

Long Covid – Long Covid – the Road to Recovery

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Webinar Long covid – the road to recovery

- Definition/ prevalence
- Common (and less common) Long COVID symptoms
- Methods of treatment
- Supporting recovery
- Possible adjustments
- External support



Definition

Clinical definitions for the initial illness and long COVID at different times:

- **Acute COVID-19:** signs and symptoms of COVID-19 for up to 4 weeks.
- **Ongoing symptomatic COVID-19:** signs and symptoms of COVID-19 from 4 to 12 weeks.
- **Post-COVID-19 syndrome:** signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19, continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis.

10% of those testing positive for Covid-19 go on to develop Long Covid (NI: 12,200 people)



How many people in NI have Long Covid?

Table 1: Number of people with self-reported long COVID by country of the UK and duration since first (suspected) COVID-19 episode
Number of people (thousands), four-week period ending 6 March 2021

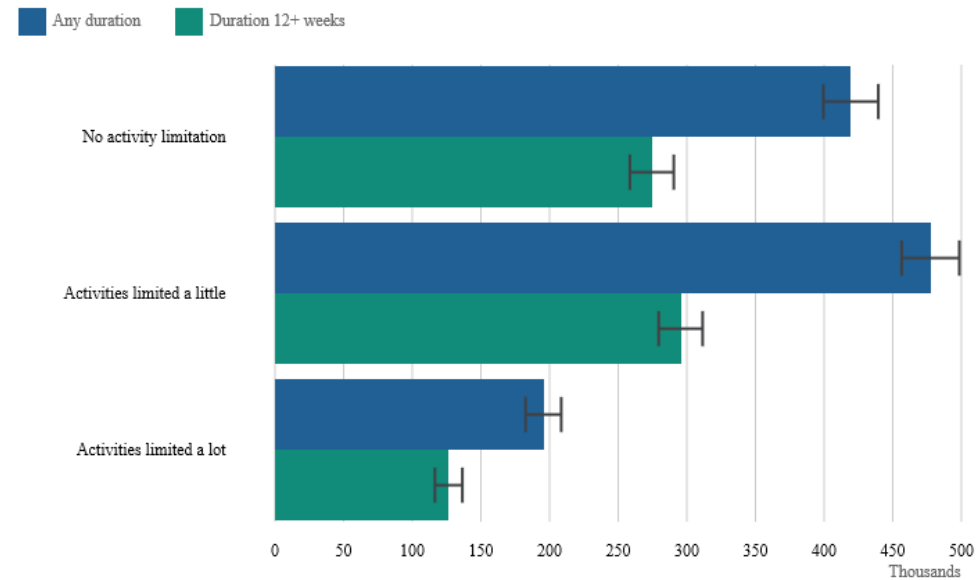
Country	Any duration			Duration at least 12 weeks		
	Estimate	Lower 95% confidence limit	Upper 95% confidence limit	Estimate	Lower 95% confidence limit	Upper 95% confidence limit
England	932	902	963	601	577	625
Wales	56	48	65	31	25	37
Scotland	79	69	88	50	43	57
Northern Ireland	26	21	31	15	11	19
UK total	1,094	1,060	1,128	697	671	723

