



CRE-DH

Centre of Research
Excellence in
Disability and Health

Plain English Summary

WHAT ARE THE POLICY GAPS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY?

The social determinants of health are factors outside of the health system which impact on a person's health. We know that where people work, live and interact is critical to their health and factors such as jobs, education, housing and transport have been shown to have a greater impact on our health than our access to healthcare. When these issues are not addressed for a particular population group, they can result in people experiencing health inequities.

People with disability have poorer health than the rest of the population, even when their health outcomes are unrelated to their impairment. At this stage, there is little research on what is driving these poorer health outcomes for people with disability, and what health inequities are being experienced as a result.

Policy Lab

To gain new knowledge on the social determinants of health for working-age Australians with disability, we are running a 'Policy Lab' with 30 key stakeholders involved in disability and health policy. We interview our Policy Lab Members twice a year for four years to hear about key policy issues and generate new policy solutions to reduce health inequities for people with disabilities in Australia.

Research Findings

The first Policy Lab interviews were conducted in 2017 with the findings published in the Report. Policy Lab Members identified a range of issues that contribute to the poorer health of people with disability, with the key factors outlined as:

- Income and employment
- Social exclusion
- Housing
- Transport
- Education



These are all interconnected, with some overlapping and impacting others. In terms of addressing these issues, a number of policy gaps were identified as:

- A lack of employment opportunities for people with disability; the jobs available are often lowly paid
- Discrimination against people with disabilities when seeking work

- Negative community/societal attitudes towards people with disability increases social exclusion which impacts on mental and physical health
- A lack of affordable housing, both in the private rental market and in social housing
- Restricted transport options for people living in rural or remote regions which impacts on a someone's ability to stay connected to family or friends and to travel to work
- A lack of education which provides people with disability the skills to manage their own health and situation such as being able to navigate the workplace and seek employment opportunities

These gaps have resulted in significant health inequities for people with disabilities.

Future research

In future interview rounds with the Policy Lab we will explore how to best address these policy gaps, which will then be shared with the other work programs at the CRE-DH to inform their research, which will be shared with Policy Lab Members. In this way we create a multi-disciplinary, cross-sectoral exchange of knowledge.

Download the Report here.

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