

Easy Read



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Locked Out: Liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond Covid-19

Summary of the full report

Author: Professor Debbie Foster



This document was commissioned by the Disability Equality Forum of the Welsh Government. It is an easy read version of 'Report on the impact of Covid-19 on disabled people in Wales – Executive Summary'.

April 2021

How to use this document



This is an easy read document, but you may still need support to read and understand this document. Ask someone you know to help you.



Some words may be hard to understand. They are in **bold blue writing**. They have been explained in a box below the word.



If the hard word is used again it is in **normal blue writing**. You can check what they mean on **page 26**.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Where the document says **we**, this means the **Disability Equality Forum of the Welsh Government**. For more information contact:

Website: www.gov.wales/disability-equality-forum

E-mail: EqualityBranch@gov.wales

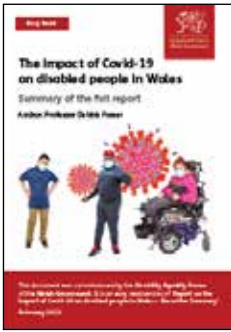


This document was made into easy read by **Easy Read Wales** using **Photosymbols**. To tell us what you think about this easy read document, please [click here](#).

Contents

	Page
Introduction.....	4
What we did.....	5
What we could not include.....	7
What we found out and our suggestions.....	8
The social model of disability.....	8
Including disabled people in big decisions.....	9
Deaths of disabled people from Covid 19.....	11
Access to public services.....	13
More about access to public services.....	14
Human rights laws in Wales.....	15
Access to justice during the pandemic.....	16
Education during the pandemic.....	17
Travel needs.....	18
Health services in Wales.....	19
Mental health and well-being.....	20
Poverty in the pandemic.....	21
Housing for disabled people.....	22
Work and employment.....	23
Making life fairer after the pandemic.....	24
Public spaces and public life.....	25
Hard words.....	26

Introduction



This report is about the impact of the **pandemic** on disabled people.

The **pandemic** means the spread of the coronavirus.



We collected lots of different information for this report. For example, from the government, research, and talking to people.



We asked a group of disabled people to help us with this report.



The disabled people were from **Disabled People's Organisations** and disability charities. We called them a **Steering Group**.

A **steering group** is a group of people who are experts in what they are talking about. For example, disabled people talking about disability.



Professor Debbie Foster put everything we found out into this report.

What we did



The **steering group** met regularly between October 2020 and February 2021.



Rhian Davies helped with the meetings. She is the **Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Disability Wales**.

We put the information we collected into five sections called:



- **The social model of disability**



- **Human rights**



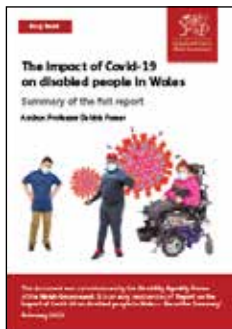
- **Health and well-being**



- **Social and money problems**



- **Exclusion, accessibility and citizenship**



This report is a summary of the main report. We think you should read the main report too.

What we could not include



We focused on **disability** in this report.



We **did not** include things about:

- Older people
- Children
- Education



This would have made the report too long and confusing.



There are other people helping the groups we did not include.



And we know that there is much more work to do.

What we found out and our suggestions

The social model of disability

It is very important to understand the **social model of disability**.



The **social model of disability** says that the way society works can stop disabled people from doing things people who are not disabled do.



That's why we wanted the **steering group** to be included in this report. The **steering group** helped us understand the barriers disabled people faced during Covid-19.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

We want the **Welsh Government** to state clearly how important the **social model of disability** is.



We want the history of disabled people's rights to be taught in schools.

Including disabled people in big decisions

During the **pandemic**, we found out that disabled people:



- Did not get all the medical help they needed.



- Had less access to **public services** and social support.

Public services are services paid for by Government. For example: local councils, the NHS, police and fire and rescue.



- Had less access to public spaces and public life.



- Struggled to live independently.



- Did not always have their human rights fully respected.



Disabled people should have a say in big decisions that impact their lives.



Having a say in big decisions could stop this from happening again.



There is money available to help disabled people get into politics. And have a say in big decisions.



This is good but there is still more to do. Like letting disabled people know that we will make **reasonable adjustments**.

Reasonable adjustments are changes that places and services can make to make sure everyone is able to use them. For example putting ramps in buildings for wheelchair users. Or giving information in easy read.

Deaths of disabled people from Covid 19



More than half of the people who died from Covid-19 in Wales were disabled.



A big reason for this was **social factors**.

Some **social factors** include:



- Poor housing



- If you have a job



- Where you live



- Bad health and social care services



- Confusing information



- Not having **PPE**

PPE means **personal protective equipment** that you wear to protect yourself from Covid-19. Like wearing a mask.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

We want the **Welsh Government** to think about social factors and how they have had an effect.



We want the **UK Government** to do the same for all four nations.

Access to public services



Disabled people found it harder to access **public services** in the **pandemic**.



This made them feel confused, scared and alone. And less valued in Welsh society.



A lot of these problems were caused by staff being thoughtless.



We want the staff planning and delivering public services to have training so this doesn't happen again.



Disabled people and **Disabled People's Organisations** should have a say in this training.



We will call **Disabled People's Organisations DPOs** for short.