Source: Office for National Statistics

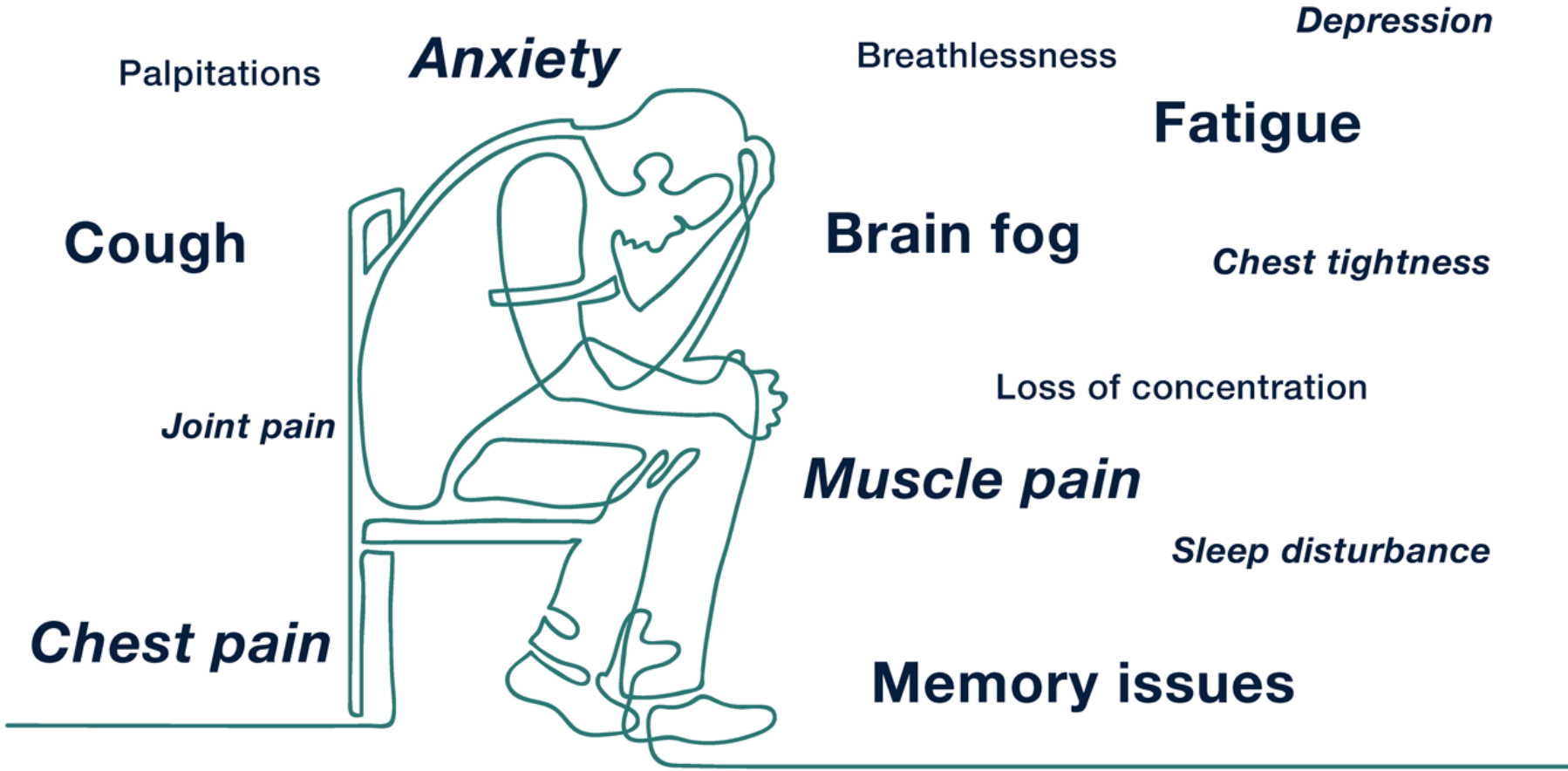
Impact on functional ability

Figure 1: Most people with self-reported long COVID experienced some limitation to their day-to-day activities as a result

Number of people with self-reported long COVID according to activity limitation, UK: four-week period ending 6 March 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics

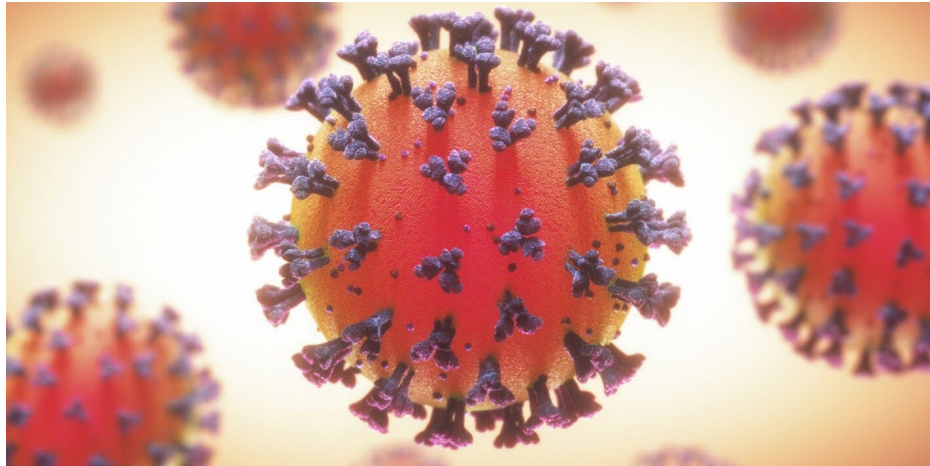


People who had mild symptoms at first can still have long-term problems.

