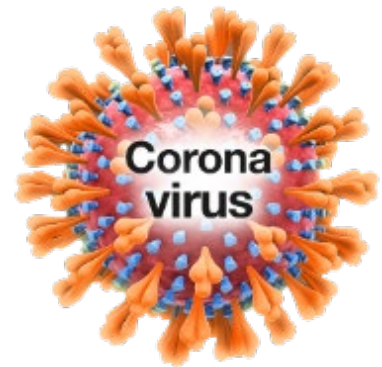


Making Disability Rights Real in the COVID-19 Pandemic



**A report by the Independent Monitoring
Mechanism of the Disability Convention**

January 2021

Easy Read summary



What is in this book?

Page number:



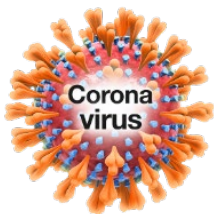
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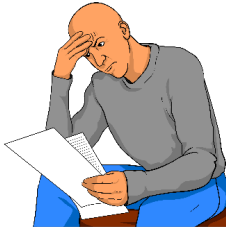


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Before you start



This is a long document.



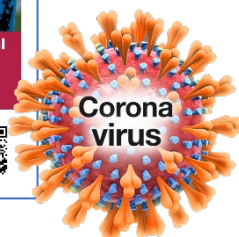
While it is written in Easy Read it can be hard for some people to read a document this long.

Some things you can do to make it easier are:



- read it a few pages at a time
- have someone help you to understand it.

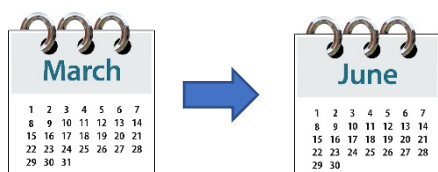
The Making Disability Rights Real in a Pandemic report



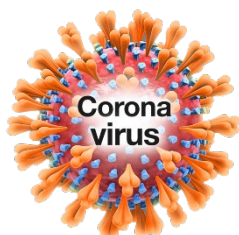
This report is about some of the things that disabled New Zealanders went through during the **COVID-19** emergency.



The **COVID-19** emergency was the time when people needed to stay at home because of the COVID-19 virus.



Our report is about what happened to disabled people during the COVID-19 emergency from **March** to **June 2020**.

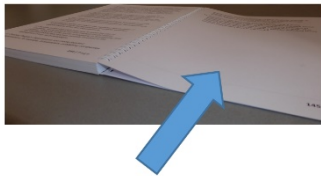


The COVID-19 emergency was still happening when we made this report.



The **Independent Monitoring Mechanism** wrote this report.

The Independent Monitoring Mechanism is called the **IMM** for short.



Read more about the IMM on **page 11**.

The IMM wanted to find out about:



- the things the government did well
- the things the government did not do well
- how things could be done better
- if disabled people had their rights protected during the COVID-19 emergency.



Rights are things that you should get to live a good life.

For example everyone has a right to things like:

- housing
- having enough food to eat.



The IMM had meetings around New Zealand to find out what happened during the COVID-19 emergency.



We talked to:

- disabled people
- family / whānau of disabled people
- support workers
- people who work with disabled people.





The main thing we wanted to find out was to how to make things better for disabled people if an emergency like COVID-19 happens again.

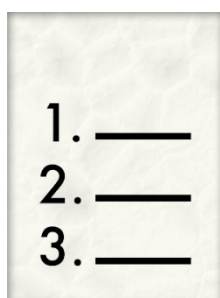


We will give this report to the:

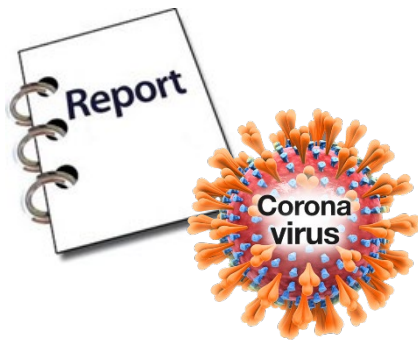
- Government
- United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



The IMM has asked the Government to do some things to make lives better for disabled people if an emergency like COVID-19 happens again.



