

Rights at Risk

This is a short report about our survey and what happened to disabled people at the start of Covid-19.

Introduction

The Covid-19 (coronavirus) crisis has had a big impact on disabled people. Disabled people have always been left out and treated unfairly and the Covid-19 crisis made things worse. Our human rights have been put at risk.



When lockdown started in March 2020 a lot of support that disabled people need was stopped and there were no back-up plans to help them.



The Covid-19 crisis is not over. Even though some things have got better, disabled people are still having problems. These problems will continue after the crisis is over.



The Covid-19 crisis has shown why it is important it is to listen to disabled people and include us when decisions are made.

About this report

Inclusion Scotland did an online survey in April 2020 to ask disabled people what was happening to them.

More than 800 disabled people and their carers took part.

This is a short report about what we found out.



We have made this report about our rights. Each part looks at a different right and tells you:

- What was life like for disabled people before the Covid-19 crisis?
- What happened to disabled people at the start of the Covid-19 crisis?
- What needs to happen now?

Our Findings

1. Our right to independent living



How was life for disabled people before the Covid-19 crisis?



Many disabled people need social care support to support them to enjoy their right to independent living.



But cuts to Local Authority budgets means that people have been getting less care and support. Most people who do get social care support have to pay for it from their own money.

What happened to disabled people at the start of the Covid-19 crisis?



Nearly one in every 3 people who took part in our survey said that their social care support was stopped or that they got less support than they need.



Some people told us they had to sleep in their wheelchair or stay in bed all day. Other people told us they could not get washed or dressed or keep up with household chores.

What needs to happen now?



There is going to be a review of social care support to find out what changes are needed. There will be a report about this in January 2021.



We want changes made so that disabled people get the things they need. We want disabled people to have choice and control over the support they get.



The emergency money that the Scottish Government gave for social care support must be spent on making sure people who need help get it.



The Independent Living Fund needs to open up again so that more people can apply for money.



2. Disabled children's rights

How was life for disabled people before the Covid-19 crisis?



Disabled children and young people do not do as well at school as other children. Disabled children and young people are also more likely to be excluded from school.



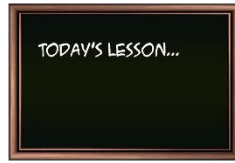
Many disabled children and their parents get support from the school to help them.



What happened to disabled people at the start of the Covid-19 crisis?



People who took our survey told us that they and their children lost the support they need.



Parents of disabled children told us they feel 'abandoned'. There was very little support for disabled children who were not going to school. Parents said they were finding it difficult to teach their child at home.



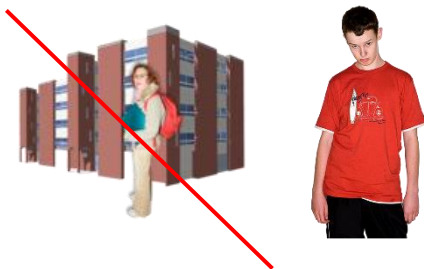
Some people who took the survey said that the children they were caring for were feeling more anxious which caused violent behaviour or self-harm.



What needs to happen now?



Disabled children and young people and their families need to be given support to help them recover from what happened during the lockdown.



Councils must work to help disabled children make up for the education and support they lost out on when schools were closed.



Schools should make sure they think about the needs of disabled children in case there are more lockdowns in the future. They should make sure there if they need to do classes online that disabled children will be able to take part. They should also have other options for children who can't use the internet.



3. Our right to a good enough standard of living

How was life for disabled people before the Covid-19 crisis?



We know that disabled people and their families are poorer than most other people and don't have the money they need for things like food.



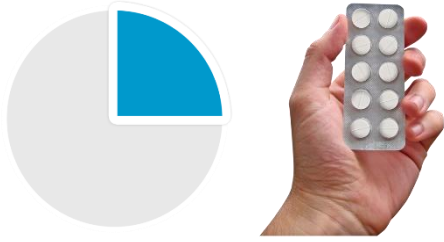
Disabled people have been badly affected by cuts to benefits that have happened in the last 10 years and fewer people can claim money.



What happened to disabled people at the start of the Covid-19 crisis?



