

North West SPF joint statement on commitment to guidance on Long COVID

Date: March 2022

Whilst the vaccination of healthcare staff and the wider population has helped to reduce the number of our NHS colleagues who contract COVID both inside and outside of the workplace, COVID-related sickness absence continues to affect thousands of people working in healthcare. Many colleagues are also suffering from the effects of Long COVID. As of 18 May 2021, estimates by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) suggest that approximately 122,000 healthcare workers and 31,000 social care workers are self-reporting symptoms of Long COVID, however this data is not inclusive of the full NHS workforce and excludes roles such as agency staff and those working within primary care.

All partners engaged in the North West SPF acknowledge that effectively supporting our NHS people who contract COVID 19, including those who go on to develop Long COVID, is of the utmost importance, both for themselves and for the reduction of transmission of the virus in healthcare settings.

We are conscious that a number of guidance documents have been published since the onset of the pandemic regarding support for staff who contract COVID, are required to self-isolate or who suffer with Long Covid. The North West SPF want to ensure that all employers and staff side colleagues are aware of the most up to date guidance from NHS Employers, NHS England and NHS Staff Council in place to support staff in these circumstances.

The guidance documents below, which are still current, outline the support which should be provided to our colleagues affected by COVID infection and Long COVID, including full pay during periods of COVID-related absence (inclusive of long COVID) and reasonable adjustments. They also provide helpful direction regarding the recording of, and support provided in relation to, periods of COVID related absence, which should be separate from any standard sickness absence process and should not be counted towards 'trigger points' which other absences may invoke in accordance with local sickness absence policies. As per the NHS Workforce Bulletin of 14th February 2022, the NHS Staff Council guidance from July 2021, which helps employers in England support staff during the management of long-term COVID-19 sickness absences, remains the principle source of guidance when supporting directly employed staff members.

[NHS Staff council agreements](#)

[Guidance from the FOM](#)

[NHSE/I guidance on long covid](#)

[The NHS Employers guidance](#)



Long-term-covid-abs
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We thank you in advance for your ongoing support with the above.

Signed by Joint Chairs of the North West SPF

James Bull, UNISON

Mike Gibney, The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust