



Long Covid & Physical Activity Rehabilitation Webinar

More People **More Active** **More Often**



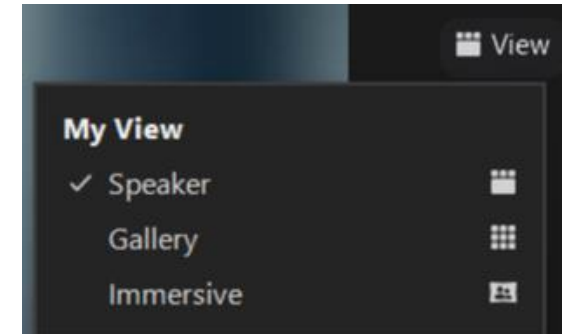
Central London
Community Healthcare
NHS Trust



Webinar Housekeeping

All participants will remain muted and cameras off throughout the webinar

Select 'Speaker View' for the best viewing experience



Comments and networking welcomed through the 'Chat' function

- Please introduce yourselves and highlight anything you would like everyone to know about
- Before you send – make sure you select 'Everyone'

Questions for the presenters are encouraged through the 'Q&A' function

- We will attempt to answer all questions live, any others will be responded to after the event

This webinar will be recorded and distributed to those registered for the event

- This webinar will also be available to view at www.sportinherts.org.uk

Please fill in the pop-up feedback survey when you leave

Agenda

1. Long Covid & Management Techniques

Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust

2. The Long Covid Service (West Hertfordshire)

Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust

3. Long Covid & Physical Activity Project Update

Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership

4. Questions for Presenters



Central London
Community Healthcare
NHS Trust

West Hertfordshire Long Covid Assessment & Rehabilitation Service

April 2024



Aims of the session

- An introduction to our service including who we are and what we offer
- To increase overall awareness of Long Covid
- To increase awareness of the basic principles of Long Covid management
- To discuss exercise outcomes with Long Covid patients

What is Long Covid?

Signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19, continuing for more than 12 weeks and not explained by an alternative diagnosis.

NICE 2021

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng188/resources/covid19-rapid-guideline-managing-the-longterm-effects-of-covid19-pdf-51035515742>

How
common is
it?

Research suggests that between one month and one year after having COVID-19:

- 1 in 5 people ages 18 to 64 has at least one medical condition that might be due to COVID-19.
- Among people age 65 and older, 1 in 4 has at least one medical condition that might be due to COVID-19.

Who is most at risk?



You might be more likely to have post-COVID-19 syndrome if:



You had severe illness with COVID-19, especially if you were hospitalized or needed intensive care.



You had certain medical conditions before getting the COVID-19 virus.



You had a condition affecting your organs and tissues (Multisystem inflammatory syndrome) while sick with COVID-19 or afterward.



However, anyone who gets COVID-19 can have long-term effects, including people with no symptoms or mild illness with COVID-19.

Meet the team

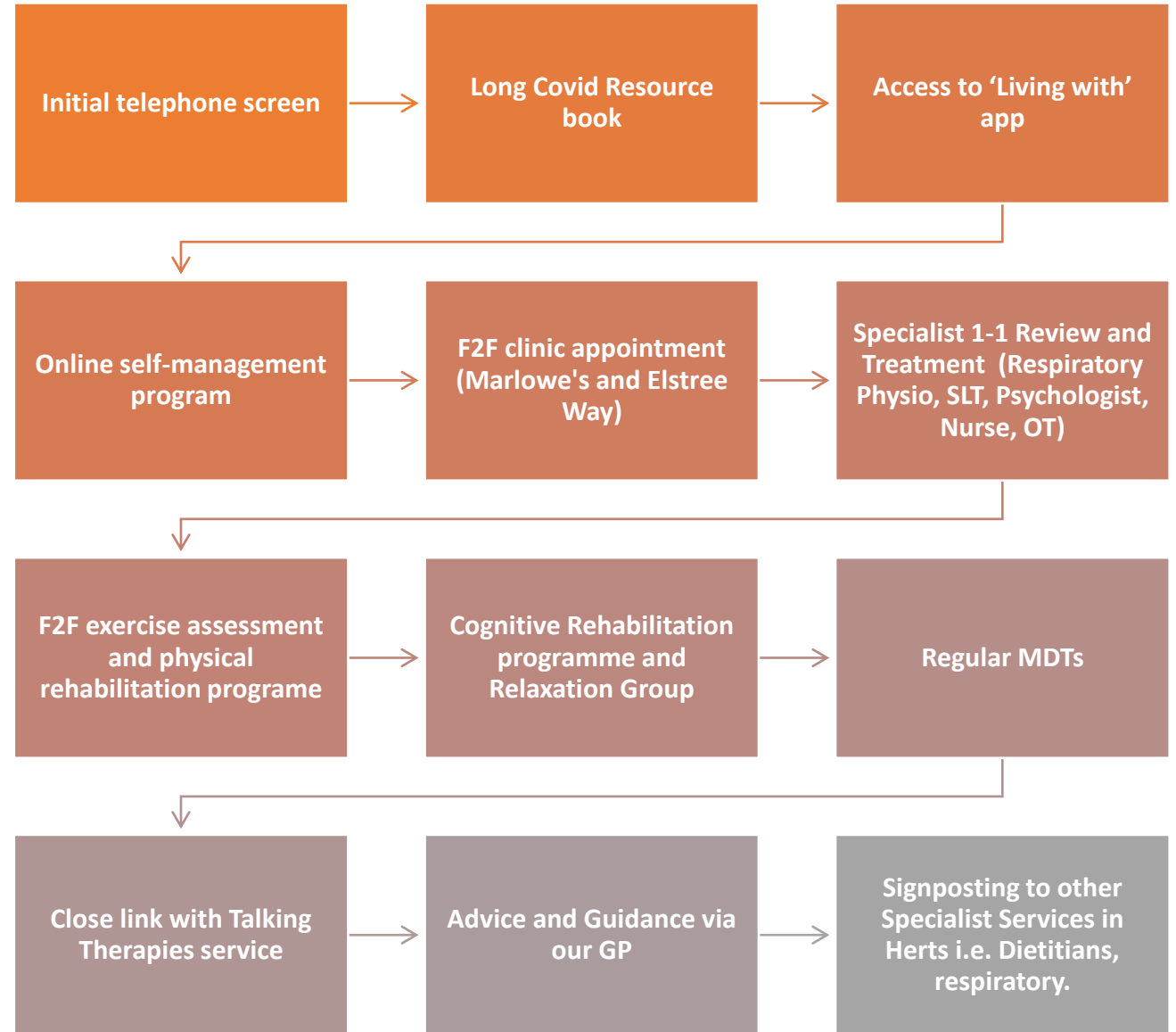
- First established in 2021
- The 2024 establishment consists of:
 - Clinical lead
 - GP
 - Specialist Nurse
 - Occupational therapists x2
 - Physiotherapists x2
 - Speech and Language therapist
 - Clinical Psychologist
 - Clinical Exercise Physiologist
 - Rehabilitation assistant
 - Administrator