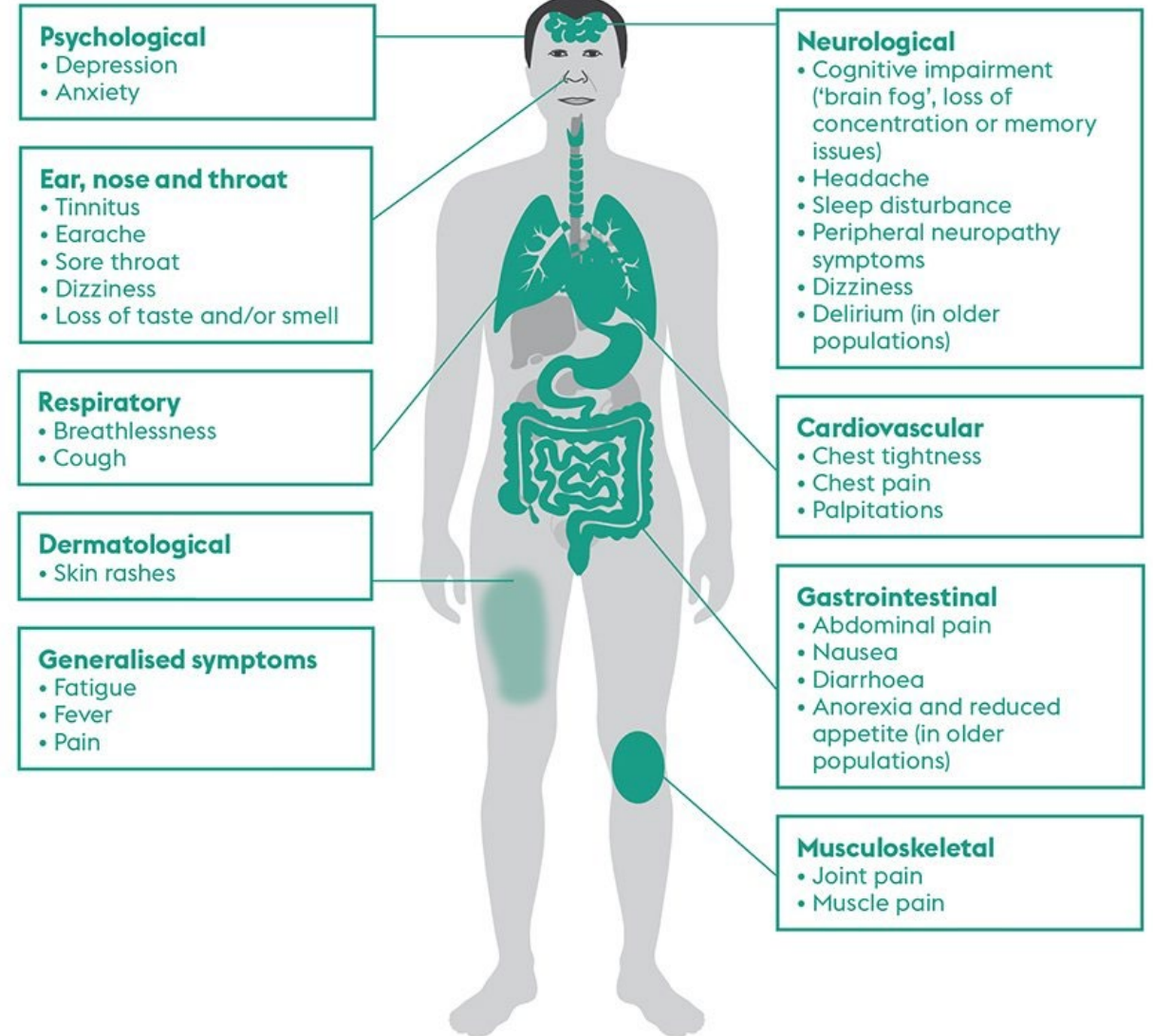
Common long COVID symptoms include:

