

**To: PS(I)**

**From:**

**NR**

**Clearance:**

**Adam McMordie, Deputy  
Director Patient Access and  
Flow Team (PAFT)**

**Date:**

**21/05/2021**

**Copy:**

**Lee McDonough, Elin Jones,**

**NR**

## **LONG COVID – WEEKLY UPDATE**

### **MESSAGING ON SCHOOLS AND CHILDREN**

Colleagues from DHSC, PHE, NHSEI and DFE met on Tuesday 18 May to decide next steps for messaging on long COVID for schools. Colleagues agreed that messaging should focus on reassuring people that occurrence of long COVID in children is rare, but to also provide signposting for any child that may be experiencing long-term symptoms following a COVID-19 infection.

It was decided that DHSC and PHE will work together to draft appropriate messaging, which DFE will circulate via their communication channels with schools. NHSEI will also adapt their Your COVID Recovery online platform to include resources on children and schools.

### **NHSEI PUBLICATION**

NHSEI have updated that the discussions surrounding funding for long COVID services are reaching resolution and they should be ready to publish their revised long COVID plan shortly. We have asked to see a draft of the plan as soon as possible and will pass this onto your Private Office once we have received it.

NHSEI may request quotes from yourself and/or Secretary-of-State to support this publication.

### **FILE ON 4**

BBC's File on Four programme (18 May – "The Cost of Long Covid") reported on the financial challenges facing frontline workers with Long COVID. The programme included consideration of Long COVID being recognised as an occupational disease, with commentary from Dr Lesley Rushton of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council on how this is done, and Layla Moran MP who called upon the Government to establish a presumptive compensation scheme immediately. Our lines to take were included in both the broadcast and related BBC on-line news coverage.

### **LONG COVID SOS VACCINE REPORT**

Patient advocacy group, Long COVID SOS, published a report analysing survey results from 812 people living with long COVID who had received their COVID vaccine. 56.7% of respondents experienced an overall improvement in symptoms, 24.6% felt their symptoms

remained unchanged, and 18.7% reported a deterioration in their symptoms. The report has yet to be peer-reviewed but it has received some media coverage over the last week.

## **PQS**

We have received PQs this week from Luke Pollard MP (Labour) and Layla Moran MP (Lib Dems) querying:

- a strategy on the diagnosis and treatment of long COVID
- details of progress on the work commissioned by NHSX on a long COVID app

## **RCGP ROUNDTABLE**

DHSC, PHE and NHSEI colleagues attended the RCGP roundtable on 20 May. The roundtable focused on rehabilitation, looking at system ownership and enablers. The roundtable broadly concluded that the service needs to be GP based, but with access to multi-disciplinary support. Dr Kiren Collison, Chair of the National Long COVID Taskforce and Deputy Medical Director of Primary Care, confirmed that NHSEI was looking at plans, including funding, to support GPs and rehab services, as well as specialist clinics.

## **UCLH CLINIC VISIT**

Colleagues from DHSC and Cabinet Office visited the UCLH long COVID clinic on Wednesday 19 May. They were able to sit in on a patient appointment and also spoke to lead consultants, Dr Melissa Heightman and Dr Toby Hillman about the types of patients presenting at the clinic and the pressures facing the NHS to support these patients.