These are called **recommendations**.



This Easy Read summary has the **main messages** from our report.



You can read the full report **Making Disability Rights Real in a Pandemic** on this website:

<https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/resources/making-disability-rights-real-pandemic>

About the Independent Monitoring Mechanism



The **Independent Monitoring Mechanism** looks at what the Government is doing to make sure disabled people are getting their rights in New Zealand.



The Independent Monitoring Mechanism is called the **IMM** for short.



The IMM makes sure the Government is doing a good job for disabled people.

The IMM is made up of 3 groups that work together which are the:



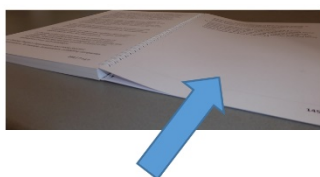
- Human Rights Commission



- Disabled People's Organisations Coalition – also called DPO Coalition for short.



- Ombudsman



There is more information about these organisations on **pages 13 to 19** of this report.

Human Rights Commission



The Human Rights Commission is the organisation that looks after human rights in New Zealand.



The Commission:

- supports human rights
- protects human rights
- checks that all New Zealanders are getting their human rights.



If disabled people are not getting their human rights they can make a complaint to the Commission.

Disabled People's Organisations Coalition



The DPO Coalition is a group of Disabled People's Organisations.

**DPO
COALITION**

DPO is short for Disabled People's Organisations.



Disabled People's Organisations are groups that disabled people run themselves.



The DPO Coalition is where DPOs can:

- talk to each other
- have a strong voice about things that affect disabled people.





The DPOs that belong to the DPO Coalition are:



Blind Citizens NZ



- Balance Aotearoa
- Blind Citizens of New Zealand Incorporated
- Deaf Aotearoa



Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

- Disabled Persons' Assembly New Zealand Incorporated



Kāpō Māori Aotearoa
New Zealand Inc.

- Kāpō Māori Aotearoa New Zealand Incorporated



Muscular Dystrophy
New Zealand

- Muscular Dystrophy Association of New Zealand Incorporated



- People First New Zealand / Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.

The Ombudsman



The Ombudsman looks into complaints about government organisations.



A **complaint** is when you:

- are not happy about something
- tell someone why you are not happy.



The Ombudsman can:

- look into complaints
- give advice.





You can contact the Ombudsman if you are having a problem with a government agency.



The IMM is the group that makes sure the Government is following the **Disability Convention**.



The **Disability Convention** is the short name for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

New Zealand Government

The **Disability Convention** is an agreement that the New Zealand Government has signed.



The **Disability Convention** says what the New Zealand Government should do to make sure disabled people:



- have the same **rights** as everybody else
- can have a good life.



The **Disability Convention** has been signed by nearly every country in the world.



Rights are things that you should get to live a good life. For example everyone has a right to things like:

- housing
- being kept safe

having enough food to eat.

The COVID-19 emergency



The Disability Convention says that the Government must make sure disabled people are protected during **emergency situations**.



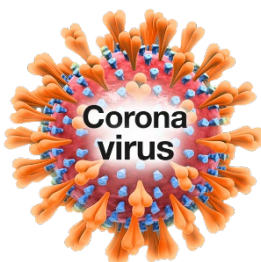
An **emergency situation** is when:

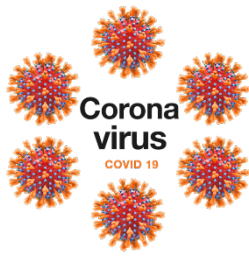
- people are in danger
- people need to be kept safe.



An emergency situation can be something like:

- an earthquake
- flooding
- a pandemic.