More about access to public services



The **Welsh Government** should think about disabled people's public service needs.



We want the **Welsh Government** to provide more money for **advocacy** services too.



Advocacy is when someone helps you and speaks up for you.



We want the **government** at all levels to follow the rules from the **UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People**.

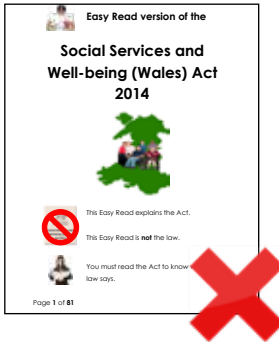


UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People have rules that protect disabled people.

Human rights laws in Wales



Changes to laws during the **pandemic** impacted disabled people's human rights.



Some of the law called the **Social Services and Well-being Act 2014** was not followed anymore.



This meant that disabled people had less say in decisions about their lives.



Part of a law called the **Coronavirus Act** stopped some services for disabled people.



We are happy that the **Welsh Government** is changing some parts of the Coronavirus Act that did this.



But there is still lots more to do to protect disabled people's human rights.

Access to justice during the pandemic



Access to justice means going to court or seeing your solicitor to sort out legal problems.



The **pandemic** has meant that people cannot do this face to face.



Everything is done by video, on-line or on the phone.



This makes it harder for disabled people to access justice. Especially disabled **refugees**.



A **refugee** is someone who has been forced to leave their country. This may be because of a war or they have had their life threatened.



We want disabled people to get more support to access justice.

Education during the pandemic



We did not include education in this report.



Other people will do this. Like the **Children's Commissioner of Wales**.



But we still have some ideas.



We think more equipment, training materials and social care are needed to help children with special educational needs.



We want the **Welsh Government** to do more to help with disabled children's education.

Travel needs



The **pandemic** made it harder for disabled people to travel safely and easily.



Changes to routes and rules is difficult and confusing for some disabled people.



Some disabled people are using taxis now instead. Taxis are expensive.



The **Welsh Government** must support disabled people with their travel needs.



This is urgent.

Health services in Wales



The **pandemic** made it harder for some disabled people to access health services.



Some disabled people's health got worse during the **pandemic**.



Some disabled people died because of this.



We want gaps in health services to be noticed quickly and fixed.



The **Welsh Government** and other health care bodies must support disabled people with their healthcare needs.

Mental health and well-being



The **pandemic** has been bad for disabled people's mental health and well-being.



The government made changes to the **Mental Health Act** during the **pandemic**.



These changes were not good for disabled people.



We are talking to the Welsh Government about how to fix this.



The **Welsh Government** must support disabled people with their mental health and well-being.



More people should be encouraged to work in mental health services

Poverty in the pandemic



The **pandemic** has made **poverty** even worse for disabled people.



Poverty means not having enough money to pay your bills to feed yourself and your family, to heat your home, to buy the things you need and to get around.



We are happy that a law called the **Socio-economic Duty of the Equality Act** in Wales 2021 has been created.



This will make life better and fairer for disabled people.



But there is still a lot more to do to support disabled people in **poverty**.



For example, the UK Government needs to fix problems with disabled people's welfare benefits.

Housing for disabled people



There are not enough suitable houses for disabled people in Wales. We are worried the **pandemic** will make this even worse.



The **Welsh Government** needs to act fast to make sure there are enough houses to rent or to buy.



DPOs should be involved when decisions are made about housing.



More funding is needed so disabled people can adapt their houses.

Work and employment



A lot of disabled people lost their jobs because of the **pandemic**.



The support the **Welsh Government** gives to help disabled people to find new work or train for a different job is needed more than ever at the moment.



Some disabled people still have jobs but are working from home.



Employers should protect disabled people wherever they work.



The **Welsh Government** must make sure employers stick to the law.



The **Welsh Government** must support disabled people if employers treat them unfairly or break the law.

Making life fairer after the pandemic



We found out that **DPOs** and volunteers did lots of good work during the [pandemic](#).



They helped disabled people who suffered from cuts to services and funding.



But disabled people should not have to rely on charity.



The **Welsh Government** needs to support DPOs so they can help disabled people.



The **Welsh Government** needs to be more flexible in the way it gives out money.



Then we can build a fairer Wales after the [pandemic](#).

Public spaces and public life



The **pandemic** meant the government had to make rules about public spaces and public life.



But disabled people's needs were not always considered enough.



For example, broadcasters did not always show the **BSL interpreter** enough in TV announcements



Disabled people need to have the same access to public spaces and public life as everyone else.



The government should talk to **DPOs** to find out the best ways to improve access.

Hard words

Advocacy

Advocacy is when someone helps you and speaks up for you.

Pandemic

This means the spread of the coronavirus.

Poverty

This means not having enough money to pay your bills to feed yourself and your family, to heat your home, to buy the things you need and to get around.

PPE

This means personal protective equipment that you wear to protect yourself from Covid-19. Like wearing a mask.

Public services

These are services paid for by Government. For example: local councils, the NHS, police and fire and rescue.

Refugee

A refugee is someone who has been forced to leave their country. This may be because of a war or they have had their life threatened.

Social model of disability

The social model of disability says that the way society works can stop disabled people from doing things people who are not disabled do.

Steering group

This is a group of people who are experts in what they are talking about. Like disabled people talking about disabilities.