



This is an easy-to-read summary of a report by the National Advocacy Service and the Patient Advocacy Service.



The report is about how Covid-19 impacted people using health and social care services. It also says how we supported people in the difficult Covid-19 times.



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. We made sure their voice was heard.



The UN Convention says that people with disabilities have a right to the best physical and mental health possible.



Health and social care staff worked very hard during the Covid-19 time.

Many of these staff are very tired and stressed.



Some people told us how they were moved to hospital wards where other people had Covid-19. We supported 24 people who caught Covid-19 in hospital.



People told us how they have been on long waiting lists as their operation, scan or x-ray has been postponed due to Covid-19. This is very hard on their quality of life.



Families found it very hard to contact staff when their ill family member was in hospital. Patients and their families were very worried. Some people were shocked to find out how sick their family member was.



Some people were not able to visit a family member who was dying. We supported some people to have a visit.



Poor mental health was a big issue for many people with disabilities, their families and carers. People were isolated because many disability and mental health services were reduced or closed.



People were also anxious in hospitals as they had no family support and all of the staff were wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

We supported many people to get services they needed such as shopping and medicines.



For a number of reasons home care and personal assistance services were reduced because of Covid-19. Some people stopped their own service themselves for fear of catching Covid-19.



Some people could not get any support staff when being sent home from hospital. This meant that some people were alone for long periods as there was not enough staff. This was very worrying.

PPE was not always available at first.



Some people with disabilities found it very hard to get an appointment with the doctor or a therapist. Some appointments were by video only which some people could not do.

Recommendations



The Covid-19 impact on health and social care services has had a greater impact on people with disabilities than the general public. Their experiences must be used to improve service delivery.



We supported people during Covid-19 in a way that made a real difference in their lives.

Quality independent advocacy needs to be available to people with disabilities and properly funded.



Home care services need to develop plans to keep vital services going in times of crisis.
Home care services need to be regulated.

Home care services need to be in place to allow people to be safely discharged from hospital.



Mental health services must be restored and invested in to lessen the impact of mental health and loneliness during the Covid-19 period.



Poor access to GP and therapy services has had a bad impact on people with disabilities. Big waiting lists have built up. Access to these services needs to be addressed to ensure people have good health.



Hospitals have learned a lot during the Covid-19 period. It is important that systems are improved more to ensure that all patients are kept safe from catching Covid-19 in hospital.



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