



Australian Government  
Department of Health



# Better health care for people with intellectual disability

Our plan

Easy Read guide



## How to use this guide



The Australian Government Department of Health (DoH) wrote this guide. When you see the word 'we', it means DoH.



We wrote this information in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Not bold  
**Bold**

We have written some words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 33.



This Easy Read guide is a summary of another guide. This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other guide on our website at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)



You can ask for help to read this guide.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

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## What is this guide about?



An **intellectual disability** affects how well you can:

- learn new things
- solve problems
- communicate
- do things on your own.



People with intellectual disability should get the same health care as everyone else.

When you get health care, you should get:

- good service
- what you need.



It should also support you to be:

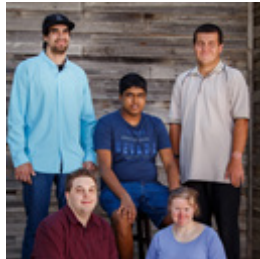
- healthy
- active.





We made a plan to make sure everyone can get the same health care.

Our plan is for:



- people with intellectual disability



- their families and carers



- health care workers



- governments.



It's part of a bigger plan for making sure health care works well for everyone.

On the following pages we explain:



- why we made our plan



- who we talked to



- our goals.

## Why did we make our plan?



There are about 450,000 Australian people with intellectual disability.

We know people with intellectual disability:



- have health problems



- go to hospital more often



- don't get enough health care.



We also know some people with intellectual disability die because they don't get the right health care.



We need to change how health care works for people with intellectual disability.

## UN Convention



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is an international agreement.

We call it the UN Convention.



It applies in many different countries around the world, including Australia.

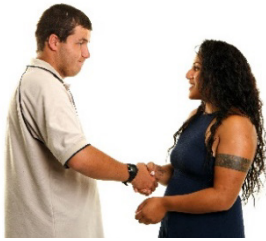


The UN Convention sets out the **rights** of people with disability.

Rights are rules about how everyone should be treated:



- fairly



- equally.

The UN Convention says people with disability have the right to:



- good health care

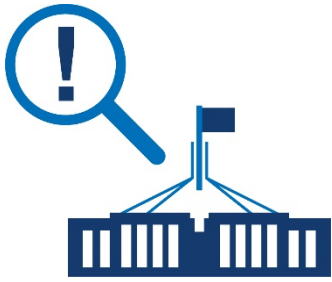


- the same health care as everyone else



- make their own choices.

## Disability Royal Commission



A royal commission is how the government looks into a big problem.

It helps us find out what:



- went wrong



- we can fix.



In Australia, we have the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

We call it the Disability Royal Commission.

The Disability Royal Commission is about how people with disability experience:



- violence – when someone hurts you physically



- abuse – when someone treats you badly



- neglect – when someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to help you



- exploitation – when someone takes advantage of you.



The Disability Royal Commission asks people with disability about their experiences in different areas of their life.



A lot of people told the Disability Royal Commission that people with disability in Australia need better health care.

## Who did we talk to?



We wanted to talk to the community before we made our plan.

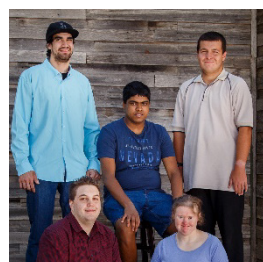


We started talking to the community in August 2019.



And we finished talking to the community in March 2021.

We talked to:



- people with intellectual disability



- families and carers.

We talked to organisations that:



- speak up for people with intellectual disability



- provide services to people with intellectual disability.

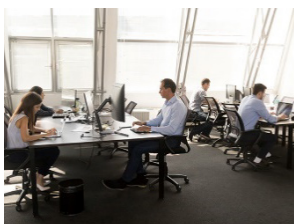
We also talked to:



- researchers



- health care workers



- people who work for the government.



They told us what we could do make sure people with intellectual disability get the same health care as everyone else.



We used their ideas in our plan.



Some of these ideas will take longer to achieve than others.

