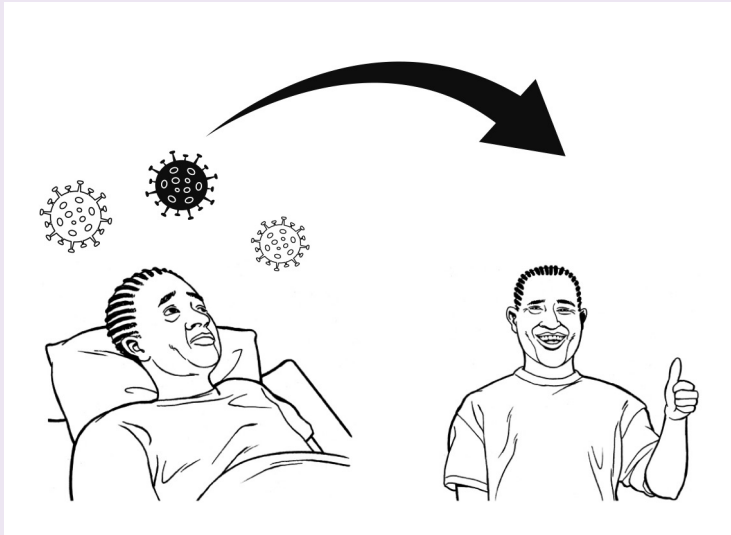


About long COVID

Easy Read leaflet



RECOGNISE.
REACH OUT.
RECOVER.



We are here to support you through your recovery from COVID-19.

This easy read booklet answers these questions:

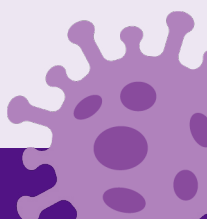
- What is long COVID?



- What are the symptoms of long COVID?

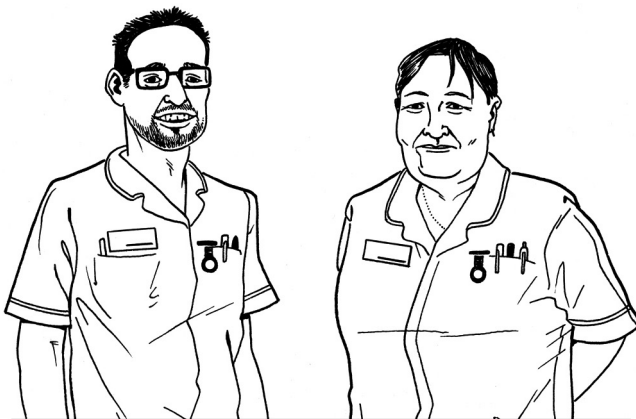


- Where can I get mental health support?



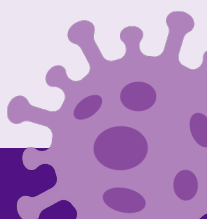


- What can I do about my symptoms?

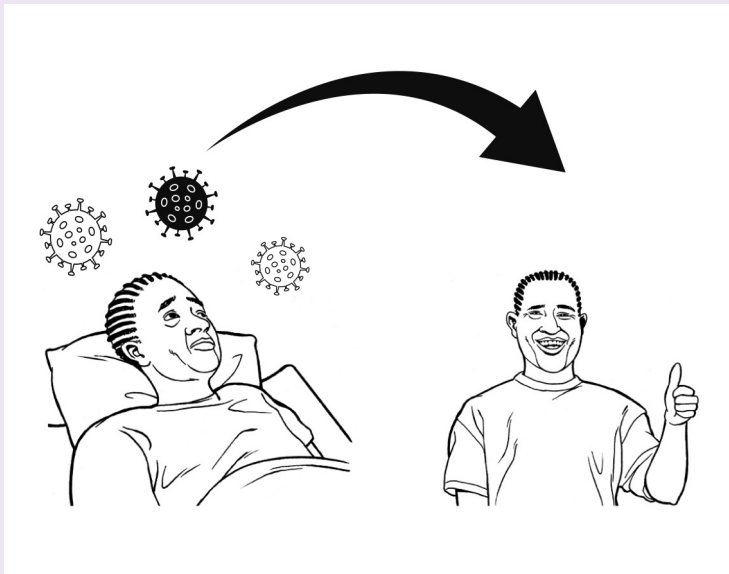


Long COVID service

- What is the long COVID service?