COVID-19 is a **pandemic**.

A **pandemic** is when a lot of people around the world:

- get very sick from the same illness
- die from this illness



The Government must look after everybody during an emergency situation.



This includes disabled people.



To do this disabled people need to be included in decisions about them.



You can read Easy Read information about COVID-19 on the New Zealand Government **COVID-19 website**:

www.covid19.govt.nz/updates-and-resources/accessible-information/easy-read/

Tāngata whaikaha Māori



It is important that the Government makes things better for **tāngata whaikaha Māori** in the next emergency situation.



Tāngata whaikaha Māori are Māori disabled people.



Tāngata whaikaha Māori told us they were not involved properly at the start of the COVID-19 emergency.



Tāngata whaikaha Māori told us there was a lot of confusion around things like:

- tangihanga / funerals
- who was allowed in the bubble
- **tikanga.**



Tikanga means the Māori way of doing things.

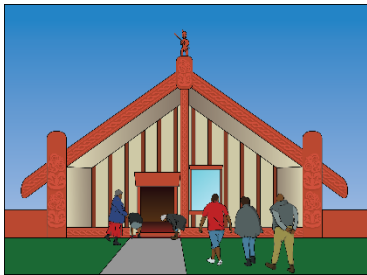


Tāngata whaikaha Māori told the IMM that their organisations need to be involved in making decisions about Tāngata whaikaha Māori.



Tāngata whaikaha Māori organisations should be involved:

- when planning for an emergency
- during an emergency
- after an emergency.



Information about the emergency needs to be from organisations that tāngata whaikaha Māori trust like:

- Māori organisations
- iwi.



The Government and government agencies need to think about tikanga in emergency situations.

The main things in this report



The Government needs to do some things better for disabled people in emergencies.



The IMM says there are 7 important things for the Government to do.

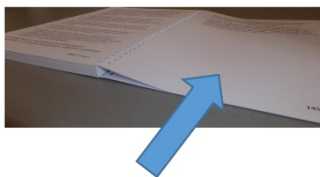
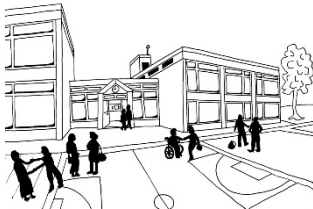
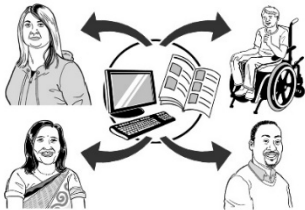


Doing these things will make life better for all disabled people in emergencies.



The 7 important things the government needs to improve are:

- services for disabled people
- involving disabled people in making decisions
- accessible information
- education
- health
- work
- access to justice for disabled people in places of **detention**.



We talk more about what **detention** means on **page 41** of this report.

1. Services for disabled people



Disabled people have the right to use the same services as people who are not disabled.

During the COVID-19 emergency some disabled people found it difficult to get:



- food
- transport
- disability services
- housing
- access to public places like parks.



Some of the things that are needed are:



- more money to help disabled people get transport
- work with disabled people to make rules to use in emergencies for:
 - shops
 - service providers / disability support services
- make an plan for emergencies so that:
 - families with high support needs get support like respite care
 - people who use individualised funding can use it how they need.



2. Disabled people having a say in making decisions



The Disability Convention gives disabled people the right to have a say in decisions that affect them.



Disabled people said the government needed to let them have their say in making decisions during the COVID-19 emergency.



More **statistics** needed to be collected to check how disabled people were doing during the COVID-19 emergency.



Statistics is information about people like how many people have a home.



We need to make sure that when making decisions that we talk and listen to:

- disabled people
- disabled people's organisations.



Disabled people need to be:

- paid for time they spend in helping to make decisions
- able to attend meetings online when they choose to.



