



The House of Commons Women and Equalities committee report on Coronavirus, disability and getting services.

The Government's reply



EasyRead version of
Response to the Women and Equalities Select
Committee Report; 'Unequal impact? Coronavirus,
disability and access to services' (HC1050)

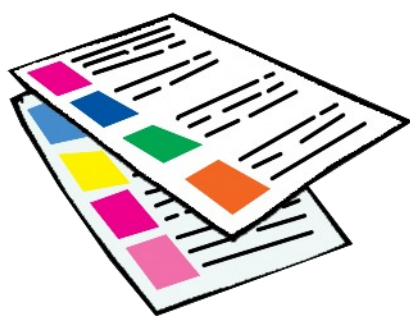
About this paper



The Women and Equalities Committee, a committee of Members of Parliament (MPs), have been looking into some of the problems for disabled people during the Coronavirus emergency.



They wrote a report.



This document is an EasyRead version of the Government's reply to their report.



Members of Parliament (MPs) have been elected by local people to:

- speak up for their local area



- make laws



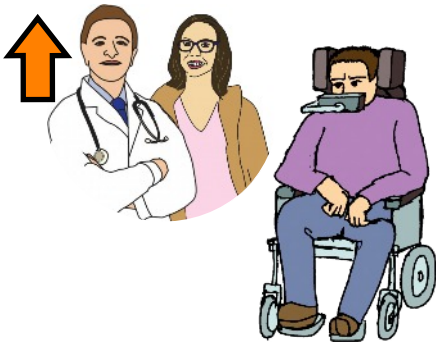
- make sure the Government is doing a good job.

What the MPs said

The Committee said that:



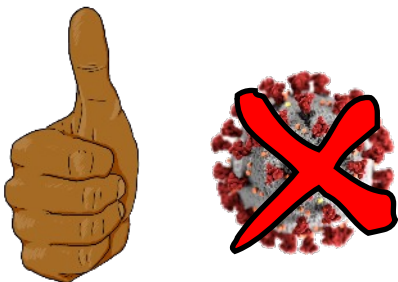
- disabled people found it difficult to get services even before the Coronavirus came along



- disabled people often have extra health and learning support needs



- the Government must ask experts to look at why disabled people have suffered more since Coronavirus started



- this should happen when Coronavirus is under better control



The committee has made some **recommendations**.

Recommendations are the things that the committee thinks should happen.

Being fair and equal with food



Recommendation 1

The Committee thinks that the Government must make the rules clear about how shops must make getting food the same for everyone.

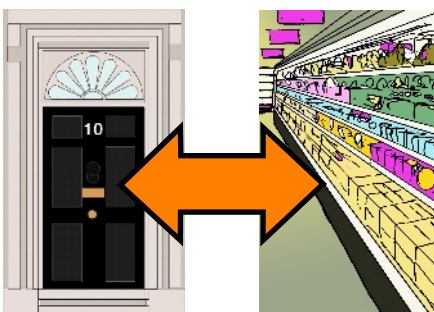


The Government says:

We have clear rules for shops about making sure getting food is the same for everyone.



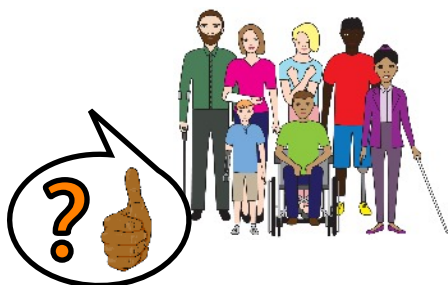
We agree that shops should follow the rules.



We are working with shops to make sure getting food is fair.



We are working with shops, local authorities and charities to find ways to make sure everyone can get food during the Coronavirus emergency.



Recommendation 2

The Government is asking disabled people about how their lives can be made better.



