

Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust
Long Covid Assessment and Rehabilitation Service

Resources for Returning to Work Webinar – November 2022

In Partnership with Better Business for All Hertfordshire.

Introduction

Living with symptoms of Long Covid can make the process of returning to work for some individuals daunting and extremely challenging. The anxiety of anticipating how they will cope back at work can be high and this may cause difficulties for them when planning a successful return to work conversation with their employer. In some cases when individuals have already attempted to return to work and this has been unsuccessful this has resulted in them feeling low in mood and less motivated to try again.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) recognises that the process of returning to work is important in achieving a successful outcome: 'Employees are more likely to return to work safely and productively following a period of sickness absence if they are well supported during their absence and on their return. How you manage these situations will make a difference to whether the individual returns effectively and sustainably to work' (*CIPD - Working with Long Covid, Guide for Managers to Support employees, March 2022*)

There is strong evidence that working is generally good for our physical health and mental wellbeing so remaining in employment can be seen as part of the rehabilitation journey for most individuals recovering from and living with Long Covid.

This resource pack is intended to provide guidance for navigating the return to work process for employers and inform them of both local and national organisations to support their employee with this.

Activity Diary and Pacing Advice

Tracking activity levels can be helpful for individuals when considering returning to work. This helps with planning suitable times of the day and week where working may be more successful for them when recovering from symptoms of Long Covid.

Using a pacing approach can help some to manage daily activities more effectively. The Royal College of Occupational Therapists have developed guidance for this which may be helpful.



Activity and reflective diary example Nov 22



Conserving your energy - Practical adv

Return to Work Example

This document may be of use when starting the return to work conversations with the employee. This is a guide document, so can be adapted if indicated.



RTW Example
template Nov 22.docx

Useful information

- ❖ **The Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust Long Covid Information pack** provides information for managing symptoms and concerns including:
 - ✓ Managing breathlessness
 - ✓ Suppressing a cough
 - ✓ Dealing with physical and mental fatigue
 - ✓ Pacing during recovery
 - ✓ Dealing with the emotional impact of Covid-19
 - ✓ Advice on physical activity and social life



long-covid-rehabilitation-booklet-july-2021.

- ❖ **The NHS 'Your Covid recovery'** site is also a useful resource to look over:

[I think I have long COVID - Your COVID Recovery](#)

- ❖ **Hertfordshire Foundation Partnership Trust** offer a range of webinars to support those with ongoing needs relating to their mental well-being. The programme of webinars cover a variety of topics including stress, sleep and relaxation, as well as worry and anxiety and mindfulness. They can be accessed without any referral and booked directly by the individual.

[Webinars | HPFT IAPT Services \(hpft-iapt.nhs.uk\)](#)

- ❖ **MIND** offer Wellness Action Plans that can support employees at work with issues around their mental health and well-being:

[Wellness Action Plan Sign Up - Mind](#)
[Taking care of your staff - Mind](#)

[mind_guide_for_small_businesses.pdf](#)

- ❖ **Acas** - gives employees and employers free, impartial advice on workplace rights, rules and best practice. Updated 6 October 2022:

[Sickness and absence because of long COVID: Long COVID – advice for employers and employees - Acas](#)

❖ **Faculty of Occupational Medicine: Update -**
[longCOVID_guidance_managers_02_small \(fom.ac.uk\)](https://www.fom.ac.uk/longCOVID_guidance_managers_02_small)



FOM Quick guide
longCOVID_guidance_

❖ **Society of Occupational Medicine:**

[Home | The Society of Occupational Medicine \(som.org.uk\)](https://www.som.org.uk)

Quick read article:

[Supporting staff with Long COVID in the workplace | The Society of Occupational Medicine \(som.org.uk\)](https://www.som.org.uk/supporting-staff-with-long-covid-in-the-workplace)

Specially aimed at managers to help guide the process for returning to work:
[COVID-19 return to work guide for managers.pdf \(som.org.uk\)](https://www.som.org.uk/covid-19-return-to-work-guide-for-managers.pdf)



SOM
COVID-19_return_to_w

Specially aimed at employees:
[COVID-19 return to work guide for recovering workers.pdf \(som.org.uk\)](https://www.som.org.uk/covid-19-return-to-work-guide-for-recovering-workers.pdf)

❖ **The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD):**

[CIPD The Professional Body for Human Resources and People Development](https://www.cipd.co.uk)

[Working with long COVID: guide for line managers to support employees with long COVID \(cipd.co.uk\)](https://www.cipd.co.uk/working-with-long-covid)



CIPD
long-covid-guide-for-

❖ **Access to Work** can support with transportation and equipment:
[Access to Work factsheet for employers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work)

❖ **'Long Covid Support'** is a charity formed by a group of people struggling to recover from Covid-19 who facilitate international peer support and advocate in the UK for recognition, rehabilitation and research into treatments.

[Home - Long Covid Support](https://www.longcovid.support)

Resources for individuals regarding benefits and financial support networks in the UK including a series of 4 short videos for employees and managers that may be helpful during the return to work process.

[Patients and Carers - Long Covid Support](https://www.longcovid.support/patients-and-carers)