3. Accessible information



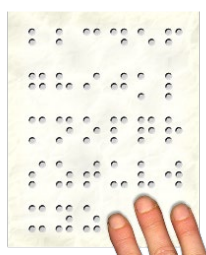
Information about emergencies need to be **accessible** so disabled people can make good decisions.



Accessible information is when somebody gets information in a way that they can understand.



During the COVID-19 emergency disabled people often had to wait for accessible formats like:



- Easy Read
- Braille / large print / audio
- New Zealand Sign Language.

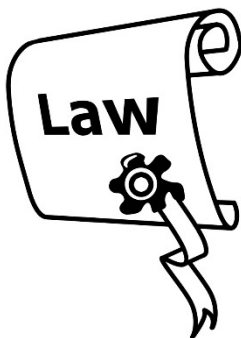


Some of the things that need to happen are:



- setting up a group to tell the Government the best way to make information in accessible for:

- disabled people
- Disabled People's Organisations



- making a law that says all information should be available to disabled people in a way they can understand



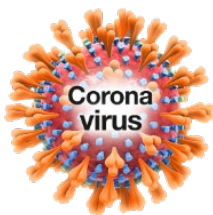
- making a plan to help more disabled people get technology like computers.



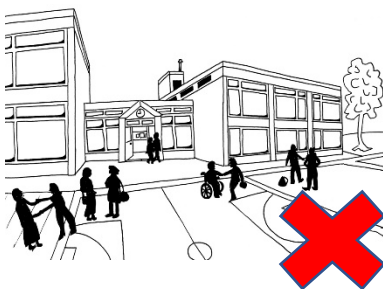
4. This will mean disabled people can use the internet to get the information they need. Education



The Disability Convention says disabled people have a right to education.

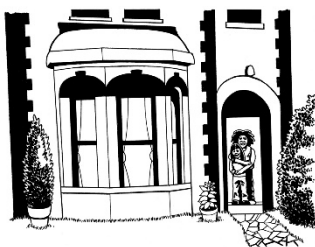


During the COVID-19 emergency some disabled people could not access education.



For example during the COVID-19 emergency most school children:

- did not go to school
- stayed home
- did their learning at home.





When the Government says students must learn from home there needs to be a plan for disabled students.

All students need to have:



- computers
- internet
- learning materials they can use.



The Ministry of Education needs to set up a group to find out how to make home learning better for disabled students.



This group needs to have:

- disabled people
- the whānau / family of disabled people
- Disabled People's Organisations.



5. Health



Disabled people have the right to access health care.



Disabled people said they had some bad health experiences during the COVID-19 emergency.



Some disabled people had problems getting:

- personal protective equipment (PPE)
- a test for COVID-19
- mental health services
- other health services.





Some of the things that need to happen are:

- the Government needs to find out why disabled people found it hard to get health care during the COVID-19 emergency
- the Government should use this information to help with future health planning
- there needs to be emergency health information available to disabled people in formats that they can understand like Easy Read
- disability service providers need to keep providing services for disabled people in emergencies.



Some more things that need to happen are:



- make sure that information about using PPE is kept up to date
- make sure that health professionals check the needs of disabled people when using PPE.



This might include taking off a mask so that Deaf people can lipread.

6. Work



The Disability Convention gives disabled people the same right to **work** people without disabilities.



Some changes that happened during the COVID-19 emergency like working from home were good for some disabled people.



Some other disabled people found it much harder to get work.

Some of the things that need to change are:



- the Government should pay for technology like computers if disabled people need to work from home during emergencies



- making sure the Employment New Zealand Labour Inspectorate can visit workplaces using **Minimum Wage Exemption Permits** more often



A Minimum Wage Exemption

Permit is a rule that lets employers pay some disabled people less than the minimum wage.



- making sure disabled people have a better chance to get a job.

7. Disabled people in places of detention



The Disability Convention says that disabled people who are living in places of **detention** should be treated fairly.

