

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is long COVID and what are its symptoms?

Long Covid describes a set of symptoms that continue long after the initial Covid-19 infection has gone. Even people who had relatively moderate Covid-19 at the time can experience Long Covid symptoms and can be left with lasting health problems.

On the whole, the Covid-19 virus has not had a severe impact on the physical health of children and young people in the same way it has affected older people. However, that is not to say that children cannot experience symptoms of Long Covid in the same way that many adults are thought to, and it is still unclear as to what the long term impact of having caught the virus may be.

Doctors are still in the early stages of understanding Long Covid and there are a variety of different symptoms affecting many parts of the body.

There is no medical definition or list of symptoms shared by all patients - two people with Long Covid can have very different experiences. Symptoms can include: fatigue, breathlessness, a cough that won't go away, joint pain, muscle aches, hearing and eyesight problems, headaches, loss of smell and taste as well as damage to the heart, lungs, kidneys and gut. Mental health problems have also been reported including depression, anxiety and struggling to think clearly.

### Where can I find out more and/or access self-help?

A website called *Your COVID Recovery* - [www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk](http://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk) - has been launched to help individuals recover from Covid-19 and manage the effects on both their body and mind effectively.

The website contains general information and advice for the public which can help to reduce the impact that Covid-19 and symptoms of Long Covid have on their day-to-day lives. These include issues with taste and smell, headaches, and concentration/memory problems.

The Humber Long Covid Triage & Assessment Service has also produced a very useful information pack to aid patients' recovery after coronavirus. This is available online at: <https://www.hullccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/10844-nhs-hull-long-covid-web.pdf>

In addition, there is also a *Your Covid Recovery* app for people who have already been seen/reviewed by a clinician. Users can access more personalised and tailored modules covering topics such as fatigue and breathlessness management and nutritional advice. Individuals are encouraged to set goals and choose the resources that may help them to achieve their targets. This is available to all following an assessment with a healthcare professional and referral to the programme.

### What is the Paediatric Long Covid Assessment Service?

The Paediatric Long Covid Assessment Service is run by Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (HUTH) on behalf of hospital trusts in the Humber, Coast and Vale region, namely:

- Northern Lincolnshire & Goole Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

The service will provide assessment for children referred to HUTH by paediatricians who believe the symptoms a child is presenting with are likely to be Long Covid. This can be either a community paediatrician or a paediatrician based at the child's local hospital.

Referrals will be considered by a team comprising a senior paediatric consultant, a child psychologist, an occupational therapist and a physiotherapist; these people comprise the multi-disciplinary team (MDT).

The service is not a distinct service with dedicated staffing, accommodation and resources; the relevant staff will perform their role within the Paediatric Long Covid Assessment Service in addition to their regular duties. Therefore, the service will provide assessment using a combination of weekly multi-disciplinary team meetings (MDTs) and face to face assessments when appropriate. Those patients who need to be assessed in person will be invited to attend East Riding Community Hospital in Beverley.

### **How does my child access the Paediatric Long Covid Assessment Service?**

If a parent, carer or guardian believes their child is experiencing symptoms of long Covid, they must contact their GP in the first instance. Their GP will make a referral to the local hospital and if a child's local paediatrician feels the child and their symptoms are appropriate, a referral to the Paediatric Long Covid Assessment Service will be made.

Parents cannot self-refer their child to the service, nor can a GP make a direct referral; this is to ensure other common causes of a child's symptoms can be considered by their local hospital and either treated or potentially ruled out first before a request for the Paediatric Long Covid Assessment Service to review the child is made.

### **Does referral mean my child has Long Covid?**

A referral to the Paediatric Long Covid Assessment Service does not constitute a diagnosis or in any other way confirm a child has Long Covid. The purpose of the referral is to assess a child and then formulate a suitable care plan for their symptoms/issues.

### **When will the service start?**

The Paediatric Long Covid Assessment Service will begin on Monday 16 August 2021.

### **What will the service do?**

The team of health professionals making up the Paediatric Long Covid Assessment Service will review the referrals made to them by either community paediatricians or other hospital-based paediatricians within the Humber, Coast and Vale area. Their role is to determine, based on the combination and complexity of a child's symptoms, whether Long Covid is felt to be the cause and then either make appropriate onward referrals for treatment or recommend treatment plans or other support to manage a child's symptoms. At this stage, HUTH will not provide any specific treatment for children with Long Covid, except where a

child lives in and/or would ordinarily access healthcare and treatment within Hull and the East Riding.

**Will my child and I have to travel to hospital(s) in Hull or East Yorkshire for appointments?**

The service will be provided from the East Riding Community Hospital in Beverley. Travel to Beverley will not be necessary for all children. In some circumstances, a child's case will be reviewed at a multi-disciplinary team meeting without the need to physically see or examine the child. In other cases, members of the team will need to see the child to carry out a full assessment e.g. to determine the severity of any mobility issues.

If the team does need to see a child in person, the child will be seen in Beverley and if multiple assessments are needed, the team will endeavour to carry these out on the same day. In a limited number of cases, it may be possible to conduct virtual/video appointments. Acknowledging that some children may live many miles away, the team will endeavour to keep travel to a minimum, and families should normally expect to access any treatment which the assessment service recommends from their own local hospital.

**What is demand expected to be like/how long will my child have to wait?**

At this stage, it is unclear what level of demand there will be for the service however children will be assessed in order of clinical priority.

In the meantime, please visit the *Your COVID Recovery* website - [www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk](http://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk) which contains tips and information on managing symptoms for those who have not yet been seen or reviewed by a clinician.