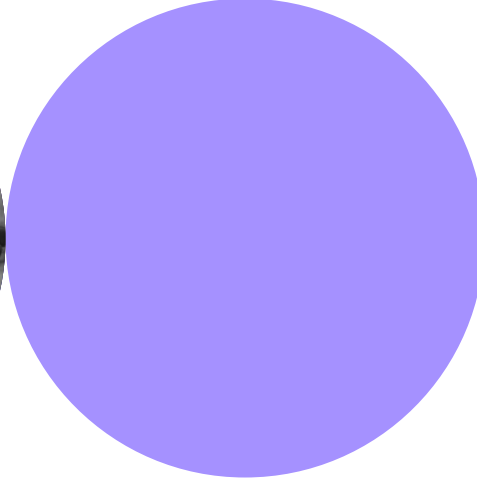
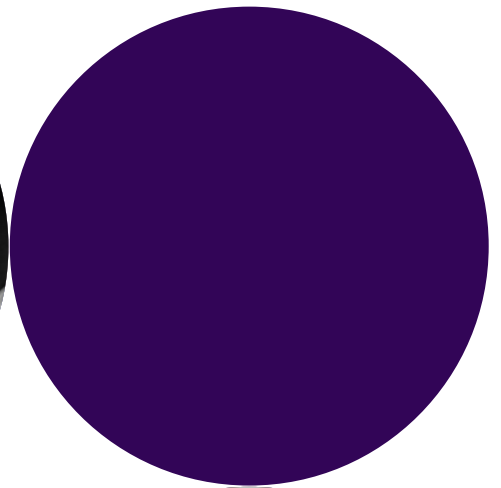
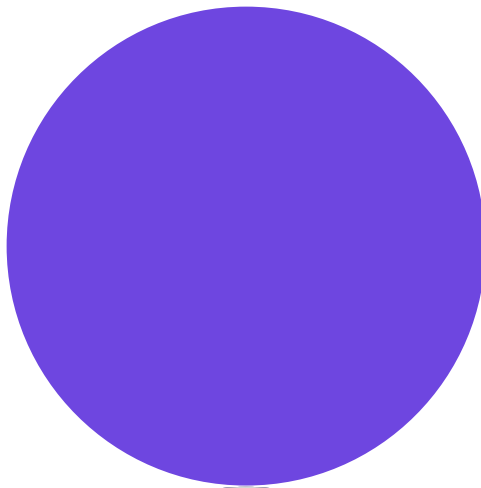




Disability Health Strategy

First Action Plan

Progress Report
June 2025

Acknowledgement of Country



The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.

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● Introduction

The Disability Health Strategy

The *Disability Health Strategy 2024-2033* was launched in December 2023 as part of the ACT Government's vision for an inclusive society, where everyone has the chance to participate in community life and leaves no-one behind.

The Strategy is a ten-year overarching plan to ensure people with disability have equitable and appropriate access to healthcare in the ACT and improved health outcomes. The strategy has 3 goals, 9 principles, and 5 focus areas.



The First Action Plan

The *Disability Health Strategy: First Action Plan 2024-2026* is a three-year plan laying the foundations to build upon in subsequent actions plans. The actions and activities work towards fulfilling the requirements of the 3 goals, 9 principles, and 5 focus areas presented in the Strategy.

The First Action Plan has 15 actions across the five focus areas of the Strategy.

The First Action Plan aligns with *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031*, *ACT Disability Health Strategy 2024-2033*, and *Canberra Health Services Disability Action and Inclusion Plan 2022-2025*. Additionally, the First Action Plan aligns with local and national legislation and policy.

The First Action Plan includes a focus on eight priority populations identified in current national and local legislation, policy, and research. The eight priority populations are:

- women with disability
- older people with disability
- people with an intellectual disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People with disability
- culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability
- LGBTIQ+ people with disability
- detainees with disability
- carers of people with disability.

The Disability Health Reference Group

Under the Strategy and First Action Plan, ACT Government committed to the establishment of the Disability Health Reference Group.