- extreme tiredness (fatigue)
- shortness of breath
- chest pain or tightness
- problems with memory and concentration ("brain fog")
- difficulty sleeping (insomnia)
- heart palpitations
- dizziness
- pins and needles
- joint pain
- depression and anxiety
- tinnitus, earaches
- feeling sick, diarrhoea, stomach aches, loss of appetite
- a high temperature, cough, headaches, sore throat, changes to sense of smell or taste
- rashes

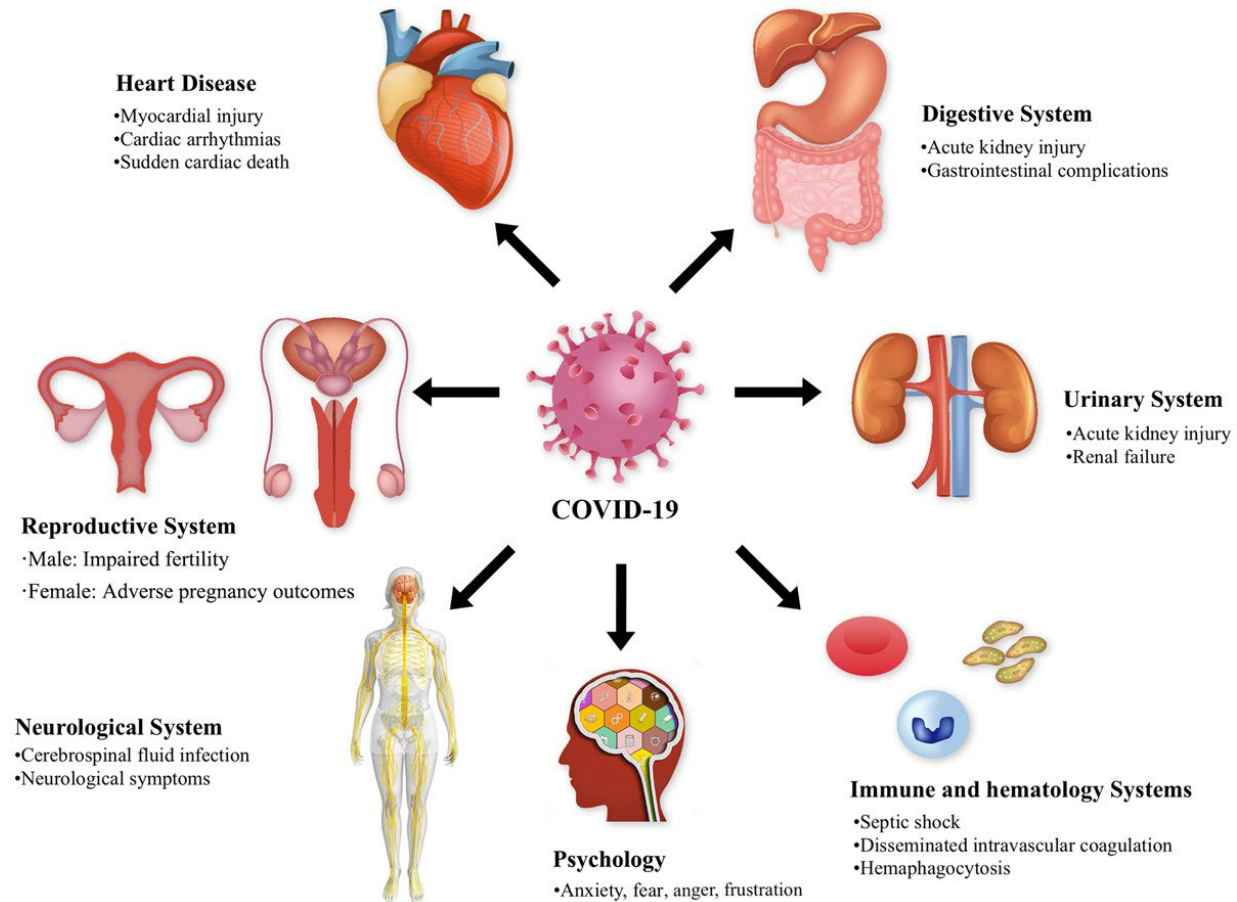
Multi- system attack



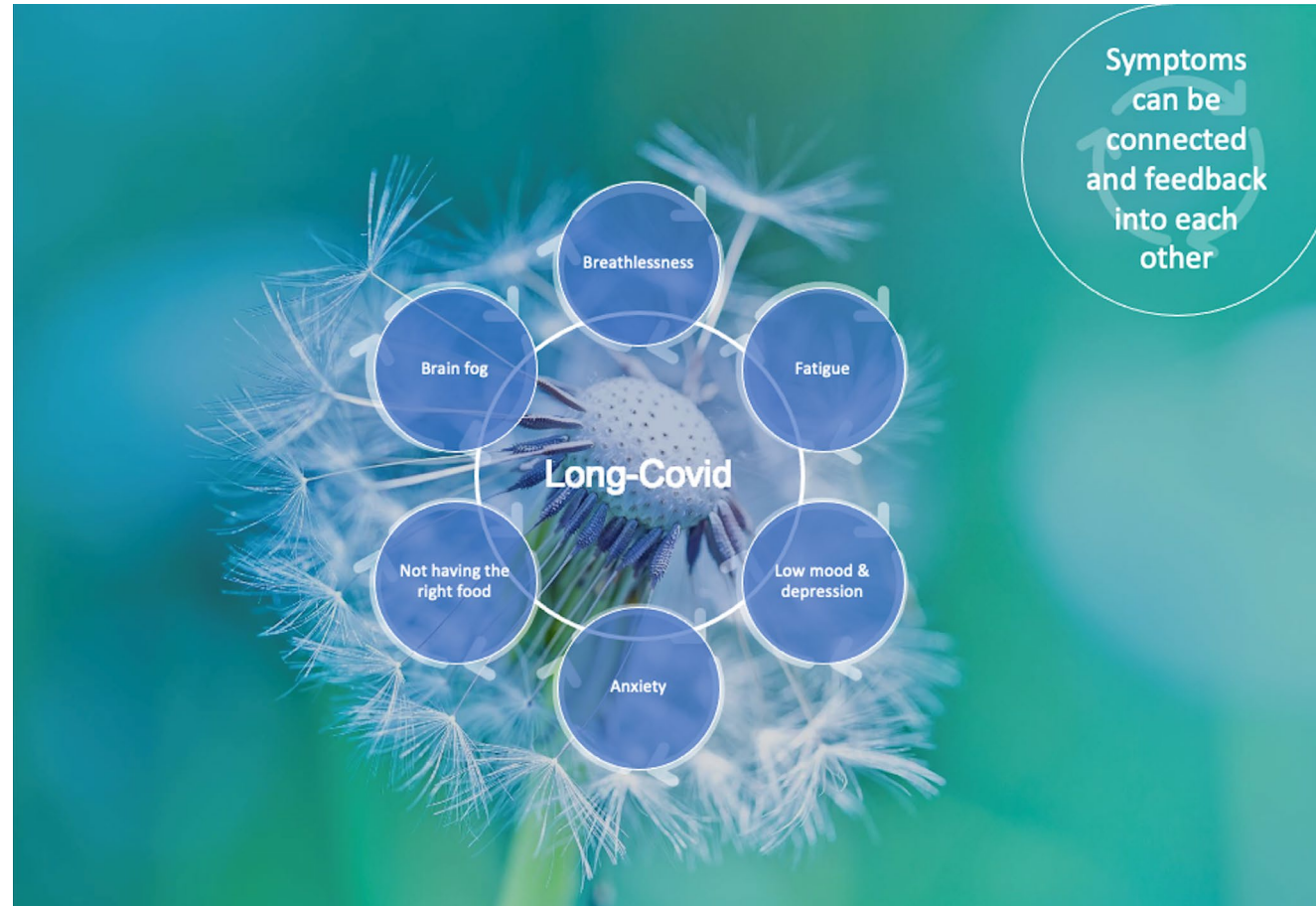
Symptoms of long-COVID



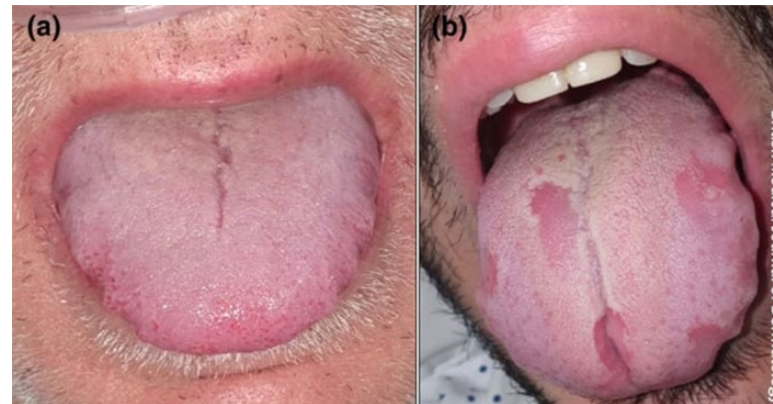