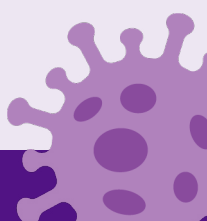
What is long COVID?

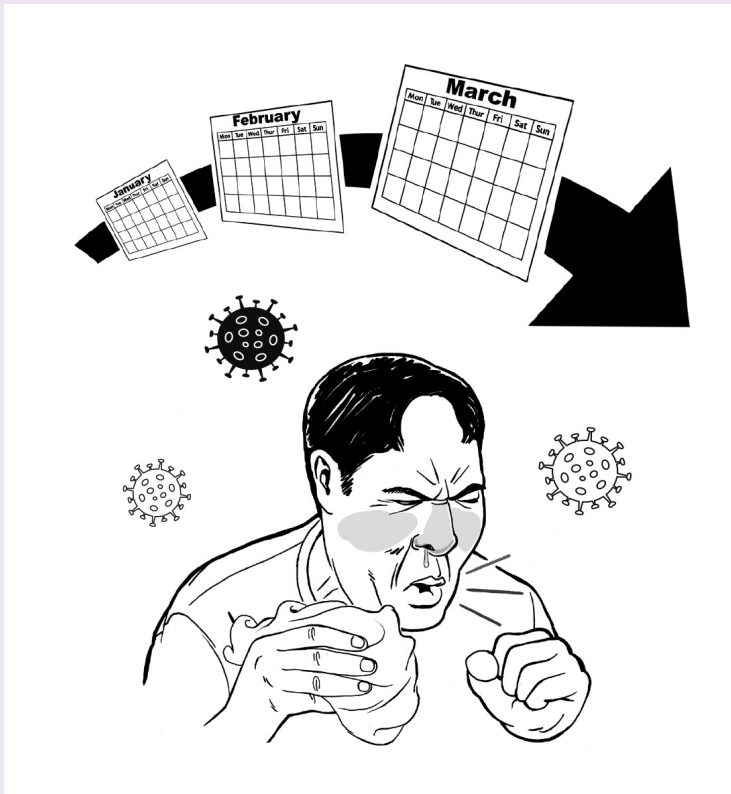


Most people with **COVID-19 (coronavirus)** feel better in a few days or weeks of their first symptoms.



COVID-19 affects everyone differently. It is important not to compare yourself with others.

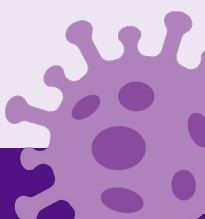




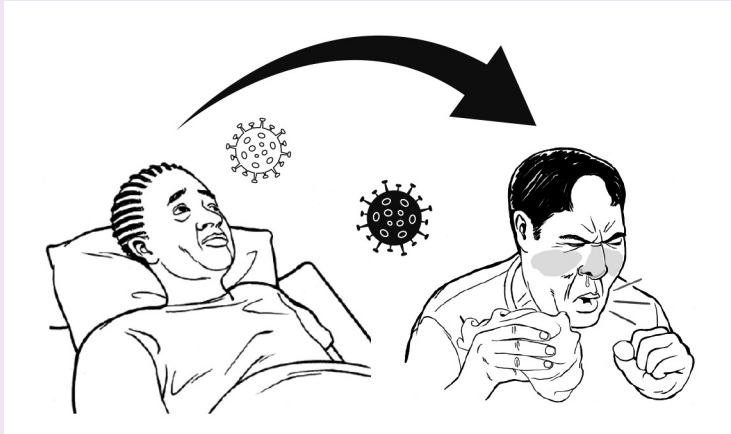
For some people, symptoms can last longer. This is called **long COVID**.