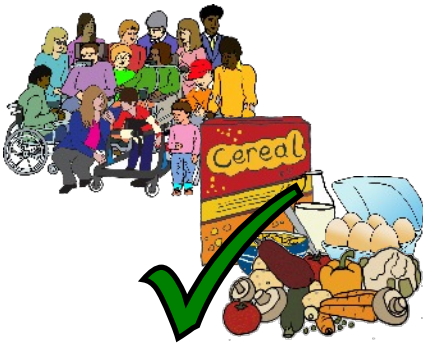
This is so they can come up with a plan called the National Strategy for Disabled people.



The Committee thinks that the Government must ask disabled people what they think about support to get food in emergencies like Coronavirus.



The Committee thinks this should be in the National Strategy.

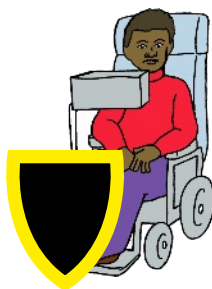


The Government says:

We did lots of things to help disabled people get food in the Coronavirus emergency.



We asked people who might have been **shielding** to tell us about the things they needed. We checked to make sure they had food.



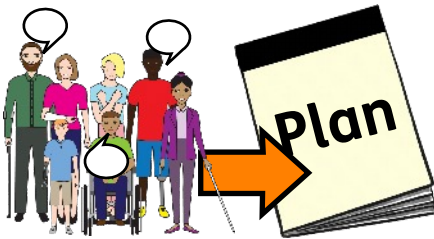
Shielding is when you need to keep away from other people to keep safe.



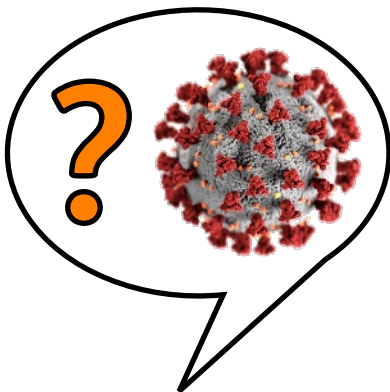
We organised lots of volunteers to help disabled people get food and other important things.



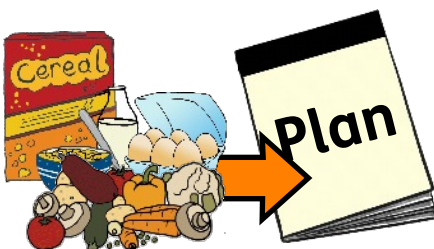
We followed the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**.



It's up to disabled people to tell us what they want in the National Strategy.

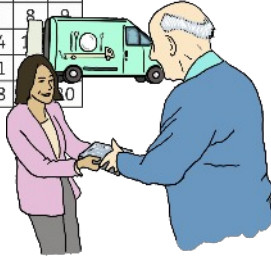


We will ask them how they have been affected by the Coronavirus emergency.



If disabled people tell us they want a plan about making getting food fair in emergencies like Coronavirus, it will be in the National Strategy.

August 2020						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
31					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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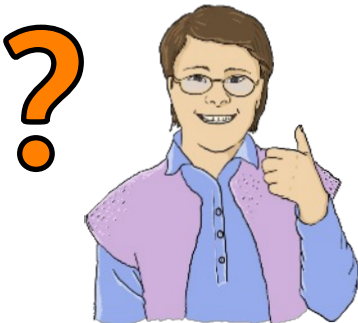
Recommendation 3

The Government made changes to the way disabled people got food in August last year.



We don't know how the Government checked:

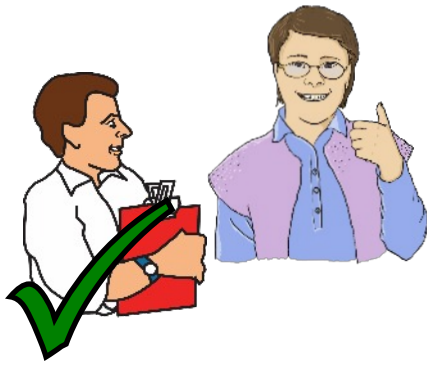
- who needed help to get food



- if the things they did to help people get food during the Coronavirus were fair for disabled people.