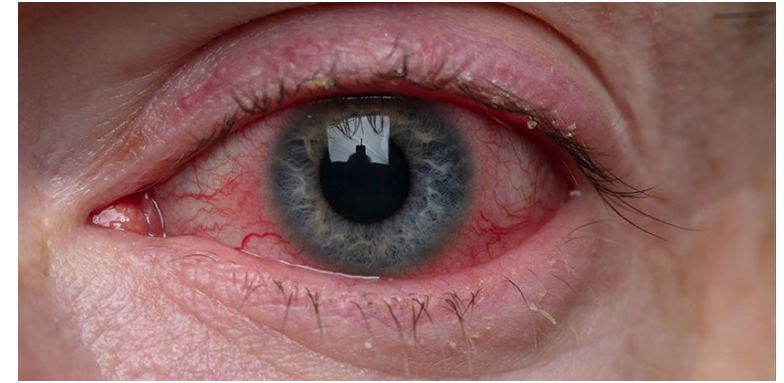
Medical terms- Long Covid



Main symptoms



Unusual symptoms of Long covid



Think – 3 legged stool



Health

Home

Work

Key steps to follow when supporting staff to return to work



Key steps to follow when supporting your returning worker

- Following these steps will give your returning worker the
- best chance of getting back to work safely and staying at
- work. More information on each step is provided in the
- guide.
- *Step 1:* Stay in touch while the worker is absent from
- work.
- *Step 2:* Prepare for the worker's return.
