

BEST CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH COMMUNICATION DISABILITY DANDENONG ED

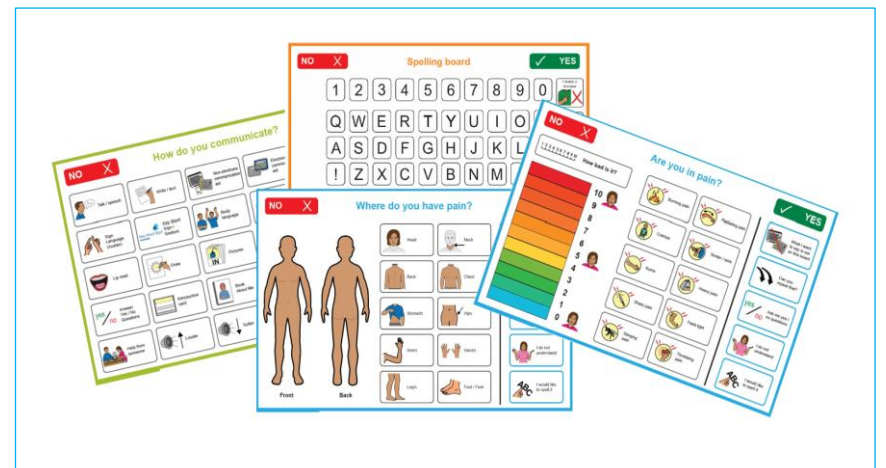
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Improvement opportunity

Up to 1.2 million Australians live with a communication disability, and people with disability access mainstream emergency healthcare more frequently than the general population (ABS, 2017). Effective communication is therefore critical to safe, high-quality emergency care and to ensuring positive patient experiences.

Consumer feedback identified instances of poor communication between Emergency Department Dandenong clinicians and patients with communication disability, resulting in patient dissatisfaction and subsequent complaints. This feedback highlighted the need for targeted improvement to support more inclusive, patient-centred communication.

In response, this improvement activity aims to strengthen communication with patients presenting to Dandenong Emergency Department who have a communication disability through the use of practical communication tools and targeted education. In July 2025, Monash Health partnered with Scope to implement the Best Care Communication Pilot Project, focused on the co-design and delivery of tailored resources and training to build staff capability, confidence, and consistency in providing inclusive emergency care.



How we engaged consumers

Consumer feedback at Dandenong Hospital Emergency Department was captured through existing Complaints, Compliments and Comments feedback mechanisms.

The Best Care Communication Project was a co-design initiative that actively engaged people with communication disabilities through:

- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Advisory group participation
- Training

This work contributes to a five-year co-designed program led in partnership with Ambulance Victoria and Scope, embedding lived experience into the development of communication-accessible



Communication tools development

What changed

Best Care Communication Pilot Project has resulted in the following with the aim of improving the ED experience for patients accessing the Emergency Department with communication disabilities. **Training & Education for ED staff**

- Customised online learning for ED clinicians
- Face-to-face education sessions delivered in the ED in partnership with people with communication disabilities

Development of Resources

- Communication Boards implemented in the Emergency Department
- Easy Read emergency healthcare information for patients and carers
- Keyword sign resources to support shared understanding

Scoping and establishment of Inclusion Champions within the ED



Training provided to ED staff in partnership with scope and a trainer with a communication disability