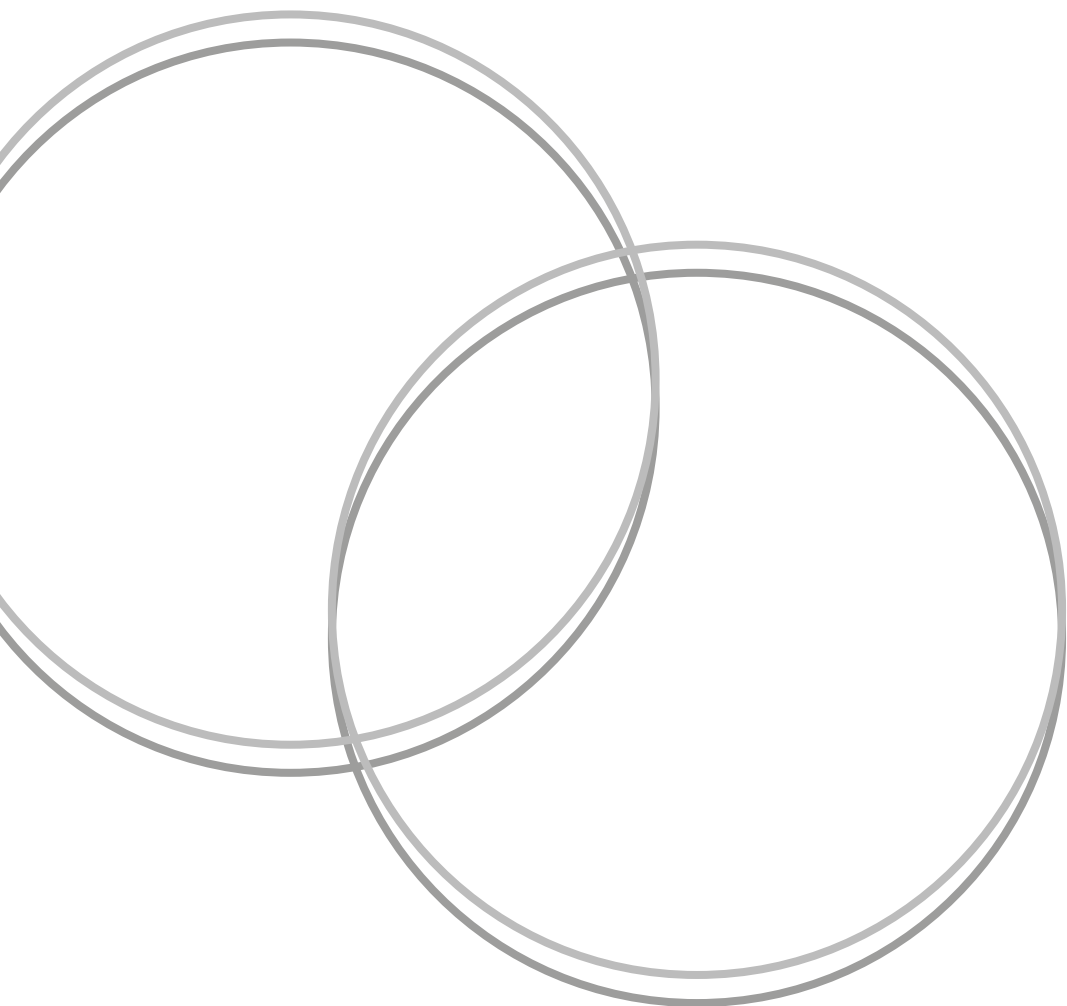




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Oxfordshire Post COVID Service

Information for patients



Introduction

You have received this leaflet as you have been referred to the Oxfordshire Post COVID-19 Service. We are specialists in helping people who have ongoing symptoms after having COVID-19.

People are referred to our service for many different reasons. You may have been referred to the service by your local doctor because you have ongoing symptoms after having COVID-19. You may have also been referred if you have needed high dependency care in hospital for COVID-19.

What is Long COVID / Post COVID-19 Syndrome?

Long-COVID (or 'post-COVID-19 syndrome' as it is formally recognised) can present with a variety of different symptoms and for some people these can become disabling and limit daily activities. Your local or health care professional has referred you to the Long-COVID service for further assessment and support.

"Signs and symptoms that develop during or following an infection consistent with COVID-19, continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis. It usually presents with clusters of symptoms, often overlapping, which fluctuate and change over time and can affect any system in the body."

National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE 2021)

Why have I been referred to the service?

