

Lived experience of long term COVID-19 on workers in NHS health care settings in Scotland: a longitudinal mixed methods study

IRAS Project ID: 298496

Participant information sheet

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide if you want to take part, it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this information sheet.

What is the purpose of this study?

Robert Gordon University (RGU) is carrying out this study, together with St Andrews University and the University of Aberdeen for the Chief Scientist Office of the Scottish Government Health Directorates (CSO). In this study we want to find out about the experience of people who work in the NHS and have or are currently experiencing 'long COVID'. Long Covid was the name given by patients, for complex and debilitating symptoms and conditions, that followed on from when they first contracted Covid-19. It is defined by bodies such as National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP), as Covid-19 symptoms which last longer than 4 weeks.

People experience long Covid as an illness with a diversity of symptoms which are often relapsing-remitting. Some people whose initial Covid-19 was mild (and who were never hospitalised) may go on to develop chronic symptoms and vice versa. The most commonly reported symptoms of long Covid include but are not limited to: respiratory (breathlessness, cough); cardiovascular (chest tightness, chest pain, palpitations); generalised symptoms including fatigue, fever and pain; neurological ('brain fog'); peripheral neuropathy symptoms; gastrointestinal; musculoskeletal; psychological/psychiatric symptoms; ear, nose and throat; loss of taste and/or smell and dermatological skin rashes.

We are interested in hearing the views and experiences of all health care staff working in NHS Scotland, including ancillary staff, nurses, doctors and allied health professionals, working in acute and primary care, who feel they have suffered from long Covid for more than 4 weeks.

Why have I been invited to take part in the study?

You are invited to take part if you are an employed in a health care setting and have had or are currently experiencing Covid-19 symptoms which have lasted longer than 4 weeks and meet the following:

- You over the age of 18;
- You are comfortable speaking English (even if English isn't your first language).

Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you agree to take part, we will ask you to give your consent, but you are free to stop taking part at any time without giving a reason.

What will I be asked to do if I choose to take part?

If you are interested in taking part, you will be asked to complete an online questionnaire. We may also invite you to take part in a confidential interview and will contact you at the email address you provide. This is entirely voluntary and we would ask for your consent before the interview, which will be conducted either by telephone or a secure internet-based platform. Interviews will last approximately 60 minutes with a shorter interview approximately 6 months later, lasting 20-30 minutes. During the interview, you will be asked questions about your experiences of long Covid and how your symptoms have impacted on your life. With your consent, we would like to audio-record the interview, so that we can listen back and consider the information afterwards. All participants who take part in interviews will be offered an honorarium for their time.

How will we use information about you?

All information collected about you during the study will be kept strictly confidential. Any information about you will be held by us in a way that **will not** allow anyone to trace information back to you. A record of the study design, study participants and allocated informant identification numbers will be held separately within RGU and may be inspected by RGU regulatory authorities at any point. All information taken will be stored, accessed and destroyed in accordance with RGU ethics procedures. Data will be disposed within 10 years of completion of this study by the Principal Investigator or another deputised person. All electronic data for the study will be stored in the user-restricted study R drive on the RGU network. The results of the study will be fed back by the research team, used for analysing and understanding people's experiences and used in publications and reports. At no time will your identity or any information that could identify you be made available to anyone outside the research team. We will write our reports in a way that no-one can work out that you took part in the study.

What are your choices about how your information is used?

You can stop being part of the study at any time, without giving a reason, but we will keep information about you that we already have.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

This research is unlikely to benefit you directly but it is aimed at understanding experiences of long Covid to inform policy and further research.

Where can you find out more about how your information is used?

You can find out more about how we use your information at www.hra.nhs.uk/information-about-patients or by asking one of the research team by sending an email to LoCH@rgu.ac.uk

Who has reviewed the research?

The study has been reviewed by the School Ethics Review Panel (SERP) at the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice, Robert Gordon University and NHS Grampian Research and Development.

Contact for further information.

If you have any questions about the study or would like more information before deciding whether or not to take part, please contact either:

Dr Emma MacIver (Research Fellow): e.maciver@rgu.ac.uk or LoCH@rgu.ac.uk

and/or

Dr Nick Adams (Research Fellow): n.adams5@rgu.ac.uk or LoCH@rgu.ac.uk

If you have any concerns or issues about from this information, or the research itself if you decide to take part in it, you can contact:

Data Protection Officer
Robert Gordon University
Garthdee

Aberdeen

AB10 7QB

Email: dp@rgu.ac.uk

Tel. +44 (0)1224 262076

or

complaints@rgu.ac.uk

Telephone: 01224 262195

Thank you for reading this information sheet.