Because long COVID is a new condition, we do not understand everything about it yet.



What are the symptoms of long COVID?

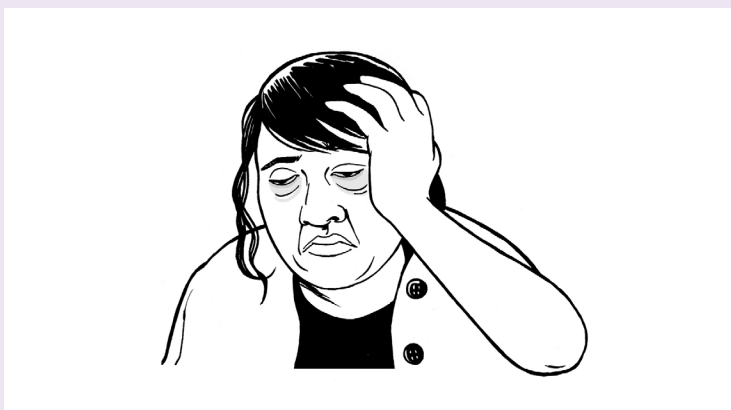


As you recover (get better) from COVID-19, you may still have symptoms that affect your body and mind.



The symptoms are not the same for everyone. The most common symptoms are:

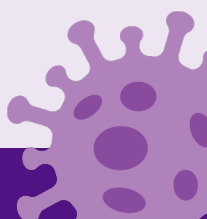
- Feeling short of breath (**breathlessness**)



- Extreme tiredness or low energy (**fatigue**)

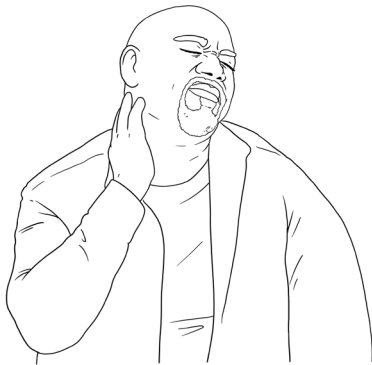


- Finding it hard to remember things or to focus (**brain fog**)



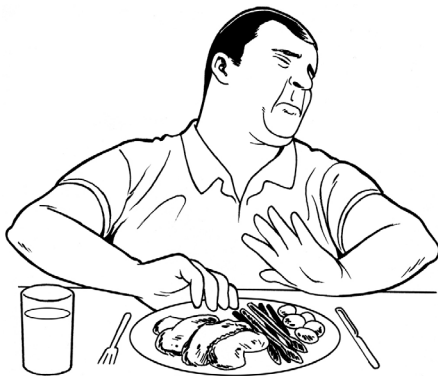


- Feelings of anxiety or depression (**low mood**).



Other symptoms include:

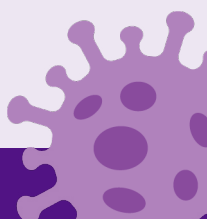
- Aching muscles or joints



- Changes to your sense of smell or taste, or not feeling hungry



- A fast heartbeat





- Feeling dizzy



- Earache or ringing in your ears (**tinnitus**)

