



ACT
Government

ACT Health

COVID-19 – An ACT Operational Plan for People with Disability

Complementing the Australian Government
Department of Health Management and
Operational Plan for People with Disability

ACT Health
Directorate

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1. Introduction

On 9 April 2020, the Australian Government Department of Health released the [Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability](#) (the Commonwealth Plan) as part of the [Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Coronavirus](#). The Commonwealth Plan focuses on health and social care advice and essential supports and services for people with a long-term physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive or sensory impairments or conditions.

The *COVID-19 – An ACT Operational Plan for People with Disability* (the Operational Plan) outlines the ACT's response to the Commonwealth Plan and focuses on the actions and responsibilities of the ACT Health Directorate, hospital, primary healthcare and specialist disability services as well as people with disability and their formal and informal carers.

Whilst the focus of the Operational Plan is people with long term impairments or conditions, the Operational Plan seeks to be inclusive of all people with disability in the ACT. People with disability of all ages (including those over the age of 65), people with disability regardless of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) status and people with disability in the full array of life and life circumstances are part of the intended audience for this document and the ACT response takes this diversity into account.

People with disability have inherent rights to life and access to equitable and tailored healthcare. These rights are set out in the *Human Rights Act 2004*, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the National Disability Strategy (2010-2020).

When responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the health system, disability service providers and carers in the ACT should seek to ensure that people with disability:

- are recognised as having fundamental rights to life and its enjoyment on the same basis as other persons;
- are provided with equitable access to and equitable quality of healthcare;
- have access to timely and appropriate health services;
- receive healthcare that is free from bias or discrimination; and
- are treated with dignity, autonomy and respect when receiving healthcare.

This Operational Plan is to be read in conjunction with the:

- the Australian Government's [Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability](#);
- ACT Government's [ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy](#); and

- associated documents that outline the processes, plans, prevention and response arrangements for managing a COVID-19 in the disability sector.

Health and disability services and people with disability in the ACT are strongly advised to regularly consult the [ACT Government COVID-19 website](#) and the [Australian Government Department of Health Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#) for updates, alerts and changes to relevant legislation, regulations and public health directions. These sites will continue to be updated regularly as measures change and develop.

Roles and Responsibilities

This section outlines the responsibilities for the following organisations:

(i) ACT Health Directorate

The ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) will advise on the prevention, detection and management of COVID-19.

Under the Operational Plan and related regulatory obligations, the ACTHD is responsible for:

- developing, monitoring and updating this Operational Plan;
- overseeing the execution of this Operational Plan;
- coordinating the ACT health system response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including mobilising medical stockpiles;
- working collaboratively with advocacy and representative organisations, people with disability and their formal and informal carers, to support the response to the COVID-19 threat; and
- working closely with the Australian Government, the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission to support the collective response to the COVID-19 threat.

During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the Public Health Emergency Coordination Centre (PHECC), within the ACTHD, concurrently maintains the responsibility for:

- managing the public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the ACT via the Health and Emergency Control Centre (HECC);
- contributing to national surveillance as part of the COVID-19 response;
- case investigation and contact tracing;
- determining isolation and quarantine requirements;
- daily symptom monitoring and release from isolation for people in isolation or quarantine;

- providing guidance to service providers on prevention and outbreak response in relation to COVID-19;
- monitoring development of the COVID-19 pandemic in the ACT and publishing public information; and
- collecting notification data in the ACT, including evidence from the sector of what responses are required in communities, in order to understand the spread of COVID-19 to inform public health response activities (such as the phased response outlined in this Operational Plan).

Policy development, cross-sector collaboration and information dissemination will be supported when necessary by other organisations within the ACT Government, including the Office for Disability within the Community Services Directorate.

During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, the Clinical Health Emergency Coordination Centre (CHECC), within the ACT Health Directorate, concurrently maintains the responsibility for leading the development of a Territory Wide Clinical Response Plan to clinically respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the ACT. Once the Clinical Response Plan is developed, and endorsed, the CHECC, as an emergency committee, will oversee its implementation and operationalisation.

(ii) Community Services Directorate

The Community Services Directorate (CSD) is leading the *ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy* to ensure that people with disability, their families, carers and the disability sector are supported through the COVID-19 health emergency and during the post-emergency transition.

The Strategy is supported by an Action Plan, which enables the ACT Government to be flexible and responsive to the changing environment. The Action Plan outlines a broader range of actions and initiatives funded through the ACT COVID19 Stimulus Funding as well as actions undertaken by the Commonwealth.

Under the COVID19 ACT Disability Strategy a range of core initiatives have been explicitly funded to support people with disability, their families and paid and unpaid supporters to come through this crisis as well as possible. These initiatives are increased individual advocacy; sector support through National Disability Service; a targeted communication approach; Personal Protective Equipment is made accessible and available to people with disability and their supporters; and strengthening of positive behaviour support resources.

Soon to be announced second phase funding initiatives include a Better Safety project to build the confidence and skills of disability supporters to identify abuse and violence; individual grants to reduce home-based pressure on people with disability and their family carers; training for disability support staff in infection control and resources to allow people with disability and family members to be supported through alternative accommodation in an outbreak.

Additional functions undertaken across the Community Services Directorate including Quality Complaints and Regulation, Senior Practitioner, Disability Official Visitors and the Office Disability include:

- Monitoring of non-NDIS specialist disability providers.
- Distribution of information including Public Health updates to NDIS registered and non-registered disability support providers.
- Providing advice and support to providers on development of Business Continuity Plans.
- Liaising with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission where there are concerns regarding provider readiness leading to risks to participants.
- Providing oversight and advice about restrictive practices related to COVID response (including Residential Aged Care facilities from 1 December) ensuring least restrictive practice is maintained.
- Continuing to provide safeguarding supports through the roles of Official Visitor Disability Accommodation.
- Through the Integrated Service Response Program provide short term coordination, and where appropriate emergency funding, for people with complex support needs or people with disability not eligible for the NDIS because of residency reasons.
- Provide a coordination point for complex disability support related needs on COVID-19 matters.
- Work with ACT Health, the NDIA and disability support providers to assist people with disability in quarantine or isolation whose services have been disrupted or whose current residence is unsuitable for quarantine or isolation.
- Support ACT Health, if necessary, to advise the shared accommodation residence and support agency about the information that needs to be communicated with staff, volunteers, participants and their families or caregivers and provide templates for communication in the event that a case of COVID-19 occurs in disability supported accommodation.

