

Appendix A

Briefing Paper – Long Covid August 2022

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This briefing seeks to outline the Kent and Medway understanding of Long Covid, including prevalence and statistics for Medway HCP. It will also outline planned developments.

Background

Long Covid (Post Covid Syndrome) is a new and emerging condition, which can have a significant effect on people's quality of life.

It is known that as many as 1 in 12 patients will find the recovery both prolonged and difficult. Although many people affected by Covid-19 will get better in the first 6-8 weeks of illness; some will still be struggling beyond this early phase and experience symptoms beyond 12 weeks and are defined as having Long-Covid or Post-Covid syndrome. It follows an unpredictable waxing and waning course with many symptoms both physical and psychological being linked to it.

These problems which may appear weeks or months after the start of the illness include: low energy & intense fatigue, breathlessness, aches and pains in muscles/joints, pains in chest & lungs, palpitations, alteration & loss of smell; stomach & bowel symptoms like nausea/abdominal pains/diarrhoea; mental health problems like anxiety/depression; brain fog with sluggish memory and dizziness. Younger adults and occasionally children can also get affected.

There is an evolving evidence base that continues to grow in relation to best practice for identification and care.

We are required as an ICB footprint to ensure there is a full end to end pathway for patients with Long Covid. It should include diagnostics, treatment, rehabilitation and recovery support for Long Covid as described in the Long Covid plan [Long COVID: the NHS plan for 2021/22](#) and meet the clinic specification in the recently revised [National guidance for post-COVID syndrome assessment clinics](#).

Principles of Care

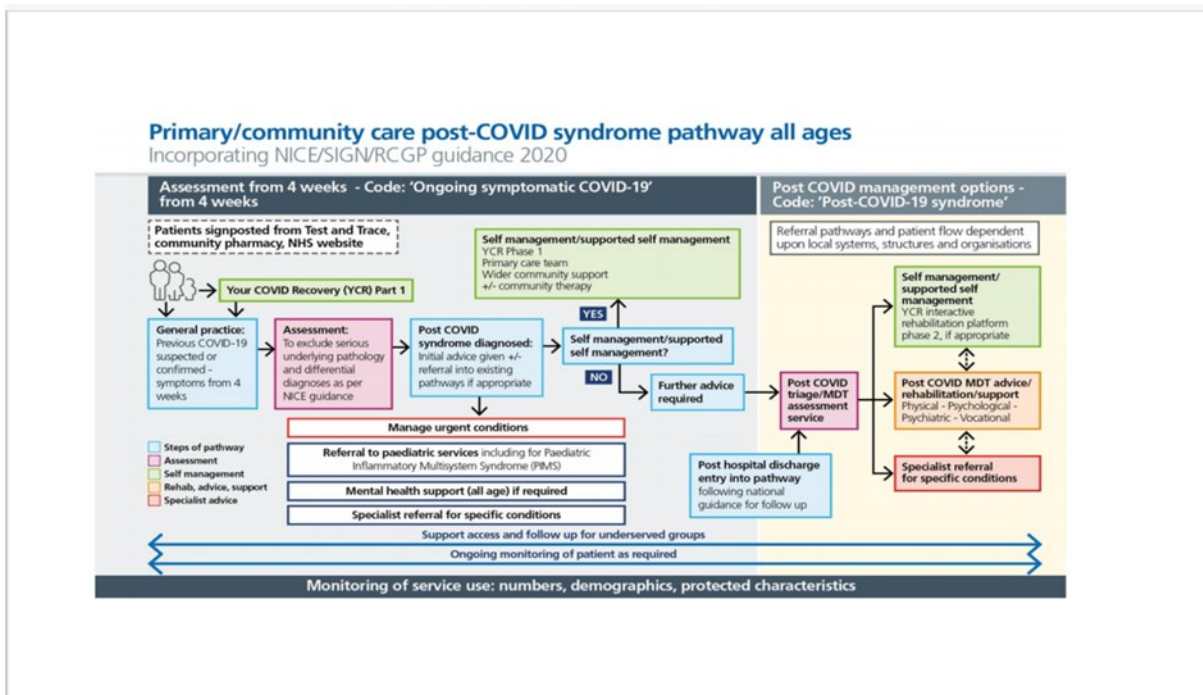
The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has issued official guidance on best practice for recognising, investigating and rehabilitating patients with long COVID. The guideline makes recommendations in a number of other key areas, including:

