

FOI_1628_2023-24 – FOI Request concerning Long Covid Services

1. Do you have a specialist service for long Covid patients within your trust? Please name the clinic/service

Yes. Solent Adult Long Covid Service

2. How many patients in your local NHS area have been referred to the clinic/service to date? Please break down by year to date ie 12 months to this date in 2024 and then each of the previous 12 months back to the start of the service

April 2023 – March 2024 - 237

April 2022 – March 2023 - 483

April 2021 – March 2022 - 636

January 2021 – April 2021 - 103

3. Is the service physician-led?

No, the service is led by Allied Health Professionals – we have access to Respiratory and Rehabilitation Consultants for advice via multidisciplinary meetings.

We have plans for access to GP support within a weekly MDT.

4. Please provide figures for how many patients referred to the clinic/service received the following type of treatment in-house:

Difficult to provide exact figure due to the vast number of referrals into the service since the start. Most patients require support with the management of fatigue, breathlessness and deconditioning

a) physical rehabilitation – please give details

Rarely appropriate, we support people with breathing retraining and following screening for post-exertional malaise may prescribe other exercises or encourage people to start attending a gym / yoga /Pilates when their fatigue is well managed, and they feel ready to start working on their physical fitness. We may also refer to Pulmonary Rehabilitation where the patient is appropriate and meets the referral criteria for this service.

We are in the early stages of developing an activity group to support physical rehabilitation for appropriate patients within the developing service model.

b) Graded exercise therapy

No, we do not offer GET. We encourage patients to find a sustainable level of activity and to gently increase it, to wait and to carefully monitor their body's response before increasing any further. This is not a linear process and patients may need to reduce their activity if symptoms increase or change.

c) CBT or other psychological intervention – please state whether this is to cope with symptoms or with a view to improving/treating them

We do not have a psychologist within the core Long Covid Service, however we do have psychologist within our Long covid fatigue aspect of the service who offers ACT

based therapy to support the fatigue self-management. We also have access to a Psychologist within our MDTs

d) Advice on pacing

Yes – all patients, this will include pacing of mental and emotional activity as well as physical activity.

e) A brain retraining or Neuro Linguistic Programming-based course such as the Lightning Process, Gupta Programme or Nuffield programme (please specify which)

N/A

f) drug treatment

N/A, we are commissioned as a rehabilitation service and not a medical service, we do not prescribe medication.

g) other, please specify

Breathing pattern disorder management

General lifestyle information about healthy eating and improving sleep quality

Measures to maximise mental well-being,

Signposting to other appropriate sources of support

Relaxation.

Support and strategies to manage cognitive impairment.

5. Does the service have the ability to prescribe medications to long Covid patients for symptoms where appropriate?

No, we are a rehab service. Medical responsibility remains with the patients GP.

6. If so, please list the 3 most common drugs prescribed for long Covid patients by the clinic, with numbers of prescriptions if possible.

N/A

7. Does the service have the ability to order diagnostic tests and scans?

No – these must be requested through the patient's GP or hospital teams that they have been referred into.

8. If so please list the 3 most commonly ordered tests/scans/diagnostic questionnaires for long Covid patients by the clinic

N/A

9. If not provided in-house, which of the following types of services does the clinic/service refer patients onto or recommend?

a) physical rehabilitation – please give details

Community Therapy Teams

Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Local leisure providers following careful screening.

b) Graded exercise therapy

We do not offer GET or refer patients for GET

c) CBT or other psychological intervention – please state whether this is to cope with symptoms or with a view to improving/treating them

NHS Talking Therapies to help patients cope with symptoms and address any underlying personal difficulties that may be worsening their symptoms.

d) Advice on pacing

The service offers group education and individual consultations to support with managing fatigue.

Can refer onto specialist fatigue service if indicated (Long Covid Fatigue Service).

e) A brain retraining or Neuro Linguistic Programming-based course such as the Lightning Process, Gupta Programme or Nuffield programme (please specify which)

N/A

f) drug treatment

GP

g) other, please specify

Interventions to manage cognitive impairment through use of adaptive strategies (not brain retraining)

Relaxation techniques so that patients can rest more effectively.

Vocational rehabilitation and support to return to work.

10. How many staff do you have working in the service FTE (full time equivalent) broken down by job title of:

Doctor 0 Hours

Nurse 0 Hours

Physiotherapist 1.08 WTE

Occupational therapist 1.0 WTE

Clinical psychologist/ CBT practitioner / psychotherapist/counsellor 0 Hours

Care Co-ordinator 0.5 WTE

Admin 0.6 WTE

Other Please Specify:

Paramedic 0.5 WTE

Midwife 0.8 WTE

Long Covid Fatigue Service: Covers across HLOW

Physiotherapy 0.56 WTE

Occupational Therapy 0.78 WTE

Psychology 0.1 WTE

11. For any doctors employed, please specify their specialism eg GP, cardiologist, neurologist, psychiatrist

N/A

12. Is the clinic expected to continue running after 2025?

Currently working closely with ICB to look at the future of the service and what is required. Working on an integrated long term conditions pilot working in partnership with our Pain, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME, Long Covid Fatigue service, Fibromyalgia & Long Covid in line with the NHS long term plan (The NHS Long Term Plan has advised that rehabilitation for patients within the community should offer pathways, which are needs led and symptom focused, rather than condition specific).