The Reference Group was established in September 2024 with the Inaugural Workshop facilitated by a consultant and opened by the Minister for Health, Ms. Rachel Stephen-Smith.

The Reference Group gives advice to the ACT Government and the health system in the ACT about the health and wellbeing of people with disability. It also provides high-level oversight of disability health related strategies, plans, and recommendations; including the Strategy, First Action Plan, and Canberra Health Services' Disability Action and Inclusion Plan.

The reference group consists of:

- eight community members – people with disability and/or carers of people with disability
- four community organisation representatives:
 - ACT Down Syndrome and Intellectual Disability
 - Advocacy for Inclusion
 - Carers ACT
 - Health Care Consumers' Association.
- the Chair of the ACT Disability Reference Group
- a representative from Capital Health Network
- four ACT Government representatives including from the ACT Health Directorate, the Community Services Directorate, and Canberra Health Services.

The community members were appointed by the Director-General of ACT Health Directorate after a public Expression of Interest process.

The Reference Group is co-chaired by a representative of ACT Health Directorate and a person with disability who was appointed by the Director-General after an Expression of Interest process with Reference Group members.

The Reference Group has met five times and has agreed to a workplan of topics they would like to know more about and provide advice about.

The Reference Group has made a commitment to being accessible for everyone, providing Easy English translations of key meeting papers.

● Progress Report 2025

Progress

This Report covers progress on the First Action Plan from 1 January 2024 until 30 June 2025.

Under the Strategy and First Action Plan, ACT Government committed to the development of an evaluation framework. Work has commenced to develop a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Framework to monitor and track ACT Disability Strategy and ACT Disability Health Strategy progress and performance.

Following machinery of government changes announced by the ACT Government, from 1 July 2025 the ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) has combined with Community Services Directorate to become the Health and Community Services Directorate (HCSD). This report only refers to ACTHD where actions were undertaken under the old directorate structure; otherwise, the directorate is referred to under its current name.

FOCUS AREA 1		Health information and literacy		
Goals	Action	Activity	Progress	Status
 	1.1 Easy English training and tools	Procure and facilitate access to Easy English translation training for healthcare and disability services in the ACT.	ACTHD procured accessible information training focusing on how to write in plain language and Easy English. The training was made available to healthcare and disability services in the ACT. 145 people participated. These will continue to be scheduled.	Completed
		Procure and facilitate access to an Easy English image library to be used in the development of Easy English translations by ACT public healthcare services.	Licenses for an Easy English image library are now available from HSCD to assist service providers who are making their own Easy English documents.	
		Fund access to an Easy English image library to be used in the development of Easy English translations by healthcare and disability services in the ACT.		
 	1.2 Accessible healthcare information	Update ACT public healthcare services' websites to ensure compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).	ACTHD and Canberra Health Services (CHS) websites were updated and are now Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliant.	In progress
		Provide healthcare information in accessible formats across ACT public healthcare services.	CHS have undertaken translations of key consumer handouts and patient guides into Easy English to make their healthcare information more accessible. CHS has nine new Easy English booklets available for consumers, with additional Easy English translations of key consumer handouts to be completed during the 2025-2026 financial year.	
  	1.3 Health literacy	Scope and develop a disability health literacy program for people with disability, their family members, carers, and advocates, healthcare workers, disability service providers, and advocacy groups. Implement a disability health literacy program.	In August 2024, Healthcare Consumers' Association (HCCA) were commissioned to scope the health literacy needs of people with disability, and their supporters (families, carers, disability service providers, and advocates), and healthcare workers. The Disability Health Literacy Scoping Report, including findings and recommendations, will help inform requirements for the development and implementation of a disability health literacy program.	In progress

