

27 December 2023

Specialist Service for Long Covid Patients

1. **Do you have a specialist service for long Covid patients? Please name the clinic/service.**

The Post-Covid Syndrome Service is the one-stop Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) assessment clinic. The post-Covid rehabilitation service is the rehabilitation strand of this service.

For the purpose of this FOI, we have included the assessment clinic and rehabilitation service together.

2. **How many patients in your local NHS area have been referred to the clinic/service to date?**

Since November 2021, 807 patients have been referred to the service.

3. **How many staff do you have working in the service FTE (full time equivalent) broken down by job title of:**

- a) **Doctor:** 0.2 WTE
b) **Nurse:** Vacant
c) **Physiotherapist:** 1.0 WTE
d) **Occupational Therapist:** 0.4 WTE

- e) **Clinical Psychologist / Psychiatrist / CBT practitioner:**

The Clinical Psychology service for post-Covid patients sits adjacent to the MDT assessment and rehabilitation service

0.2 WTE Band 5 Associate Psychologist is provided to the MDT to assist with rehabilitation programmes.

An additional 0.42 WTE Band 8B Clinical Psychologist and 0.4 WTE Band 5 Associate Psychologist make up the Clinical Health Psychology service, which provides psychological assessment and intervention specifically for post-Covid patients and which receives referrals directly from the MDT.

- f) **Other, please specify:**

- Clinical Co-Ordinator:** 0.6 WTE
Physiotherapy assistant: 0.2WTE
Administration: 0.5 WTE

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4. For any doctors employed, please specify their specialism, e.g. GP, Cardiologist, Neurologist

General Practitioner (GP)

5. Does the service have the ability in-house to prescribe medications to long Covid patients:

The service does not prescribe in-house medications to patients with Post-Covid Syndrome. There are no medications currently recommended by NICE or other clinical guidelines specifically for Post-Covid Syndrome. Occasionally recommendations are made to the patient's General Practitioner regarding medication management for associated conditions or for symptomatic benefit.

6. If so, please list the 3 most common drugs prescribed for long Covid patients by the clinic.

Not applicable, as advised above.

7. Does the service have the ability to order tests and scans?

The clinic can order blood tests, pulmonary function tests and ECGs. Prior to referral to the post-Covid clinic, standard tests such as CXR and bloods are carried out, if deemed appropriate by the GP. The clinic will refer directly to other specialist services such as Cardiology, Respiratory, ENT and Sleep Medicine, if further investigation or consults are required.

8. If so, please list the 3 most commonly ordered tests / scans / diagnostic questionnaires for long Covid patients by the clinic.

Please see above. As most tests are ordered by the GP prior to referral to the clinic, Belfast Trust do not hold this data.

We do not refer for scans. Our most common referrals are to ENT, Speech and Language therapy, Sleep Medicine and Respiratory.

With regard to diagnostic questionnaires, there is a standard data set completed: EQ5DL, PHQ9, GAD7 and FES PEMS.

9. Please provide figures for how many patients referred to the clinic / service received the following type of treatment:

a) A wellbeing programme: Numbers unavailable as self-referral

b) Physical rehabilitation: 202

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c) Psychological support

Patients of the post-Covid MDT have been able to avail of psychological support via written resources and bespoke psychology sessions delivered as part of an MDT rehabilitation programme. A breakdown of the number of patients accessing these is not available as some programmes have comprised multiple appointments but a total of 665 attended appointments are recorded across these programmes with Clinical Psychology input since commencement of the service.

In addition, Clinical Psychology workshops were offered to post-Covid MDT patients. Again, patients may have attended up to 3 sessions and the number of patients is unavailable but a total of 89 attended appointments are recorded across these workshops.

d) A brain retraining or Neuro Linguistic Programming-based course such as the Lightning Process, Gupta Programme or Nuffield programme (please specify which):

0

e) Drug treatment:

0

f) Other, please specify:

Belfast City Council post-Covid Pilates and yoga services - 130

10. If not provided in-house, which of the following types of services does the clinic / service refer patients on to or recommend?

a) A wellbeing programme

Chest, Heart & Stroke, Versus Arthritis, Belfast Recovery College, Condition Management Programme, Better days

b) Physical rehabilitation:

Pilates and yoga programme via local Leisure Centres, Healthwise Scheme and Chest Heart & Stroke.

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c) Psychological support:

The post-Covid MDT has also referred 73 patients for specialist Clinical Psychology assessment and therapy, which is provided as part of the service funded within post-Covid Psychological services.

d) A brain retraining or Neuro Linguistic Programming-based course such as the Lightning Process, Gupta Programme or Nuffield programme (please specify which):

Not applicable

e) Drug treatment:

Not applicable

f) Other, please specify:

Social prescribing, as part of the Connected Care Hub for Belfast, which include support for social isolation, finances and long-term health conditions.

11. Is the clinic expected to continue running after 2025?

Funding has been provided since 2021 on a non-recurrent basis. The service funding has been approved until 31 March 2024.