

MEDIA RELEASE

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Mandatory vaccination for disability workers must come with vax leave, support

Mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations in the disability care sector must come with vaccine leave and support for what is already a low-paid and undervalued workforce, the Community and Public Sector Union of NSW says.

Disability support workers are among the state's lowest paid, and often work as casuals. The union says worries about missing shifts due to any mild side-effects as well as confusion about AstraZeneca slowed the uptake among the workforce.

"Disability care workers want to be vaccinated so they can do their job safely but they've faced significant hurdles in accessing the vaccine," said Stewart Little, general secretary of the CPSU NSW.

"The disability workforce needs to know if they need a day off to get the jab, or some time off to recover from any mild side effect, they won't miss out on a day's pay."

The union has been calling for a comprehensive plan for vaccinating NSW's disability support workers, that includes access to vaccine leave, since February.

"The disability sector cares for our state's most vulnerable people but they have been completely abandoned by this government.

"In Victoria we saw the government prioritise vaccinating disability workers, but in NSW our calls for better support, including vaccine leave, have been dismissed by the Berejiklian government.

"The union wants a plan that encourages this workforce to get vaccinated. Rather than engaging with the workforce, the government ignored their concerns and is now deflecting from its failure by making it mandatory. Workers in the disability sector are fed up with being overlooked and undervalued – the risk is mandatory vaccination without a plan that actually listens to the workforce will see people leave the sector for good."

CONTACT: Stewart Little 0434 062 079 Suze Metherell 0412 867 084