- Assessing people with ongoing symptoms after acute COVID-19
- Investigations and referral
- Planning care

- Management, including self-management, supported self-management, and rehabilitation
- Follow-up and monitoring

Key principles of care for Long covid:

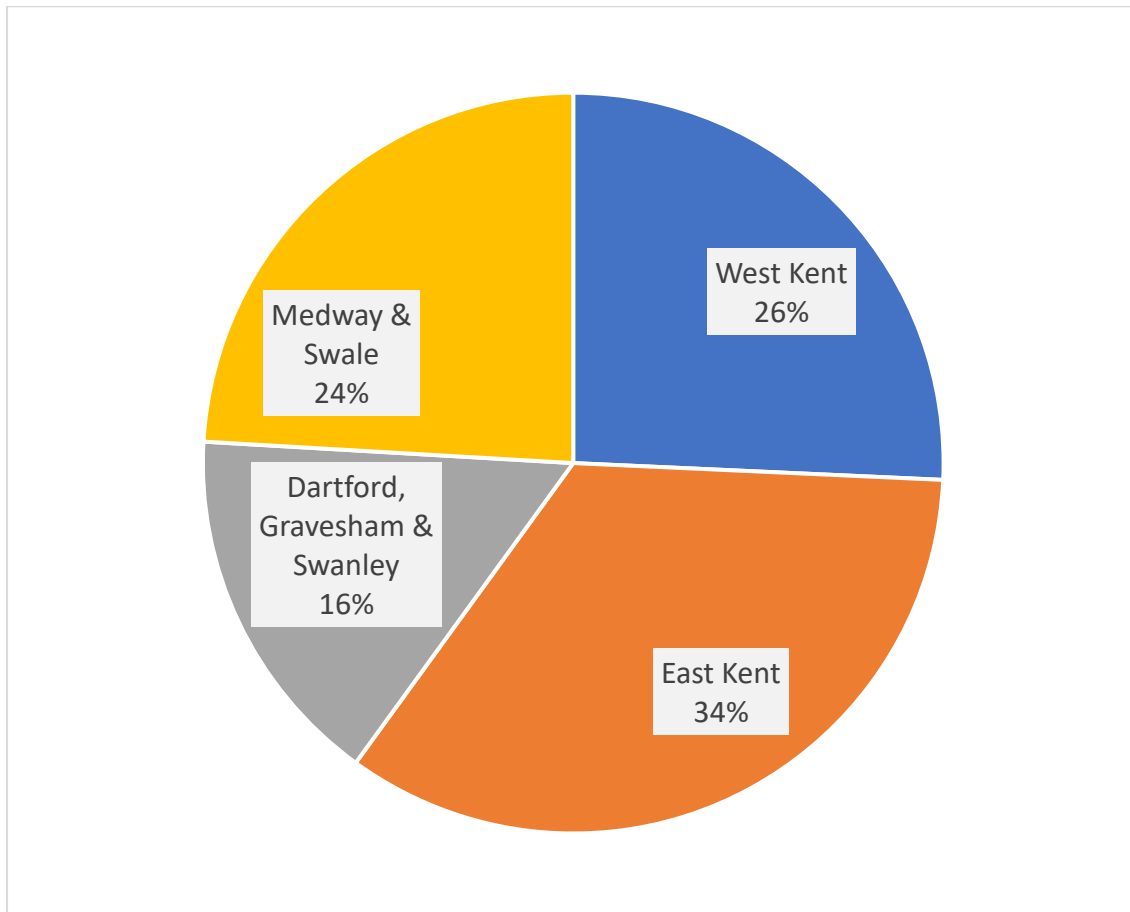
- 1) Personalised Care: By listening to people and asking ‘what matters to you’ and providing a personalised plan
- 2) Multidisciplinary rehabilitative approach for physical, mental and social needs
- 3) Supporting and enabling self-care



Current service provision

Post Covid Assessment Service

Kent and Medway Post Covid Assessment Service opened on 14 May 2021. The service has received 2400 referrals since it went live. With the following split of referrals by HCP:



Before referring to the Post Covid Assessment Service, a **patient's GP may carry out further tests depending on symptoms, so any alternative diagnosis can be ruled out and also to decide if referral to the Post Covid Assessment Service would be suitable.**

Once referred, the Post Covid Assessment Service will get in touch and a team of professionals will assess a person's condition and provide support in accessing services to support recovery.