(iii) Canberra Health Services

Canberra Health Services (CHS) works in partnership with the ACT Health Directorate, which has a system steward role for the ACT health system as a whole. This includes driving collaboration across the system with responsibility for outcomes, including the health of the ACT population.

CHS provides a range of publicly funded acute, sub-acute, primary and community-based health services to people in the Australian Capital Territory and surrounding Southern New South Wales region. These services are provided through:

- Canberra Hospital: a modern 600-bed tertiary hospital providing trauma services and most major medical and surgical sub-specialty services;

- University of Canberra Hospital: a specialist centre for rehabilitation, recovery and research with 140 inpatient beds, 75 day-bed places and additional outpatient services;
- community health centres: six centres providing a range of general and specialist health services to people of all ages;
- Walk-in Centres: providing free treatment for minor illness and injury; and
- community-based health services ranging from early childhood services, youth and women's health to dental health, mental health and alcohol and drug services.

Under the Operational Plan and related regulatory obligations, CHS is responsible for:

- service planning for alternate models of service delivery for people with disability, where needed, including risk management to enable ongoing provision of health services, particularly relating to equitable access to healthcare for people with disability;
- service planning and management of the Respiratory Assessment Centres (RACs) at Weston Creek, COVID-19 surge centre at Garran, drive through centre at EPIC, plus other RACs as determined by CHS; and
- communication of changes to CHS service delivery to patients, their family/carers, non-government support providers and primary healthcare health professionals in the ACT as services change through the pandemic.

(iv) Calvary ACT

Calvary ACT (Calvary) operates a range of public and private health facilities in the ACT. The ACT Government, through the ACT Health Directorate, funds Calvary to provide public health services through Calvary Public Hospital Bruce and Clare Holland House Hospice.

Calvary Public Hospital Bruce is a fully accredited public general hospital located in the northside of Canberra. Services provided through the public hospital include:

- a 24/7 emergency department;
- intensive and coronary care;
- medical and surgical inpatient services;
- voluntary psychiatric services;
- specialist outpatient clinics; and
- hospital in the home (HITH) and Geriatric Rapid Acute Care Evaluation (GRACE) services.

Palliative care services provided through Clare Holland House include an inpatient specialist palliative care unit, outpatient clinics and community-based services.

The private facilities operated by Calvary include Calvary Bruce Private Hospital, Calvary John James Hospital, Haydon Retirement Community and a range of aged care, disability and other community support services operated under Calvary Community Care.

Under the Operational Plan and related regulatory obligations, Calvary is responsible for:

- service planning for alternate models of service delivery and risk management for people with disability to enable ongoing provision of healthcare services administered by Calvary, particularly relating to equitable access to healthcare for people with disability; and
- communication of changes to service delivery to patients and primary healthcare health professionals in the ACT.

(v) Capital Health Network

Capital Health Network (CHN) is responsible for supporting primary healthcare services to respond to COVID-19 and to continue delivering high quality primary healthcare services including the management of people with chronic disease throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the Operational Plan and related regulatory obligations, CHN is responsible for:

- supporting the planning and implementation of alternative models of primary healthcare for people with disability, where needed, including digital health (telehealth and e-prescribing) and shared care models;
- providing personal protective equipment (PPE) from the National Medical Stockpile (NMS) to relevant providers as determined by the Commonwealth Department of Health;
 - Relevant providers are defined as GP respiratory clinics, general practices, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, after-hours GP home visiting services, MDS and Nurse Practitioner owned or led primary care practices, community pharmacies and eligible Allied Health providers.
- developing care pathways to support assessment and management of COVID-19, including for people with disability;
- developing care pathways for chronic disease and other local services that may be impacted by the COVID19 pandemic; and
- coordinating communications with ACTHD for primary healthcare providers with a focus on infection control, management of COVID-19, and usual care.

(vi) All specialist disability service providers

Specialist disability service providers* in the ACT are subject to requirements outlined in the *Disability Services Act 1991*. Providers maintain responsibilities under the Act regardless of funding source.

According to the *Disability Services Act 1991*, services are expected to:

- have as their focus the achievement of a better quality of life for people with disabilities, such as increased independence, education and employment opportunities and integration into the community;
- contribute to ensuring that the conditions of everyday life of people with disabilities are the same as, or as close as possible to, the conditions of everyday life enjoyed in the general community;
- be provided as part of local coordinated service systems and be integrated with services generally available to members of the community where possible;
- be tailored to meet the individual needs and goals of people with disabilities;
- be designed and administered to meet the needs of people with disabilities who may experience additional disadvantage because of their sex, sexuality, ethnic origin, physical isolation or Aboriginality; and
- be designed and administered so as to respect the rights of people with disabilities to privacy and confidentiality.

The meeting of these and other applicable requirements within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic response will require modifications to business as usual practices.

* Under the *Disability Services Act 1991*, “specialist disability service providers” are defined as “a service that is provided specifically for people with disability.”

(vii) NDIS Providers

NDIS providers have specific obligations under the NDIS Code of Conduct and the NDIS Practice Standards that relate to the delivery of safe, quality supports and services, and the management of risks associated with the supports provided to NDIS participants. NDIS providers need to remain up to date with instructions and specific guidance issued by the NDIS Commission.

(viii) National Disability Insurance Agency

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is the Commonwealth agency responsible for implementing the NDIS. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the NDIA and its community partners have a key role in ensuring that NDIS participants continue to receive critical services and supports, and that they have timely access to relevant safety and wellbeing information.

The [NDIS Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information and support website](#) has COVID-19 information in a range of formats for NDIS participants and providers, including on management of and revisions to NDIS plans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(ix) NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission is the national regulator of NDIS supports and services. The roles and responsibilities of the NDIS Commission in relation to COVID-19 include providing information to registered NDIS providers to support them in understanding:

- their obligations to safely and competently provide supports and services to people with disability during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- how to reduce exposure and transmission of COVID-19; and
- how to maintain NDIS supports and services.