The Committee says the Government must show us what they found out when they check again.



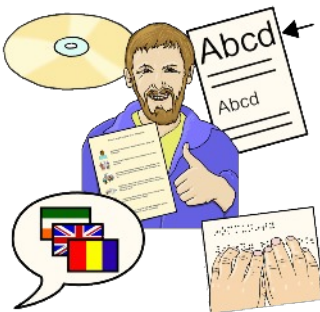
The Government says:

We have checked if the things we have done to help disabled people to get food are fair.



But we usually don't share this information.

When we checked we found out some changes were needed. We:



- asked charities and organisations helping with food to use accessible information



- gave ideas for extra support for people who needed help to carry food boxes inside their house.

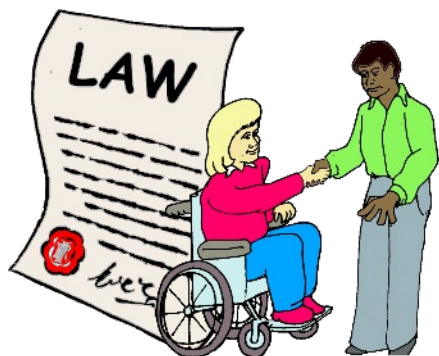


We will keep checking if things are working and are fair to disabled people. We will make changes when they are needed.

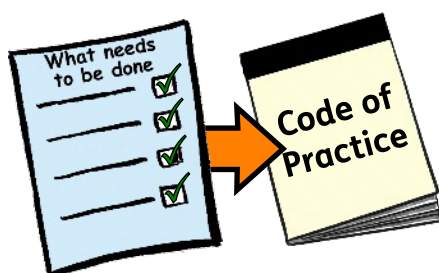
Recommendation 4



There have been times when disabled people have not been treated fairly when they needed care or support during the Coronavirus emergency.



The Committee thinks that the Government should make the law on treating people fairly clearer and easier for people to use.



Instead of just telling people like the NHS and local councils what they should do, there should be something called a Code of Practice, which tells people what they must do.

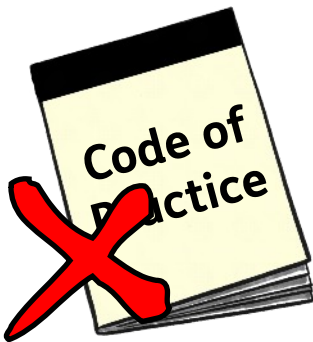


The Committee thinks if everyone knows exactly what they must do to be fair to people, it will be better for everyone.



The Government says:

We don't agree with this. We think the law is clear enough as it is.



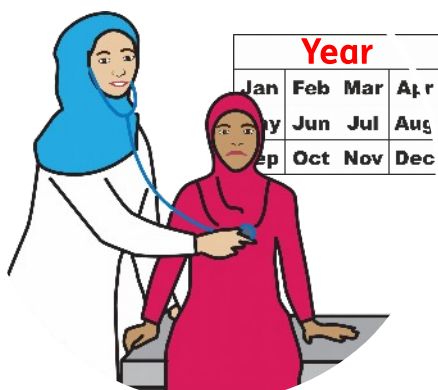
So we don't think a Code of Practice would make things better.

Health checks

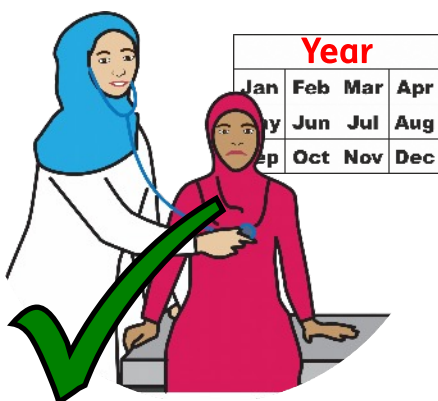
Recommendation 5



The Committee says that people with learning disabilities with health problems have had more problems during the Coronavirus outbreak.



The Committee thinks it is important the Government looks at this and that yearly NHS health checks start again.