The PCAS team is resourced on an anticipated weekly referral of 60 patients.

Each patient assessment pathway includes:

- A 1hr initial assessment
- A Multi-disciplinary Team Meeting (comprising of Nurse, PCAS GP, Psychologist, physiotherapist)
- Follow up call post-MDT

The aim is for patients to be assessed within six weeks, unless they chose to delay assessment for personal reasons. We are working with the provider, to continually monitor demand and service capacity.

Following assessment, the service provides recovery advice and guidance and makes relevant referrals, as dictated by patient need.

Key self-management advice is given and the WHO Support for Rehabilitation Self-Management after Covid-19 is utilized for:

- Managing Breathlessness
- Managing problems with voice
- Managing eating, drinking and swallowing
- Managing problems with attention, memory and thinking clearly
- Managing activities of daily living
- Managing stress and problems with mood
- When to contact a healthcare professional

Common onward referrals include:

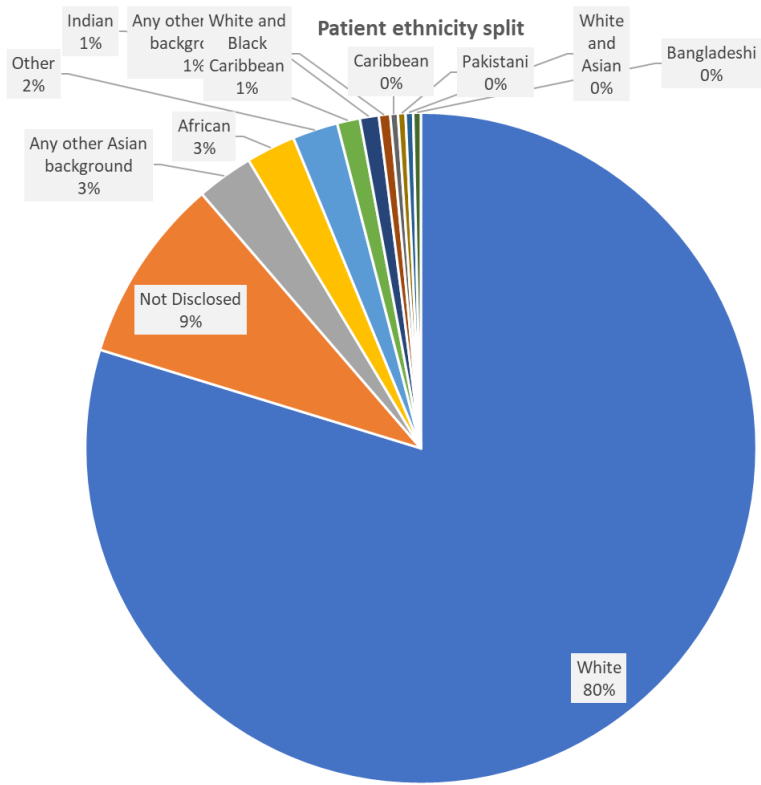
- Onward referral for diagnostics and specialist support/pulmonary rehabilitation
- IAPT
- Social Prescribing
- Your Covid Recovery – Guided Rehabilitation with the virtual support of a physiotherapist (provided by PCAS)

There is also some need for onward referral to specialist secondary care services most commonly respiratory, cardiology, neurology and ENT.