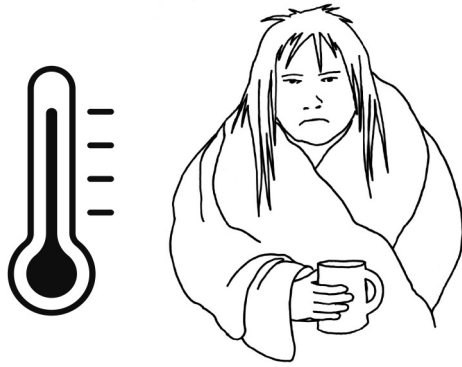


- Feeling sick, or a stomach ache



- Finding it hard to sleep





- A high temperature



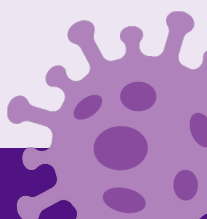
- A cough or sore throat

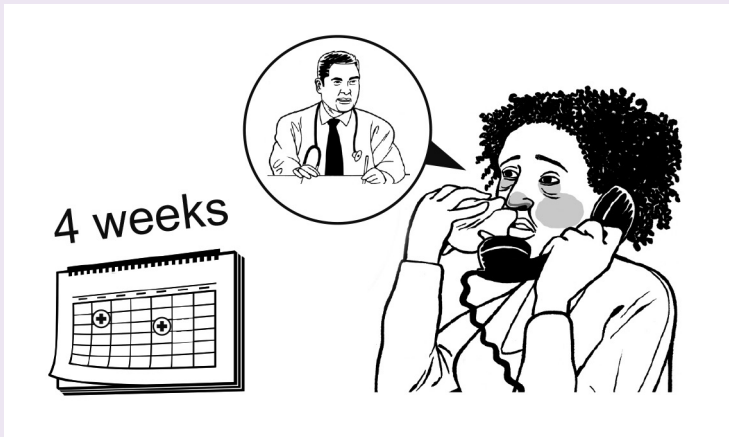


- Headaches.



Your symptoms should get better over time, but some may last longer than others.





If you have symptoms for 4 weeks or more, contact your GP practice and ask for a review.

Where can I get mental health support?



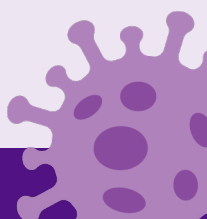
Mental health support is available if you feel like you cannot cope with your symptoms.



North Staffordshire helpline
0800 032 8728

The complex block contains an illustration of a map of North Staffordshire on the left and a person on a landline phone on the right. Below these is a white box with a black border containing the text 'North Staffordshire helpline' and the phone number '0800 032 8728'.

If you live in Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-Under-Lyme or Staffordshire Moorlands and need urgent mental health support, call the **North Staffordshire helpline** any time on **0800 032 8728**.





South Staffordshire helpline
0808 196 3002

If you live in Stafford, Stone, Rugeley, Cannock, South Staffordshire, Lichfield, Burton, Uttoxeter or Tamworth and need urgent mental health support, call the **South Staffordshire helpline** any time on **0808 196 3002**.

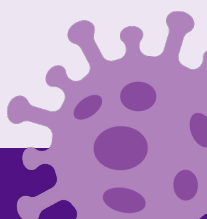
What can I do about my symptoms?



If you have had any symptoms for less than 4 weeks, visit staffsstokeics.org.uk/longcovid. The website has information about how you can manage your symptoms.



If you have had any symptoms for **4 weeks or more**, contact your GP practice.





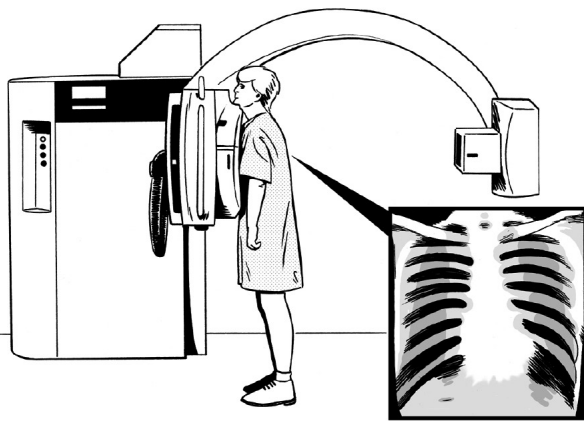
Your GP will ask you about your symptoms and how they are affecting you.