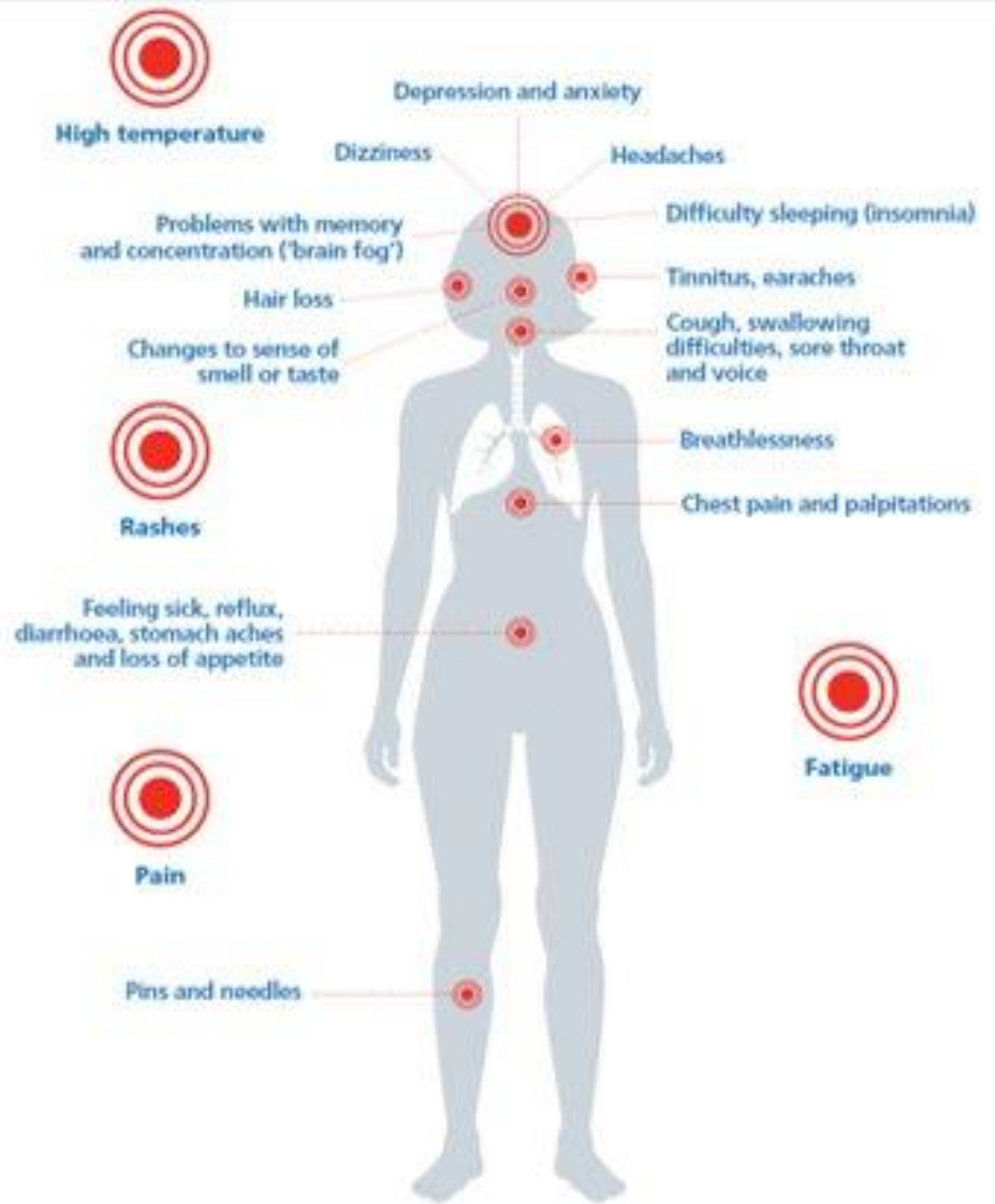
Specialist AHP roles

SLT	Speech, Language, Communication and swallowing. (I.e. Dysphagia, voice therapy)
PT	Breathing pattern and Cough assessments, Exercise prescription, Ergonomic advice, POTS.
OT	Specialist fatigue management advice, Vocational rehab.
Nurse	Face to face assessment and observations, medication reviews, diet and nutrition, triage.
Clinical Psychologist	1:1 Psychological advice and support
Exercise Physiologist	1:1 exercise prescription and group exercise sessions

What do we offer?



