

Long Covid definition

NICE guidance (NG188) provides the Clinical definitions for the initial illness and long COVID at different times:

- **Acute COVID-19:** signs and symptoms of COVID-19 for up to 4 weeks.
- **Ongoing symptomatic COVID-19:** signs and symptoms of COVID-19 from 4 to 12 weeks.
- **Post-COVID-19 syndrome:** signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19 continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis.

In addition to the clinical case definitions, 'long COVID' is commonly used to describe signs and symptoms that continue or develop after acute COVID-19. It includes both ongoing symptomatic COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 syndrome (defined above).



Symptoms

Wide ranging and varied

- **Respiratory-** Breathlessness and cough
- **Cardiovascular symptoms-** Chest tightness/pain and palpitations
- **Generalised symptoms** – fatigue, fever and pain
- **Neurological symptoms-** Cognitive impairment ('brain fog', loss of concentration or memory issues), Headache, Sleep disturbance, Peripheral neuropathy symptoms (pins and needles and numbness), Dizziness, Delirium (in older populations)
- **Gastrointestinal symptoms-** Abdominal pain, nausea, Diarrhoea, Anorexia and reduced appetite (in older populations)
- **Musculoskeletal symptoms** – Joint and muscle pain
- **Psychological/psychiatric symptoms** – Depression and anxiety
- **Ear, nose and throat symptoms** –Tinnitus, Earache, Sore throat, Dizziness, Loss of taste and/or smell.
- **Dermatological-** Skin rash



Current Service

Cheshire and Merseyside (C&M) Respiratory Clinical Network were tasked (Nov 2020) by NHSE/I with developing a **post COVID-19 assessment service (PCAS)**. **The service is designed to support patients with symptoms of COVID-19 lasting more than 12 weeks and is based on NICE guidance.**

The Post Covid Assessment Service opened for referrals in January 2021; based in Liverpool and provided by Liverpool University Foundation Trust (LUFT). This is an 'all age' assessment Service with Alder Hey Children's hospital supporting those patients under 18 years old. The Service accepts referrals from GPs across Cheshire and Merseyside.

Patients are offered a **telephone or video consultation** and are not expected to travel to Liverpool. The Assessment service **provides a full assessment and treatment plan**, referring the patient back to their existing local services e.g., Pulmonary Rehab, Improving Access to psychological therapies (IAPT), or secondary care consultants for single organ issues e.g., cardiology to support ongoing treatment.

Initial funding of £450K was made available to support the C&M integrated Care system (ICS) to develop and resource this regional assessment service for the year ending March 2021. A proportion of this was allocated to the Cheshire and Merseyside Pulmonary Rehabilitation teams to support assessments locally. It is important to note that this funding was specifically for assessment services only and the additional demand for treatment was supported by hospital trusts.



Referrals to Cheshire and Merseyside ICS Post COVID assessment service (June 21)

Place	COVID-19 Infections to 26/06/21	Referral to PCAS	% of total referrals to C&M	Long COVID-19 Cases per 100K Population
Cheshire East	23,299(CIPHA)	47	9.6%	12.2
Cheshire West	23,914(CIPHA)	67	13.7%	19.5
Halton	12,563	21	4.3%	16.2
Warrington	19,375(CIPHA)	54	11%	25.7
For Comparison				
Liverpool	52,371(CIPHA)	127	26%	25.5



Development of Long Covid Services for 2021/2022



National guidance for Long Covid was published by NHSE/I in April 2021 to inform the commissioning of PCAS services and states that:

‘Clinics should offer physical, cognitive, psychological and psychiatric assessments with the aim of providing consistent services for people with post-COVID syndrome (‘Long COVID’). These services should support those who need them, irrespective of whether they were hospitalised and regardless of whether clinically diagnosed or by a SARS-CoV-2 test’

Following the guidance issued and building on the experience and learning from the Liverpool PCAS service, a new pathway has been proposed which brings the multi-disciplinary team into the localities (Tier 3) with only the most severe cases being referred onto the C&M PCAS (Tier 4). This new pathway is in development and funding will support the development of the place-based multi-disciplinary teams (MDT’s)



NHS Long Covid Plan



The NHS Long Covid Plan was published in June 2021 which sets out the 10 key steps for 21/22 summarised as follows:

£70 million to expand Long COVID services and support treatment and rehabilitation pathways to add to the £24 million already spent on Post-COVID Assessment Clinics, the proportion of this allocated to the Cheshire and Merseyside system has been confirmed as £4 Million.

£30 million for the rollout of an enhanced service for general practice to support patients to be managed in primary care, where appropriate, and enable more consistent referrals to clinics for specialist assessment and treatment.

Care coordination- Care coordinators will support the running of Post-COVID Assessment Clinics

Establish 15 Post-COVID assessment children and young people's hubs across England in order to coordinate care across a range of services.

Develop standard rehabilitation pathway packages to treat the commonest symptoms of Long COVID.

Extend the use of the Your COVID Recovery online rehabilitation platform.

