

United Kingdom



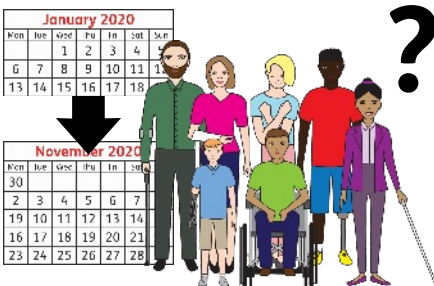
EasyRead version



The Office of the **High Commissioner for Human Rights** is part of the United Nations. They make sure that everyone in the world is treated fairly and has their rights respected.



The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights asked an independent person to write this report.



This report is about what happened to people with disabilities in the UK during COVID-19 between January 2020 and November 2020.

How many people with disabilities had COVID-19?



In the UK:

- many people died of COVID-19
- many of the people who died had disabilities

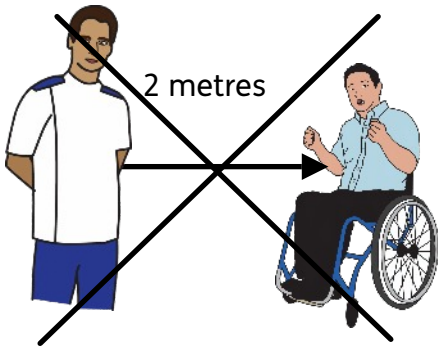


Many people with disabilities died in institutionalised settings like care homes.

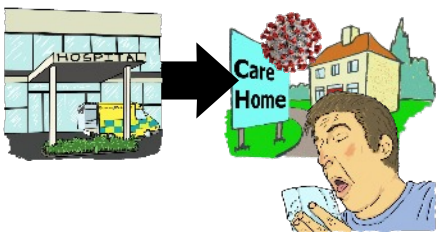


This might be because:

- they did not have the right equipment like face masks to stay safe from COVID-19



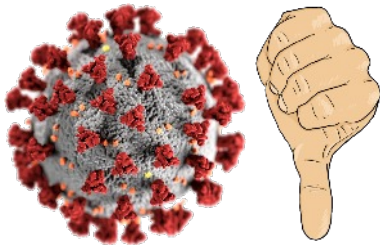
- it was hard to social distance other residents and staff and stay safe from COVID-19



- some people were sent from hospitals to care homes when they had COVID-19 and this made other people in the care home sick.



Life is already hard for many people with disabilities.



COVID-19 made this worse.

What helped people during the COVID-19 emergency?

Information

The UK collected and shared information about how many people with disabilities:

- got sick from COVID-19
- died from COVID-19
- people's disability
- if they were men or women
- their age.

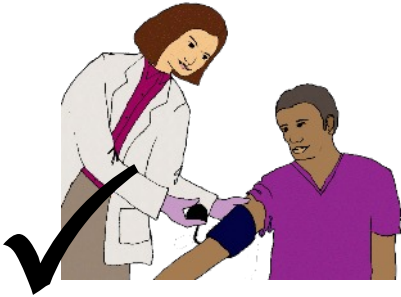


Collecting information about people with disability helped the UK to check if the rights of people with disabilities were being respected.

Checking and making changes



When the UK checked if the rights of people with disabilities were being respected they found some problems:

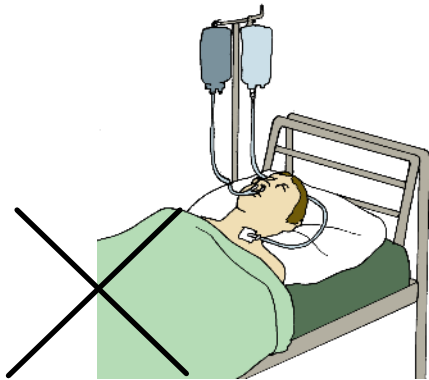


- changes were made to make sure decisions about people with disabilities getting treatments were fair



- some problems are still being checked.

What happened to people with disabilities during the COVID-19 emergency?



Deciding who got treatment

Advice to doctors made it hard for people with disabilities to get treatment in hospitals when they were sick with COVID-19.

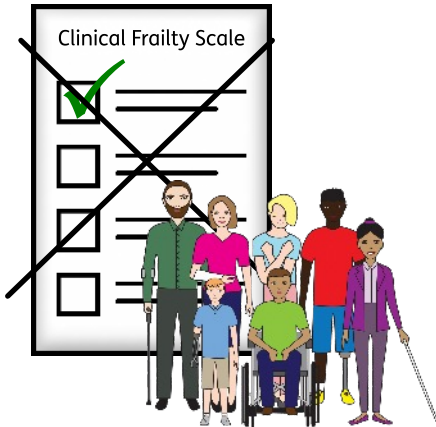


Hospitals in the UK used a tool called the Clinical Frailty Scale.