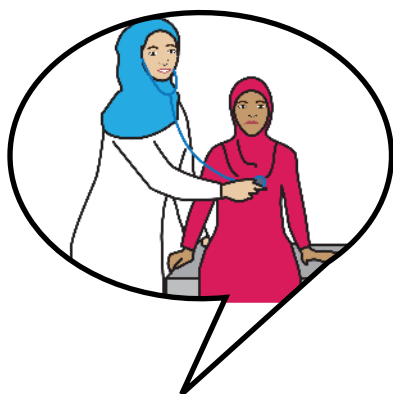


The Government says:

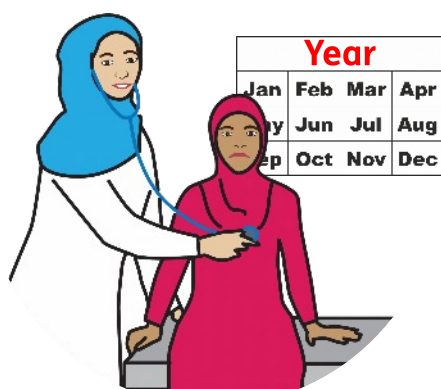
We agree that NHS health checks are very important for people with learning disabilities.



We have given more money to the NHS to help more people have health checks.



The NHS have asked people with learning disabilities to come in for health checks.



We are looking at ways to make sure more people with a learning disability have a health check every year.

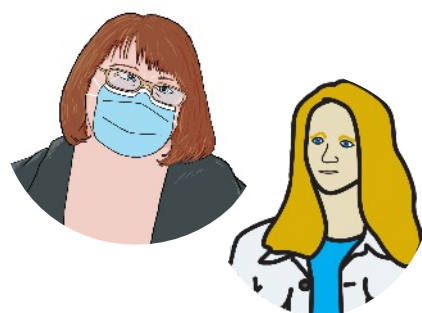
Mask wearing

Recommendation 6

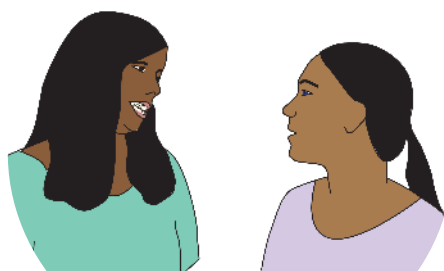
The Committee says that:



- wearing masks during the Coronavirus outbreak makes it difficult for some disabled people to understand what people are saying



- deaf people need to lip-read and they cannot see people's mouths if they wear a mask



- some people need to see people's faces to understand them.



The Committee says the Government needs to buy more clear face masks to help disabled people.



The Government says:

We agree that clear face masks help disabled people.

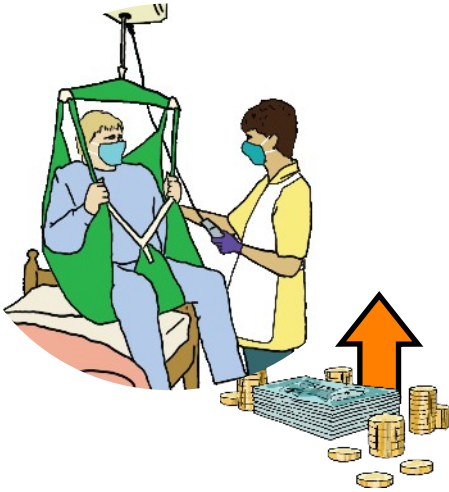


We are finding out which clear face masks work best for people and keep people safe.



When we find out which clear face masks work best we will buy them for the health and social care teams that need them.

Extra money



Recommendation 7 and 8

The Committee says it is very important that the Government gives much more money to all social care areas to make sure services are much more person-centred and meeting people's needs.

The Government says:

We have given some extra money to social care areas. The extra money is to:

- help social care areas recover from the Coronavirus emergency
- make sure services are much more person-centred and meeting people's needs.