All NDIS providers have obligations under the NDIS Code of Conduct and the NDIS Practice Standards that relate to the delivery of safe, quality supports and services, and the management of risks associated with the supports that they provide to NDIS participants. Possible COVID-19 infection of providers, workers and people otherwise engaged by providers to deliver NDIS supports, and infection of NDIS participants present risks that providers are expected to manage in the context of their obligations under the NDIS Code of Conduct and relevant NDIS Practice Standards.

More information is available on the [NDIS Commission COVID-19 website](#).

(x) Other relevant service providers

There are some organisations that may not have explicit obligations under the *Disability Services Act 1991* or similar legislation yet care for people with disability. Examples may include aged care services providing supports for older people with disability. These organisations should be aware of any parallel government COVID-19 plans that may directly relate to their work, however they may also use this Operational Plan and the resources it promotes to help guide their response to COVID-19 conditions, especially for people with disability under their care.

Updates

This is a live document that will be updated on a regular basis. It is best accessed online, as printed copies may become obsolete quickly. The most recent version of this document is available on the [ACT Health Directorate COVID-19 website](#).

For the most up-to-date COVID-19 information, visit the [ACT Government COVID-19 website](#).

Further information may also be sought via the ACT COVID-19 hotline on (02) 6207 7244.

2. A Three-Phased Operational Plan

This Plan outlines a three phased response to COVID-19, namely:

1. Preparedness;
2. Targeted action; and
3. Stand down and evaluation.

Phase 1: Preparedness

This phase aims to reduce the risk of infection in people with disability and facilitate community preparedness by:

- preparing and tailoring plans and guidance materials;
- preparing and supporting the health workforce;
- preparing and supporting the disability sector and workforce;
- assessing the demand for, and enable access to, personal protective equipment;
- maintaining and preparing clinical care and public health management, including existing services;
- tailoring and targeting communications;
- supporting planning and preparedness;
- understanding the disease; and
- establishing leadership and decision making.

Phase 2: Targeted Action

This phase aims to optimise health and support responses to help recovery and minimise further transmission by:

- reviewing previously implemented action;
- triaging patients and potential patients;
- early identification of cases and treatment of confirmed cases; and
- management and support of the health and disability workforce, including carers and support workers.

Phase 3: Stand down and Evaluation

This phase aims to stand down enhanced measures by:

- sharing information between responders;
- public communication;
- assessment and restock of PPE and medical equipment;
- monitoring for subsequent infection risks; and
- a process of review and learning.

The ACT's response to these actions has been outlined in the following table utilising a 'traffic light' system that indicates the status of each response:

● completed ◆ in progress ■ has not commenced

Phase 1 – Preparedness

The aim of the Preparedness phase is to maximise prevention of transmission of COVID-19 to people with disability.

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
Preparing and tailoring plans and guidance materials	Develop operational plans for public health, clinical and disability service responses.	ACT Health Directorate - Health Policy and Strategy Branch	<i>COVID-19 - An ACT Operational Plan for People with Disability (2020)</i> - ACT Health Directorate ●
	Prepare and update relevant guidelines to reflect the needs of people with disability, their families, carers and support workers, health services and others as needed to support the Operational Plan, including but not restricted to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the use of PPE; - the establishment of support protocols; and - advice for healthcare workers in acute and primary healthcare settings. 	- Chief Health Officer - Clinical Health Emergency Coordination Centre (CHECC) ACT Community Services Directorate - Office for Disability	<i>ACT Health Custodial Settings COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan</i> ◆ ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy (2020) - Community Services Directorate ●
	Use the Operational Plan to inform jurisdictional plans and guidance.		The Office for Disability Support for People with Disability webpage provides health, family, employment and community information relating to COVID-19 for people with disability and their family/carers. Resources promoted include the COVID-19 individual planning tool for people with disability and the <i>ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy</i> . ●
	Support dissemination of guidelines and other communications through		The ACT Government COVID-19 webpage provides information for the community including via the Chief Health Officer Alerts , Information for Health Professionals in the ACT and Non-Government Community, Disability and Health Service Providers webpages. ●

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
	existing and effective networks and channels.	Canberra Health Services	<i>COVID-19 Clinical Operations Manual (2020)</i> for the guidance of Canberra Health Services staff. ●
Preparing and supporting the health workforce	<p>Provide information and guidance to engage health professionals and healthcare workers about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the rights of people to equitable access to healthcare in appropriate settings; engaging with and supporting people with disability and families, carers and supporters within each relevant health setting (emergency departments intensive care units, hospital wards, primary healthcare settings and healthcare in the community); and how to use telehealth and teleconferencing services with Auslan interpreters. 	<p>ACT Health Directorate - Health Policy and Strategy</p> <p>Capital Health Network</p> <p>Commonwealth</p>	<p>Information for healthcare workers in hospital and primary care settings developed by the Australian Government Department of Health, the National Disability Insurance Agency and the National Disability Insurance Agency Quality and Safeguards Commission is promoted via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the ACT Government COVID-19 webpage. (e.g. the National Coronavirus Helpline); and the Capital Health Network's Health Alerts - Information and Resources for Health Professionals in the ACT. ● <p>The COVID-19 Health Professionals Disability Advisory Service provides specialised advice to health professionals responsible for the medical care of people with disability diagnosed with COVID-19 or experiencing symptoms. The Service can be accessed on 1800 131 330, 11:00am to 7:00pm daily. ●</p> <p>People who are deaf may access the National Auslan Booking and Payment Service for private non-hospital medical appointments. Eligible NDIS participants can request funding through their package. ●</p>

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
		ACT Government	<p>ACT Health websites, incl ACT Government COVID-19 website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are designed to be displayed on all commonly used internet browsers and with accessibility hardware and/or software; and • conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2 (WCAG 2.0). <p>Individuals with speech or hearing impairment can access the teletypewriter service at 13 36 77 (ask for 13 22 81).</p> <p>Speak and listen users can contact 1300 555 727 and ask for 13 22 81. More information is available on the RelayService website.</p> <p>The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) is available at 13 14 50 for people with disability who speak languages other than English.</p> <p>ACT Government publications may be requested in alternative formats, including large text and braille, via 13 22 81 or HealthACT@act.gov.au ●</p> <p>During the COVID-19 pandemic, all individuals have greater access to telehealth services. Using telehealth allows patients to stay home, protecting themselves from potential exposure to COVID-19. Canberrans requiring outpatient services can access</p>

