

Humber Long Covid Triage and Assessment Service

What to expect before, during and after referral by your GP



Most patients with longer lasting symptoms after COVID-19 will be managed under the care of their GPs. Patients will receive help and support to self-manage their symptoms while other causes of their symptoms are explored, and ruled out first.

If your symptoms have not improved after 12 or more weeks you may be referred by your GP to a new service in the Humber area, which includes Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire.

The Humber Long COVID Triage and Assessment Service brings a range of health professionals together to ensure patients with more complex rehabilitation and recovery needs are referred onto the right clinical pathway to support them. Your GP will be able to refer you to this service if this is appropriate for you.

There are a few steps to this process:

1 Your GP appointment / Diagnosis

Your GP will discuss your ongoing symptoms with you to help make a provisional diagnosis of Long COVID. Depending on the severity of your symptoms, they may refer you directly to rehabilitation services. If your symptoms are severe and/or you have a long-term health condition that has worsened, your GP will carry out some tests before referring you to the Long Covid Triage and Assessment Service. These tests are important to rule out any other diagnosis for your symptoms first.

2 Tests and investigations before referral to the Long Covid Triage and Assessment Service (LCTAS)

Blood tests will be taken at your GP practice, or community health provider depending on your GP's usual arrangements. You may also be required to have a chest X-ray at your local hospital or community health centre/clinic.

3 Referral process into the LCTAS

If your test results indicate that there is no alternative diagnosis for your symptoms, your GP will refer you by letter to the LCTAS with your details, symptoms, date of your COVID-19 positive test result (if available) and your test results.

4 Initial telephone contact with a care coordinator at the LCTAS

When your referral is received, you will be contacted by a Care Coordinator by telephone within seven days to complete a patient screening questionnaire. This usually takes up to 20 minutes.

5 The Yorkshire Rehabilitation Screening questionnaire

This detailed questionnaire will be completed over the telephone with the Care Coordinator. We know that everyone's experience is unique to them, and the screening questionnaire is designed to measure severity of symptoms on a 'sliding-scale' of between 0 and 10. This can be related to issues with walking, exercise, breathlessness, fatigue and normal activities of daily living. Your answers will help the doctors in the service to develop your individual treatment plan and support your recovery programme.

6 Clinical triage (not face-to-face appointment)

Following this initial screening you will be placed on the clinical triage waiting list where your responses will be reviewed by a doctor, along with your medical record from your GP, your medical history and current problems/symptoms. The doctor may refer you at this stage to appropriate service(s) to help support your rehabilitation with Long COVID.

7 MDT assessment by senior clinicians (not face-to-face appointment)

Some patients have more complex problems and symptoms, especially if they have existing long term health problems. If this is the case, you will be referred for a further assessment with the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT). This is a team of very experienced senior doctors and clinicians who will review your case and recommend the appropriate care to support your rehabilitation and recovery.

8 Further investigations (if required)

Sometimes, following your case review at the MDT assessment, you may need to have further tests and investigations before you are referred to a specialist or rehabilitation service. These could be further blood tests or X-rays which will be arranged for you.

9 Referral to rehabilitation/specialist services and treatment plan

Following referral, services in hospital and/or in the community will develop an individualised treatment plan to help support you through your rehabilitation programme.



Waiting times



We recognise that waiting for assessment can be an anxious time for people and we try to keep this as short as possible. There is currently high demand for the service, but waits are improving for patients:

- **From GP referral and first contact by telephone with a care coordinator in the LCTAS:**

 **up to 1 week**

- **Initial clinical triage assessment by triage doctor (not face to face):**

During this time, you will be sent a letter from the LCTAS to confirm your management plan and onward referral(s). You will be sent a letter from the service you are referred to confirming your referral and/or appointment. The majority of appointments with these services will be face-to-face.

 **up to 10 weeks**
(This is due to high demand on the service)

- **MDT assessment for further review if required:**

You will be sent a letter from the LCTAS to confirm your management plan and onward referral(s). You will be sent a letter from the service you are referred to confirming your referral and/or appointment. The majority of appointments with these services are face-to-face.

 **4 - 6 weeks**

Keeping in contact



- To try and help reduce anxiety around waiting for your review/assessment and outcomes, you will receive a text message every four weeks to confirm you are still on the waiting list for initial clinical triage and/or MDT assessment.

Discharge from the service



- Once you have been referred to a service in hospital and/or in the community for support, treatment and ongoing management, you will be discharged from the LCTAS. However, if you experience new or worsening symptoms, the service you have been referred to can contact the LCTAS for further advice. If appropriate, the MDT can review and reassess your symptoms.

Websites that offer further support and information



For further support with your Long Covid symptoms, please visit the dedicated NHS website www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk



Our local page also has a range of information and online resources www.hullccg.nhs.uk/humber-long-covid



For support and management with taste and smell issues you can visit Fifth Sense at www.fifthsense.org.uk or Abscent at abscent.org



For the Long COVID peer support group for health, care and emergency services working across the Humber and North Yorkshire area visit www.hcvresiliencehub.nhs.uk



Royal College of Occupational Therapists provides practical advice for patients on recovering from COVID-19 post viral fatigue and conserving energy at www.rcot.co.uk



You can find peer support and an advocacy group for people living with Long COVID at www.longcovid.org



The British Psychological Society website has useful tips, advice and links to articles for professionals and the public at www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources



Mind has information and tips to help people explore feelings about the pandemic at www.mind.org.uk