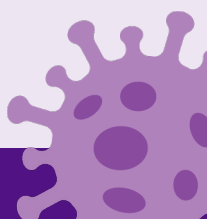
They may suggest some tests to find out more about your symptoms.

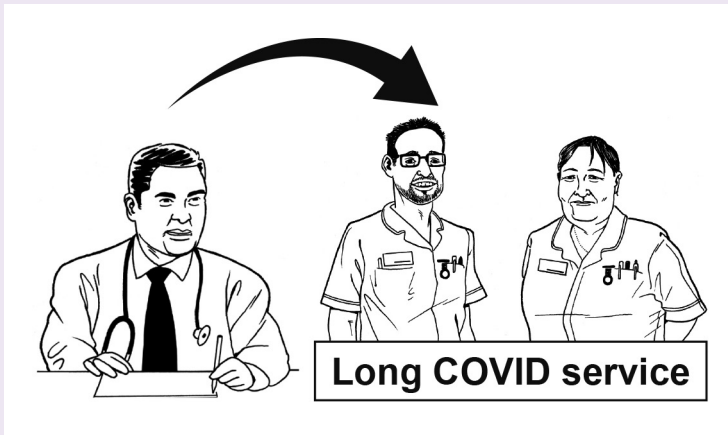
These might include:

- blood tests
- checking your blood pressure and heart rate
- a chest X-ray.



You may be given advice about how to manage and **monitor** (track) your symptoms at home.





If the symptoms are having a big impact on your life, you may be referred to the **long COVID** service for more support.

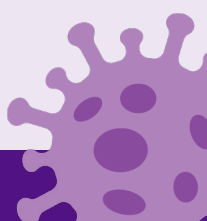
What is the long COVID service?

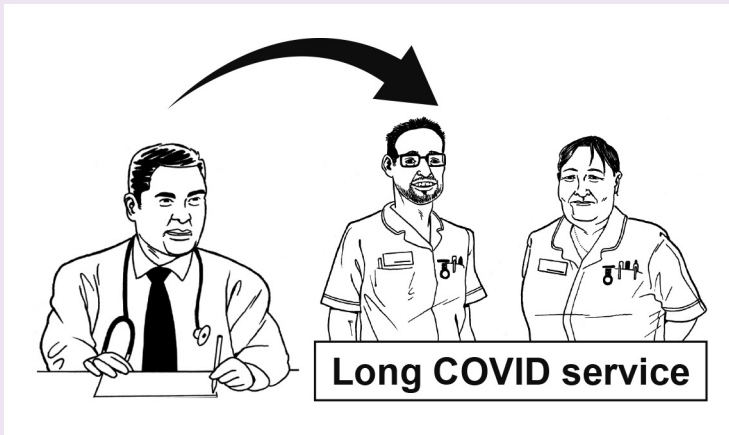


The long COVID service is available to people aged 18 or over who live in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. It is run by Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust



It brings together different specialists including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, GPs, care coordinators and psychology support. This provides a range of support for people as they recover from COVID-19 or who need help to manage their symptoms.





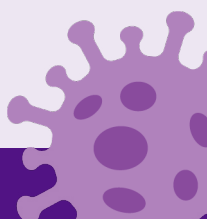
You cannot refer yourself to the long COVID service. You must be referred by your GP or another healthcare professional.



A care coordinator will assess you over the phone to discuss your symptoms at 4 weeks, 8 weeks and 12 weeks. During this time, they can advise you on how to manage your symptoms yourself, or guidance from a clinician as needed.



If you continue to have symptoms after 12 weeks, a clinician will contact you. They will complete an assessment and create a care plan for you.