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
		Carers ACT	<p>appointments from home using a simple-to-use Telehealth Service video call. This service is available to Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce outpatients. Information and advice on the use of telehealth services is promoted by the ACT Government COVID-19 webpage. ●</p> <p>Carers ACT has initiated a program dedicated to helping clients to use videoconferencing at home to attend medical appointments, including for people with disability who do not have access to the internet. More information can be found on the Carers ACT Telehealth Support webpage. ●</p>
	Consider the needs of Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) and ensure staff are trained in how to best manage and support people with disability, including identifying impairments and the barriers to care.	<p>Commonwealth</p> <p>ACT Health Directorate - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnerships Team</p>	<p>The Commonwealth COVID-19 Management and Operational Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Populations promotes clinical resources available on the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation website. These resources include the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health COVID-19 Toolkit, which provides guidance on care planning for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability. ●</p> <p>The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Partnerships Team has worked closely with the ACT Chief Health Officer to acquire PPE for Winnunga Nimmityjah and Gugan Gulwan’s frontline staff and clients. Ongoing PPE supply chain prioritisation was confirmed for Winnunga Nimmityjah and Gugan Gulwan for the duration of the pandemic public health response.</p>

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
		<p>ACT Government</p> <p>Commonwealth</p>	<p>Under the ACT Health COVID-19 Stimulus Package, Winnunga Nimmityjah received \$172,624.00 for infrastructure and support costs resulting from revised COVID-19 service delivery arrangements.</p> <p>Winnunga Nimmityjah received funding from the Commonwealth Government to support the establishment of a dedicated GP Respiratory Clinic. In addition, Winnunga Nimmityjah was also provided with Commonwealth funding to support COVID-19 response coordination and to facilitate culturally safe access to the GP respiratory clinics.</p>
	<p>Prioritise influenza vaccinations for the key supporters of people with disability.</p>	<p>ACT Health Directorate - Chief Health Officer</p> <p>ACT Health Directorate - PHECC</p>	<p>The ACT's Planning and managing influenza vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic is a factsheet for service providers. For more information, visit the ACT Health flu vaccination webpage.</p> <p>◆</p> <p>Any potential changes will be led at a national level, with alternative testing methods needing to be approved by the Public Health Laboratory Network and Communicable Disease Network Australia. PHECC will advise on appropriate alternative testing methods when these are available. ◆</p> <p>Public COVID-19 testing is conducted at drive-in and walk-in clinics across a range of locations. People in exceptional</p>
<p>Consider less invasive COVID-19 testing approaches for some people.</p>			
<p>Consider more options for the provision of any treatments within the home of a person with disability or other familiar environment.</p>			

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
		Calvary ACT	<p>circumstances who require testing but are unable to leave their home can call Access Canberra on 13 22 81 and ask to speak to the ACT Health. ACT Health may be able to arrange in-reach testing via Capital Pathology. Information about testing for COVID-19 and the Commonwealth Government's Information for Support Workers and Carers on Coronavirus (COVID-19) Testing for People with Disability are promoted via the ACT Government COVID-19 webpage. ●</p> <p>At-home testing for current home-based patients is being conducted, such as for those participating in the Clare Holland House Hospital in the Home program. ●</p>
	Consider making reasonable adjustments to hospital visitor protocols for people with disability during the COVID-19 pandemic.	CHECC	CHECC issues guidance on visitor restrictions, which public hospitals and community health centres have implemented . For more information, visit the Canberra Hospital webpage . ●
Preparing and supporting the disability sector and workforce	<p>Provide information and guidance to engage disability support professionals and carers on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the application of infection control strategies and training; ● management of suspected or actual outbreaks; and ● circumstances where PPE should be utilised. 	<p>ACT Health Directorate - PHECC</p> <p>NDIS</p>	<p>The COVID-19 Response Team at ACT Health is screening people who have COVID-19 and their contacts to determine if they are carers, as well as assessing their health and community support needs. If a potential concern is identified, these people are assessed and linked to necessary services or supports. ●</p> <p>The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Commission's fact sheet on behavioural support and restrictive practice relating to COVID-19 isolation NDIS Commission website is promoted via the ACT Government COVID-19 webpage. ●</p>

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
			PHECC has developed checklists for disability accommodation providers to aid the development of a plan to respond to a COVID-19 case in supported disability accommodation. ◆
	Provide support workers, families and carers with information and guidance on the risks of infection, avoidance of infection, infection control, and the underlying conditions which may exacerbate risks associated with infection.	<p>ACT Health Directorate - PHECC</p> <p>ACT Community Services Directorate - Office for Disability</p> <p>ACT Health Directorate</p> <p>ACT Health Directorate - PHECC</p>	<p>Outbreak management planning and infection control guidance will support service providers, carers and people with disability in managing the isolation, quarantine and care of people with disability diagnosed with COVID-19. ◆</p> <p>Online risk assessment and PPE information for support workers is promoted via the ACT Health Directorate NGO website. ●</p> <p>Isolation guidance for caregivers and household members of an individual isolating due to COVID-19 is available on the ACT Government COVID-19 website. ●</p> <p>Specialist and tailored information will be provided by the PHECC to individuals who need to quarantine or isolate. ●</p> <p>ACT Health Directorate has developed internal guidelines for managing outbreaks in high-risk settings which align with Whole-of-Government outbreak planning. ●</p>
	Develop specific individual healthcare plans and a hospital passport to reflect the COVID-19	Commonwealth	The Australian Government's Coronavirus (COVID-19) hospital companion for people with disability is promoted via the ACT Government COVID-19 webpage. ●

