



Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority

New ways to live and work in the future – what we learnt from COVID-19



This is an easy to read summary of a report.

What is this information about?



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This information is about research carried out by the National Disability Authority (NDA).



It is a report on new ways to live and work in the future.

It looks at what we learnt during COVID-19.



The report talks about the changes that happened during COVID-19.

It says how these changes are important to persons with disabilities.



It shows that good changes could stay in place after COVID-19 to support persons with disabilities.



The NDA looked at research and called for submissions on new ways of working.

A submission is when you send in your views and ideas.



We held an event called 'Building Back Better after COVID-19' around the same time as this report.

Persons with disabilities were asked their views on COVID-19.

Some of those views are in this report.



The information in this report is under different headings.

The headings are different areas of life.



This report shows that as a society we can come together to solve problems and deal with challenges.



We can make changes when we need to.

We can be creative and work in different ways.



The NDA thinks we should keep new ways of living and working that are more inclusive.

If something is inclusive, it suits more people or more people can take part.



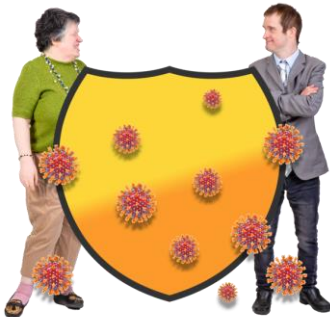
It is important to use our learning from COVID-19 to guide us in the future.



It is important that we plan and design all changes with persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities should have a chance to check out any changes and give their views.

Social, cultural, and community life



We had to cut back on doing a lot of things.
This was to stop the spread of COVID-19.



We could not do our usual social activities.
Cinemas and restaurants closed, public transport
was limited, and we had less visitors to our homes.

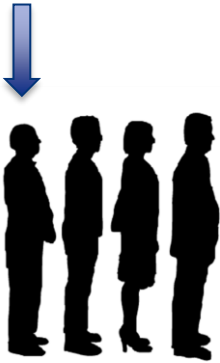


The Community Call was set up to link different
local and national groups together.
These groups came together quickly and helped
people that needed support.

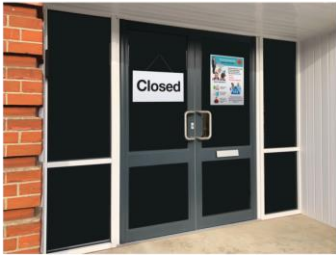


This showed that when we needed to, we could put
supports in place for people quickly.

Education



One in four people in Ireland are taking part in education.



Schools had to close for a while during COVID-19. Some students found this harder than others.



Learning online has been very hard for children and young people with disabilities.



Schools and colleges had to learn to use different types of technology.



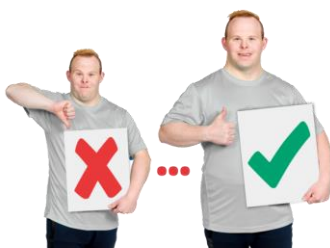
Technology has shown that we can learn in new ways.



Learning online means that more people can be involved and can use resources.



Blended learning is when you have a mixture of face to face learning and online learning.



This could be a more inclusive model of education in the future.

It could be very important in colleges or universities.

Employment



COVID-19 has helped employers understand that people may prefer to work from home.

Working from home is also called remote working.



Blended working means spending some days working from home and some days in your workplace.



Blended working could take away some of the things that stop persons with disabilities from working.

For example, high transport costs.



However, the research tells us that many persons with disabilities do not have jobs that suit working from home.

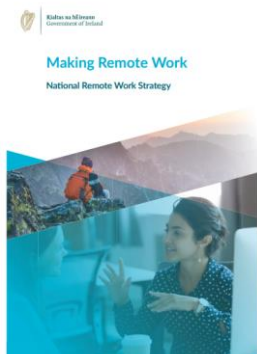


Some persons with disabilities may have lost their jobs during COVID-19.



One good change is the COVID-19 income supports.

Income is the money you get each week or month from work or social welfare.



Another good change is the new national plan for remote working called the 'National Remote Work Strategy'.



A new sick pay scheme will protect workers.
It will be very important to persons with disabilities.

Disability Services



It may be possible to make changes in disability services too.

For example, in day services.



Blended services would mean that persons with disabilities could use a mixture of face to face and online supports.



Many disability services used online activities during COVID-19.

For example, Zoom classes and YouTube channels.



Sometimes, people from outside the service could also use these activities.



People with disabilities learned to use technology and became part of the digital world.

The digital world includes the internet, computers, smartphones, social media, and other technologies.



However, not everyone can take part in online activities.

Some people do not have technology, an internet connection, or the skills to use them.



Long-term plans for blended services must think about all persons with disabilities and the supports they need.



Staff showed how skilled and creative they are during COVID-19 too.

Health Services



There have been big steps forward with Telehealth. This is where you have a health appointment or healthcare online.



Devices and apps have been made to support care and help patients manage their health.



Better IT systems mean that health and care resources can be managed better.

More money and time needs to be spent on this.



Public and private hospitals worked together during COVID-19.

If this continued, it could help with waiting lists and mean a more inclusive health service in the future.

Mental health and well-being



There are concerns that COVID-19 will lead to more mental health difficulties in the future.

This is because some people felt lonely and anxious.



There will need to be more mental health supports.



Some support groups have been set up on social media so people can meet and get advice.



People are encouraged to think about and talk about their mental health.

More public campaigns will be needed to keep up the good progress we have made.

Family Carers



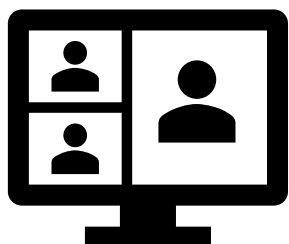
Family carers lost supports during COVID-19.
There were no activities outside the home and less visitors allowed at home.



Some carers were managing on their own.



Carers were worried that the person they looked after would get COVID-19.



Some carers supported each other on social media groups.

Universal Design



During Covid-19, there was more work on making information easy for everyone to understand. For example, information in Braille, Audio, Irish Sign Language, and Easy to Read.



We used new ways to control infections such as automatic doors or soap machines. These made it easier for persons with disabilities to get into buildings and use the things in them.



The report says that changes to outdoor spaces could be both a help and a barrier to persons with disabilities.

Sport and Exercise



National and local organisations made a big effort to encourage persons with disabilities to stay physically active.



This has meant more inclusive ways that support persons with disabilities to take part in sport.

What will help in the future?



The main changes from COVID-19 are:

- More use of technology
- Working and learning from home
- More online services and resources



These changes have been good for persons with disabilities in disability services, employment, education, and health.



We have to remember that not everyone can access or use technology.



We need to do more to check how the different changes are working for persons with disabilities.



We need research to find out what works best.
We need to continue to talk to persons with disabilities about their experiences.



We need to keep the things that people tell us work well.



We need Universal Design in technology, telehealth, buildings, outdoor spaces, remote working.



We need to build the technology skills of persons with disabilities and staff.
We need to find different ways for people to take part if they cannot or do not want to use technology.



We need to help students that lost out the most from school closures, for example, students with disabilities.

We need to check if summer teaching helps.



We need to ask teachers if their technology skills are better now and what helped them the most.



We need to find out if changes to exams could support students with disabilities in the future.



We need more home care supports and personal assistants so a person can have a choice about moving to a nursing home.



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This information was put together by the
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Ace Communication helped to put this
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