We agree that it is important to keep making improvements to social care. We want everyone to:

- have the care they need



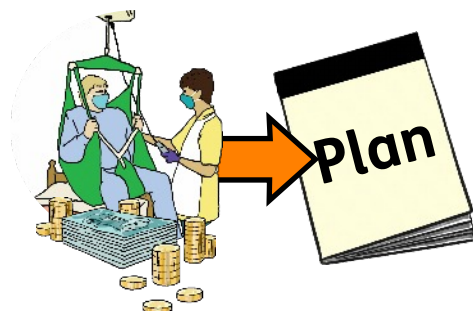
- be treated with dignity



- live as independently as possible in their own home for as long as possible



- have help to plan their care.



Later this year we will come up with a plan to give social care even more money and improve support for people.

Special educational needs and disability

Recommendation 9

The Committee says:



- providing education for children and young people with special educational needs or a disability (SEND) during the Coronavirus emergency was hard



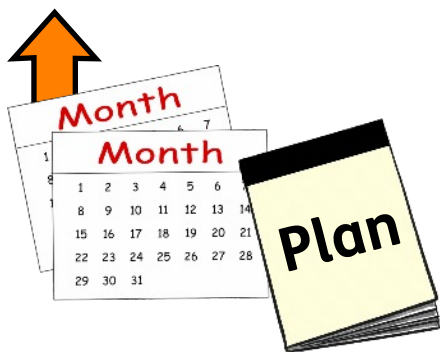
- many children and young people had no education or support for 3 months



- lots of the problems were there before the Coronavirus emergency



- in September 2019 the Government said it would come up with a plan to make things better.



The Committee says the Government has taken too long to come up with the plan.



The Committee thinks the Government should say what its plan is as quickly as possible.



The Government says:

We agree a new plan for education for children and young people with special educational needs or a disability is very important.

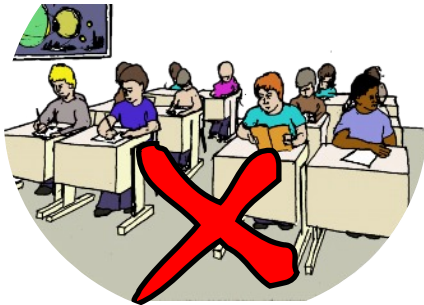


We want to get changes right.



We are planning to ask people what they think is working and not working. We need some more time to do that properly.

Recommendation 10



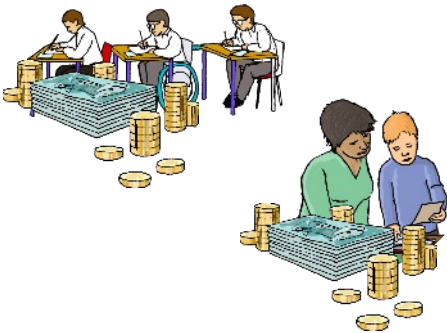
All children have missed out on learning at school because of the Coronavirus emergency.



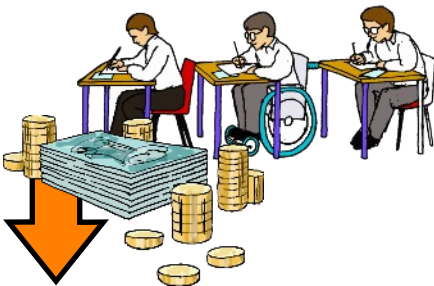
The Committee thinks it's good that the Government is giving extra money to help children catch up.



The Committee says that the Government needs to give more money to help children with special needs or a disability who go to school with non-disabled children.



The Committee thinks the Government should give the same amount of money to help disabled children who go to school with non-disabled children as it does to help disabled children who go to special schools.



Disabled children who go to school with non-disabled children sometimes get less help. It's not fair that they get less money to catch up after Coronavirus.