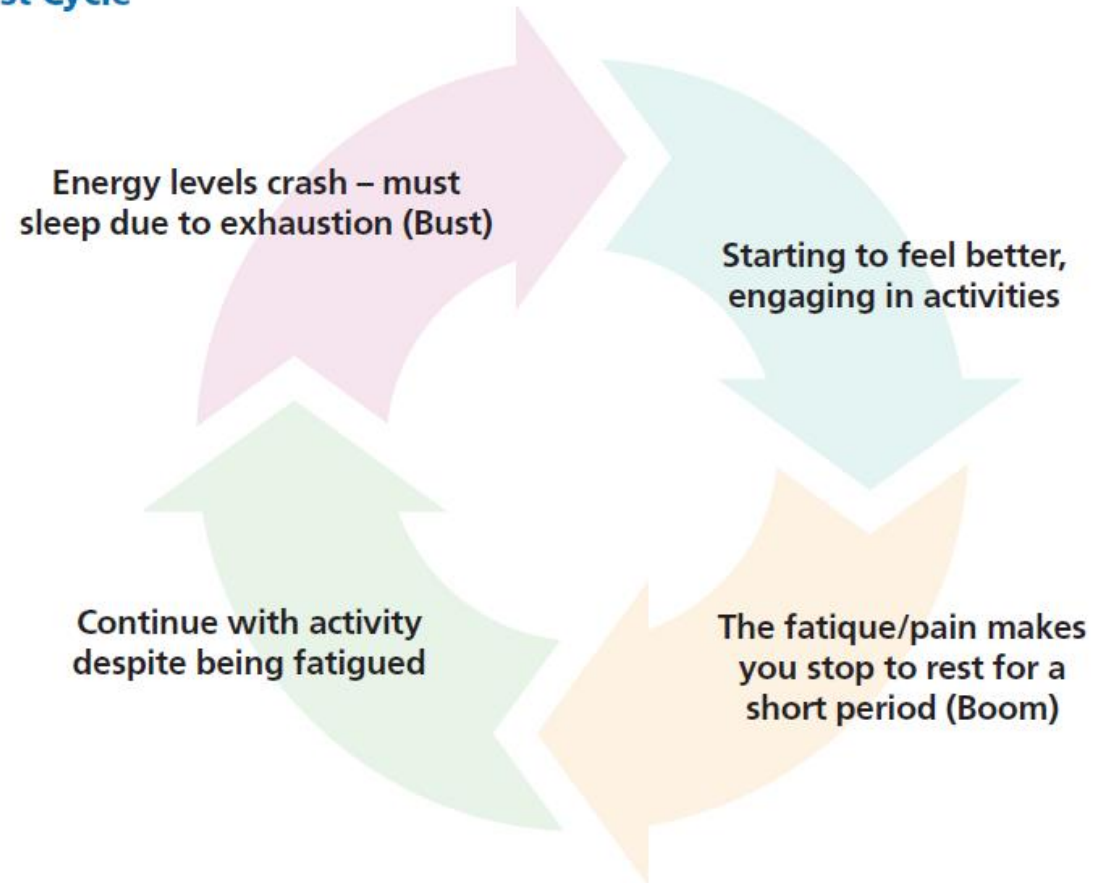
What are the symptoms?



Management principles: Fatigue

-
- **Avoid pushing through the fatigue (Boom and bust cycle)**
 - **Plan, pace and prioritise your activities**
 - **Keep to a routine**
 - **Take regular rest breaks**
 - **Keep a fatigue diary to monitor symptoms**
 - **Have good nutrition and hydration**
 - **Reduce stress and anxiety**
 - **Get an Occupational health review if they are having difficulty at work**

Boom-Bust Cycle



Management principles: Brain Fog

Sleep hygiene

Stop smoking and avoid alcohol

Optimise nutrition and hydration

Planning and pacing cognitive tasks

Take regular breaks

Reduce stress and anxiety

Meditation and mindfulness

Optimise attention and concentration

Memory aids

Reassurance

Management principles: Emotional wellbeing

Encourage the patient to open up about their mood

Reassure that they are not alone

Meditation and mindfulness practice

HPFT Talking Therapies referral – Emotional difficulties of long covid group

Peer support networks

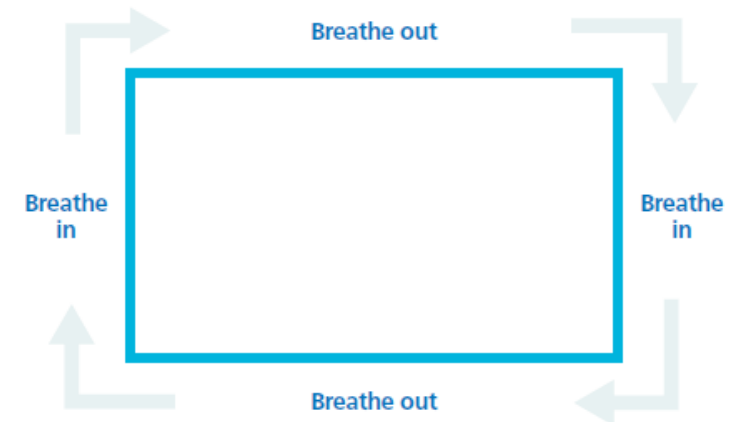
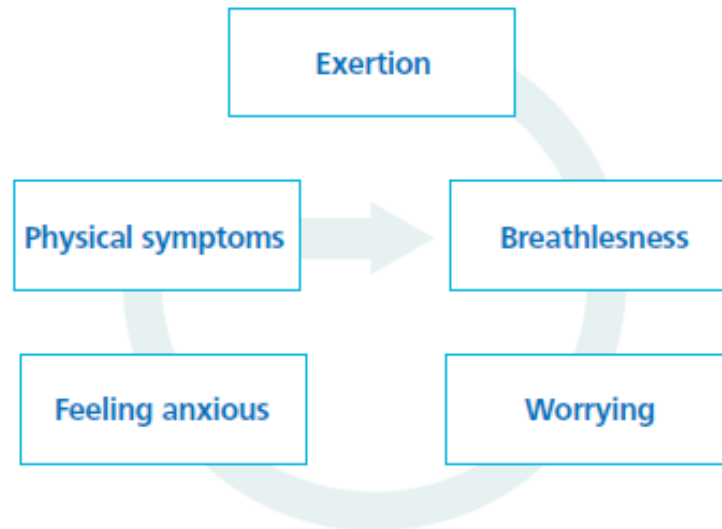
Nutrition and hydration optimised

