



Government of
South Australia

Safeguarding Task Force

The July 2020 report about our work

Easy Read version



About this report



We are the Department of Human Services.

People call us DHS.

We are part of the government in South Australia. We wrote this report.



We wrote this report in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Not bold
Bold

We have written some words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 34.



This Easy Read report is a summary of another report. It only has the most important ideas.



You can find the other report on our website at dhs.sa.gov.au/latest-news/safeguarding-taskforce



You can ask someone to help you to read this report like a friend, family member or support person.

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What is the Safeguarding Task Force?



We set up the Safeguarding Task Force in May 2020.

We call it the Task Force.



If you are **vulnerable**, you might be in danger of:

- being hurt
- getting sick
- someone taking advantage of you.

You can be vulnerable if you:



- need a lot of support



- have a disability that affects the way you think, learn and understand



- do not have very much money



- live in a home that is not safe



- are not close to your family, friends or the services you need.

The Task Force includes:



- people with disability



- family members of people with disability



- service providers



- people who work for the SA Government



- **advocates.**



Advocates are people who speak up for:

- people with disability when they can't speak up for themselves
- the **rights** of people with disability.



Rights are rules about how everybody should be treated fairly.



Advocates also help people with disability speak up for themselves.

Many people with disability do not:



- know about their rights



- get support to protect their rights.

What does the Task Force do?



The Task Force looks at what can make some people with disability vulnerable sometimes.



Safeguarding is what we do to help people feel safe when they use:

- disability services
- other community services.

The Task Force looks at:



- things we already have to protect people with disability



- what other things we need to make people with disability safer.



The Task Force talked to people about the things that we don't have at the moment.



We call these safeguarding gaps, or just gaps.



This report is about the gaps that we found.

What laws do we have to keep people with disability safe?



In SA, we have some laws that keep people with disability safe.

They include:



- the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018*



- the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*.

There are also laws that apply around Australia.

They include:



- the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*



- the *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*.



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN Convention) is an international agreement.

It applies in many different countries around the world.



The UN Convention sets out the rights of people with disability.



It explains how people with disability should be treated fairly.



In Australia, we have agreed to do what the UN Convention says.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)



The Task Force found gaps with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).



The National Disability Insurance Agency runs the NDIS.



Some people find the NDIS very hard to use.



Participants are people with disability who have an NDIS plan.



Some vulnerable participants don't get the support they need.



Vulnerable participants should get extra support in their NDIS plan so they can work with **support coordinators**.



Support Coordinators help participants manage the supports and services in their NDIS plan.



Your plan should say if you are vulnerable.



Your **Local Area Coordinator** should know if you are vulnerable.



Local Area Coordinators help participants:

- find and use services in their NDIS plans
- help people connect with their community.

They are often called LACs.



If your LAC knows you are vulnerable, they can help you get the extra support you need.



NDIS participants have choice and control over what supports and services they use.



The NDIS works well for most participants.



But it can be very hard for some people with disability to:

- understand how to use the NDIS
- use their NDIS plan
- get the help they need.



It can also be hard to understand what people with different jobs at the NDIS do.



Planners should make sure NDIS plans have the supports and services people need.



Plan Managers should pay for the supports and services in NDIS plans.



Support Coordinators should help participants manage the supports and services in their NDIS plans.



But there are strict rules about who can get help from a Support Coordinator.



Participants who are vulnerable might need help from a Support Coordinator.

This help should be in their NDIS plan.



NDIS plans do not say if a participant might be vulnerable.

This means the participants might not get all the support they need.



NDIS plans need to say:

- if a participant is vulnerable
- what makes a participant vulnerable.



Vulnerable participants need extra support to live the way they want.



Vulnerable participants need LACs to help them get the extra support they need.

The NDIS Commission



The Task Force has found gaps with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission).

It's the NDIS Commission's job to:



- look at what service providers are doing and how well they are doing it



- handle **complaints** about service providers.



When you make a complaint, you tell someone that something:

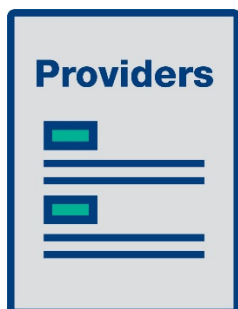
- has gone wrong
- isn't working well.



If something goes wrong, people have to contact the NDIS Commission themselves.



Anyone should be able to contact the NDIS Commission with a complaint.



The NDIS Commission keeps a list of which service providers can offer supports and services. We call these registered service providers.



It can take a lot of work and a long time for service providers to become registered.



Some service providers are not registered. They do not have to follow some of the same rules as registered service providers.



Lots of participants choose service providers that are on the list.



If you use service providers that are not on the list, you must decide if the services you get are:

- safe
- good quality.



You need to understand the risk if you use service providers that are not on the list.



The NDIS Commission needs to think about this risk as well.



People who need personal care at home should have at least 2 support workers.



The 2 support workers do not have to be there at the same time.



But they do need someone to check sometimes to make sure they are doing a good job.



We think that only having 1 support worker is a risk.

The SA Government



The Task Force found gaps with how the SA Government works.



The SA Government provides health care services.

Vulnerable people with disability need:



- a health check each year



- support to get to health care appointments



- to see a doctor they know and trust



- a plan for how to manage their health care.



