



**ADVOCATE
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**Our 2021-2023 plan
for supporting the
reproductive and
sexual rights of people
with disability**

ADVOCATE, EDUCATE, LISTEN: our 2021-2023 plan for supporting the reproductive and sexual rights of people with disability

Family Planning NSW is committed to promoting the reproductive and sexual health and rights of people with disability. We are guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and work collaboratively with people with disability and their support people to ensure that our work meets the needs of our consumers.

In 2014, we launched our plan 'Love and Kisses: Taking action on the reproductive and sexual health and rights of people with disability 2014-2018'. We outlined what needed to happen to improve the reproductive and sexual health and rights of people with disability. We also outlined what we would do to help achieve it.

We're proud of what we accomplished as part of that plan.

- We developed 18 new health information resources in collaboration with people with intellectual disability and their support people.
- We delivered 45 information workshops across NSW to nearly 850 parents and carers of people with intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorders.
- We delivered 83 training courses across NSW to over 1000 disability support workers and teachers.
- We launched our Hunter Sexuality and Disability Service in 2015, providing therapeutic services that support people to develop skills across the lifespan in the area of sexuality and relationships as part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

We also know there is much more that needs to be done to improve the reproductive and sexual health and rights of people with disability. That is why we've created this new plan to help guide our work from 2021 - 2023. This plan will also guide our conversations with people with disability so that we can continue to learn about what needs to happen to improve the reproductive and sexual health and rights of people with disability.

To create our new plan we spoke to people with disability, disabled people's organisations, and workers in the disability sector, and asked what they thought about the quality of sexuality support currently being provided in NSW and what we should focus on to improve it.

We listened to what people had to say and we heard a number of things that concerned us.

- People with disability aren't getting the sexuality support they should be entitled to receive under the NDIS and there is no comprehensive NDIS policy framework to guide the provision of sexuality support.
- Myths and misconceptions about the sexuality of people with disability are still common in conversations within the general community.
- Lack of training, lack of clear policy, and the persistence of myths and misconceptions about the sexuality of people with disability means that too many disability support workers, teachers and health professionals still think they do not have a role in supporting people with disability to have good reproductive and sexual health.

We also looked at what the research is saying about the reproductive and sexual health of people with disability and best ways to improve it. There is valuable research that demonstrates:

- the importance of asking people with disability what they want and need from sexuality education and information¹
- the benefits of providing comprehensive sexuality education², particularly with well trained staff³
- the barriers that need to be addressed in improving the reproductive and sexual health of people with disability⁴.

However, population-based data on the reproductive and sexual health and rights of people with disability remains scarce⁵. Without good quality, comprehensive data, we cannot fully understand the progress we are making towards improving the reproductive and sexual health and rights of people with disability.

Based on all of this information, we have identified the four key areas Family Planning NSW will be focusing on from 2021-2023.

1. Start more conversations

- We will work with people with disability in new and different ways to:
 - raise awareness of the reproductive and sexual health and rights of people with disability
 - normalise conversations about sexuality support and what it looks like, including sexuality support within the NDIS
 - initiate conversations on reproductive and sexual health and rights of people with disability through traditional and social media

2. Train more support people

- We will continue to pursue external funding opportunities to hold free training for disability sector workers, parents and carers.
- We will work with people with disability to make sure our training courses and workshops meet their expectations on how they should be supported.
- We will also work with disability sector workers and parents and carers to make sure the training and resources meet their needs.
- We will provide practical information and training via digital platforms that can be accessed across Australia.

3. Actively pursue opportunities to advocate for the reproductive and sexual health and rights of people with disability

- We will focus our advocacy on:
 - the routine inclusion of sexuality support in NDIS participant plans
 - the creation of NDIS guidelines on sexuality support
 - the importance of providing comprehensive sexuality education in schools
 - the importance of training support people on how to provide sexuality support
 - the introduction of measures to collect data on the reproductive and sexual health of people with disability
 - any other matters that may arise that infringe upon the reproductive and sexual rights of people with disability.

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- We will work with people with disability, their families and disability services so that we understand what the issues are and how they can be solved

4. Be a more inclusive and accessible organisation

- We will work with people with disability to become a more inclusive and accessible organisation.
- We want to be inclusive and accessible for people of all ages, whether they visit our clinics, look at our website, read our resources or work for us.
- We particularly want to make sure our services are inclusive, accessible and culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, people with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people with disability.

We're looking forward to collaborating with people with disability, parents and carers, disability services and workers to make these things happen over the next three years.

If you would like to find out about what we're currently working on, have a look at our website www.fpnsw.org.au/disability

For more information, or to find out more how you can be involved, contact us at healthpromotion@fpnsw.org.au

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