

Nazmul Hasan

From: Nuala Toman
Sent: 13 December 2021 22:08
To: Gerry Carroll
Subject: Disability Strategy and Covid-19
Attachments: Disability Strategy.docx

Hi Gerry,

Thanks again for today- see below some notes on the pandemic

Almost two thirds of people who have died due to coronavirus were d/Deaf and Disabled People. Research undertaken by Disability Action regarding the experience of disabled people during the pandemic has shown that health social care services for disabled people had experienced significant disruption and that many disabled people have experienced a decline in physical and mental health. This was a result of the removal and reduction in access to key services and support. Our research also showed that disabled people had challenges in accessing medication and food.

We are concerned about the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on access to essential health and social care and essential services by d/Deaf and Disabled People many of whom continue to experience declining physical and mental health.

We are deeply concerned that the rights of disabled people, of all ages, as set out in the Human Rights Act (1998), the Mental Capacity Act (NI) (2016), the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) are not always being upheld.

We have the right to be fully involved in decisions about our own lives, including life and death decisions. Decisions should never be made without our involvement, or consideration of our best interests. There is no justification for policies based on age or learning disability that do not treat each of us with respect and as individuals.

We are concerned about reports of the application of Do Not Resuscitate Orders to d/Deaf and Disabled People without their consent

We are asking the Department of Health to:

- Take account of Articles 10 (Right to Life), Article 11 (Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies) and 25 (Health) of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in its approach to dealing with COVID-19, by providing d/Deaf and disabled people, older people, and carers with reassurance they will have equal access to hospital treatment, health, and social care services.
- Establish without delay, a mechanism to consult with and actively engage with disabled people (including disabled children) in planning and delivering its response to COVID-19 in line with Article 4 of the UNCRPD (General Obligations). It is essential that the needs of d/Disabled people are addressed within every plan and change in regulations
- Commit to a legislative programme which will incorporate the UNCRPD into law and provide adequate protection for d/Deaf and Disabled People

In addition testing facilities are not readily accessible to blind and visually impaired people- this includes lateral flows and PCR testing

Not all Doctors have put in place accessible methods of communication with d/Deaf and disabled people- for example blind people only receiving letters or being asked to photograph ailments

It is also important that the Covid-19 passports are accessible.

Thanks

Nuala

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