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
	pandemic, to ensure health and support needs are documented and accessible.	Community Services Directorate - Office for Disability	Health passports are being developed via a codesign process with people with disability, carers and representatives from the sector to assist healthcare workers and guide people with disability through their interactions with both primary care and hospital services. ◆
	Develop strategies to rapidly on-board support workers to maintain critical supports.	National Disability Services in partnership with CSD.	The ACT Government has provided funding to National Disability Services through the <i>ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy</i> to develop workforce responsiveness. ●
	Formal support providers deploy business continuity planning to preserve critical supports to maintain the health, wellbeing and safety.	ACT Health Directorate - Contracts NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission NDIS	<p>The Business Continuity Management Under COVID-19 guide has been released by the ACT Health Directorate to assist organisations. To seek further advice or raise concerns contact quality@act.gov.au (CSD) or PSRContracts@act.gov.au (ACT Health Directorate). ●</p> <p>The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission webpage promotes information for providers, including advice on preparation, planning and obligations as well as specific information relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability. ●</p> <p>The NDIS website has resources available for finding new or backup staff if required, which is promoted via the ACT Health Directorate Information for Non-Government Community, Disability and Health Service Providers in relation to COVID-19 webpage. ●</p>

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
		ACT Health Directorate	The ACT Health Directorate has developed the ACT Government PPE (Prioritisation and Distribution) Policy and accompanying attachments (A and B) to help guide the distribution of the ACT Government PPE stockpile. ●
	Develop guidance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimise inappropriate use of PPE; and • utilise PPE in the correct manner 	ACT Health Directorate ACT Community Services Directorate - Office for Disability ACT Health Directorate - PHECC	The Health Directorate's PPE use for non-government community and health service providers is for clients both in quarantine/isolation and not and is accompanied in the ACT by the Donning PPE guide for health and support workers. ● The ACT Health Directorate has developed pocket sized z-cards with instructions for putting on and removing PPE. These can be accessed at no cost by sending a request to CSDPPE@act.gov.au . ● The ACT Health Directorate is proposing to secure the delivery of in-person PPE training to disability providers, in collaboration with the Office for Disability and Skills Canberra. ◆
	Encourage adoption of ePrescribing and home delivery options.	Commonwealth ACT Health Directorate Capital Health Network ACT Government	The Commonwealth Home Medicines Service is a temporary program, which aims to support and protect the most vulnerable members of our community from potential exposure to novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Pharmacy and patient eligibility information is provided on the Home Medicines Service webpage . Further information may be sought by calling 1800 951 285. ● ACT legislation supports electronic prescribing by enabling:

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
		Commonwealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • digital image and faxed prescriptions; • telephone (verbal) prescriptions; and • the supply of schedule 4 (prescription only) appendix D and schedule 8 (controlled) medicines using electronic, digital image, fax or telephone prescriptions; and home medicine services (delivery). ● <p>The Commonwealth Government has extended the temporary Continued Dispensing (Emergency Measures) to 30 September 2020. An extension of these arrangements will provide another option for consumers to continue to access their PBS subsidised medicines, if they are having difficulty accessing a prescriber to obtain a valid prescription. Further information can be found on the PBS webpage. ●</p>
	Implement flexible health service delivery and healthcare models, including telehealth.	<p>Canberra Health Services</p> <p>Calvary Public Hospital</p> <p>Capital Health Network</p>	<p>Canberrans requiring outpatient services are being offered access to appointments from home, where possible. ●</p> <p>During the COVID-19 pandemic, all individuals are being offered greater access to telehealth services. Using telehealth allows patients to stay home, protecting themselves from potential exposure to COVID-19. Canberrans requiring outpatient services can access appointments from home using a simple-to-use Telehealth Service video call. This service is available to Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce outpatients. Information and advice on the use of telehealth</p>

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
		Carers ACT	<p>services is promoted by the ACT Government COVID-19 webpage. ●</p> <p>Carers ACT has initiated a program dedicated to helping clients to use videoconferencing at home to attend medical appointments, including for people with disability who do not have access to the internet. More information can be found on the Carers ACT Telehealth Support webpage or by contacting 6296 9928. ●</p>

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
	Adopt alternative measures for dissemination of information to people who do not have access to internet	ACT Health Directorate Commonwealth	ACT Government publications may be requested in alternative formats, including large text and braille, via 13 22 81. ● Both the Commonwealth and ACT Governments have established COVID-19 helplines to assist in the dissemination of information and support. The National Coronavirus Helpline can be accessed on 1800 020 080 24 hours per day. The ACT Government helpline is available on 6207 7244 between 8am and 8pm daily. For health questions, including information on symptoms, call Healthdirect on 1800 022 222. ●
	Develop targeted information on mental health and wellbeing strategies during the pandemic.	ACT Health Directorate - Mental Health Policy Unit	The ACT Government's COVID-19 Mental Health Support Package provides additional funding to services and community groups to meet increasing needs as a result of the pandemic via the Mental Health and Wellbeing Innovation Grants Program (MHWIGP). ● The ACT Government's Psychological Wellbeing During COVID-19 website provides information and resources to people in isolation. General mental health support advice and resources are available on the ACT Government COVID-19 website as well as online resources from the Australian Psychological Society , including specific advice for people with disability. ●
	Provide consistent updates to guidance for people with disability, their families, carers, support	ACT Health Directorate	For the most up-to-date COVID-19 information, visit the ACT Government COVID-19 website . Further information may also be sought via the ACT COVID-19 hotline on (02) 6207 7244. ●

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
	workers, employers, health services and others as needed, in accessible formats		<p>ACT Health websites, incl ACT Government COVID-19 website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are designed to be displayed on all commonly used internet browsers and with accessibility hardware and/or software; and • conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2 (WCAG 2.0). <p>Individuals with speech or hearing impairment can access the teletypewriter service at 13 36 77 (ask for 13 22 81).</p> <p>Speak and listen users can contact 1300 555 727 and ask for 13 22 81. More information is available on the RelayService website.</p> <p>The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) is available at 13 14 50 for people with disability who speak languages other than English.</p> <p>ACT Government publications may be requested in alternative formats, including large text and braille, via 13 22 81 or HealthACT@act.gov.au ●</p>
	Develop a disability-dedicated webpage to ensure all guidance and resources are provided in an easy-to-find place for people with	Community Services Directorate - Office for Disability	The Office for Disability Support for People with Disability webpage provides health, family, employment and community information relating to COVID-19 for people with disability and their family/carers. Resources promoted include the COVID-19

