# Better support for Victorians with disability during the coronavirus

Empowered Lives is a group of over 40 disability advocacy organisations who work together to speak up for people with disability.

Empowered Lives tells government about what needs to change so Victorians with disability can have good lives.

The Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS) listens to groups that help Victorians who need all kinds of support. After taking time to listen, VCOSS shares ideas for how people could get better or more support.

Empowered Lives is worried about how the coronavirus affects people with disability. Empowered Lives have learned that people with disabilities have more chance of getting very sick from the coronavirus.

The coronavirus has changed the way we live. Some people are not able to leave their home very much or at all. It is hard to find on what is happening and what the rules are. People are having problems getting food, medicine and support services. Some people are not allowed to have visitors or see family and friends.

Coronavirus rules changed in Victoria in July 2020. People living in Melbourne have to stay home and only go out for food, exercise, work or to help others.

Empowered Lives wrote a list of ideas for the government to help people with disability to stay safe and healthy.

We want the government to:

* Contact people with disability who are not able to leave their homes very much or at all, and find out what support they need
* Share clear messages with people in person and through flyers, websites and social media and make sure Auslan interpreters and language interpreters are used
* Visit people to make sure they know what is happening
* Help people to get the food, medicine and support they need
* Make sure people can see their doctor and other health workers
* Change the rules to let carers, family members and support workers visit people with disability for care and support
* Let people go outside if they need to for their health, or to care for their guide dog or assistance animals
* Make sure people with disability and their families can get tested for coronavirus
* Help people with disability to move if it is not safe for them to stay at home
* Support students with disability to keep learning
* Make sure people with disability have phones and internet to:
  + call emergency hotlines
  + stay in touch with family and friends
  + keep learning or working
  + access online help from doctors and other services
* Support carers who may have to do more at home now
* Talk with and listen to people with disability, their families and carers about ideas to make things better