FOCUS AREA 2 Service access, design, and delivery

Goals	Action	Activity	Progress	Status
 	2.1 Accessible facilities	Develop and undertake an accessibility audit of facilities leased or owned by ACT public healthcare services.	In 2023, CHS completed an audit across 54 sites, including (but not limited to), Canberra Hospital, car parks, Community Health Centres, and off-site facilities.	In progress
		Develop an accessibility improvement plan for facilities leased or owned by ACT public healthcare services.	The priority of the audit was to investigate areas within CHS facilities which have a functional impact for people with disability. An improvement plan includes a phased approach, with work commenced in 2024 to progress with actions on the 10 high priority items. Some remain outstanding as they have been incorporated into upcoming capital upgrade projects. The 10 priority items will be completed by the end of 2025. An audit of facilities associated with North Canberra Hospital (NCH) is currently underway. The DDA specialist consultant provided CHS with a summary recommendation report that included 780 actions identified by the audit: 10 high priority, 368 medium priority, and 402 low priority. CHS will continue to assess the medium and low priority items and work collaboratively with consumers and staff with lived experience, co-designing where appropriate.	
 	2.2 Supported decision-making framework	Develop a disability health supported decision-making framework for healthcare services in the ACT.	Due to commence in 2026-2027.	Not Commenced

Goals	Action	Activity	Progress	Status
 	2.3 Case management and referral service	Scope and model a disability health case management and referral service for the ACT.	HCSD has undertaken desktop research and preliminary consultation with key stakeholders regarding the scoping of a case management and referral service.	In progress
		Pilot a disability health case management and referral service. Evaluate the pilot disability case management and referral service.	ACT Government, along with other jurisdictions, are working with the Commonwealth Government in response to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission). Recommendation 6.34: Introduce disability health navigators to support navigation of health care for people with disability directly relates to this action item. HCSD will continue to work with the Commonwealth Government, other jurisdictions, and other ACT Government directorates to achieve this action.	
  	2.4 Women's sexual health	Scope, develop, and implement a clinical sexual health service for women with disability.	HCSD has undertaken desktop research and preliminary consultation with key stakeholders.	In progress
		Scope, develop, and implement a sexual health information and education program for women with disability.	These activities have informed the development of the Statement of Requirements for the procurement of services to scope clinical, educational, and informational services for women with disability in the ACT.	
		Evaluate the clinical sexual health service and information and education program.	The procurement process for a suitable supplier of scoping services is underway and HCSD expects a scoping report in early-mid 2026. The scoping report will inform the next phase of this action: the development and implementation of pilot clinical, educational, and informational services for women with disability in the ACT.	

Goals	Action	Activity	Progress	Status
	2.5 Improving Mental Health Wellbeing Outcomes for People with Intellectual Disability - Position Statement	Finalise and endorse the Improving Mental Health Wellbeing Outcomes for People with Intellectual Disability - Position Statement.	In June 2024, the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing released the <u><i>Improving Mental Health Wellbeing Outcomes for People with Intellectual Disability - Position Statement</i></u>. The Position Statement was co-designed with the disability community and aims to address systemic barriers to mental health care for people with intellectual disability.	Completed
 	2.6 Health projects with a disability perspective	Scope and recruit to a disability health lived experience advisor role. Develop a disability co-design framework for ACT public healthcare services. Provide a disability perspective to ACT public healthcare projects, plans, and commissioning.	Not commenced.	Not Commenced
  	2.7 Minor home modifications	Scope and pilot a minor home modification grant program for people ineligible for NDIS or My Aged Care to support their discharge from hospital. Evaluate the minor home modifications program.	HCSD has undertaken scoping activities, including desktop research and preliminary consultation with key stakeholders and other jurisdictions. Delivery options are being considered.	In progress

FOCUS AREA 3**Emergency planning, preparedness, and management**

Goals	Action	Activity	Progress	Status
	3.1 Healthcare emergency planning	Scope a disability health-focused emergency preparedness and management plan.	HCSD has undertaken an environmental scan of international, national, and jurisdictional emergency preparedness and management to inform work along three themes: inclusive planning, inclusive practices, and inclusive information. Additionally, consultation has occurred across ACT Government directorates and disability representative organisations. The findings of the environmental scan and consultations will be delivered in the Disability Health Emergency Preparedness and Management Scoping Report due in late 2025.	In progress