- *Step 3:* Hold a return to work conversation.
- *Step 4:* Provide support during the early days of the
- return to work.
- *Step 5:* Provide ongoing support and review regularly.

Stay in touch



Prepare for the staff member returning



Do not under-estimate the importance of work conversations



Support during early return



Provide ongoing support and review



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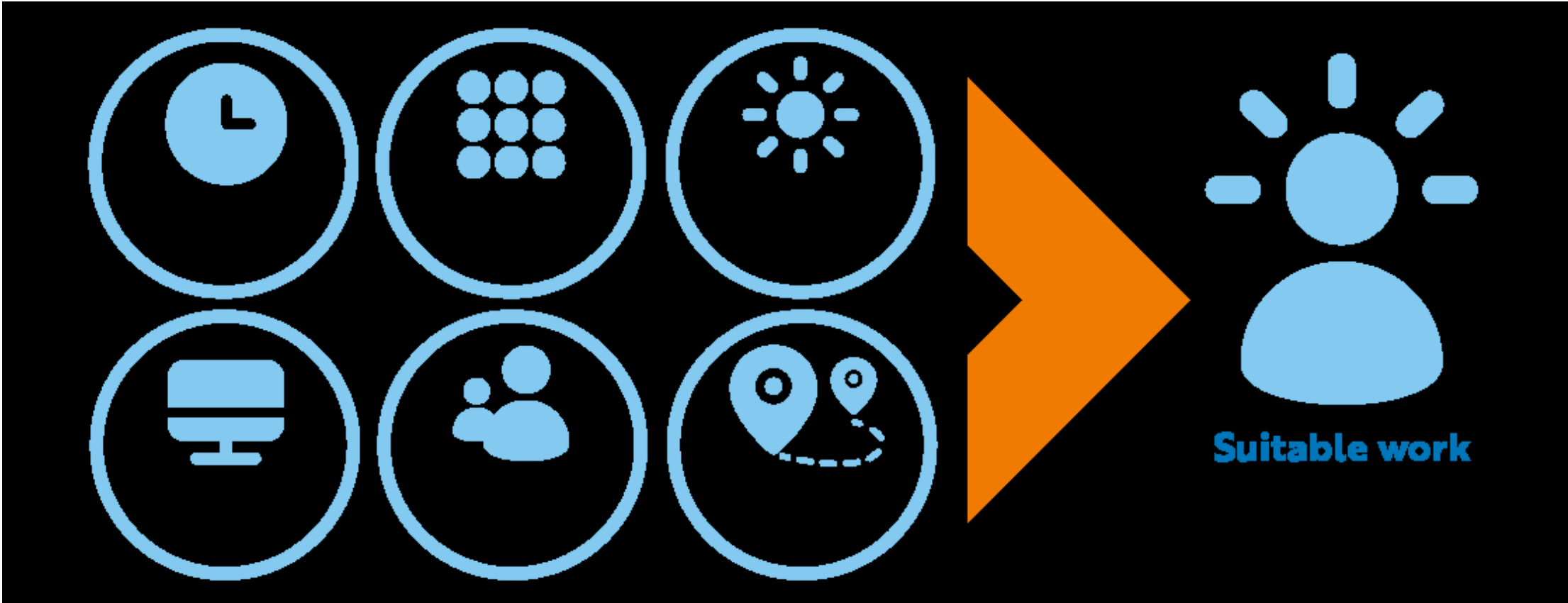
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Job modification (working hours, organisation of work, change to environment, technology, assistance, IT)