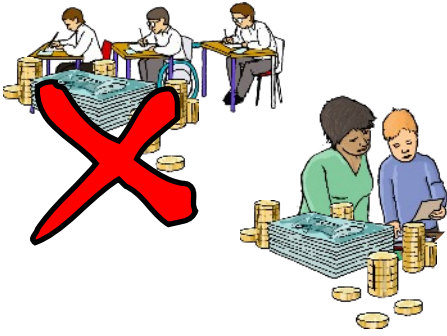
The Government says:



We agree that extra money is needed to support children and young people who have special educational needs and a disability to catch up on learning.



We have given extra money to provide education.



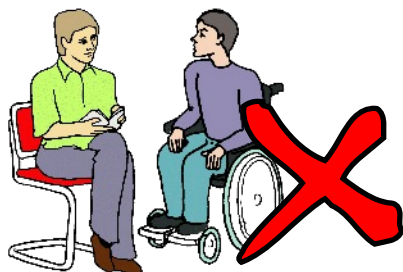
But we don't think that disabled children who go to school with non-disabled children should get the same amount of money as children who go to special schools.



This is because it costs more to teach children in special schools.

Involving everyone

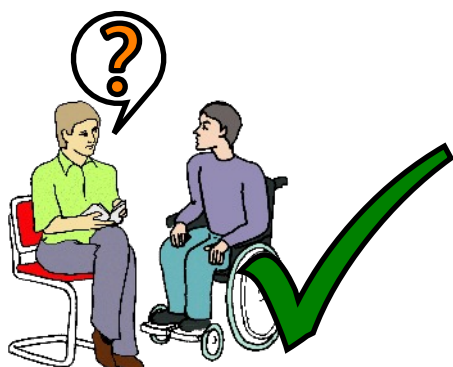
Recommendation 11



The Committee says that during the Coronavirus emergency some disabled people and organisations felt they were not asked for advice.



The Government must ask disabled people what they think about how they do things.



The Government says:

We think it this is important too.

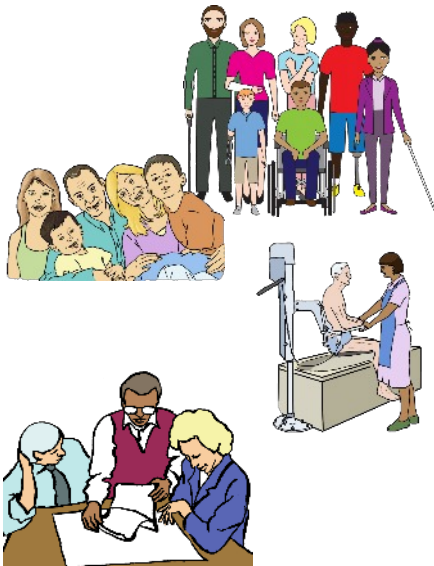
We do try to find out what disabled people think about government decisions in lots of different ways:



- online workshops
- advisory committees



- listening to research from disabled people
- surveys filled in by many people.



Our Ministers also listen at special meetings to:

- disabled people
- families
- carers
- organisations.

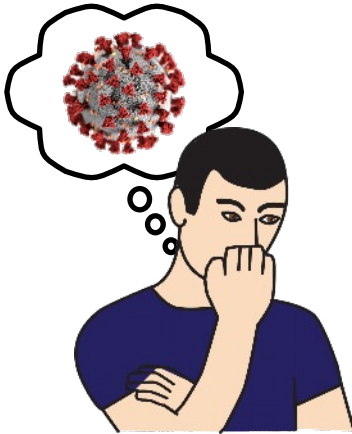


We will think about what we have heard when we make the UK National Strategy for Disabled People.