The tool was used to help decide who should get treatment during the COVID-19 emergency.

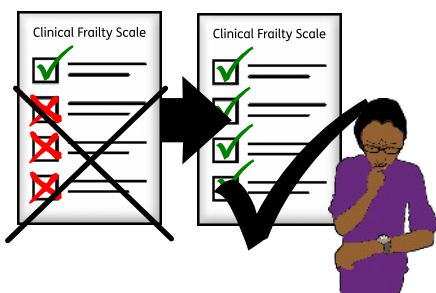
The UK's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and NHS:



- told hospitals the tool was not right for people with disabilities
- told hospitals not to use the tool for people with disabilities.

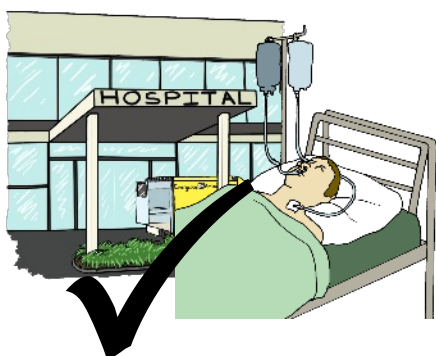


Other rules made it hard for people with disabilities to go to hospital for treatment.

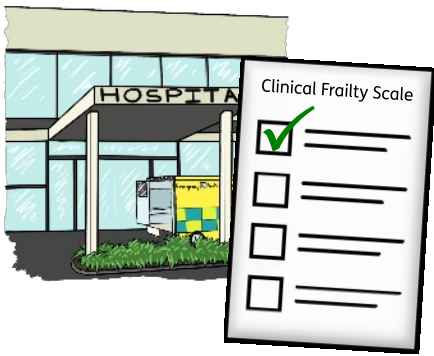


What happened

The problems with the tool were found quickly.

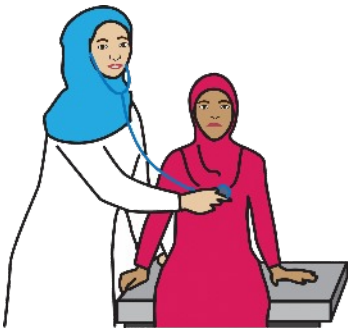


The UK tried to fix the problems. Hospitals were told that it was very important that people with disabilities could go to hospital if they were sick with COVID-19 or other conditions.



But the problems didn't go away.

Some hospitals kept using or thinking about the tool.



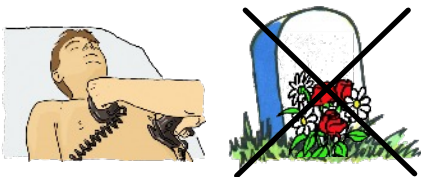
People with disabilities had problems:

- getting treatments for COVID-19 in a fair way



- being allowed to go to hospital.

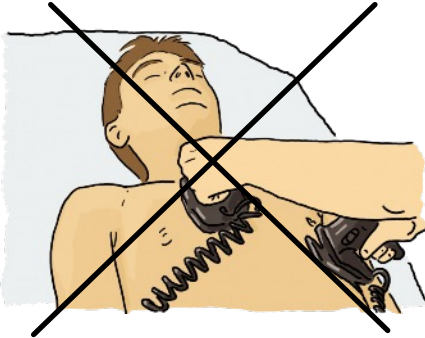
Rules about getting treatment to stop you dying



Resuscitate is getting treatment to stop you dying.



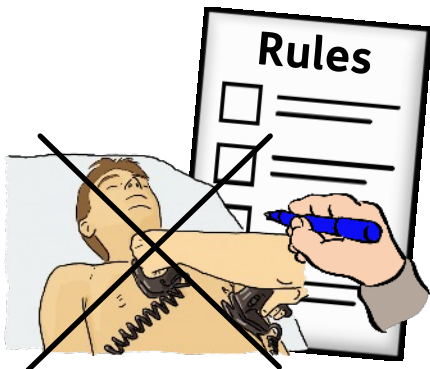
It happens when you stop breathing or your heart has stopped.



When people are sick they might ask not to have the treatment. They are allowed to die if they want to.



Doctors need to agree but it must be the person's choice.



If it is agreed a rule can be written down for the person to say do not resuscitate, this is called a Do Not Attempt Resuscitation Notice (DNAR Notice).