FOCUS AREA 4

Workforce

Goals	Action	Activity	Progress	Status
 	4.1 Disability Access and Inclusion Plans	Develop an ACT Health Directorate Disability Access and Inclusion Plan.	The development of an ACTHD Disability Access and Inclusion Plan was put on hold when the Machinery of Government changes were announced, with ACTHD merging with Community Services Directorate on 1 July 2025.	In progress
		Implement an ACT Health Directorate Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and the Canberra Health Services Disability Action and Inclusion Plan.	The new directorate, Health and Community Services Directorate, will develop a Disability Inclusion Plan (DIP) in alignment with the Disability Inclusion Act 2024. The CHS Disability Action and Inclusion Plan 2022-2025 (DAIP) continues to be implemented, guiding the way CHS addresses barriers, promotes inclusivity, and aims to improve the health outcomes and health services for people with a disability and the workplace for staff. CHS have commenced development of a DIP for 2026 onwards.	
 	4.2 Training	Develop disability health training for frontline employees across the healthcare system in the ACT.	HCSD has undertaken desktop research and participated in a variety of disability-related training courses as a part of scoping the training needs of frontline healthcare workers in the ACT. A comprehensive discussion paper and supporting presentation are under development and will be presented to the DHRG for discussion and advice. The research and the advice from the DHRG will inform the development of the Statement of Requirements for the procurement of services to develop a co-designed training package.	In progress

FOCUS AREA 5

Data and research

Goals	Action	Activity	Progress	Status
	5.1 Data collection, recording, and sharing	Review and report on disability data clinical and reporting requirements for ACT public healthcare services.	In late 2023, ACTHD undertook disability data review in consultation with CHS. The review considered disability-related data requirements, along with enhancements to the Digital Health Record (DHR). The final reports were completed in May 2024.	Completed
		Provide National Minimum Data Sets (NMDS) unidentified healthcare data to the Australian Government's National Disability Data Asset (NDDA).	The reports have been provided to CHS for their disability data working group and will help inform upgrades to the DHR to include disability-related information, such as reasonable adjustments. In 2024, ACTHD provided de-identified hospital data to the National Disability Data Asset (NDDA). The NDDA is a cross-government initiative led by the Commonwealth Government in partnership with jurisdictions. It is designed to inform more targeted and responsive policy development across key domains, including health, enabling governments to better understand and support the goals of people with disability. On 19 December 2024 the NDDA achieved a major milestone with the release of its first integrated dataset.	
	5.2 ACT public healthcare services feedback	Develop and implement a feedback mechanism for people with disability accessing ACT public healthcare services.	Not commenced.	Not Commenced

NEW Additional initiatives			
Goals	Action	Progress	Status
 	Support for DHRG members with intellectual or cognitive disability	In July 2024, ACT Down Syndrome and Intellectual Disability (ACTDSID) commenced a project to recruit and support a person with intellectual disability or cognitive disability to participate as a DHRG community member. ACTDSID provided tailored support to ensure the member could participate meaningfully and confidently. The member's active involvement has strengthened the representation of people with intellectual disability or cognitive disability, ensuring their voices are heard, their needs are recognised, and their perspectives are understood and respected. This initiative is linked to the DHRG, ensuring all community members can be active participants in the DHRG.	Completed
		Easy English Testing Panel In September 2024, ACTDSID established an Easy English testing panel. Six people with intellectual disability were recruited and trained to ensure they could provide informed feedback on Easy English translated documents. The panel was designed to reflect the diversity of the community, with members of different ages, types of disability, and an equal gender balance. Involving people with intellectual disability directly in the Easy English translation testing process ensures the translations are appropriate, accessible, and easy to understand. The Easy English Testing Panel is now available as a resource for ACT Government directorate and the wider community on a fee-for-service basis. This initiative is linked to Action 1.1 Easy English training and tools, providing organisations with access to a local service, by local people, to test their Easy English translations prior to publishing.	

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