

NICE guideline on Long COVID/Post-COVID Syndrome: Information for GPs

www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG188 - Updated November 2021

Key recommendations for your practice to be aware of:

1. **Initial Consultation:** offer to anyone with new/ongoing symptoms 4 weeks or more after COVID-19.
2. **Diagnosis:** consider for symptoms continuing more than 12 weeks after COVID-19.
 - Symptoms are wide-ranging, can fluctuate and change over time, and can affect any system in the body. See guideline for common symptoms.
3. **Assessment:** should be *“holistic and person-centred”*, including:
 - Comprehensive clinical history, including history and exacerbation of other conditions
 - Assessment of physical, cognitive, psychological & psychiatric symptoms, and functional abilities
 - Nature and severity of symptoms and how they affect patient’s life
 - *“Ask about any feelings of worry or distress. Listen to their concerns with empathy and acknowledge the impact on their day-to-day life.”*
4. **Investigations & Referrals:** offer tests and investigations tailored to signs and symptoms to rule out acute or life-threatening complications.
 - Offer referral to an integrated Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) service – In Sheffield this is the Long Covid Rehabilitation Hub.
 - *“Do not exclude people from referral to an integrated multidisciplinary assessment service or for further investigations or specialist input based on the absence of a positive SARS-CoV-2 test.”*
5. **Support:** give advice and information, including:
 - ways to self-manage symptoms, such as setting realistic goals
 - who to contact if worried about symptoms, or for support with self-management
 - sources of advice and support, including support groups, social prescribing, online forums, apps
 - other services, including social care, housing and employment, advice about financial support
 - information to share with their family, carers and friends.

Post Exertional Malaise: Where patients display exacerbation of symptoms after exertion (as seen in ME/CFS), they should **not be encouraged to increase their activity levels**, as this can worsen symptoms. Refer to NICE guideline for ME/CFS: www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG206

Healthwatch Sheffield and Sheffield ME and Fibromyalgia Group would especially welcome hearing that this has been raised at a practice meeting to ensure full awareness by all practitioners. Details about the extensive range of activities for people living with the conditions provided by Sheffield ME and Fibromyalgia Group, who support people with Long COVID, can be found at www.sheffieldmegroup.co.uk or email info@sheffieldmegroup.co.uk

A pack of resources developed by the Long Covid Project to support people living with Long Covid are available at: <https://www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk/long-covid-resources>