Fresh air daily

Management principles: Breathlessness

Once other causes of breathlessness have been ruled out, we would advise the following:

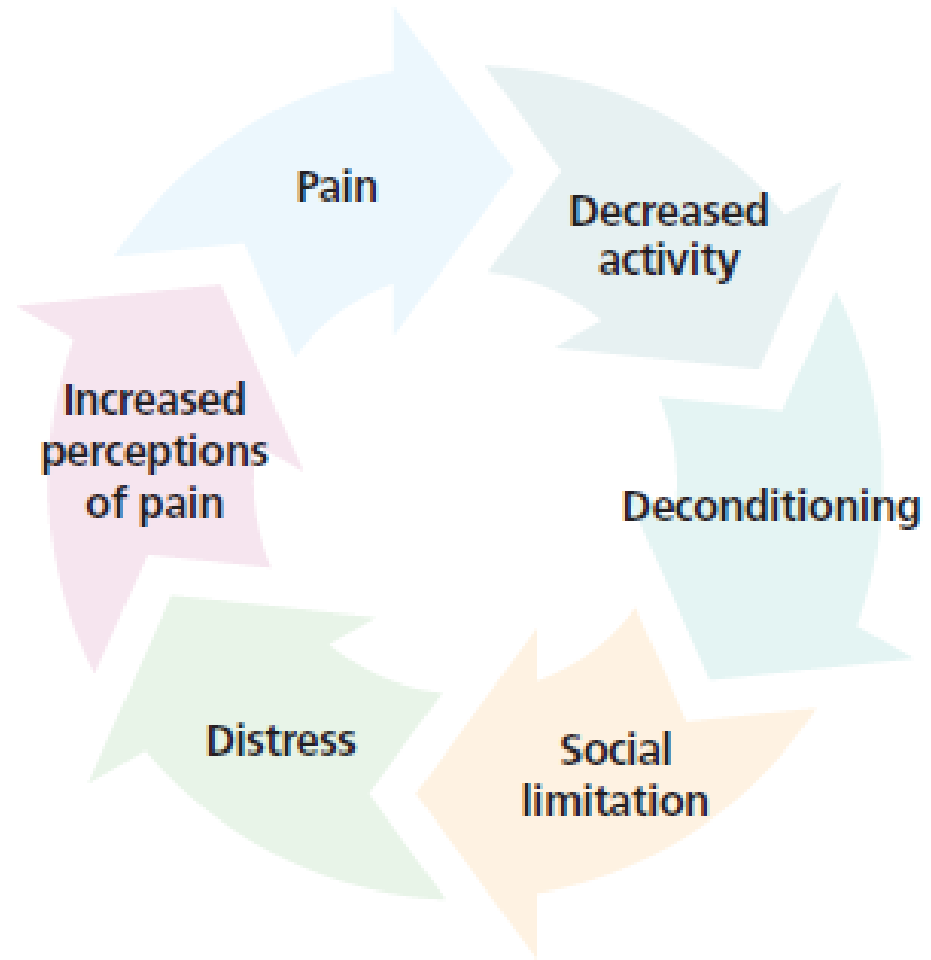
- Encourage good breathing
- Explain how anxiety can impact
- Prepare a breathlessness plan
- E.g. Positions of ease, box breathing



Management principles: Pain

- Keep moving regularly
- Pace and plan
- Do things you enjoy
- Distraction from pain with relaxation activities
- Look at suitable medications
- Pain management clinic, MSK, IAPT

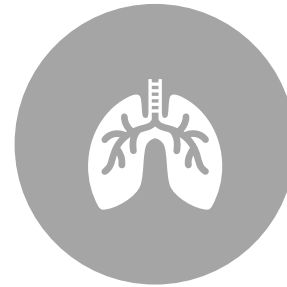
Cycle of pain and inactivity



Management principles: Managing exercise



Start by 'sitting less' and walking around your home little and often



If main issue is breathlessness, then focus on breathing techniques



If main issue is fatigue, then look at pacing activity's and keeping an activity diary.



Important not to overdo it as this can cause a relapse in symptoms

Background: Exercise Rehabilitation Group

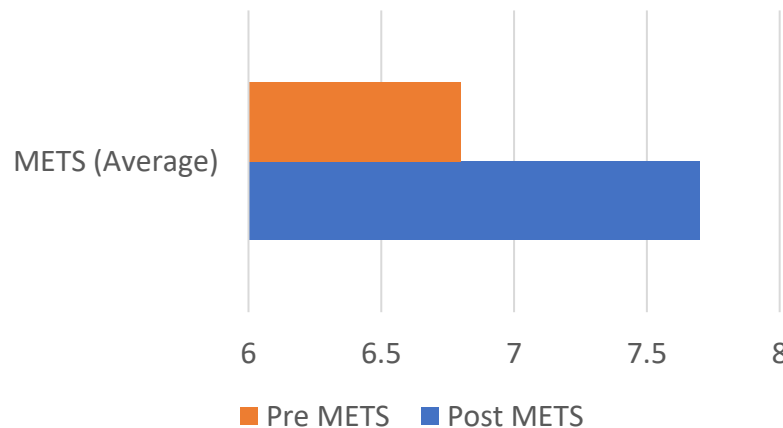
- Exercise Rehabilitation Group started in November 2023, following national guidance of positive physical patient outcomes and benefits in symptom management through in the Long Covid patient population.
- The exercise programme is an 8 week programme – focused on strength based exercise prescription and aerobic activity management of fatigue and exercise tolerance.
- Programme is now delivered on rolling cohort basis – maximum wait time for programme is 6 weeks.
- Every patient referred to service is clinically assessed and risk assessment prior to consideration of the exercise programme.
- The exercise programme is now a fundamental part of the service provision in the core pathway.
- The exercise programme is delivered F2F at Bennett's End Community Centre – Hemel Hempstead
- CLCH West Herts Long Covid service remains the only service in the EoE to develop its own 'in-house' service provision.