Over half of people who answered our survey said they found it difficult to get food for themselves or those that they care for.



Over a quarter of people told us they had difficulty getting the medicines they need.



What needs to happen now?



Disabled people must not be left to live in poverty. Benefits must pay enough to live on.



When people apply for a benefit their application must be dealt with quickly. There are some stories that people are having problems applying for benefits and that they are having to wait for a long time.



The Scottish Government had to delay introducing the new disability benefits because of the crisis. It must tell us when they will do this.



The Scottish Government must also make sure that the new disability benefits will give people enough money so that they can live independently.



4. Our right to have a job

How was life for disabled people before the crisis?



More disabled people are out of work than people who are not disabled.



Disabled people find it harder to get a job. This is because of things like employers not wanting to give disabled people a job and because the forms are not as easy to fill in as they should be.



What happened to disabled people at the start of the Covid-19 crisis?



More disabled people have jobs in areas like education, health, restaurants and hotels than non-disabled people. Many of these are

‘key workers’ – this means people who had to keep working when other people were in lockdown.



About one in every five people who answered our survey told us that they, or someone in their family, works in a job that puts them at risk of getting Covid-19. People are worried.



Because of Covid-19 many disabled people’s jobs could be lost.



What needs to happen now?



The Scottish Government must come up with a plan to help protect disabled people’s jobs. It must also make sure that disabled people who lose their job have the chance to find another one.



There must be good support to help disabled people to find a job. The Scottish Government must work with Disabled People’s Organisations so

that disabled people get the right kind of support.



A Disabled People's Organisation

is an organisation that is run by disabled people ourselves and is for disabled people.



The Covid-19 crisis has shown that it is easy for many people to work from home. These new ways of working must continue.



5. Our rights to be alive and to be healthy



How was life for disabled people before the crisis?



Disabled people are more likely to say they have bad health than non-disabled people.



Many disabled people need appointments with their doctors and nurses to get medicine and treatment. Other people need exercise or to go to clubs and classes to keep themselves feeling healthy.



What happened to disabled people at the start of the Covid-19 crisis?



Disabled people told us that they have missed appointments and did not get the treatment they needed.



Our survey showed that the crisis has had a bad effect on disabled people's mental health.



Hundreds of people told us they felt very worried and stressed. They are worried about their health, their family's health and the future.



15 disabled people who already had mental health problems told us that they wanted to end their life.



What needs to happen now?



The NHS must tell people how they can get the appointments they need.



People might need more support and changes to their health care if their health has got worse during the

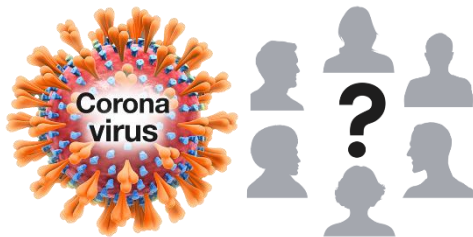
crisis. There needs to be more support available in case people need it.



The Scottish Government must look at what happens to disabled people's health over the next months and years and take action.



If the virus comes back again the Scottish Government needs to make sure that more people are able to get help if they think they need to stay away from other people.



The Scottish Government must find out how many disabled people have died from Covid-19. It is important to have this information so that they can plan how to protect disabled people.



Our core asks



Our core asks are the things we think that people in government and service providers and employers must do to deal with some of the problems in this report.



These need to be done in all areas, not just in things that are only about disabled people.



1. Stop treating disabled people as the problem and telling everyone we are helpless and weak



2. Stand up for our human rights as disabled people



3. Include us because we are the experts in our own lives.



4. Support our national and local Disabled People's Organisations so that we can be involved in decisions about services and laws.



5. Make sure that things like reports, meetings and letters are easy for us to understand. Easy Read and British Sign Language should always be provided.



Finally



Our survey results show that what happened when Covid-19 started put our human rights at risk.



We must make sure that we don't go back to the way things used to be – this wasn't good for disabled people either. Disabled people's human rights must be protected at all times.



Government and organisations need to do the things we have asked for in this report. It is very important that disabled people have a say about what happens after the crisis and that we have our rights.