



This report is by the National Advocacy Service and the Patient Advocacy Service.



The report shows that during the Covid-19 time that decision making and access to justice were hard for people with disabilities.



During the Covid-19 time the National Advocacy Service and the Patient Advocacy Service changed how we worked to phone and video meeting contact.

We kept providing a quality advocacy service to people who needed it.



During Covid-19 people with disabilities were less involved in making their own decisions than usual.

NAS saw lots of decisions made by next of kin or family members who had no right to do this.



Family members told us that end of life decisions were made without the person being involved.

We supported people to have a say on very important decisions. People with disabilities had a say on decisions like having the Covid-19 vaccine and end of life care thanks to NAS advocates.



Access to justice is a basic human right. This can be very hard for some people with disabilities. NAS helps them to be included so their voice is heard.



During Covid-19 court was not always on and NAS advocates were often not able to attend.

There was a long wait for legal aid for parents with disabilities. Many Ward of Court cases were delayed. This waiting caused people a lot of stress.



Some legal meetings were done online. For parents in childcare cases, visits with their child in care was online. Online is not accessible for a lot of people with disabilities and children. In many cases they did not have a smart phone or iPad.



We supported people in meetings with their legal team so their will and preference was respected. We supported people to have their voice heard in childcare and Ward of Court cases.



During Covid-19 there were some safeguarding issues for people with disabilities. They included physical and financial abuse and being homeless. We supported some homeless people to get better housing and supports.

Recommendations



All people with disabilities should be informed about and involved in decisions about themselves.

For people who find it hard to communicate they must have an advocate for support.

Independent advocacy must be properly funded to ensure this happens.



Important decisions that people with disabilities must be involved in are:

Do not resuscitate or end of life decisions.

Getting a Covid-19 vaccine or not.



People with disabilities must have their human rights protected in decision-making. This means the Decision Support Service must be fully set up as soon as possible.



Many people with disabilities are homeless. Local authorities need to offer accessible routes to housing. The right kind of housing and support needs to be made available.



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