Outcomes

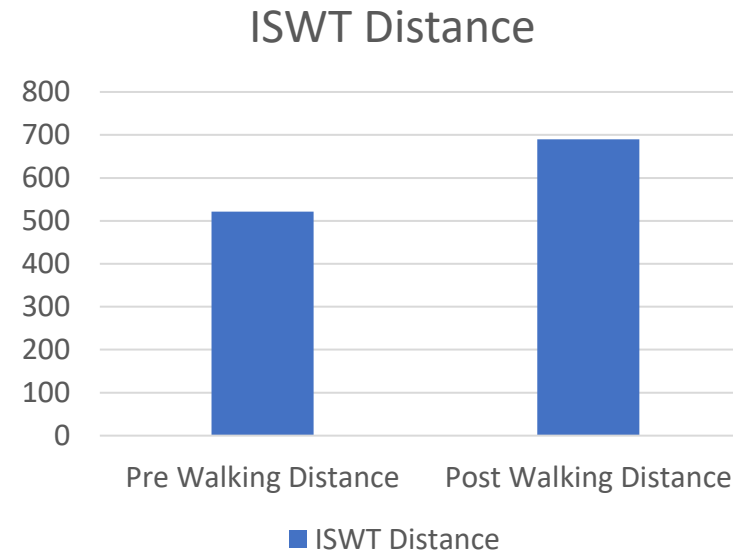
- Every patient receiving exercise intervention is assessed via, sub-maximal exercise assessment.
- Incremental Shuttle walking test is used as the sub-maximal assessment – provide to physiological capacity outcomes of METS and Walking distance.
- Following the pilot group – Grip strength has been added as a secondary strength based outcome measure.

Total Patient Started Programme	30
Total Patient completed (Minimum 75%)	16/18 PTS
Average Number of Sessions Completed per patient	6.6

METS Outcome Assessment



10/13 Patient Achieving MCID of Walking Distance



Why are we still talking about Long Covid?

Estimated 2 Million People living with self-reported Long Covid symptoms in the UK.

A lot of people do not recognize their symptoms as a result of Long Covid so this number is likely to be much higher.

Long Covid directly impacting day-to-day activities of 1.5 million people in the UK

Highlighting the importance of considering the impact of covid during your general consultations.

Long Covid & Physical Activity Rehabilitation Project – Project Update



Sarah Keen

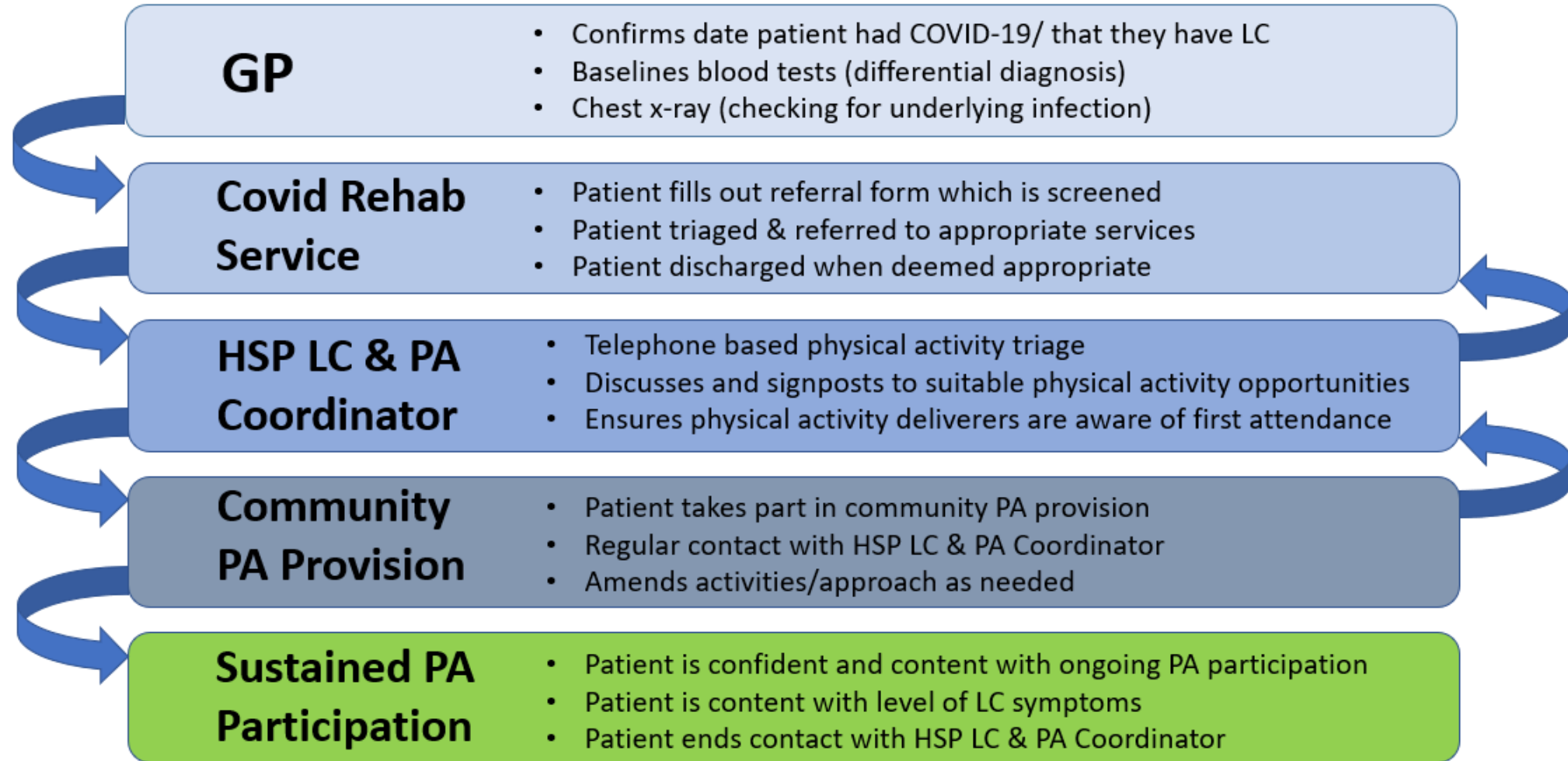
Long Covid Lead & Physical Activity Coordinator

Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership

About the project

- Initially a 1-year feasibility project, has been extended until March 2025
- Funded by Public Health within Hertfordshire County Council
- Delivered in collaboration with Hertfordshire's two NHS Covid Rehabilitation Services
- The project aims to explore the impact of physical activity on Long Covid recovery.
- Achieved by:
 - ✓ Introducing a **referral pathway** from Covid Rehabilitation Services to ongoing community physical activity.
 - ✓ **Mapping** and assessing a range of suitable physical activity opportunities in Hertfordshire.
 - ✓ Offering **training** to physical activity deliverers where upskill in awareness of Long Covid is needed.
 - ✓ **Developing** physical activity opportunities where there are gaps in provision (new or existing).
 - ✓ **Improve knowledge and awareness** of Long Covid and physical activity through training, webinars & resources.
 - ✓ Developing and delivering a comprehensive **evaluation framework** to encourage valuable learning.

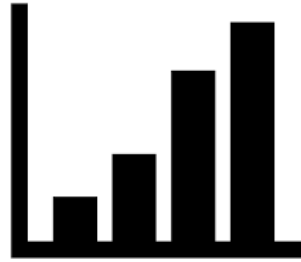
Long Covid & Physical Activity Referral Pathway



Project insights so far



43 referrals made
(30 ENH, 13 WH)



40 participants
engaged with
evaluation process



285 participant
calls made



89 providers
registered for Long
Covid training



458 physical
activities mapped
across Herts

Key facilitators

- Rapport built with NHS Clinicians
- Evaluation support
- Documentation in place (referral form, triage form, participant logs)

Main challenges

- Increasing numbers of referrals
- Participant engagement in physical activity
- Ensuring all project objectives are being met

Case Study 1 – Sykes



Sykes had acute Covid-19 in August 2022, and has been living with symptoms of Long Covid since. He was a patient at the Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust Long Covid Service and was referred to HSP's physical activity referral pathway in December 2023.

Sykes is continuing to gradually walk more where he can and does floor-based exercises at home occasionally, to maintain his cardiovascular fitness and strength.

Key Takeaways

- Long Covid affects not only an individual's health and wellbeing, but also home life, work life, and relationships.
- Pacing is vital when re-introducing physical activity.
- Living with Long Covid is a massive life adjustment, so it is important to come to terms with this and seek support from healthcare professionals as soon as possible.



Long Covid & Physical Activity Rehabilitation Project – Interim Evaluation



Martin Logue

Senior Research & Evaluation Officer

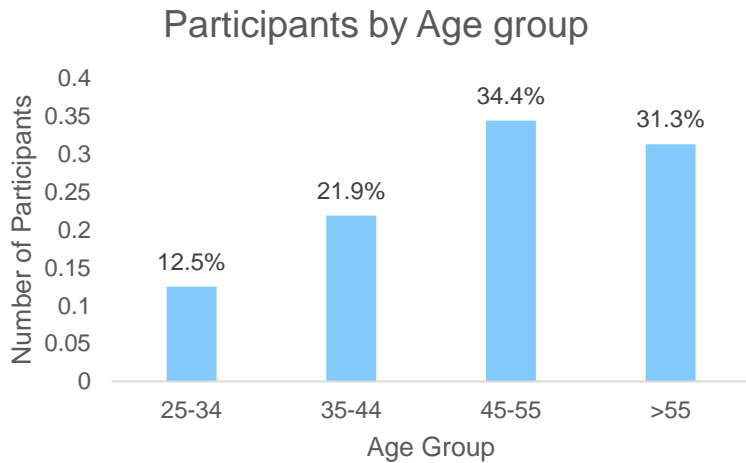
Public Health Evidence and Intelligence

Hertfordshire County Council

Demographics

Age

The majority (65%, n=21) of participants were over 45 years.



Gender

There have been a greater number of female referrals (65%) compared to male referrals (35%).



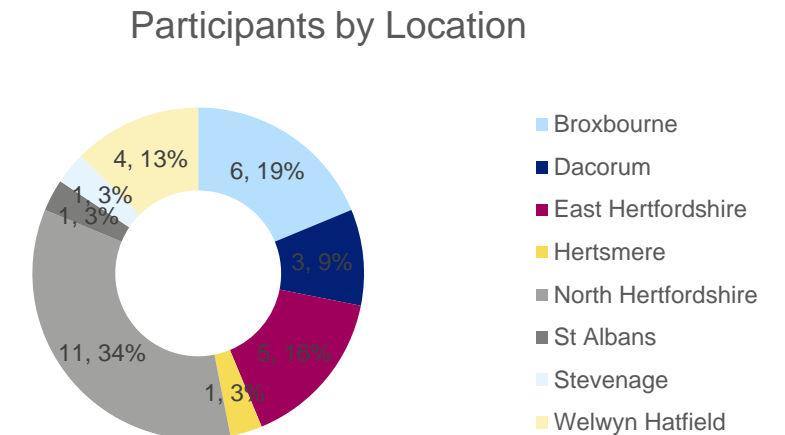
28 female referrals



15 male referrals

Location

34% (n=11) of participants were from North Herts district. Only 1 participant each for Hertsmere, St Albans and Stevenage districts.