During COVID-19 it was found out that many people with disabilities got letters saying they should have a DNAR Notice.



What happened?

The problems with the do not resuscitate letters were found out quickly.

The UK tried to fix the problems.



Medical people and groups were told:

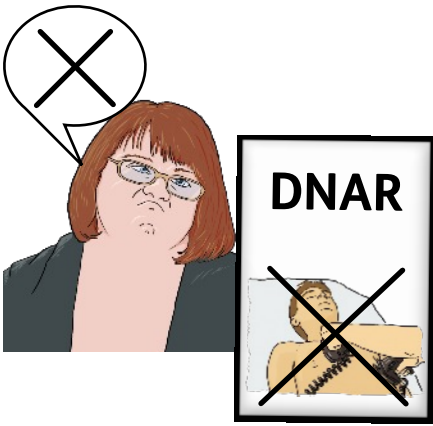
- not to send out letters recommending DNAR Notices to lots of people with disabilities



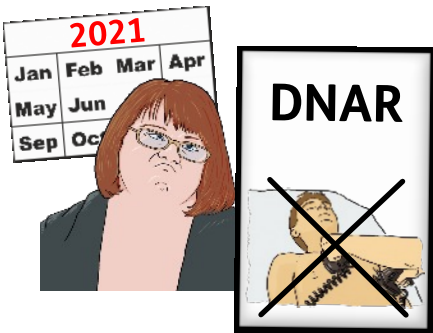
- to respect the rights of each person with a disability who was sick with COVID-19 to have treatment or ask not to.



But the problems didn't go away.



Some people with disabilities had DNAR Notices put on them without proper permission.



Some people with disabilities who got DNAR Notices still have them. People are trying to fix this problem.



What we learned

The rights about fair health care for people with disabilities were not respected.



People with disability felt their lives weren't as important as other people.

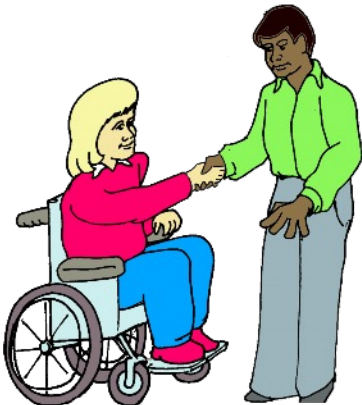
During the COVID-19 emergency between January 2020 and November 2020 we learnt we still need to teach people to:



- understand people with disabilities can live very healthy and happy lives like everyone else



- respect the rights of people with disabilities

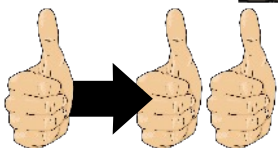


- treat people with disabilities as people first.



Collecting and sharing data about people with disabilities and COVID-19 helped to:

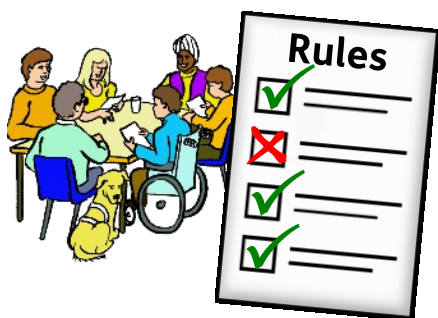
- find problems
- try to fix problems.



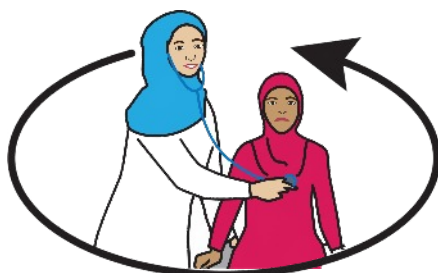
We need to make sure hospitals and other services:



- make sure they respect the rights of people with disabilities to have fair access to health care

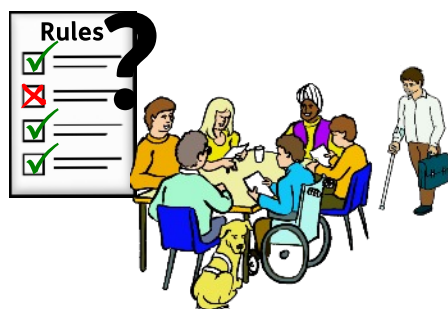


- get help from OPD's (organisations of persons with disabilities) to make rules about health care



- make sure getting health care and treatment is fair for everyone.

When new rules about health care are made:



- ask OPD's (organisations of persons with disabilities) what should be in the rules



- think about what they say to help make the rules.



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