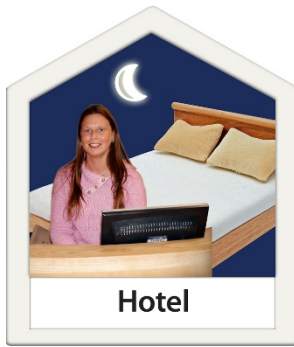


If a person lives in a place of **detention** it means they cannot leave when they want to.

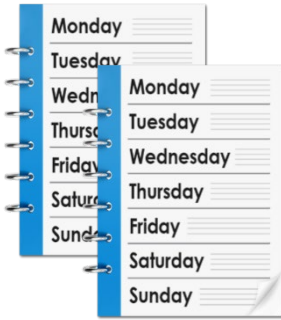
A place of detention can be places like:

- prisons
- mental health facilities
- some intellectual disability residential care places.

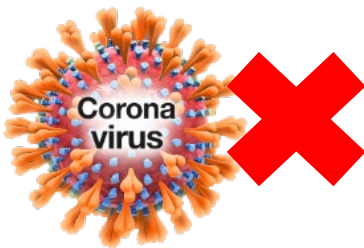




A place of detention can also be a **Managed Isolation and Quarantine facility**.



Managed Isolation and Quarantine facilities are places where people coming back to New Zealand from overseas must stay for 2 weeks.

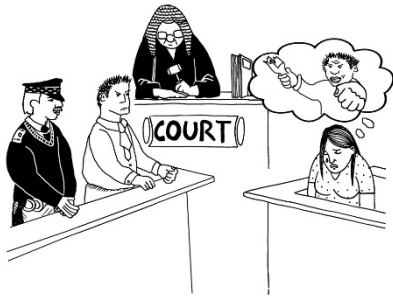


This is to make sure they do not have COVID-19.



During the COVID-19 emergency disabled people in places of detention found it hard to:

- get information
- talk to other people about what was happening.

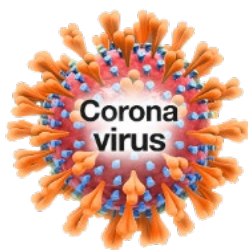


The Disability Convention gives disabled people the same right to **justice** like getting a lawyer in court.



The **justice** system is:

- the Police
- the courts
- lawyers
- legal aid.

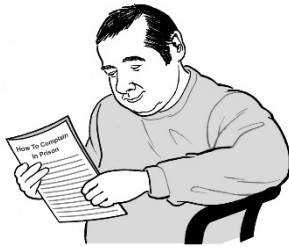


The COVID-19 emergency stopped some disabled people getting access to justice.



Some of the things to need to happen are to make sure that disabled people:

- get disability support when they are in places of detention to help them to get information during emergencies
- are supported to make complaints
- have access to legal services like a lawyer during emergencies.



Who you can talk to about this report



Human Rights Commission



Phone us for free on: **0800 496 877**



Text us: **0210 236 4253**



Email us: **infoline@hrc.co.nz**



Visit our website: **www.hrc.co.nz**

Fax us: **09 377 3593**



If you send us a fax at the top of the page please write:

Attention: Infoline

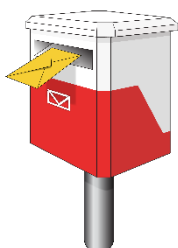
Post us a letter to:

Human Rights Commission

PO Box 10424

The Terrace

Wellington 6011



**DPO
COALITION**

DPO Coalition



Email us: **us-dpo@groups.io**

Ombudsman



Phone us for free on: **0800 802 602**



Email:

info@ombudsman.parliament.nz



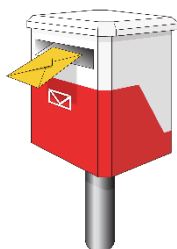
Website:

www.ombudsman.parliament.nz



Fax: **04 471 2254**

Post us a letter to:



Ombudsman

PO Box 10152

Wellington 6143



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