Physical Activity Participation

- The percentage of participants who were inactive decreased throughout the programme from 37.5% (n=12) at the start to 18.2% (n=2) at follow-up 3.
- At all points of the programme at least 60% of participants were active or fairly active.

Inactivity Levels

Baseline: 37.5%

↓ Follow-up 1: 27.3%

↓ Follow-up 2: 23.5%

↓ Follow-up 3: 18.2%

Fairly Active Levels

Baseline: 28.1%

↑ Follow-up 1: 40.9%

↑ Follow-up 2: 58.8%

↓ Follow-up 3: 45.5%

Long Covid Symptoms

Shortness of breath (SOB)

Participants reported how severe their SOB was when sitting, climbing stairs, and lying flat over the last 7 days. Scores were out of a possible 9 (most severe).

SOB	Mean
Baseline	2.91
FU1	↑ 3.14
FU2	↓ 2.59
FU3	↓ 2.36

Sleep

Participants rated how often in the last 7 days they had problems falling asleep, had shorter sleep than usual, their sleep was interrupted, and had longer sleep than usual. Scores were out of a possible 12 (more severe sleep problems).

Sleep	Mean
Baseline	↓ 8.78
FU1	↓ 8.09
FU2	↓ 7.88
FU3	↓ 7.55

Muscle & joint pain

Participants reported the severity of their muscle pain, muscle weakness, muscle stiffness, and joint pain over the last 7 days. Scores were out of a possible 12 (more severe pain).

Pain	Mean
Baseline	6.94
FU1	↑ 7.14
FU2	↓ 6.53
FU3	↑ 7.45

Fatigue

Participants rated the severity of their fatigue in the last 7 days and how severe the worsening of symptoms were following simple physical or mental activities. Scores were out of a possible 12 (most severe).

Fatigue	Mean
Baseline	8.91
FU1	↓ 8.50
FU2	↓ 8.24
FU3	↓ 7.82

Brain fog & memory

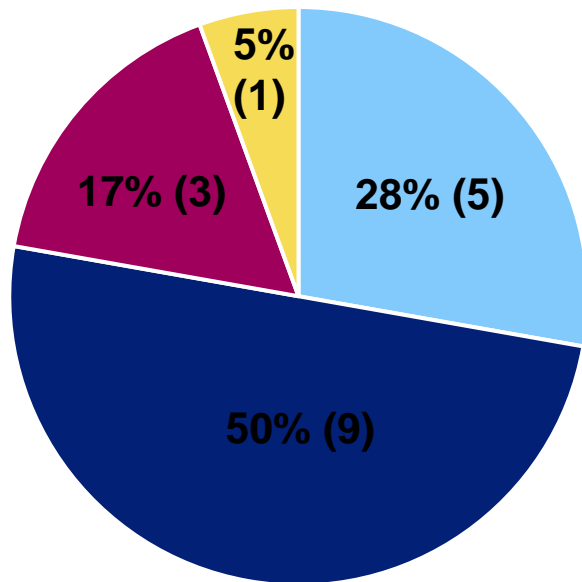
Participants rated the severity of their fatigue, low energy, and tiredness in the last 7 days and how severe the worsening of symptoms were following simple physical or mental activities. Scores were out of a possible 9 (most severe).

Brain fog	Mean
Baseline	5.19
FU1	↓ 4.86
FU2	↓ 4.29
FU3	↑ 4.73

Isolation & Loneliness

“How often do you feel isolated from others?”

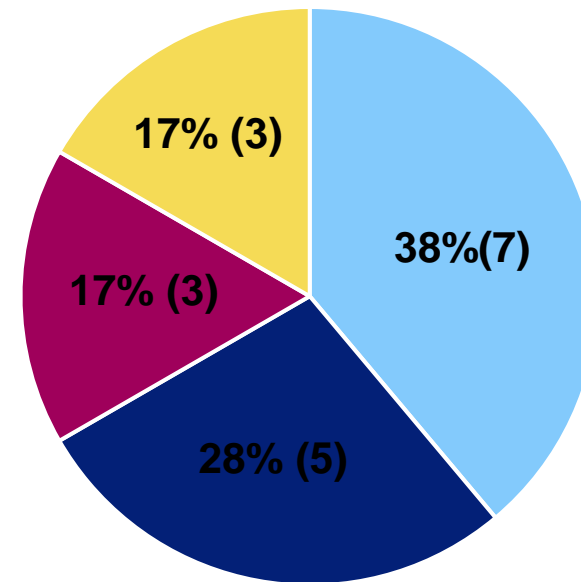
Isolation



■ Often ■ Some of the time ■ Hardly ever ■ Never

“How often do you feel lonely?”

Loneliness



■ Often ■ Some of the time ■ Hardly ever ■ Never

Participant Feedback

Survey feedback:

The majority (70%) of the participants were very satisfied with the programme, with none of the participants being dissatisfied with the programme.