There are two main aims of the service:

1. To assess your symptoms and check there is no alternative or additional causes for these. When there are concerns that there may be other causes for your symptoms, we will arrange further investigations as necessary.
2. To provide treatment and rehabilitative support where indicated and help you to develop ways to manage your symptoms. This is through a variety of methods such as advice on activity and energy, breathing and managing psychological reactions to symptoms.

Before your appointment

We will ask you to complete questionnaires to help us understand your symptoms and the impact these are having on your daily life. We may ask you to repeat these from time to time so we can reassess your symptoms.

Who will my appointment be with?

All referrals to our service are carefully read and considered by senior clinicians within our team. They decide upon the most appropriately skilled person within our team to assess you.

Our service is jointly run by experienced clinicians from Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (hospital trust) and Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (community trust) which means we have a wide range of clinicians able to help you.

We work closely as a team and have regular meetings to discuss the care of patients within the service. This helps us to be sure we are offering you the best possible treatment and support.

Where will my appointment be?

Depending upon which clinician your appointment is with, you might be invited to a phone consultation, an online virtual consultation, or a face-to-face consultation at the Churchill Hospital.

How long will my appointment be?

Typically appointments last 40 minutes. We will focus on the symptoms that are impacting on you and allow you to be able to ask any questions that you may have. The assessments do involve asking you many questions and it may be helpful to write down any concerns or queries you have prior to your appointment.

Which clinicians work in the Post COVID Service?

Doctors specialising in Respiratory Medicine

Many patients with Long-COVID struggle with breathlessness and find that they can no longer exercise normally. The respiratory doctor will evaluate the full extent of your symptoms but if breathlessness is a particular issue, they will ensure that there are not alternative explanations for this. This may involve a breathing test ('lung function') and you will be given a separate appointment for this test. They may also arrange a chest X-ray or other form of imaging, if not already undertaken.

Doctors specialising in Rehabilitation and Sports and Exercise Medicine

There are many other complex symptoms associated with long-COVID that can impact on your daily function and ability to work. A Rehabilitation Medicine specialist will be able to explore the causes for your symptoms and help form a plan alongside other health professionals to manage these.

Physiotherapists specialising in breathlessness and rehabilitation

Many people can feel ongoing breathlessness after having COVID. A physiotherapist will assess your symptoms and the impact that they are having and provide advice regarding management.

Occupational Therapists specialising in fatigue and vocational support

Many people can feel ongoing fatigue and 'brain fog' after having COVID. An Occupational Therapist will assess your symptoms and the impact they are having and provide advice regarding management strategies.

A Psychologist specialising in symptom management and rehabilitation

The symptoms of long-COVID affect people in different ways. A psychologist can work with you to identify psychological and behavioural strategies to help reduce the impact of symptoms and improve functioning and wellbeing and guide you towards recovery.

Post-COVID Specialist Nurse

Working alongside the multidisciplinary team, the post-COVID nurse provides assessment and support for patients as well as assists in the coordination of care within the hospital and community setting.

What will happen after my appointment?

After your appointment, we will write a summary of the problems that you have been experiencing, what our initial assessment has found, and a plan for what do to next. Every person is different and the plan going forward will be discussed with you. The plan may include additional assessments or tests, a recommendation for specific treatment, practical strategies or activity and symptom management strategies. Depending on your symptoms we may arrange onward care at one or more of the following:

- Continued support from the community post-COVID team
- Attendance at symptom management workshops
- Additional investigations or referral to another specialist clinic
- Further review after a time interval at the Long-COVID clinic
- Ongoing support from your GP

Who can I contact about my appointment?

If you have a query related to your appointment time you can contact the secretary on **01865 225 252**. If you have a general enquiry or concern related to your appointment the team can be contacted on **post.covid@ouh.nhs.uk** or via the secretary phone line.

If your assessment is with a physiotherapist or occupational therapist and you have a query about your appointment or a general enquiry the post COVID rehabilitation team can be contacted on **postcovidrehab@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk**.

Our service is involved in research into Post COVID-19 Syndrome, if you are interested in being involved please let us know. Taking part in research trials is entirely voluntary. Your decision to take part or not does not affect your ongoing care.

Feedback

If you would like to tell us anything about your experience using our service, please speak to a member of the team. Alternatively you can contact the patient advice and liason service (PALS).

Email: **PALS@ouh.nhs.uk**

Call: **01865 221 473**

You can also email: **feedback@ouh.nhs.uk**

For more information, please visit: **www.ouh.nhs.uk**

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

www.ouh.nhs.uk/information



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