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
	disability, their families, carers and support workers	ACT Health Directorate - Media and Communications	<p>individual planning tool for people with disability and the ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy. ●</p> <p>ACT Health Directorate to explore options for including disability-specific webpage on ACT COVID-19 webpage. ◆</p>
Supporting planning and preparedness	Establish guidelines to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 within shared residential and activity settings	<p>ACT Health Directorate - PHECC</p> <p>ACT Community Services Directorate - Office for Disability</p> <p>National Disability Services in partnership with CSD.</p>	<p>The ACT Government has released the Guide for Shared Accommodation which is promoted via the ACT Health website. ●</p> <p>PHECC has developed checklists for disability accommodation providers to aid the development of a plan to respond to a COVID-19 case in supported disability accommodation. ◆</p> <p>The ACT Government's Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness Planning for COVID-19 guide assists people to develop isolation and support plans for people with disability and their carers. The guide provides links to resources on food and medication planning and assistance with animals and pets. ●</p> <p>The ACT Government has provided funding to National Disability Services through the Community Support Package to enable the organisation to act as a central point of contact to support necessary collaborations in the disability sector. ●</p>

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
	Consider maintenance of food, water and other essential supplies	ACT Community Services Directorate	Food support is available via the Canberra Relief Network. The Relief Network can be contacted on 1800 431 133 or through the contact form on the Canberra Relief Network website . Assistance can also be sought via the COVID-19 helpline on 6207 7244. Most supermarkets provide home delivery services and some have an exclusive shopping hour for people with disability. ●
	Provide advice on respiratory hygiene and hand washing and increase access to hygiene-related products.	<p>ACT Health Directorate</p> <p>NDIS Commission</p> <p>Commonwealth</p>	<p>Posters and other documentation supporting good hygiene practice are available for downloading on the ACT Government COVID-19 website. ●</p> <p>The NDIS Commission provides an Infection prevention and control for COVID-19 module (including the Australian Government 30-minute COVID-19 infection control training module) for NDIS workers. ●</p> <p>People with disability, Disability Support providers including NDIS providers and self-managing participants who use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as part of their support arrangements should continue to access PPE through their usual means. Where this is no longer possible, they should first approach the National Medical Stockpile (NMS) by emailing NDISCOVIDPPE@health.gov.au.</p>

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
	<i>Operational Plan</i> are monitored and reviewed in a timely manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health Policy and Strategy Branch - Mental Health Policy Unit 	COVID-19 mental health support package initiatives will be monitored via regular contact between Non-Government Organisations delivering services and the Health Directorate to review needs and responses. ●

Phase 2 – Targeted Action

The aim of Targeted Action is to react to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection of people with disability.

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
	Reviewing previously implemented actions	ACT Health Directorate - Health Policy and Strategy Branch	The <i>Operational Plan</i> will be reviewed over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic in consultation with a group to oversee implementation of the plan. ◆
Triaging patients and potential patients	Individuals and health services to use videoconferencing, telehealth consultations to enable assessment of people with disability in a way which minimises disruption, and the need for transportation.	Canberra Health Services Calvary Public Hospital	Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce Outpatients are offering Canberrans requiring outpatient services access to appointments from home via telehealth if available. ●
	For people presenting with respiratory symptoms, use respiratory/fever clinics with heightened infection prevention and control capacity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redirect demand for face-to-face services away from emergency departments and usual primary healthcare providers for respiratory presentations 	ACT Health Directorate - PHECC	Respiratory Assessment Clinics ensure people with disability are able to access testing with a support person/family member present if they prefer. ●

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enable people to be accompanied by families, carers or support workers (if required). 		
Early identification of cases and treatment of confirmed cases	<p>Should COVID-19 be suspected or detected contact relevant state/territory public health units to assess risk and consider mobilising additional staffing and if laboratory confirmation of the case is received, instigate infection control measures.</p> <p>Rapid triage and response when people with disability present to EDs, clinics and paramedics.</p>	<p>ACT Health Directorate - PHECC</p> <p>ACT Community Services Directorate - Office for Disability</p> <p>NDIS</p>	<p>Outbreak management planning and infection control guidance will support service providers, carers and people with disability in managing the isolation, quarantine and care of people with disability diagnosed with COVID-19. ◆</p> <p>The ACT Government has released the Guide for Shared Accommodation which is promoted via the ACT Health website. ●</p> <p>Isolation guidance for caregivers and household members of an individual isolation due to COVID-19 is available on the ACT Government COVID-19 website. ●</p> <p>The Australian Government's Coronavirus (COVID-19) hospital companion for people with disability is promoted via the ACT Government COVID-19 webpage. ●</p> <p>The NDIS website has resources available for finding new or backup staff if required, which is promoted via the ACT Health Directorate Information for Non-Government Community, Disability and Health Service Providers in relation to COVID-19 website. ●</p>

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
	Families, carers, support workers and organisations responsible for children and young people with disability including out-of-home care and juvenile justice to consider how they will support individuals or households who are in quarantine or self-isolating.	<p>ACT Health Directorate</p> <p>ACT Community Services Directorate - Office for Disability</p> <p>ACT Health Directorate - PHECC</p>	<p>The ACT Government has released the Guide for Shared Accommodation which is promoted via the ACT Health website. ●</p> <p>PHECC has developed the <i>Custodial Settings COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan</i>. ●</p>
	To ensure overall health and COVID-19 specific care needs are communicated efficiently, provide updated individual healthcare plans and hospital passport to ED and other first responders.	<p>ACT Community Services Directorate - Office for Disability</p> <p>Canberra Health Services</p> <p>Calvary Public Hospital</p>	<p>The Australian Government's Coronavirus (COVID-19) hospital companion for people with disability is also promoted via the ACT Government COVID-19 webpage. ●</p> <p>The Office for Disability has led the development health passports to assist healthcare workers and guide people with disability through their interactions with both primary care and hospital services. ◆</p>
	The person with disability, their families or guardians should be part of decision-making around quarantine and self-isolation.	<p>ACT Health Directorate Chief Health Officer - PHECC</p> <p>ADACAS and AFI</p>	<p>Shared decision-making requirements are included in relevant ACT Health Directorate checklists and in internal guidelines for managing outbreaks in high-risk settings. ●</p> <p>Information on Supported Decision Making is available on the ADACAS and AFI webpages, including in a podcast format. ●</p>

