

# Emergency support for disabled people and their families

A briefing from Scope

# Background

## **Disabled people have routinely told us that they have felt forgotten by Government during the pandemic.**

Evidence of the disproportionate and significant impact of coronavirus on disabled people and their families continues to emerge:

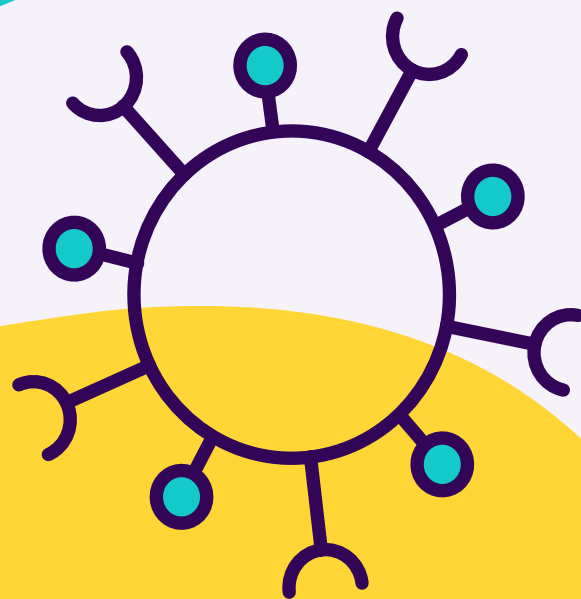
- Almost 3 in 5 (59 per cent) people who have died from coronavirus are disabled.
- Over 8 in 10 disabled people said they were worried about the effect that the pandemic was having on their life.
- 93 per cent of families said the coronavirus outbreak had negatively affected their disabled or seriously ill children's health and wellbeing.

## **Disabled people are now facing crises**

**Nearly a year into the pandemic many disabled people are facing crises in every part of their lives. This is being exacerbated by a third national lockdown.**

There is an urgent need for targeted support for disabled people to mitigate the worst impacts of the pandemic and lockdown. The package must:

- Protect disabled people's finances
- Protect disabled people's health
- Support disabled children and their families



# Financial support

## The pandemic is having a hugely damaging impact on many disabled peoples' finances.

- Disabled employees are now falling out of work at a faster rate than non-disabled people.
- Access to employment and welfare advice is limited while face-to-face services are mostly unavailable.
- The existing challenges disabled people face with extra costs are being exacerbated by the pandemic and this third Winter lockdown.
- As a result of staying at home this Winter, disabled people are more likely to have seen an increase in their consumption of electricity, gas and water than non-disabled people.

### To protect disabled people's finances, the Government must:

- Ensure any CEV disabled person who cannot work from home has the automatic right to be furloughed.
- Make the £20 uplift to Universal credit permanent and extend it to legacy benefits.
- Reinstate temporary easements in the welfare system from the first lockdown that were put in place to ensure financial protection for disabled people, including a pause on sanctions, a suspension of benefit reassessments, and a suspension of benefit recovery.
- Ensure that the financial support available to disabled people, such as the Warm Home Discount, is reaching those who need it most.



## Storyteller case study

“ I am classed as extremely clinically vulnerable to Coronavirus so going to work with lots of other people is very difficult for me. This has caused me to have panic attacks on several occasions as I am still clinically extremely vulnerable, even when the government says it's safe for me to return to work.

**Alexis**

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# Protecting disabled people's health

## Many disabled people are very concerned for their health.

- The vaccine prioritisation list has been issued but many disabled people have not been prioritised despite still being at risk and struggling with isolation and lack of support.
- There is a danger that these groups of disabled people - some still shielding - will be left behind as restrictions are lifted.
- In the meantime, the new variants of Covid are making it even more dangerous for disabled people to leave home, limiting their access to food and other essentials.

## To protect disabled people's health, the Government must:

- Prioritise all disabled people who are shielding, regardless of age or condition, for the vaccine; and ensure that all routes to vaccination are accessible to disabled people.
- Provide clear, accessible communication about supermarket slots and priority hours.
- Reintroduce food boxes for those who are still shielding, and ensure the boxes meet the recipient's requirements.



## Storyteller case study

“ The vaccine rollout process has been confusing and infuriating as a CEV person. As of January 18th CEV people are allowed to be vaccinated but my GP surgery will not let me book until I get a text. It isn't fair when I know they have the vaccine.

Emma

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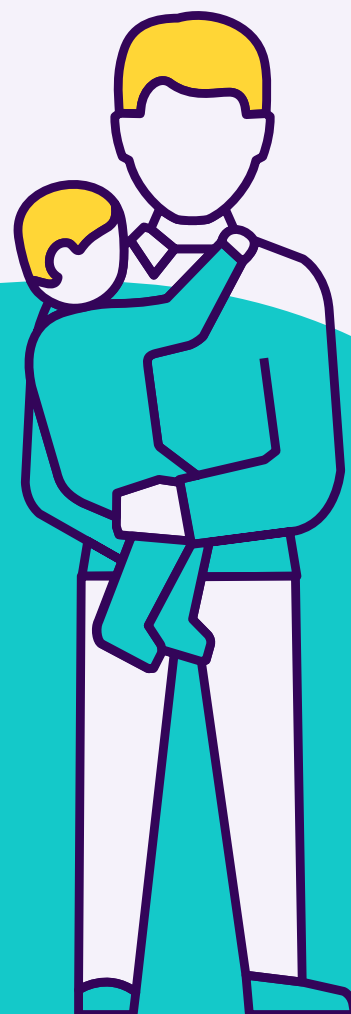
# Children and families

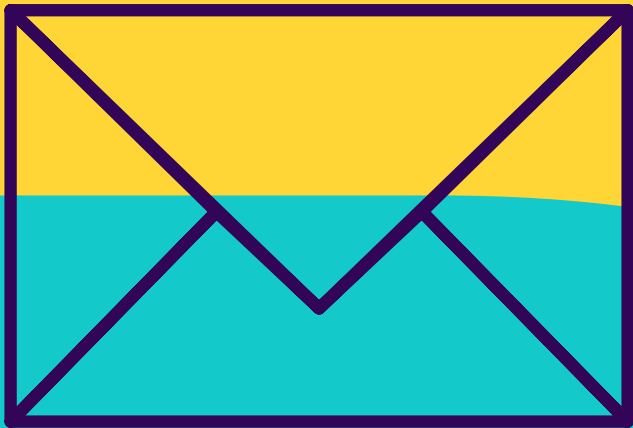
## **The pandemic is also creating huge problems for disabled children and their families.**

- The Women and Equalities Committee has highlighted that ‘the pandemic demonstrated and exacerbated a widely acknowledged pre-existing crisis in Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision’.
- We continue to hear from parents and carers of disabled children about the negative impact the pandemic is having on their families’ emotional wellbeing.

## **To support disabled children and their families, the Government must:**

- Introduce protected emergency funding for disabled children’s social care.
- Introduce protected funding for services to support the emotional wellbeing of disabled children and their families.
- Invest in, train and protect SEND professionals across education, health and social care.





## How you can help

There is an urgent need for a package of targeted support for disabled people and Scope is working hard to secure this

Please help us by raising our findings and recommendations with Government in whatever way you can.

If you would like further details or would like to arrange a call with our Political Strategy team, please get in touch via:

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