Job modifications

- Phased return
- Alterations to the timing of work (starts, finishes, and breaks).
- Alterations of hours worked e.g. shorter days, days off between workdays.
- Alterations to shift work e.g. consider suspending
- late or early shifts and/or night duty, so the individual works when at their best.
- Alterations to the patterns of working e.g. pacing, regular and/or additional breaks.
- Alterations to workload e.g. fewer tasks than normal within a time, more time to complete usual tasks and not to work to tight deadlines.
- Temporary changes to duties or tasks ('altered tasks').
- Support:» clear line of help, time off for appointments, not working alone
- Working from home or blended approach
- Seek guidance from Occupational health

Role of Occupational Health



How to manage post-viral fatigue after COVID-19

Practical advice for people who have recovered at home

Post-viral fatigue is when you have an extended period of feeling unwell and fatigued after a viral infection.

Fatigue is a normal part of the body's response to fighting a viral infection such as COVID-19. Fatigue is likely to continue for some time after the infection has cleared. It can make you sleep more, feel unsteady on your feet, make standing for long periods difficult, as well as affecting your ability to concentrate and your memory.

Initially



Self-isolate

Please follow government guidelines. Remember, this includes isolating from your family/ household wherever possible, even if they have symptoms or are also self-isolating. If you deteriorate, seek immediate medical help following government guidelines.



Rest

Rest is **very important** for your body as it fights off infection. You need to rest both your body and mind. Keep television, phones and social media to a minimum. Relaxation, breathing and meditation can all support quality rest – the [NHS Apps Library](#) has free tools you can try. Sensory relaxation tools such as fragrances, blankets, and relaxing music can also help. If a strategy doesn't work for you, try another one until you find one that does.



Sleep

You may find that you need to sleep more. Make sure you follow healthy sleep habits: ensure your room is as dark as possible, have a bedtime routine, and avoid caffeine, eating late and using electrical items before bed.



Nourishment

Try to keep your normal routine for eating and drinking. Being ill with a temperature can make you dehydrated so make sure you drink fluid when you're thirsty and enough so that you pass urine with normal frequency and volume.



Move

Get up and move around slowly and gently a few times each day. This will keep your body mobile and help with circulation.



Keep activity levels low

Both physical and cognitive (thinking) activities use energy. Try to do only a small number of these activities each day, including basic activities of daily living, such as washing and dressing.



How to conserve your energy

Practical advice for people during and after having COVID-19

When you are ill or recovering from an illness, you are likely to have less energy and feel tired. A simple task, such as putting on your shoes, can feel like hard work. This guide will help you to find ways to conserve your energy as you go about your daily tasks. By making these small changes you'll have more energy throughout the day.

The 3 Ps principle (Pace, Plan and Prioritise)

Learning to pace, plan and prioritise your daily activities will help you to save energy.

Pace

Pacing yourself will help you have enough energy to complete an activity. You'll recover faster if you work on a task until you are tired rather than exhausted. The alternative, doing something until you're exhausted, or going for the big push, means that you'll need longer to recover.