We will work towards some of these ideas over the next:



- 1 to 3 years



- 4 to 6 years



- 7 to 10 years.

## Our goals



We have set goals for making health care better for people with intellectual disability.



We talk about our goals on the following pages.



We need to work with other people to achieve our goals.

We must work with:



- people with intellectual disability

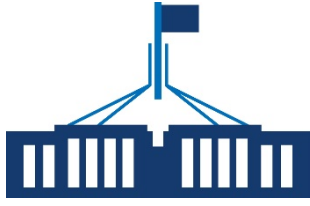


- their families and carers



- disability support workers.

We also need to work with:



- the Australian Government



- state and territory governments



- schools and universities



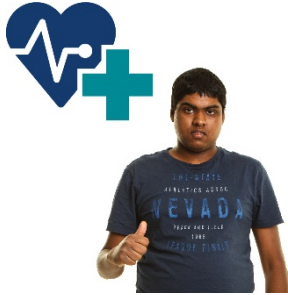
- health care workers



- organisations that speak up for people with intellectual disability.

## Improving support

We want to support people with intellectual disability to:



- find good health care services



- make decisions about their own health care.



We want to make information about health care easier to understand.



We want to share health care information that is easy to understand.



This includes sharing information in Easy Read.



We want to make it easier to use online health services.

We want to work with people with intellectual disability to understand how to:



- support them



- give them information about health care services.

## Improving health care



We want health care to focus on what each person with intellectual disability needs.

This might include:

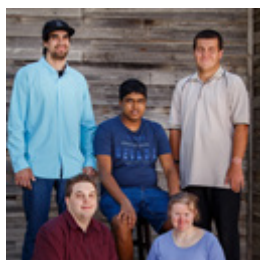


- changing how health care workers share information



- making appointments last longer.

We want health care workers to make decisions with:



- people with intellectual disability

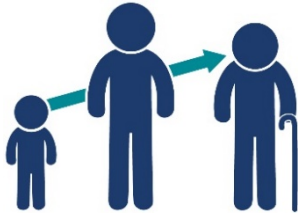


- their families and carers.



We want to find out the best ways for making health care work well.

This includes how health care works:



- across a person's whole life



- when something in a person's life changes.



We want to teach health care workers how to work with people with intellectual disability.



We want to make it easier to use online health services.



We must think about what people with intellectual disability need when we make other health plans.

## Using more Medicare Benefits Schedule services



We want more people with intellectual disability to use **Medicare Benefits Schedule** services.



The Medicare Benefits Schedule is a list of health care services the government can help you pay for.



This includes services like having a health check every year.



We want to get more people with intellectual disability to have a health check every year.



We will keep track of how many people with intellectual disability have a health check every year.

## Making different types of health care work well together

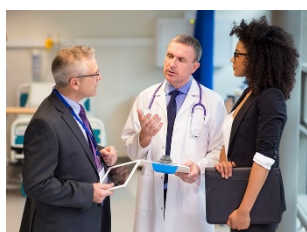


Often people with intellectual disability need to see different health care workers.

We want different health care workers to work well together, such as:



- doctors
- nurses
- dentists
- specialists
- other health care workers.



Specialists are health care workers who are experts in 1 main area of health care.



We also want people with intellectual disability to be able to see the same health care worker each time.



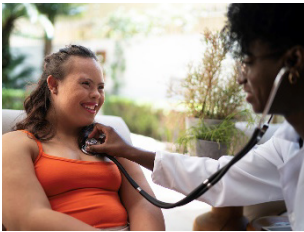
This means their health care worker will:

- know them well
- understand what they need.



We want to work out a good way for health care services to share information.

We will encourage people with intellectual disability to:



- choose 1 doctor
- tell other health care workers they see to share information with their doctor.

## Working together with other government supports



People with intellectual disability often use different government services.



We want different types of government services to work well together, such as:

- health care
- education
- housing.



