



# **Covid-19: Impact on disabled and older people survey**

30<sup>th</sup> March – 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020

The following quotes are taken from the open-ended questions that RiDC panel members responded to. In this summary we have grouped the comments by various themes that emerged from the data.

## **Lack of supermarket delivery slots available**

“All I want is to be able to access supermarket delivery as a priority customer... supermarkets are not doing enough to prioritise support for those in isolation at home”

“Asda and Tesco are not considering their disabled customers. I cannot stand for ½ hour waiting to get into the shop, but the delivery slots are full all the time... leaving the disabled who want to be independent having to rely on neighbours”

“Tesco have said they are prioritising special needs but there is no way to contact them to tell them you have special needs. Blind people do not seem to be prioritised. I can't drive so can't carry large amounts of shopping.”

“It is the delivery companies that need to prioritise disability friendly delivery slots. Not the government.”

## **Information provided by the government not being accessible**

“They're supposed to send letters to people of high risk, and I haven't received anything yet. Why can't they just announce this advice to the general public on TV? It would save time. They have not acknowledged communicating this information in BSL either. This also applies to advice being given about protecting yourself from others.”

“Only 2 weeks ago – pdf documents were made html and some easy to read. Slides were not accessible. Some people are being left behind – such as older people who are trying to get technology to work. DRUK information is slightly misleading because the Care Act is not changing for all but it makes people stressed.”

“Many of Downing Street and other briefings don't have BSL interpreters present and therefore Deaf people may be missing out on important health

information. I'm also unsure about how easy it is to access information in Braille ... the government need to address these issues (not being able to access online food deliveries, social and medical care) and to employ reasonable adjustments to all 14m disabled people who require them as if it is their legal duty."

"They need to ensure all official announcement videos are subtitled, translated with BSL and that there is easy to read documentations."

### **Those with visual impairments not being considered as also vulnerable**

"People with vision loss are not deemed to be as vulnerable."

"I am registered blind and can't go out alone, none of my key workers will work with me."

### **Having trouble with social distancing if visually impaired**

"(going to shops) is giving me anxiety and fear of crowds as I can't see. I feel particularly vulnerable when out and about because of the comprehension of the able bodied. When I'm out I don't notice how other people are interacting with me or if they're coming in close proximity to me."

"As a completely blind person... other people are not respecting social distancing as they're coming to pet my guide dog often without talking to me"

### **Lack of PPE being provided to carers which makes older and disabled people feel more at risk of infection and reluctant to receive help**

"Can't have help from my PAs (personal assistants) due to lack of PPE and no help getting it"

"We have had to suspend my carers because they were only provided with gloves, which one carer was allergic to...This is a further stress to our worries about contracting the virus amid my complex medical needs."

"No PPE for my PA's, had to badger the local authority for an identity letter for each of my PA's as they are key workers"

"I phoned to ask about protective clothing for my personal assistance, they had no idea or response. As far as they are concerned because I used Direct Payment and employed my PA directly, it was not their problem."

“They should provide PPE at reasonable prices to all care agencies and care homes and those who are on direct payments should have free PPE for their staff.”

“There has been insufficient consideration of the needs of disabled people who employ their own PAs, a failure to provide PPE for those PAs, a failure to put in place a suitable backup for disabled people should their PAs fall ill, a failure to give guidance on how people are supposed to receive care and maintain a safe physical distance in the absence of suitable PPE.”

### **Reduction in care being provided**

“I have a team of 3 PA’s. Last week two were off sick... I tried ringing care agencies but none were taking new clients... should my PA’s all be off at the same time, I don’t know what I will do.”

“Two of my PA’s are in isolation and down to one. Trying to recruit some others temporarily but worried about bringing someone new into my home and how do I interview?”

“My PA announced she will not come for the duration of the virus. I cannot get to know my neighbours because of social distancing

“Reduced carer visits because of lack of staff, only one visit daily when it should be 3”

“Few carers available and care agency are all working from home on very limited hours”

“They’re leaving it to ordinary citizens to provide for the elderly and disabled. Many people like me do not wish to be a burden on our friends and neighbours.”

### **Lack of financial support being provided**

“Food prices have gone up and the people on DLA, PIP or ESA should be given more so they can access food and other urgent supplies like hygiene products”

“Increase all ESA and PIP payments to cover extra costs incurred by social isolation and having to buy things that are more expensive online.”

## **Insufficient adaptations being made to the needs of disabled and older customers in shops**

“Clear information needs to be given to shops and services to think about their disabled customers e.g. setting aside shopping hours which start at 8am are impossible for many disabled people”

“Supermarkets have a one-hour slot – not enough and some cannot do this at the time or themselves. Plus, in that hour many have to queue.”

### **Notes**

- Survey administered to RiDC Consumer Panel between 30<sup>th</sup> March and 3<sup>rd</sup> April.
- The survey was sent to a total of 1,562 disabled and older people. A total of 842 people responded.
- 56 panel members do not have access to email or due to their disability prefer not to complete online surveys. Between 30<sup>th</sup> March and 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020, we contacted all these individuals and completed a total of 33 surveys over the telephone.
- The quotes presented in this document are selected from the larger data set and relate to the following questions:
  - Have you experienced any reduction in any support services your local authority normally provides?
  - Do you think the government is doing enough to help disabled and older people during this Coronavirus outbreak?"
  - How do you feel supermarkets have responded to your needs?

### **Covid-19 resources**

WE have compiled a list of resources and guidance aimed at supporting disabled and older people through the current Covid-19 crisis. As new resources are developed, we will update this page <https://www.ridc.org.uk/news/coronavirus-useful-links>

### **About RiDC**

We are a user-led UK research charity, run by – and for – people with a personal experience of disability.

We believe that products and services should be inclusive and accessible for all, from the word go, not as an afterthought. We want a society that works for everyone, regardless of their abilities or age. Visit our website [www.ridc.org.uk](http://www.ridc.org.uk) to find out more.

For more information about this research contact Eric Harris (<mailto:ericharris@ridc.org.uk>).