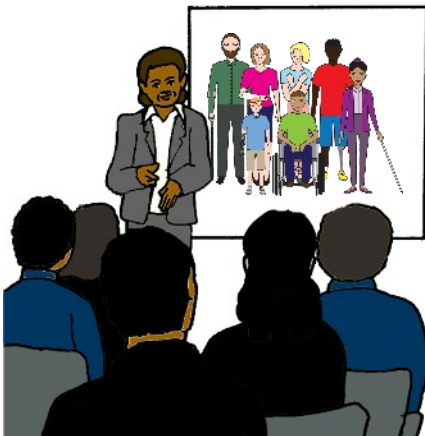


Recommendation 12

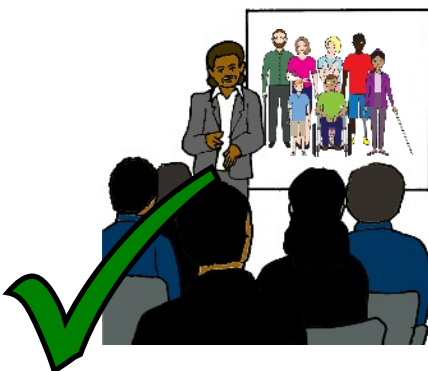
The Committee says the way the Government has talked to disabled people during the Coronavirus emergency has been confusing for disabled people.



Sometimes it has made disabled people more worried about Coronavirus.



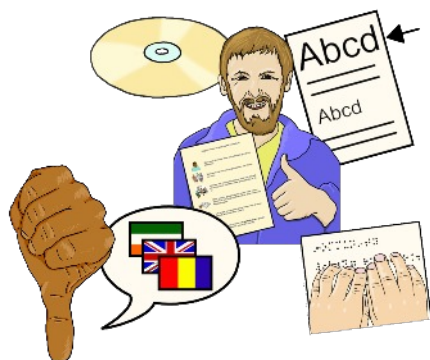
The Committee says that Ministers and people working for the Government must be made to have training in how to talk best with disabled people and to understand how they feel and what they need.



The Government says:

Ministers and people working for the Government can choose to have training if they want it.

Accessible ways to talk to disabled people

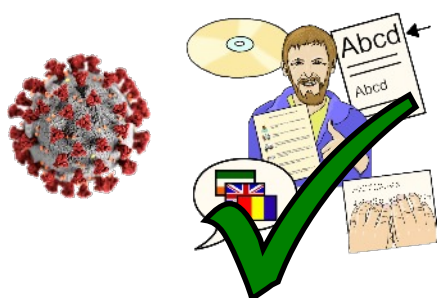


Recommendation 13

The Committee says the Government has not done a good job with accessible information during Coronavirus.

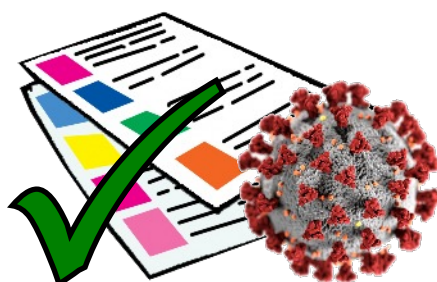


The Committee thinks the Government should listen to disability organisations who have told them how to make information accessible. The Committee says this is how the Government should do it.



The Government says:

We want information about Coronavirus to be accessible.



We have provided important information about the Coronavirus in an accessible way.



It has been good to work with disability organisations to help get important information to everyone. We have been trying to make information accessible, following what disability organisations have told us.

Recommendation 14



The Committee says it was a big problem that information about its own investigation wasn't available in British Sign Language.



It says the House of Commons needs to come up with a plan to fix this.



The Government says:

We agree with this. We hope the House of Commons comes up with a plan to have more British Sign Language.

Recommendation 15

The Committee says the Government must ask experts to look at:



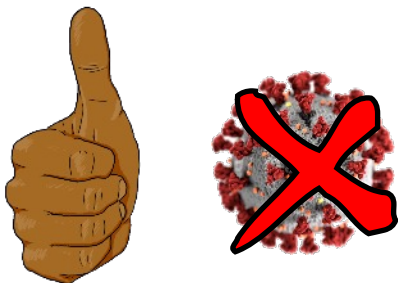
- why disabled people have suffered more than non-disabled people since Coronavirus started



- why so many disabled people have died from Coronavirus.



The experts should look at whether the Government could have done things better.



This should happen when Coronavirus is under better control.



The Government says:

The important job at the moment is keeping people safe from Coronavirus.



We will think about looking at what happened during the Coronavirus emergency afterwards.