The long COVID service can offer different types of support, including:

- Symptom management workshops



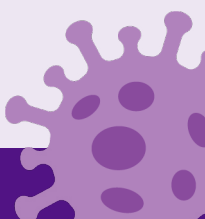
- Support groups

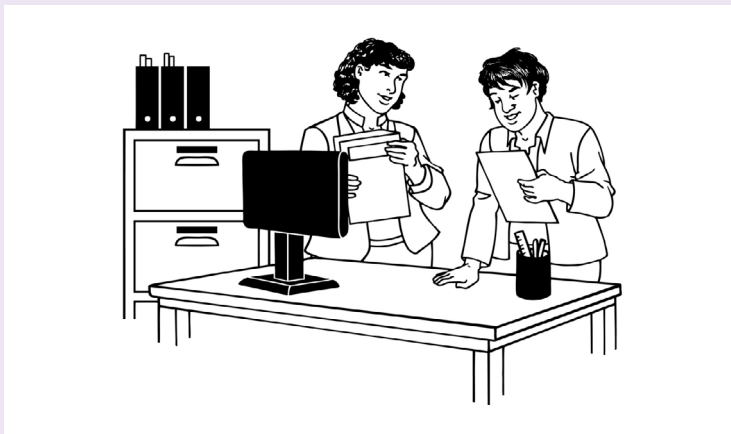


- Wellbeing support

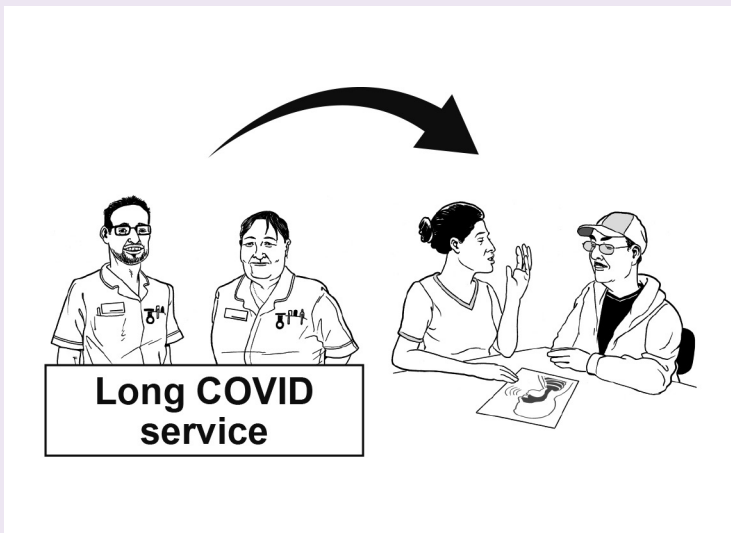


- Exercise classes



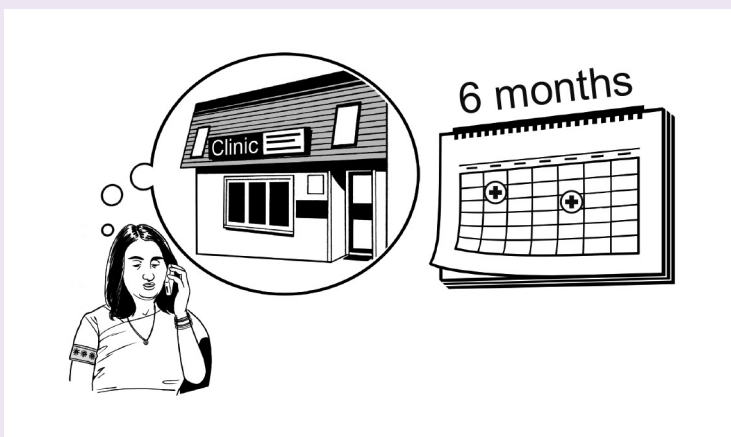


- Support to go back to work, including workplace assessments if needed.



They may also refer you for more tests or to other services, such as:

- Respiratory services (for help with breathing)
- Speech and language therapy
- Physiotherapy.



Your referral will stay open for 6 months. This means you can arrange a follow-up appointment if you need it.

Produced by:

[NHS Arden and Greater East Midlands Commissioning Support Unit](#)
and [NHS Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit](#)

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