In 2024, the NDIA engaged the Centre for Innovative Justice at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) to undertake a research project called Leaving Prison Disability Support: Examining the Links Between Disability Support, Risk and Release from Custody.

We wanted to understand the links between disability supports, risk and release from custody.

This research project looks at people with disability who have committed serious violent or sexual offences.

Part 1 of the project, the Desktop Review, has been completed.

Findings

The full desktop review is available on the Centre for Innovative Justice website .

You can download a summary of the findings below.

- Plain Language Summary: Examining the links between disability support, risk and release from custody: Summary (DOCX 68KB)
- Plain Language Summary: Examining the links between disability support, risk and release from custody: Summary (PDF 126KB)

The review uses evidence from 103 pieces of Australian and international literature. The review found that:

- There is not much research about the support needs of people with disability who have committed serious violent or sexual offences. Only 12 of the 103 pieces of literature asked people with lived experience of disability and criminal justice system involvement, about their experiences.
- There is a small amount of Australian research that suggests there are complex issues leading to people with disability not getting the right supports in prison and when they leave.
- We need more research to better understand the support needs of people with disability who have committed serious violent or sexual offences when exiting custody in Australia.

The next part of the research will include interviews with people with disability who have committed serious violent or sexual offences and focus groups with professionals who work with this group.

This part of the project will be completed later in 2026. For more information about this project, please contact research@ndis.gov.au.