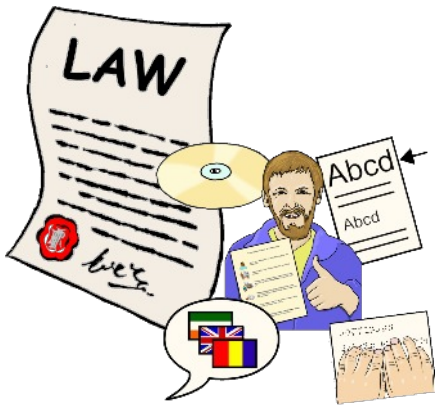


Recommendation 16

The Committee says there should have been accessible information about the Coronavirus emergency from the start.

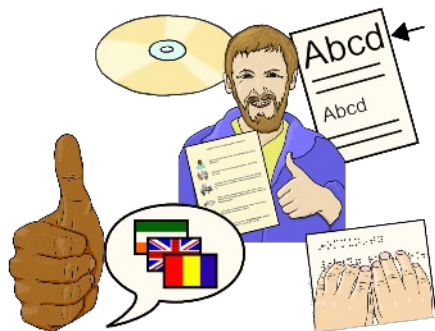


Disabled people have been put in danger because important information about their health wasn't accessible.



The Committee thinks the Government should make it the law that information from the Government about people's health must be accessible to everyone.

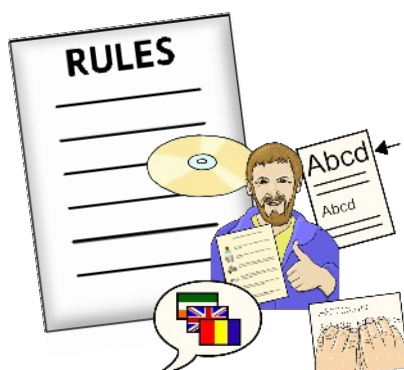
The Government says:



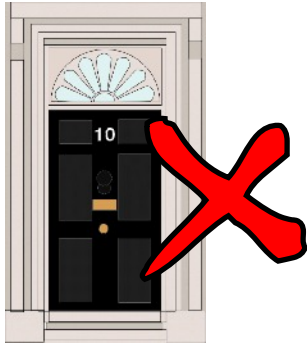
It is really important that information that is meant to be for everyone is made accessible for everyone.



This includes patients, people who use services, parents and carers with a disability.



The NHS and some social care organisations have to meet rules about accessible information called the Accessible Information Standard (AIS).



The AIS does not include government departments.



But other laws say all government departments must try to:

- stop people being treated unfairly



- make things more equal for people who belong to groups of people often treated unfairly (like women, disabled people and others)



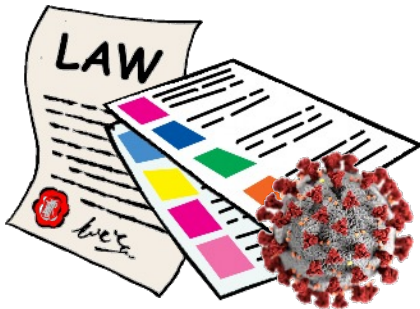
- help people who belong to a group of people often treated unfairly get on well with others.



For more information about these groups of people, called protected characteristics, please see www.equalityhumanrights.com/en



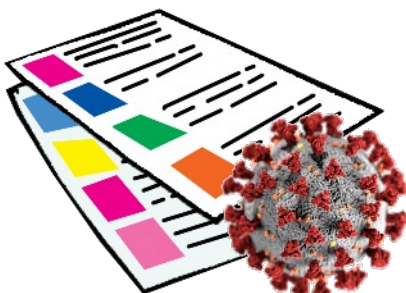
Government has a group called the Equality Hub which tries to make things more equal and fairer.



They told all Government Departments last year about what the law says and how they need to make sure coronavirus information is accessible.



This included help on how to do it well.



The Government really wants to make coronavirus information more accessible and has plans to make sure everyone who needs it gets it.

Credits



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