Medway HCP PCAS Statistics

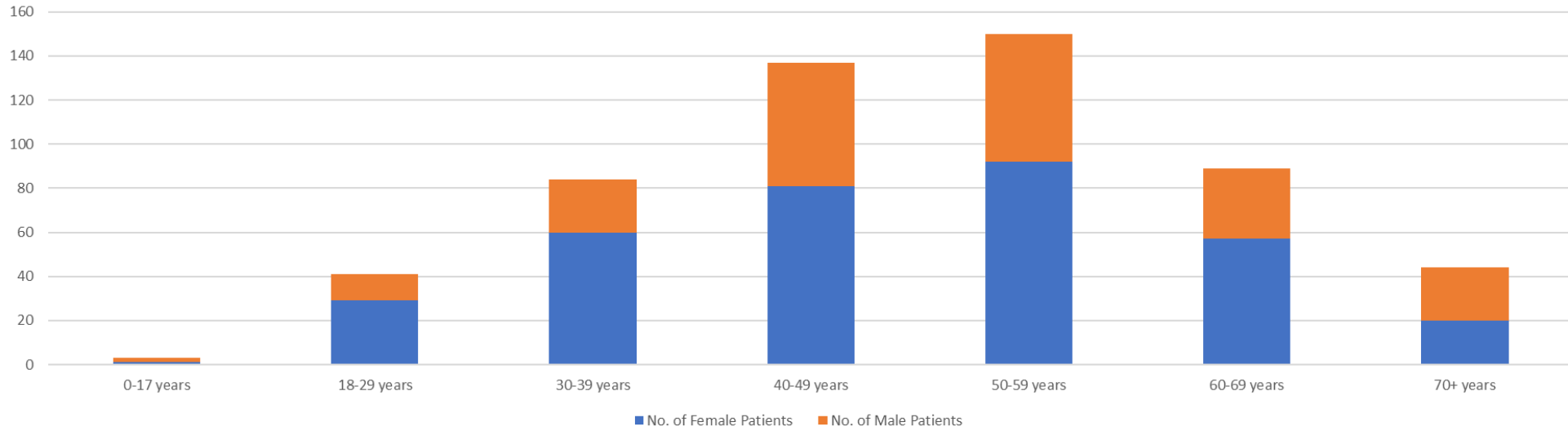
Medway & Swale May 2021 to June 2022	Total PCAS referrals to date (May 2021 – June 2022)	548
	Total Patients Discharged to date	119
	Total Patients who have had an HCP contact	357
	Total Patients who have been discussed at MDT	321
	Total Patients Referred onwards to YourCovidRecovery	49

Ethnicity of referrals



Age & Gender

Medway & Swale patient split by age & gender



22/23 Planned Developments in Long Covid Services

The service continues to evolve in accordance with national guidance and developing understanding of how best to meet the needs of patients with Long COVID.

We are committed to expanding support for patients with Long Covid, support the reduction of inequalities and reduce service and outcome variation.

An **Integrated Long Covid Delivery Network** has been convened and comprises of partners across the system with the following **key aims** and work plan for 22/23:

Expanding Treatment and Support - Identifying gaps in current assessment, treatment and rehabilitation Long COVID service offer and developing delivery

Children and Young People - Maintain and build relationship with CYP London Hub, develop CYP rehabilitation offer/pathways within K&M for cohort requiring them, develop educational offer for Primary Care in relation to identification, pathways and care for CYP with Long Covid

Reducing Inequalities – Taking a health equity approach to determining the current burden of covid/long covid and how it is distributed, Look at fairness of access to services, plan and deliver actions to reduce any identified inequalities

New NHS Plan for Improving Long Covid Services & Background papers – for Interest/ further reading

New NHS Plan for Improving Long Covid Services

Newly published national Long Covid Plan documents 28th July 2022 will be reviewed and incorporated into 22/23 Delivery Plans.

C1607 - [NHS England » The NHS plan for improving long COVID services](#)

C1669 - [NHS England » Long COVID: Advice and resources for healthcare professionals in primary care](#)

C1670 - [NHS England » National commissioning guidance for post COVID services](#)

Background papers – for Interest/ further reading

NHS.uk website information on Long COVID

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-COVID-19/long-term-effects-of-coronavirus-long-COVID/Nhs.uk>

NHS England and NHS Improvement website information on Long COVID

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/post-COVID-syndrome-long-COVID/>

NICE COVID-19 rapid guideline: managing the long-term effects of COVID-19

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng188>

Your COVID Recovery

<https://www.yourCOVIDrecovery.nhs.uk/>

National Institute of Health Research – Funded research into COVID-19

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/researchers/manage-your-funding/funded-research-into-COVID-19.htm>

Royal College of General Practitioners – Resources for GPs

https://elearning.rcgp.org.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=11512&_ga=2.14873968.711735455.1615980427-643992121.1603279467

Health Education England – Knowledge and library Long COVID page

<https://library.nhs.uk/long-COVID/>

Post COVID-19 syndrome: What support can patients expect from their GP?

The Faculty of Occupational Medicine has produced guidance for return to work for patients with long-COVID

<https://www.fom.ac.uk/media-events/publications/fom-guidance>