Example: climbing stairs

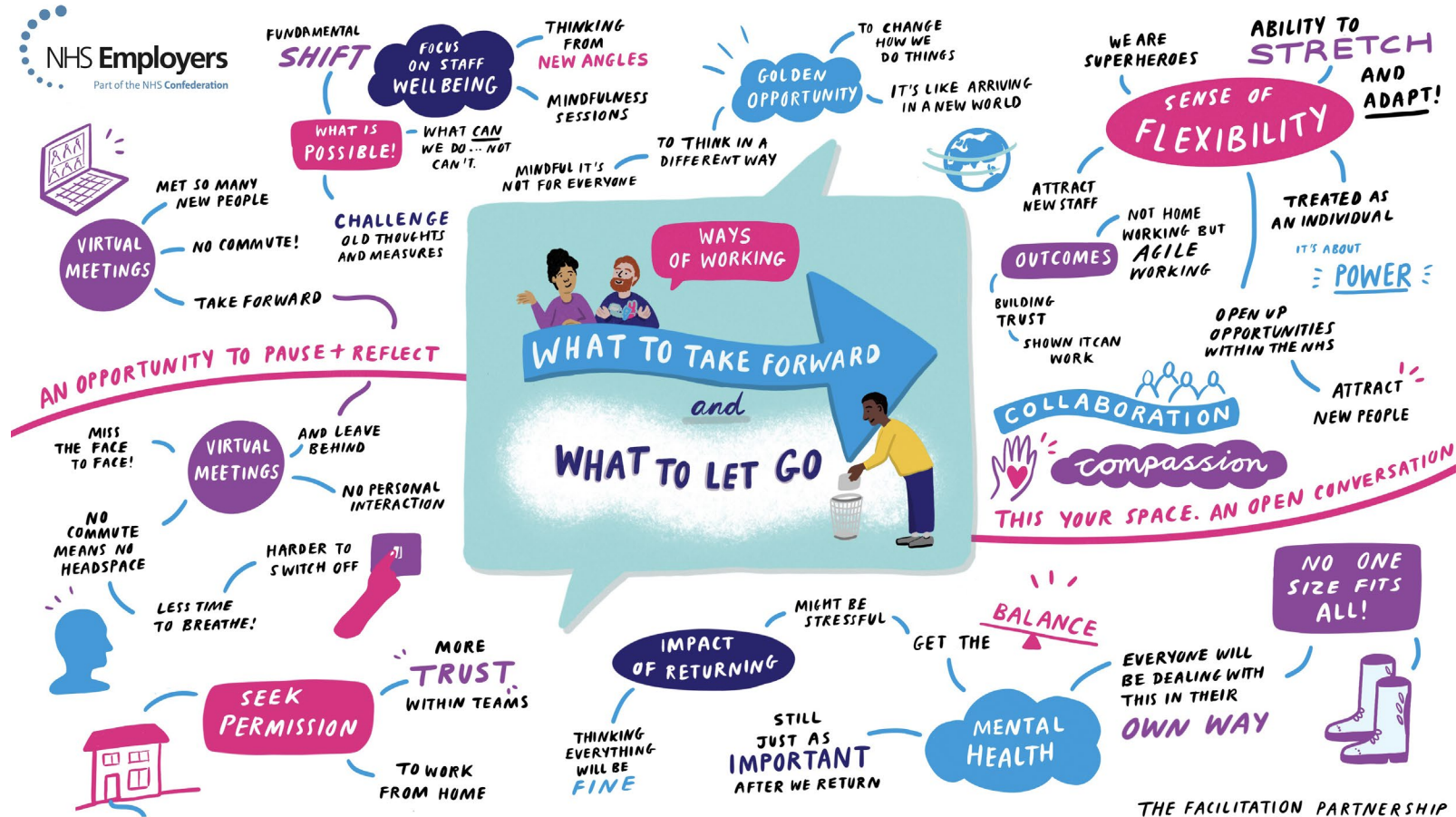
The pacing approach ✓

Climb five steps, rest for 30 seconds and repeat.
You won't need a long rest at the top and won't feel so tired the next day.

The big push approach ✗

Climb all the stairs at once.
You'll have to rest for 10 minutes at the top, and feel achy and tired the next day.

Conclusion



References

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/long-term-effects-of-coronavirus-long-covid/>
- <https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/>
- https://www.som.org.uk/COVID-19_return_to_work_guide_for_managers.pdf