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
<p>Manage and support the health and disability workforce, including carers and support workers</p>	<p>Implement surge workforce options, such as sourcing staff to assist with the healthcare needs of a person with disability if their families, carers and/or support workers have confirmed COVID-19 infection.</p>	<p>ACT Health Directorate PHECC</p> <p>National Disability Services in partnership with CSD.</p> <p>NDIS</p>	<p>The ACT Government has released the Guide for Shared Accommodation which is promoted via the ACT Health website. ●</p> <p>The ACT Government has provided funding to National Disability Services through the Community Support Package to enable the organisation to act as a central point of contact to support necessary collaborations in the disability sector. ●</p> <p>The NDIS website has resources available for finding new or backup staff if required, which is promoted via the ACT Health Directorate Information for Non-Government Community, Disability and Health Service Providers in relation to COVID-19 website. ●</p>
	<p>Develop guidelines for the best use of the limited supply of PPE.</p>	<p>Capital Health Network</p> <p>Commonwealth</p> <p>Community Services Directorate - Office for Disability</p>	<p>The Capital Health Network (CHN) provides access to personal protective equipment (PPE) from the National Medical Stockpile for general practitioners, pharmacies, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, allied health professionals and aged care providers based on priorities established by the Australian Government Department of Health. ●</p> <p>People with disability, Disability Support providers including NDIS providers and self-managing participants who use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as part of their support</p>

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
		ACT Health Directorate	<p>arrangements should continue to access PPE through their usual means. Where this is no longer possible, they should first approach the National Medical Stockpile (NMS) by emailing NDISCOVIDPPE@health.gov.au.</p> <p>Where people with disability who require PPE on a daily basis to ensure that their support needs can be met and disability support providers are unable to access PPE supplies through these means they are eligible to apply to access PPE through a supply supported by ACT Government. Complete and lodge online request forms via the ACT Government COVID-19 website. Any further issues or enquiries may be addressed through the Community Services Directorate PPE inbox at CSDPPE@act.gov.au. ●</p> <p>The ACT Health Directorate has developed the ACT Government PPE (Prioritisation and Distribution) Policy and accompanying attachments (A and B) to help guide the distribution of the ACT Government PPE stockpile. ●</p> <p>The Health Directorate's PPE use for non-government community and health service providers is for clients both in quarantine/isolation and not and is accompanied in the ACT by the Donning PPE guide for health and support workers. ●</p>

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
		Community Services Directorate - Office for Disability	The ACT Health Directorate has developed pocket sized z-cards with instructions for putting on and removing PPE. These can be accessed at no cost by sending a request to CSDPPE@act.gov.au . ●
	Develop options for technology and equipment, including telehealth, to enable remote monitoring of patients, particularly for people remaining in their home environment, and people living in rural and regional settings.	Commonwealth Department of Health	During the COVID-19 pandemic, all individuals have greater access to telehealth services. Using telehealth allows patients to stay home, protecting themselves from potential exposure to COVID-19. Canberrans requiring outpatient services can access appointments from home using a simple-to-use Telehealth Service video call. This service is available to Canberra Health Services and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce outpatients. Information and advice on the use of telehealth services is promoted by the ACT Government COVID-19 webpage . ●
	Carers ACT	Carers ACT has initiated a program dedicated to helping clients to use videoconferencing at home to attend medical appointments, including for people with disability who do not have access to the internet. More information can be found on the Carers ACT Telehealth Support webpage . ●	
ACT Health Directorate - Mental Health Policy Unit	The ACT Health Directorate's Mental Health Support package includes additional funding for NGOs who required additional resources to meet increasing community mental health and wellbeing needs as a result of COVID-19. ●		

Phase 3 – Stand Down and Evaluation

This is the final phase of response, centred on the removal of COVID-19 enhanced measures and the evaluation of the response as a whole.

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
Sharing information between responders	Discussions with people with disability/ representative/ industry bodies to evaluate response/ remaining needs.	ACT Health Directorate - Chief Health Officer - Health Policy and Strategy Branch Community Services Directorate - Office of Disability	Engagement with the Disability Reference Group, ACT Peak Disability organisations and Advocacy groups and the group to oversee implementation of the Operational Plan. ■
	Use the review of the response to inform adjustments in normal healthcare operations.		
Public communication	Provide information to people with disability and disability and healthcare sectors about the transition of services in post-pandemic.	Canberra Health Services	
	Conduct consultations with people with disability, representative bodies and other experts to understand experiences of people with disability.		
	Implement mental health supports for people with disability/ families /carers and support workers.		

Focus Area	Actions	Responsibility (ACT)	Response (ACT)
Assess and restock PPE and medical equipment	Assess the status of PPE and other equipment required by people with disability and restock depleted.	ACT Health Directorate	
	Assess workforce needs.	Canberra Health Services	
Monitoring for subsequent infection risks	Maintain infection control measures.	Calvary ACT	
	Monitor for subsequent infections in previously affected settings, or changes in the virus.	All relevant disability health service providers	
	Analyse data and review processes and policies.		
	Review healthcare capacity, processes and policies.		
Review and learn	Relevant committees and working groups, with input from people and groups not directly represented.	Group overseeing implementation	

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

A group will be established to oversee implementation of the Operational Plan. The group will include representation from people with disability and carers, non-government organisations, the Capital Health Network and from within the ACT Government. The group will assist to facilitate linkages with other ACT COVID-19 disability initiatives and the Disability Reference Group.

The membership will include:

- ACT Health Directorate:
 - Health Policy and Strategy Branch (Chair)
 - Public Health Emergency Coordination Centre, Health Emergency Control Centre
- Canberra Health Services
- Community Services Directorate:
 - Office for Disability
- Non-government disability sector organisation representatives
- People with disability and carer representatives

Secretariat support will be provided by the ACT Health Directorate, Health Policy and Strategy Branch.

