

People with Long COVID

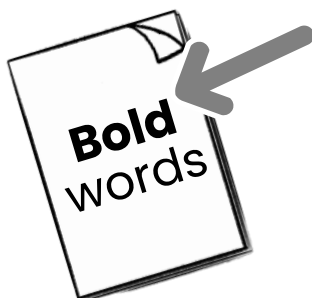


**easy
read**

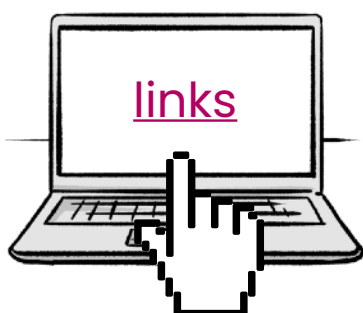


Contents

	Page
Introduction	3
What the NHS are doing	5
What we did	10
What we found out	11
What we think should change	12
For more information	15



In this Easy Read document, difficult words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after they have been used.



Some words are pink and underlined. These are links which will go to another website which has more information.

Introduction



We are Healthwatch in North Central London. This is the Healthwatch organisations in Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington.



We work to make sure health and care services in North Central London are the best they can be for the people who use them.



We have been looking at services that help people with **Long COVID**.



Long COVID is where people carry on being ill from COVID-19 for more than 4 weeks.



There are around 1.5 million people with Long COVID in the UK.



The NHS have new ways to support people with Long COVID.



In North Central London, people with Long COVID are supported by University College London Hospitals.



The different Healthwatch organisations in North Central London agreed to work on a Long COVID project in 2021.



We looked at what the NHS are doing now.

This information explains:

- What we found out.
- What we think should change.



What the NHS are doing

There are 3 parts to the support the NHS give:



1. Finding people who might have Long COVID



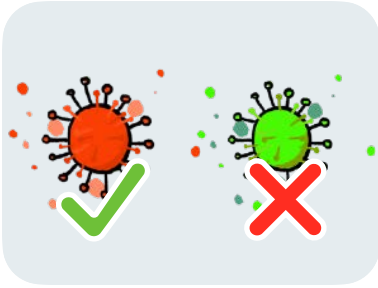
Patients who have been in hospital with COVID are checked after 4 weeks to see if they have Long COVID.



Other patients might go to their GP. This is their local doctor.



Some GPs might look for patients who have been very ill with COVID and ask if they are still ill after 4 weeks.



Doctors should make sure it is not a different illness before they say it is Long COVID.



2. Testing for Long COVID

There are 4 parts to testing for Long COVID:



1. Doctors should ask patients who might have Long COVID to fill out a form.

This form helps them explain their **symptoms**.



Symptoms are changes or feelings in your body when you get poorly. For example, headaches or feeling sick.



2. Doctors should talk to patients at an appointment and decide what is wrong with them.



3. Doctors should give patients ways to help themselves feel better at home.



4. If the patient needs it, the doctor should send them to see another doctor.



If the patient needs help right away, they should be sent to hospital.



Otherwise, the patient should be sent to a **Single Point of Access**.

A **Single Point of Access** is a place where patients can get all the care for Long COVID that they need.



3. Single Point of Access

The Single Point of Access will decide what care the patient needs. This might be:



- Going to hospital to see a doctor who knows a lot about Long COVID.



If the patient feels better, doctors should tell them to cancel their hospital appointment.



This will help the doctor to see more people who need it.



- Going to local support in the community to help with getting better.



- Working with the patient's GP to help them get better.



- Going to an online meeting to talk about more care.

What we did



We wanted to:

- Find out if people thought there were things the NHS was not doing well.



- Help services to support local people to get better on their own.

We found out what people thought in 3 ways:



- An online survey.



- Speaking to 1 person at a time.



- Speaking to groups of people.

What we found out

People said that:



- Long COVID made their health and **wellbeing** worse.

Wellbeing means feeling happy and healthy in your body and mind.



- Long COVID made it difficult for them to do their jobs.



- It was difficult to get support from the NHS for Long COVID.



- It was hard to find out if they had Long COVID.



- GPs didn't always know very much about Long COVID.

What we think should change



The NHS

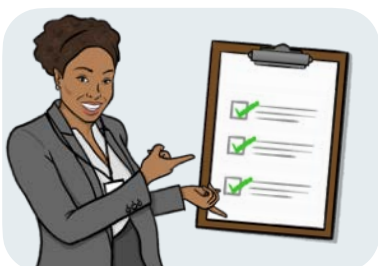
The NHS should:



- Make it easier for people to see a doctor.



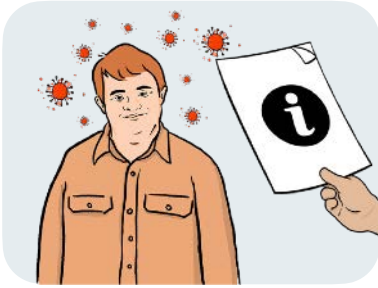
- Give doctors and nurses more training on Long COVID.



- Let people know about the support for Long COVID that they can get.



- Make sure everyone can access Long COVID support and the support meets their physical and mental health needs.



- Give patients Long COVID information in a way that they can understand.



- Make sure Long COVID patients know how they will be checked up on after their first appointment.



- Give patients ways to support themselves straight away.



- Spend money on local support groups for people with Long COVID.

The Long COVID Single Point of Access should:



- Give patients the email address and telephone number of their care team.

Councils



Local councils should work with teachers to help support families with children who cannot go to school because they have Long COVID.



Local councils should look at who has Long COVID and make sure everyone can get help if they need it.



Local councils should share what they find out about Long COVID in the area with the public.

Jobs



Councils and the NHS should support people with Long COVID who work for them.



They should help them to work in a way that is good for them.

For more information

Healthwatch Barnet



You can look at our website here:

www.healthwatchbarnet.co.uk

If you need more information
please contact us by:



- post:
Barnet & Southgate College
7 Bristol Avenue, Colindale
London
NW9 4BR



- phone: 020 3475 1308

Healthwatch Camden



You can look at our website here:
www.healthwatchcamden.co.uk

If you need more information
please contact us by:



- post:
85 – 87 Bayham Street
Camden
London
NW1 0AG



- phone: 020 7383 2402

Healthwatch Enfield



You can look at our website here:

www.healthwatchenfield.co.uk

If you need more information
please contact us by:



- post:
Community House
311 Fore Street
Edmonton
London
N9 0PZ



- phone: 020 8373 6283

Healthwatch Haringey



You can look at our website here:
www.healthwatchharingey.co.uk

If you need more information
please contact us by:



- post:
Tottenham Town Hall
Town Hall Approach Road
London
N15 4RX



- phone: 020 8888 0579

Healthwatch Islington



You can look at our website here:
www.healthwatchislington.co.uk

If you need more information
please contact us by:



- post:
6 – 9 Manor Gardens
Islington
London
N7 6LA



- phone: 07538 764 436