

5 February 2024

Our Ref: RFI 55120**Freedom of Information Act 2000
Information in Relation to Specialist Services for Long Covid.**

I am writing to confirm that the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (the Trust) has now completed its search for information relating to the above, which you requested on 4 December 2023. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request, thank you for your understanding and forbearance.

A response to each of the questions raised has been provided by the Primary Care & Older People Directorate and is attached in Appendix A.

If you are unhappy as to how this request has been handled, you have the right to seek a review within the Trust in the first instance. You should write to the Information Governance Department, Lough House, Ards Community Hospital (informationgovernance@setrust.hscni.net) within two months of the date of this response and your complaint will be considered and a response provided, within 20 working days of receipt.

If, after receiving a response, you remain unhappy, you can refer your complaint to the Information Commissioner at The Information Commissioner's Office –Northern Ireland, 3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place, Belfast, BT7 2JB. It is important to note that if you refer any matter to the Information Commissioner, you will need to show evidence of having gone through the Trust's internal review procedure to try to resolve the matter with the Trust in the first instance.

If you have any queries about this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Degans
Information Governance Officer

Q1. Do you have a specialist service for long Covid patients? Please name the clinic/service.

A1. The Trust has a specialist service for patients experiencing prolonged symptoms related to Covid-19. The services consist of several strands:

- Post Covid Syndrome Service
- Post Covid Psychology Service
- Post Covid Pulmonary Rehabilitation Service
- In addition patients who been in intensive care as a result of Covid-19 are invited to Post Intensive care (ICU) clinic.

Q2. How many patients in your local NHS area have been referred to the clinic/service to date?

A2. There have been 818 patients referred to the Post Covid Syndrome Service from 31/10/2021- 20/11/2023

There have been 159 referrals to the Post Covid Psychology Service from 09 December 2021 - 20 December 2023.

In the Post Covid Pulmonary Rehabilitation Service 385 Patients have been assessed, 69 have cancelled or did not attend (DNA) their appointments.

There have been 73 attendances at the Post ICU clinic and 21 cancelled or DNA their appointment, 23 of these were patients admitted to ICU post Covid with 1 further DNA.

Q3. How many staff do you have working in the service FTE (full time equivalent) broken down by job title of:

- a) doctor**
- b) nurse**
- c) physiotherapist**
- d) occupational therapist**
- e) clinical psychologist/psychiatrist/ CBT practitioner**
- f) other, please specify**

- A3. Please see Table 1 for the number of staff working in each service, full time equivalent broken down by job title.

Table 1

Service	Job Title	Whole Time Equivalent (WTE)
The Post Covid Syndrome Service	Doctor Physiotherapist Occupational Therapist Administrator	0.05 wte 0.12 wte 0.72 wte 0.76 wte
The Post Covid Psychology Service	Specialist Clinical Psychologist	0.8 wte
The Post Covid Pulmonary Rehabilitation Service	Physiotherapist Physiotherapist Assistant	1.0 Wte 1.0 wte
Post ICU Clinics	Nurse Physiotherapist Doctor	0.12 wte 0.35 wte 0.05 wte

- Q4. For any doctors employed, please specify their specialism e.g. GP, cardiologist, neurologist**

- A4. The Doctor employed within the Post Covid Syndrome Service is a General Practitioner (GP).

The Doctor employed within the Post intensive care clinics is a Consultant.

- Q5. Does the service have the ability in-house to prescribe medications to long Covid patients?**

- A5. The Post Covid Syndrome Service do not have the ability in-house to prescribe medications, they make recommendations to the patient's GP.

The Post Covid Psychology Service do not have the ability in-house to prescribe medications to long Covid patients.

The Post Covid Pulmonary Rehabilitation Service do not have the ability in-house to prescribe medications to long Covid patients.

The Post ICU Clinic do have the ability in-house to prescribe medications to long Covid patients.

Q6. If so, please list the 3 most common drugs prescribed for long Covid patients by the clinic

A6. No Drugs have been prescribed by SEHSCT Post Covid Syndrome Services. Some patients have been advised to consider taking Vitamin D supplements.

Q7. Does the service have the ability to order tests and scans?

A7. Yes, the Services have the ability to order tests and scans.

Q8. If so please list the 3 most commonly ordered tests/scans/diagnostic questionnaires for long Covid patients by the clinic

A8. The 3 most commonly ordered tests/scans/diagnostic questionnaires for long Covid patients are:

- 72 Hour Holter monitor
- 24 Ambulatory BP Recording
- Pulmonary Function Tests(PFTs) including Feno, Spirometry and Transfer Factor

Q9. Please provide figures for how many patients referred to the clinic/service received the following type of treatment:

a) A wellbeing programme

b) physical rehabilitation

c) psychological support

d) A brain retraining or Neuro Linguistic Programming-based course such as the Lightning Process, Gupta Programme or Nuffield programme (please specify which)

d) drug treatment

e) other, please specify

- A9. Please see Table 2 below for the figures for how many patients referred to the clinic/service received the listed types of treatment.

Table 2

Type of Treatment	Number of Patients Referred
A Wellbeing Programme	224 Patients have been referred to the Condition Management Programme a health and work programme which supports people to return to, sustain or enter employment.
Physical Rehabilitation	454 Patients have been referred to the Post Covid Pulmonary Rehabilitation Service which comprises physical rehabilitation.
Psychological Support	169 Patients have been referred to the Post Covid Psychology Service.
A Brain Retraining or Neuro Linguistic Programming-based course such as the Lightning Process, Gupta Programme or Nuffield programme (please specify which)	Nil
Drug Treatment	Nil
Other, please specify	Nil

Please note, The Post Covid Syndrome service provides assessments and self-management advice and makes onward referral to other services for interventions required.

- Q10. If not provided in-house, which of the following types of services does the clinic/service refer patients on to or recommend?**

- a) A wellbeing programme**
- b) physical rehabilitation**
- c) psychological support**
- d) A brain retraining or Neuro Linguistic Programming-based course such as the Lightning Process, Gupta Programme or Nuffield programme (please specify which)**
- d) drug treatment**
- e) other, please specify**

A10. Please see Table 3 for the types of services the clinic refer patients on to or recommend.

Table 3.

Types of Services	Clinic/Service Patients are referred to or recommended
A Wellbeing Programme	Patients are referred to the Condition Management Programme a health and work programme which supports people to return to, sustain or enter employment.
Physical Rehabilitation	Patients are referred to the Post Covid Pulmonary Rehabilitation Service or the Breathing Pattern Disorder Service when clinically indicated.
Psychological Support	Patients are referred to the Post Covid Psychology Service when clinically indicated.
A Brain Retraining or Neuro Linguistic Programming-based course such as the Lightning Process, Gupta Programme or Nuffield programme (please specify which)	No
Drug Treatment	No
Other, please specify	Referred to the Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke breathing Better Service.

Q11. Is the clinic expected to continue running after 2025?

A11. A decision on funding and continued delivery of the services beyond 2025 has yet to be determined. This decision will be taken by the Department of Health.

Q12. * For English ICBS only* Which NHS trust is responsible for the care of patients referred to a long Covid clinic in your area?

A12. Not applicable