4. References and Related Documents

Legislation

- *Disability Services Act 1991*
- *Human Rights Act 2004*
- *Public Health Act 1997*
 - *Public Health (Emergency) Declaration 2020 (No 1)*
 - *Public Health (Emergency) Declaration Further Extension 2020 (No 9)*
 - *Public Health (Returned Travellers) Emergency Direction 2020*
 - *Public Health (Residential Aged Care Facilities) Emergency Direction 2020 (No 3)*
 - *Public Health (Self-Isolation) Emergency Direction 2020*
 - *Public Health (Restricted Activities – Gatherings, Business or Undertakings) Emergency Direction 2020 (No 3)*
 - *Public Health (Returned Travellers) Emergency Direction 2020 (No 5)*
 - *Public Health (COVID-19) Interstate Hotspots) Emergency Direction 2020*

Related Documents

- Commonwealth [Management and Operational Plan for People with Disability](#)
- [ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy](#)
- *COVID-19 High-Risk Settings Outbreak Management Plan*
- [Guide for Shared Accommodation](#)

5. Resources and Communication

Useful Contacts

Name of Service	Service Availability	Website	Contact Details
<p><i>ACT Human Rights Commission</i></p> <p>The ACT Human Rights Commission promotes the human rights and welfare of all people living in the ACT. The ACT Human Rights Commission can investigate and conciliate complaints about discrimination and complaints about services in the ACT including health, disability, older people and services for children and young people.</p>	Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm	ACT Human Rights Commission website	6205 2222 or human.rights@act.gov.au Complaints can be made via the complaints form on the ACT Human Rights Commission website .
<p><i>Access Mental Health</i></p> <p>Access Mental Health offers a first point of contact for people concerned about their mental health and wellbeing or experiencing a mental health crisis.</p>	24 hours, 7 days	Canberra Health Services Access Mental Health website	1800 629 354 (free call except for mobiles) 02 6205 1065
<p><i>ACT COVID-19 Helpline</i></p> <p>The Helpline is to help the community stay informed and to access services related to COVID-19.</p>	Daily, 8am-8pm	ACT COVID-19 website	(02) 6207 7244
<p><i>ACT Disability Aged and Carers Advocacy Service (ADACAS)</i></p> <p>ADACAS is an independent, community organisation that provides independent, individual advocacy and</p>	Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm	ADACAS website	(02) 6242 5060

information to people with disability and their carers.			
<i>ACT Health Directorate COVID-19 Response Team</i> People in exceptional circumstances who require testing but are unable to leave their home can contact the Response Team	Daily, 8am-6pm	N/A	(02) 5124 9213
<i>ACT Integrated Service Response Program</i> ISRP provides short-term coordination support for people who have high or complex support needs. ISRP also provides funding for people with disability to purchase emergency supports and services from non-government providers.	Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm	Integrated Service Response Program website	(02) 6207 1086 or officefordisability@act.gov.au
<i>Advocacy for Inclusion (AFI)</i> Advocacy for Inclusion provides independent individual, self and systemic advocacy for people with disabilities.	Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm	AFI Facebook Page	(02) 6257 4005
<i>Aged Care Quality and Safeguard Commission</i> For older people with disability. The Commission is the national end-to-end regulator of aged care services, and the primary point of contact for consumers and providers in relation to quality and safety.	Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm	Aged Care Quality and Safeguard Commission website	1800 951 822 or info@agedcarequality.gov.au
<i>Beyond Blue</i> Provides support programs to address issues related to	24 hours, 7 days	Beyond Blue	1300 22 4636

depression, suicide, anxiety disorders and other related mental illnesses.			
<i>Carers ACT</i> Supports, connects and empowers carers of family and friends to maintain their caring role and wellbeing	Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm	Carers ACT website	(02) 6296 9900 or carers@carersact.org.au
<i>Commonwealth Government Carers Gateway</i> For access to in-person and online carer supports.	24 hours, 7 days	Coronavirus (COVID-19) information website	1800 422 737
<i>COVID-19 Health Professionals Disability Advisory Service</i> Provides specialised advice to health professionals responsible for the medical care of people with disability diagnosed with COVID-19 or experiencing symptoms.	11am-7pm, daily	COVID-19 Health Professionals Advisory Service website	1800 131 330
<i>Disability & Carers Information Helpline</i> Information available for families, carers, support workers and services.	Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm	Information and referrals for people with disability and their supporters about coronavirus (COVID-19) website	1800 643 787 If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can also call the National Relay Service on 133 677.
<i>Healthdirect</i> Government-funded service providing access to health advice and information.	24 hours, 7 days	Healthdirect website	1800 022 222
<i>Lifeline</i> Provides free suicide prevention services, mental health support and emotional assistance.	24 hours, 7 days	Lifeline	13 11 14

<i>National Disability Insurance Agency</i> The National Disability Insurance Agency is the Commonwealth agency responsible for implementing the NDIS.	Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm (including webchat service)	NDIA Coronavirus (COVID-19) information and support website	1800 800 110 or enquiries@ndis.gov.au
<i>People with Disability Australia</i> Disability rights and advocacy.	Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm	PWD Australia website	(02) 9370 3100

Online Training

The NDIS Commission has provided a [training for NDIS workers during COVID-19 webpage](#). This page outlines the responsibilities of NDIS providers and the people they employ or otherwise engage to the participants they support. It is expected that new workers will enter the NDIS workforce during the pandemic period. Both new and existing workers will need to complete relevant training modules.

Training modules include:

- [Worker Orientation Module 'Quality, Safety and You'](#);
- [Infection prevention and control for COVID-19](#) (including the Australian Government [30-minute COVID-19 infection control training module](#)); and
- [Worker Screening Requirements \(Employees of Registered NDIS Providers\)](#).

Infographics and Videos

Promotional materials are available in community languages, and where possible should be communicated to staff, clients and carers as directly as possible. This may include mail outs, posters in accessible areas and discussions with clients.

Disability specific messaging for ACT residents can be found on the [Community Services Directorate website](#).

A series of Auslan videos on the [COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan for People with Disability](#) has been uploaded to the front page of the [Commonwealth Department of Health YouTube channel](#).

6. Consultation and acknowledgements

The ACT Health Directorate acknowledges the input from the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services, Canberra Health Services, Calvary Healthcare ACT, Capital Health Network and the ACT Office of Disability, Community Services Directorate, in the development of the *COVID-19 An ACT Operational Plan for People with Disability*.

The ACT Health Directorate would also like to acknowledge the contributions of:

- ACT Council of Social Service;
- ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service;
- Advocacy for Inclusion;
- Carers ACT;
- Mental Health Community Coalition of the ACT;
- National Disability Services;
- People with Disabilities ACT; and
- Women with Disabilities ACT.