

10/11/2022

Dear Requester,

**FOI 1710**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request. Please note, this is a cross-site response for Bedford site and Luton site.

You asked:

1. **Could you state the number of staff members who were recorded to have had Long Covid while working for your trust at any time in the period between October 2021 - October 2022?**

47

1. **Could you state all leave of absences taken where Long Covid was cited as the cause between October 2021 - October 2022 and the length of time each absence lasted for.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Long Covid** | **No. Assignment Numbers** |
| **S15998 Other chest and respiratory problems** | **47** |
| 28.0 | 5 |
| 30.0 | 10 |
| 35.0 | 3 |
| 37.0 | 1 |
| 39.0 | 1 |
| 40.0 | 2 |
| 45.0 | 1 |
| 46.0 | 1 |
| 47.0 | 1 |
| 49.0 | 2 |
| 53.0 | 2 |
| 56.0 | 1 |
| 69.0 | 1 |
| 75.0 | 1 |
| 76.0 | 2 |
| 86.0 | 1 |
| 89.0 | 1 |
| 91.0 | 1 |
| 92.0 | 1 |
| 93.0 | 1 |
| 96.0 | 1 |
| 113.0 | 1 |
| 116.0 | 1 |
| 141.0 | 1 |
| 148.0 | 1 |
| 153.0 | 1 |
| 157.0 | 1 |
| 181.0 | 1 |
| **Grand Total** | **47** |

1. **Does your trust offer any specialised support for staff members living with Long Covid? If so could you please provide details of these services?**

All staff have access to Occupational Health and the Trust Employee Assistance Programme (EAP- CIC)

Self-referral to these, where this is possible, is recommended, however it is likely that for some a referral would be made by their line manager line manager.

Long COVID is considered an illness with a complex recovery (this can sometimes be referred to as a ‘non-linear recovery’), which means it is likely that relapses will occur. Some staff might return to work when feeling better or able to perform their duties, and shortly need to take time off again when symptoms return or affect their ability to work. The recovery process will be different for each colleague, and therefore Occupational health would encourage line managers to support colleagues on a one-to-one basis, seeking to understand and respect their experience of Long COVID.

Depending on the impact of the symptoms being experienced, staff experiencing Long COVID may be covered by the legal definition of disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010). Therefore, they may be entitled to legal protection and to additional support, such as reasonable adjustments.

Staff can seek a referral to their local Post COVID specialist service via their GP or through Occupational Health. NHS post-COVID specialist services are available nationwide and should offer an integrated multi-disciplinary service including physical, cognitive and psychological assessments and

management or appropriate onward referral to Post COVID and vocational rehabilitation, treatment and other support.

Staff who are also experiencing mental health symptoms can seek a rapid clinical assessment through one of the 40 system-wide mental health and wellbeing hubs in place to provide proactive outreach and assessment services, including rapid clinical assessment and supported onward referral to mental health services and psychological support where needed. The Trust also has CIC, the Employee Assistance programme in place; staff can self refer to this and also local hubs; Occupational Health would signpost to these.

The Trust provides COVID-19 recovery and wellbeing information via the Trust Intranet as below:

* [Your Covid Recovery - Supporting Recovery for Long Covid](https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/)
* [Bedfordshire Wellbeing Service | East London NHS Foundation Trust (elft.nhs.uk)](https://www.elft.nhs.uk/bedfordshire-wellbeing-service)
* [How to manage post-viral fatigue after COVID-19 - RCOT](https://www.rcot.co.uk/how-manage-post-viral-fatigue-after-covid-19-0?fbclid=IwAR2czAToW_Sc3kE43ueHh9T3J8p_9nRiqeul8yMmxcGSRhd1VjKYRzkV9uw)
* [Covid-booklet-post-discharge-hospital-FINAL.pdf (enderley.nhs.uk)](https://enderley.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Covid-booklet-post-discharge-hospital-FINAL.pdf)
* [Log in | The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (csp.org.uk)](https://www.csp.org.uk/membership/account?destination=/content/covid-19-road-recovery)
* [Coronavirus Recovery: Breathing Exercises | Johns Hopkins Medicine](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/coronavirus-recovery-breathing-exercises)
* [Long COVID | Asthma + Lung UK (blf.org.uk)](https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/long-covid)

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Please note that the Trust has a formal internal review and complaints process which is managed by the Information Governance Manager/Data Protection Officer. Should you have any concerns with our response, you can make a formal request for an internal review. Requests *for internal review* should be submitted within three months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter, and should be addressed to: dataprotectionofficer@ldh.nhs.uk. This option is available to you for up to three calendar months from the date your response was issued.

If you are not satisfied with the Trust review under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 you may apply directly to the Information Commissioners Officer (ICO) for a review of your appeal decision. The ICO can be contacted at: ICO, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk/)

Yours sincerely,

*FOI Officer*

Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust