharing between jurisdictions, and
 - vaccination consent and reasons for vaccine refusal among NDIS participants.
- the role of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission in disability service provider education and compliance relating to:
 - the provision of safe supports, and
 - assisting participants to access vaccination at a site of their choice.

NEXT STEPS

Two members of the Committee will attend the next meeting of ATAGI's COVID-19 Working Group to present on the risks COVID-19 poses to people with disability.

The Department will investigate available data on deaths of people with disability with COVID-19.

The agenda for the Committee's next meeting will include:

- strategies to improve vaccination rates among people with disability, and
- questions on the Department of Social Services portfolio's presentation on the COVID-19 disability response.

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee is scheduled for 26 April 2022.