

Easy Read



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Supporting disabled people after COVID-19

How COVID-19 has affected disabled people in Wales and what Welsh Government are doing to support them.



This document was written by **Welsh Government**. It is an easy read version of '**Locked out: Liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19; The Welsh Government's response**'.

July 2021

How to use this document



This is an easy read document. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. You can check what the words in blue mean on **page 20**.



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Welsh Government

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

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

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Introduction



We understand that COVID-19 has particularly affected disabled people.



It has shown up areas where disabled people still face **discrimination** in Wales.



Discrimination – being treated unfairly. For example, because of race, age, gender or disability.



We asked a group called the **Disability Equality Forum** to look at how COVID-19 has affected disabled people.



Disability Equality Forum – A group that advises Welsh Government about problems facing disabled people.



They collected information from disabled people and organisations that support them.



They wrote a report called '**Locked out: Liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19**'.



The 'Locked out' report tells us what we need to work on to improve the lives of disabled people in Wales.



The report says that disabled people have faced more **discrimination** during COVID-19. Particularly in:



- How we think and talk about disability



- Human rights



- Health and well-being



- Poorer communities



- Being left out. And accessing services.



This is our response to the 'Locked out' report. It tells you what we are already working on. And our plans for the future.

How we think and talk about disability



The 'Locked out' report says that sometimes there are barriers in our communities that prevent disabled people doing the things they want.



The Welsh Government are committed to working with the social model of disability. This means:



- The right support is available for disabled people to be able to access the things they want.



- Making places and information accessible so that disabled people can access the things they want.



- Making sure people and organisations use helpful and positive words to describe disabled people.

Human Rights



During COVID-19 we have worked hard to try to support people's **human rights**.



Human rights – the rights of every human being. For example, the right to make your own choices and decisions.



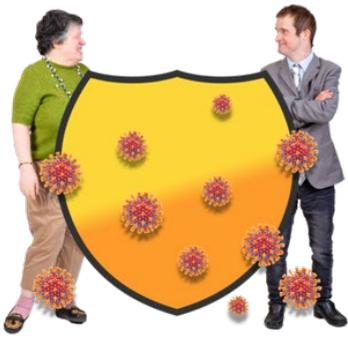
We have worked with the **Disability Equality Forum** to listen to disabled people's views on:



- Costs for social care



- Direct Payments



- Social isolation and shielding



- Coming out of lockdown



- Test and trace and using face masks



- COVID-19 advice for organisations that care for people



We are also going to include the **United Nations Convention on the rights of Disabled People** in Welsh law.



This tells countries what they must do to make sure disabled people have the same rights as everyone else.



The 'Locked out' report says that information about COVID-19 has been confusing and not always easy to understand.



This has affected disabled people's rights to make choices and decisions.



We set up an **Accessible Communication Group** in 2020. We have developed information about COVID-19 in:



- Easy read



- Different languages



- Sign language



This group will continue to make sure everyone in Wales gets clear information in the right way.

Health and Well-being



The 'Locked out' report talks about the harmful effects of COVID-19 on people's health and well-being.



We have been collecting information about how disabled people have been affected. We want to find out:



- Why certain groups of people are more likely to die from COVID-19, including disabled people.



- How COVID-19 has affected mental health in different groups of people including disabled people.



We will also continue the work we have been doing to:



- Increase money for **advocacy** services during COVID-19 to support disabled people when they need it.



Advocacy – Support from another person to help you express your views and stand up for your rights.



- Work with mental health charities to make sure there is support for people who need it.



- Work with Health Boards, Local Authorities and Charities to support people who have been lonely and isolated during COVID-19.

Poorer communities



The 'Locked out' report talks about money problems disabled people have had during COVID-19.



We will work to make sure everyone in Wales has enough money to live on during this time. We will:



- Aim to give extra support to people on benefits and low incomes



- Continue to support people who are not able to do their job because of COVID-19



- Work to make sure disabled people have good quality homes that meet their individual needs



- Supporting people to make changes to their homes which support their health or disability



- Supporting more disabled people to start work and keep working



- Helping people to stay healthy and happy at work



- Continuing to support businesses and organisations who have disabled people working for them



- Supporting people who would like to start their own business.

Being left out and accessing services



The 'Locked out' report describes how people with disabilities are more likely to have felt lonely and isolated during COVID-19 because:



- Using technology to stay in touch with people might be difficult



- There may be barriers to getting out and about



- Getting the right help and support in the community can be difficult.



- Getting information in an accessible way is not always possible. For example, easy read or sign language.

We have worked hard to support people who are likely to feel lonely and isolated. We have:



- Worked with local Authorities to remind them that changes to streets and public places must support disabled people



- Started a Bus working group to look at the problems disabled people might have using buses during COVID-19. For example, keeping socially distanced



- Increased and improved our Passenger Assist services which supports disabled people who want to travel by train



- Made a plan for loneliness and social isolation in Wales



- Given extra money to charities and organisations that support people with disabilities.



We are also planning to:



- Involve more disabled people in our work and learn from their experiences



- Support disabled people to learn skills in using technology if they want to



- Work with the Loneliness and Isolation Advisory group to think about what can be done to help disabled people who are lonely



- Make sure the right support is there for disabled people who are anxious about coming out of lockdown



- Make sure that all information is available and accessible for people with disabilities



- Continue to encourage disabled people to get involved in Welsh government and Local Authorities



- Improve our training for our staff about treating people equally and fairly



- Continue to make changes to the way we work to support disabled people to access services and information.

Hard Words

Advocacy

Support from another person to help you express your views and stand up for your rights.

Disability Equality Forum

A group that advises Welsh Government about problems facing disabled people.

Discrimination

Being treated unfairly. For example, because of race, age, gender or disability.

Human rights

The rights of every human being. For example, the right to make your own choices and decisions.