Collect and publish data to support operational performance, and clinical and research activities.

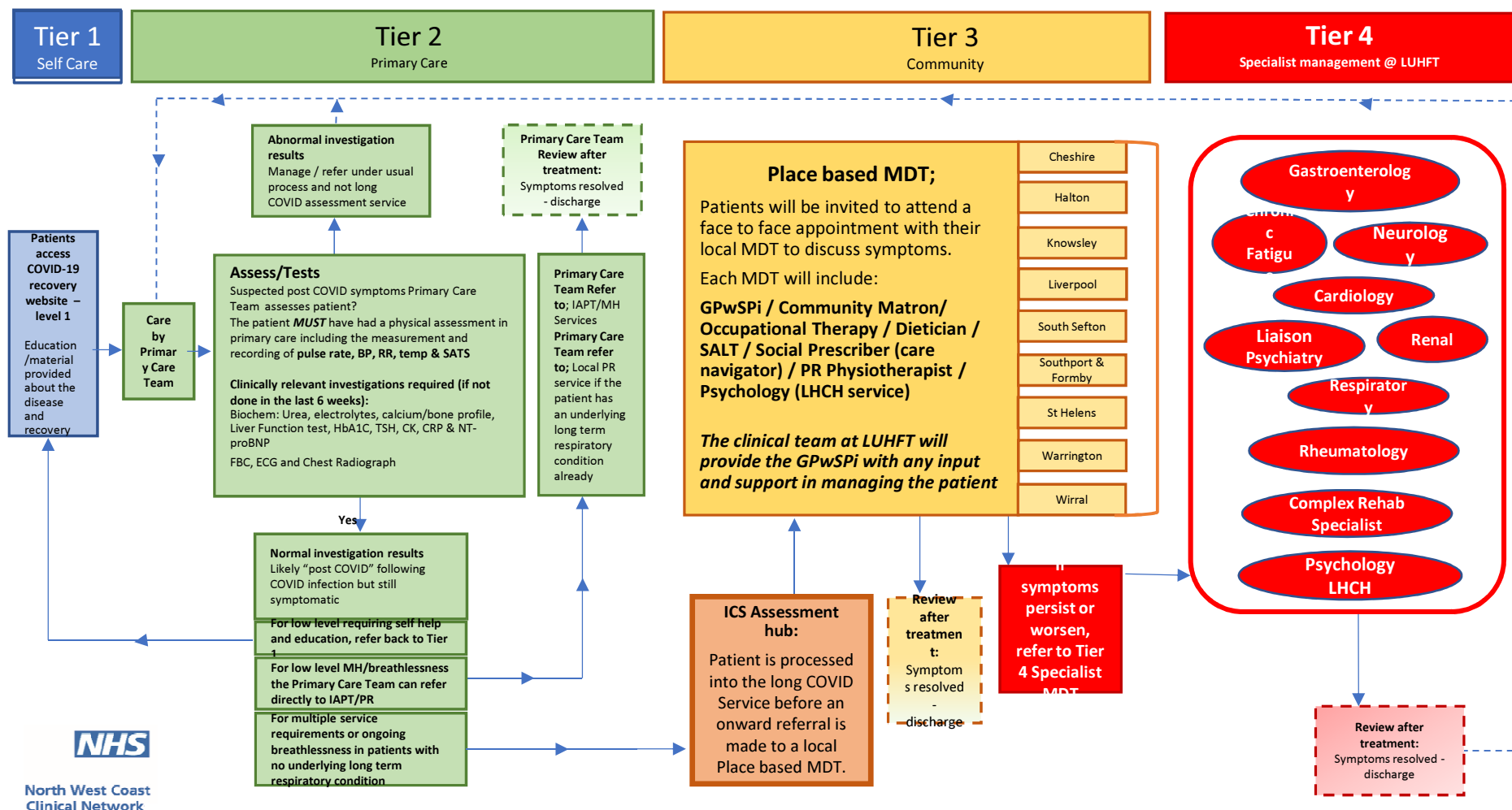
Focus on equity of access, outcomes and experience. The NHS will use data tools to track take up by gender, ethnicity and deprivation, against expected prevalence.

Promote good clinical practice through the national learning network on Long COVID for healthcare professionals

Support our NHS staff suffering from Long COVID

Cheshire Funding Allocation

Place	+Covid cases (Jan -Jul 21)	% of Total C&M cases	Funding Allocation 2021/2022
Cheshire West	14,605	10.9	310,396
Cheshire East	13,958	10.4	296,645





Community Support

- The Public Health team at CWAC have sent a Long Covid Survey and are currently looking at responses and arranging a focus group for Long Covid patients
- Health Watch are involved in exploring the Patient experience
- Nuffield Charitable foundation are providing free Covid rehabilitation classes are available
- Social prescribers will be part of the new place based Multidisciplinary teams to connect patients to Voluntary sector support.
- Local authorities are engaging with small and medium businesses to understand how they can support them to understand and manage staff suffering with Long Covid.