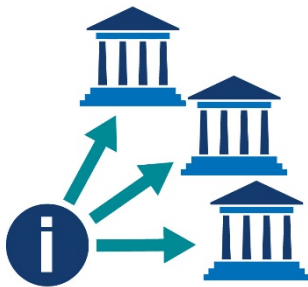
We want health care workers to understand how the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** works.



The NDIS is a way the Australian Government supports people with disability.



We want to help disability support workers understand how to support people to find health care services.



We want to share information about health care for people with intellectual disability with other governments from around Australia.



We want to work out how to make health care and disability services work well together.

## Supporting health care workers to provide better care

The Disability Royal Commission heard that health care workers don't always:



- know enough about people with intellectual disability



- have the right skills to work with people with intellectual disability



- treat people with intellectual disability the same as everyone else.



We want to support health care workers to give people with intellectual disability better health care.



We will work with other organisations to reach this goal.

This includes improving the:



- information and tools we give them



- training they get.



We want to work with state and territory governments to make hospitals and health care:

- easier to use
- safe.



We will work with state and territory governments to create a National Centre for the health of people with intellectual disability.

## Taking care of your mouth and teeth



Research shows that taking care of your mouth and teeth is important for staying healthy.



But people with intellectual disability don't always take good care of their:

- mouth
- teeth.



We want to make it easier for people with intellectual disability to find a dentist who can meet their needs.



We will work with organisations to teach dentists how to work well with people with intellectual disability, including children.



We will talk to people with intellectual disability about how to take care of their:

- mouth
- teeth.

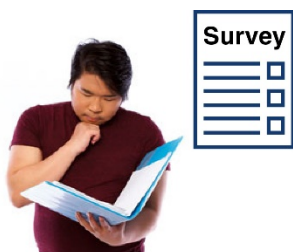
## Collecting information



We want to collect more information about how people with intellectual disability use health care.



We will use this information to make health care in Australia better for people with intellectual disability.



We will make and share surveys.

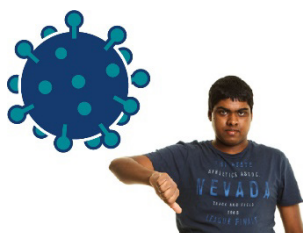


These surveys will help us find out more about the experiences of people with intellectual disability.

## Delivering health care during emergencies like COVID-19



We want to make sure we can deliver health care during emergencies.



The Disability Royal Commission heard that lots of people with intellectual disability didn't get the health care they needed during COVID-19.

This includes getting:



- the right information



- COVID-19 tests and vaccinations



- things to keep them safe, like masks and gloves



- mental health support



- other health care and supports.

We know we must:



- include people with intellectual disability when we plan
- think about what people with intellectual disability need.



We will work with other governments to include people with intellectual disability when we plan.



We will make sure disability support workers can get things people need to keep them safe.



We will look at what we have done so far to work out what we can do better.

## How will we reach our goals?

We will create a group to:



- help governments act on the plan
- check how well the plan is working
- help us make sure the plan keeps working well.

This group will include:



- people with intellectual disability



- their families and carers.

It will also include people who work for:



- health care providers



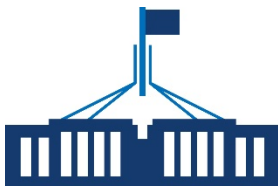
- disability services



- universities



- state and territory governments



- the Australian government.



We will share what this group tells us.

## Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



### **Intellectual disability**

An intellectual disability affects how well you can:

- learn new things
- solve problems
- communicate
- do things on your own.



### **Medicare Benefits Schedule**

The Medicare Benefits Schedule is a list of health care services the government can help you pay for.



### **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**

The NDIS is a way the Australian Government supports people with disability.



## Rights

Rights are rules about how everyone should be treated:

- fairly
- equally.



## Royal commission

A royal commission is how the government looks into a big problem.

It helps us find out what:

- went wrong
- we can fix.



## Specialist

Specialists are health care workers who are experts in 1 main area of health care.

## Contact us



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