# Finland

## COVID-19 cases

On 1st September 2020 there were 8,077 registered COVID-19 cases and 335 deaths in the overall population.[[1]](#endnote-1) To our knowledge, data on COVID-19 cases, deaths, job-loss, and poverty were not disaggregated by disability.

## Emergency, lockdown, and confinement

The state of emergency in Finland started on 16th March 2020[[2]](#endnote-2) and ended on 15th June 2020.[[3]](#endnote-3) Many health, social and disability related services were suspended. An exception to this were children with special education needs, who were entitled to contact teaching, provided that the guardian does not request that the teaching is organized through distance education.[[4]](#endnote-4)

## Involvement of organisations of persons with disabilities

Officially DPOs were not involved in the development of national policy, task forces or consultations.[[5]](#endnote-5) Nevertheless, Finnish Disability Forum conducted a survey of their member organisations to highlight the challenges that persons with disability faced during COVID-19 state of emergency. The survey highlighted the following issues: right to health care if infected; access to essential maintenance services (e.g. wheelchair repairs); access to personal assistants and their personal protection; home care of persons with disabilities when support services are reduced; continuation of services brought into the home.[[6]](#endnote-6)

## Communications and announcements

Government communications and emergency announcements were available in Finnish and Finnish–Swedish sign languages. Finnish Association of Deaf (Kuurojen Liitto) was responsible for these translations. [[7]](#endnote-7) The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health compiled information about the coronavirus in an accessible and multilingual form for the needs of persons with different disabilities.[[8]](#endnote-8)

## Institutions and closed settings

International long-term care policy network report on COVID-19 and clients of long-term care in Finland showed that on 1st June 2020 almost half of the 318 deaths in Finland had occurred in care homes for older people. However, it is likely that not all deaths from COVID-19 have been recognised and classified.[[9]](#endnote-9)

In care institutions, there were prohibitions regarding visiting, but the guidelines in Finnish handbook for disability cautioned about the possibility to limit the rights of persons with disabilities.[[10]](#endnote-10) After the emergency situation the lockdown measures for institutions stayed in force to protect the vulnerable, but their application varies from institution to institution.[[11]](#endnote-11)

## Healthcare

There was a rumoured intent of some authorities in the social and healthcare sector to limit access of persons with disabilities to intensive care in case of a COVID-19 infection.[[12]](#endnote-12) The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health responded by issuing guidelines which prohibits such prioritizing.[[13]](#endnote-13)

## Social protection

We found no information regarding increase of disability related benefits or provision of new benefits.

1. WHO Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Dashboard, Finland, available at: https://covid19.who.int/table [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Information provided by EDF. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Government lifts state of emergency in Finland, further relaxing coronavirus restrictions, available at: https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/govt\_lifts\_state\_of\_emergency\_in\_finland\_further\_relaxing\_coronavirus\_restrictions/11402495#:~:text=Government%20announced%20it%20is%20lifting,conference%20in%20Helsinki%20on%20Monday. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. EDF, Actions and responses of our members, Finland, available at: http://edf-feph.org/covid19finland [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health appointed a group to coordinate preparedness for public health emergencies, available at: https://stm.fi/en/-/sosiaali-ja-terveysministerio-on-asettanut-kansanterveysuhkaan-varautumista-koordinoivan-ryhman [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. EDF, Actions and responses of our members, Finland, available at: http://edf-feph.org/covid19finland [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Association of the deaf, Updating information on the coronavirus, available at: https://kuurojenliitto.fi/paivittyvaa-tietoa-koronaviruksesta/ [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Finnish government, Information and advice on the coronavirus, available at: <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/information-on-coronavirus> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. International long term care policy network, COVID-19 and clients of long-term care in Finland - impact and measures to control the virus, available at: <https://ltccovid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/ltccovid-country-reports_Finland_120620-1.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Coronavirus pandemic in the EU - Fundamental Rights Implications - Bulletin 2, available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2020/covid19-rights-impact-may-1> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Information provided by Finnish Disability Forum. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. EQUINET’s response to COVID-19, available at: https://equineteurope.org/covid-19-response/#data [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. EQUINET’s response to COVID-19, available at: <https://equineteurope.org/covid-19-response/#data> [↑](#endnote-ref-13)