Many vulnerable people need support to manage the health care in their NDIS plan.



We need to make it easier for people with disability to use our health services.



For example, many people with disability use ambulances to get health care when they need it.



This is not the best way:

- to use ambulances
- for people with disability to get health care.

It can be hard for people with disability to deal with big organisations like the:



- NDIA
- NDIS Commission.

It might be easier for people with disability if they:



- knew someone at these organisations who would support them
- had support coordinators who could help them.

The Adult Safeguarding Unit



The SA Government has an Adult Safeguarding Unit who work at the Office for Ageing Well.

The Adult Safeguarding Unit:



- tries to find out more when they hear stories about older adults being hurt or treated badly



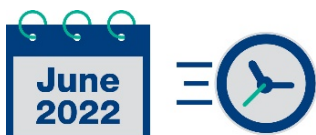
- supports adults who have been hurt or treated badly and protects their rights



- talks to the community about how to protect adults who might be hurt or treated badly.



Now, the Adult Safeguarding Unit only protects vulnerable adults older than 65.



From June 2022, the Adult Safeguarding Unit will be able to protect vulnerable adults younger than 65 too.



We want this to happen sooner.

Support worker checks



The SA Government checks support workers to make sure that, in the past, they have not:

- hurt anyone
- broken the law.



Registered service providers must make sure all their workers are checked.



Service providers that are not registered do not have to make sure all their workers are checked.



Even if workers are checked, vulnerable people with disability might still be at risk.



We need to know if a worker might put vulnerable people with disability at risk.

The Community Visitor Scheme



Community Visitors are trained **volunteers**.



Volunteers are people who work without getting paid. They often do work that helps others.

Community Visitors:



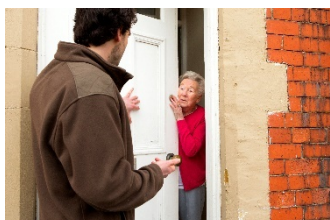
- go into homes for people with disability run by the SA Government



- check to make sure people with disability are safe in homes run by the SA Government.



We call this the Community Visitor Scheme.



Community Visitors can go into the homes of participants who have a **guardian** chosen by the **Office of the Public Advocate (OPA)**.



A guardian is a person who acts and makes decisions for you.

Your guardian might be:

- a member of your family
- a friend
- chosen for you by the government.



OPA is part of the South Australian Government.



OPA support people who need help:

- making decisions
- understanding their rights.

Community Visitors can't go into:



- private homes



- homes for people with disability that are not run by the SA Government.



But the NDIS Commission can.



We need the Community Visitor Scheme to protect vulnerable people with disability.



We think that the NDIS Commission should set up a Community Visitor Scheme that works all around Australia.



We need to work out a how our SA Community Visitor Scheme can work together with the NDIS Commission.

What has the Task Force learned?



We know the best safeguard for vulnerable people is to have:

- other people in their life
- the care and support they need.



Vulnerable people with disability need support workers who:

- respect them
- give them the help they need
- let them make choices
- help keep them safe.

The NDIA needs to:



- know when participants are vulnerable



- make sure vulnerable participants have support coordination in their NDIS plans



- make sure participants get everything they need from their NDIS plans.



The NDIS Commission needs to listen when anyone tells them:

- someone is vulnerable
- something is wrong.



The NDIS Commission needs to listen to what safeguards people with disability want.



The SA Government needs to make sure vulnerable people can get the health care checks they need.



The Adult Safeguarding Unit should be able to protect all vulnerable adults.



The Community Visitor Scheme can be a safeguard for vulnerable people with disability.

Our recommendations



The Task Force has some **recommendations**.



Recommendations are ideas about what we think should happen to make things better.



We should talk to the Australian Government about the safeguarding gaps the Task Force found.



We should make sure vulnerable participants get the health care checks they need.



We should let the Adult Safeguarding Unit protect any vulnerable adults, including people with disability.



We should look at the rules about sharing information about worker checks.



We should make sure the Community Visitor Scheme and the NDIS Commission can work together.



We should all work together to support people with disability to speak up about their:

- rights
- safety.



We should provide more money for advocates who can help people with disability get what they need from:

- the NDIS
- the community.

Word list

Advocates



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- the rights of people with disability.

Advocates also help people with disability speak up for themselves.

Complaint



When you make a complaint, you tell someone that something:

- has gone wrong
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Guardian



A guardian is a person who acts and makes decisions for you.

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- chosen for you by the government.



Local Area Coordinators

Local Area Coordinators help people find and use services in their NDIS plans. They are often called LACs.



Office of the Public Advocate (OPA)

OPA is part of the South Australian Government.

OPA support people who need help:

- making decisions
- understanding their rights.



Participants

Participants are people with disability who have an NDIS plan.



Recommendations

Recommendations are ideas about what we think should happen to make things better.



Rights

Rights are rules about how everybody should be treated fairly.



Safeguarding

Safeguarding is what we do to keep people with disability safe when they use disability services.



Support coordinator

Support Coordinators help participants manage the supports and services in their NDIS plan.



Volunteers

Volunteers are people who work without getting paid. They often do work that helps others.



Vulnerable

If you are vulnerable, you might be in danger of:

- being hurt
- getting sick
- someone taking advantage of you.

Contact us



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dhs.sa.gov.au/latest-news/safeguarding-taskforce



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