

Supporting the global community during the Coronavirus crisis

DSi has been closely monitoring the rapidly changing situation of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis with concern for people with Down syndrome and their families around the world. We are gathering information from our national member organisations to see how the situation is affecting them and what they are doing to support people with Down syndrome and their families at this time.

Information sources

It is important that people with Down syndrome and families have information to help them understand what COVID-19 is, what to look out for, how to stay safe and what to do if they have any symptoms. Not enough is known about COVID-19 to make informed and accurate comment about any specific link or effects it may have on people with Down syndrome. DSi is keeping up to date with information from relevant health and scientific organisations.

[The Down Syndrome Medical Interest Group \(DSMIG\) UK and Ireland](#) has produced the following statement: *There is no evidence at the moment of people who have Down syndrome being at particular risk of this coronavirus, though of course people who have Down syndrome may be more at risk from infections generally and respiratory infections in particular. However there is evidence to suggest it may pose a greater risk to those with other chronic health conditions, including pre-existing respiratory conditions, heart disease, diabetes, and immunodeficiency. A number of children and adults who have Down syndrome will fall within these higher risk groups.*

Critical importance of ensuring rights at this time

Similar to all humanitarian emergencies, we are aware that people with disabilities, including people with Down syndrome, are at higher risk of being impacted by this situation and less likely to be included in response plans. It is important that commitments to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are upheld at this time to ensure that the COVID-19 response is disability inclusive. While we recognise the need for all State parties (Governments) to put in place strong measures to combat the spread of COVID-19, these measures must not be implemented at the expense of the rights of people with Down syndrome.

We strongly encourage all State parties to remember their commitments to the UN CRPD and SDGs, to ensure that they 'Leave no one behind' in their responses to the virus.

Some key considerations:

- People with Down syndrome have an equal right to live and receive quality healthcare. State parties must ensure that no one is denied treatment or given substandard treatment on the basis of their disability (CRPD Articles 12 - Right to Life and 25 - Health);
- People with Down syndrome have the right to information about the situation with COVID-19 and responses to it in their country in formats that they can understand (CRPD Article 21 - Freedom of expression and opinion and access to information);
- People with Down syndrome have the right to live in the community in a place of their choosing (CRPD Article 19 - Living independently and being included in the community). They must be provided with the support they need to continue exercising this right.

We call upon the global community to ensure these basic rights are ensured at this difficult time.

DSi is working with the disability community and the [International Disability Alliance \(IDA\)](#) to ensure a disability inclusive response to the COVID-19 crisis. IDA have a useful webpage on COVID-19:

[COVID 19 and the disability movement](#)