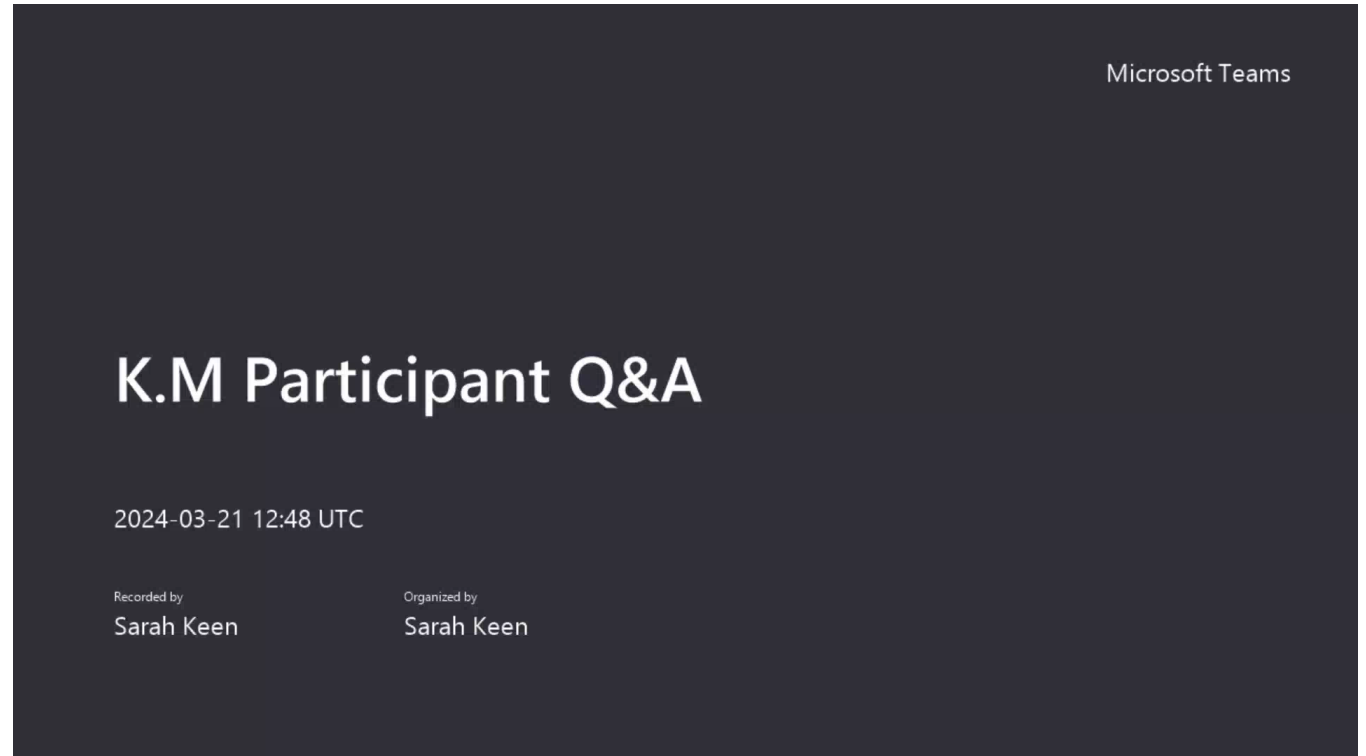
Case Study 2 – Karen

Karen was diagnosed with acute COVID-19 in 2022 and has been living with Long-COVID symptoms since. She was a patient at the Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust Long Covid Service and was referred to HSP's physical activity referral pathway in December 2023.

Karen is now in the process of joining her local Leisure Centre's Exercise Referral Scheme to increase her physical activity participation.

Key takeaways:

- It's a slow recovery period, but the progress is achievable – “Rome wasn't built in a day!”
- “It felt like for the first time someone understood my issues” – seek medical advice and support as soon as you can.
- Understand that you're not alone – there are others in the same situation as you.
- The social side of attending a physical activity session is just as important as the physical wellbeing aspect.



Participant Feedback

"Sarah has been very helpful **compiling a list of activities** I may be interested in and very supportive talking through these with me."

"Excellent - **very supportive** and **personalised advice**, helped find activities I never would have known about otherwise."

"I just want to say thank you so much for all of your help. You have **facilitated so many opportunities** that without you, I wouldn't have even known about or had access to. Since doing more exercise **I feel better physically and mentally** and actually **feel quite optimistic about the future** now, so thank you."

"I have had an excellent experience - I am grateful for the opportunity and support to develop my physical activity. I have also been struck by the **understanding, realism and empathy shown to me** with monthly check-in calls. They afford an opportunity to talk openly and **gain emotional support** whilst being **focused about the best way forward for me physically**. It has been an **empowering experience** and **safe space** to consider my reality, what is achievable and wider profile of Long Covid symptoms."

"It has been **beneficial to me** as I have been prompted to consistently **evaluate and reevaluate my approach to exercise**, especially given that my ability to be consistent has fluctuated."

Funded Long Covid training

Future Fit – Covid-19 Rehabilitation Course

- Learn how to support clients who have had Covid-19 and build your awareness of the condition, including the best strategies to aid recovery.
- 5 modules:
 - COVID-19 Rehab Part 1 – What is Covid?
 - COVID-19 Awareness Part 2 – Understanding
 - COVID-19 Awareness Part 3 – Application
 - COVID-19 Awareness Part 4 – Long-Covid
 - Breath Biomechanics
- Recognised by CIMSPA (Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity) – 3 CPD points
- Fully funded by this project – FREE to access if you meet the eligibility criteria

Eligibility Criteria

- ✓ Must be a physical activity provider
- ✓ Delivering in Hertfordshire

To access the training:

1. To register interest, copy the following web address into your browser:
<https://forms.office.com/e/mLHccwEKZu>
2. Visit our webpage for further information:
<https://sportinherts.org.uk/long-covid-and-physical-activity>

Please note:

The training is only available to access until the 31st May 2024

Future plans

- **Long Covid training will be available until end of May 2024.**
- **The project's referral pathway will remain live for the remainder of 2024.**
- **The evaluation process will continue for the remainder of 2024.**
- **There will be another event delivered around the project before the project comes to an end in March 2025 – date TBC**

If you would like to discuss any of the above, please email s.keen2@herts.ac.uk

Thank you!

Any questions?



Webinar recording and slides will be circulated to all attendees

Please complete the feedback survey when you leave