

Work and Long Covid



Working with Long Covid

- You may need extra advice and support to help you return to work with Long Covid. Long Covid is a new condition and medical understanding of it is still incomplete.
- Your employer may not know much about Long Covid or may not have heard of it. However, they still have a responsibility to support you in your return to work.
- For more information on long term effects of Long Covid go to:
www.gov.scot/policies/illnesses-and-long-term-conditions/longer-term-effects-of-covid-19-infection/

Work and Covid



Covid and its effect on work

- Government guidelines to reduce the spread of the virus mean that Covid is still affecting how we all work.
- Scottish Government guidelines still recommend working from home if you can.
- For the most up to date information and guidance visit:
www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-general-guidance-for-safer-workplaces/
- Guidance on working safely during the pandemic is available at:
www.nhsinform.scot/longer-term-effects-of-covid-19-long-covid/about-long-covid/your-recovery/ or www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/



Returning to work and Long Covid

Returning to work with Long Covid

- Many people with Long Covid can ultimately return to work
- Returning to work can be helpful for your mental health. It can:
 - Provide routine and support
 - Give you somewhere to socialise
 - Give you a sense of normality and something else to think about
- However, returning to work too soon or taking on too much work when you do return can make recovery slower.
- Remember, there is no timetable for your recovery. Do not rush back to work before you are ready.

When to return to work

- If possible, you should wait until you can manage your symptoms reliably enough to complete your daily tasks before you try to work.
- Find out if you have the option of talking to Occupational Health.
- If you can support yourself financially, or can access support, you should give yourself as much time as you need to recover.
- It is not always possible to stay off work as long as you might want. However, you have a right to statutory sick pay (SSP) for up to 28 weeks if you have a contracted employer. If you are self-employed, you may have to claim benefits during this time.
- If possible, it can help to have an extended phased return to work.

Occupational Health Service

- You may have access to an Occupational Health Service (OHS) through your employer. This is usually made up of medical professionals who specialise in workplace health.
- This service gives impartial advice about your ability to do your job and about any adjustment/s needed to support you to remain in or return to work.
- To help in the process, the OHS may talk to other health professionals, such as your general practitioner (GP) or medical consultant.
- The OHS may also offer additional services to support your return to work, such as counsellors, occupational therapists and physiotherapists.

What is a phased return to work?

- A **phased return to work** means that you initially return to work with reduced hours and/or less work to do.
- This can help you to gradually adjust to being back in work.
- A phased return can also help you (and your employer) to get an idea of the level of work you can safely manage.

When to go back

Your ability to return to work will depend on:

- The type of work you do
- The symptoms you have
- The severity of your symptoms
- The duration of your recovery

Remember:

- There is support available to help you return to work.
- There is also support available if you are unable to return to work.
- There is no “right time” to go back to work.

Work support services



Access to Work

- Access to Work is a government scheme to support people who are in work, entering work, or self-employed and who need help to accommodate illness or disability.
- You may be able to get financial support to pay for work equipment or adaptations. You may also be able to get a support worker.
- If public transport is unsuitable or unavailable, you may be able to get financial support for transport to and from work.
- More information about Access to Work: www.gov.uk/access-to-work

JobCentre Plus

The JobCentre offers a range of schemes to support your return to work. These include:

- New Deal for Disabled People
- Work Preparation
- Job Introduction
- Pathways to Work
- Residential training
- WORKSTEP

More information: www.gov.uk/looking-for-work-if-disabled



Employer's responsibilities

Employer's Responsibility

Your employer is required by law to make any reasonable adjustments to allow you to return to work.

If you have a contract of employment and you can still meet the terms of that contract, your employer is not allowed to use your illness or disability as a reason to dismiss you.

However, they can only help you if you keep them informed of your circumstances. Usually, the sooner you discuss the situation with your employer, the more easily changes can be made.

Legislation around work

The **Equality Act 2010** and the **UN Convention**:

- Make it illegal to discriminate against people with disabilities or long-term illnesses at work.
- Require employers to make reasonable adjustments to prevent disabled employees being disadvantaged at work compared with employees who are not disabled
- Require employers to ensure that there are processes in place to prevent harassment and bullying in the workplace, including on the basis of health.

More information about the Equality Act: www.gov.uk/rights-disabled-person

Further Legislation

The **Equality & Human Rights Commission**:

- The Equality & Human Rights Commission is an organisation which promotes and upholds equality and human rights ideals and laws across England, Scotland and Wales.
- It is a good source of advice about discrimination at work.
- It can help if someone wants to consider lodging a claim at an Employment Tribunal.

More information about the Equality & Human Rights Commission at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com

Self-employment



Returning to work when you are self-employed

- If you are self-employed, there is some support available to you.
- You may have more flexibility in your work patterns and workload.
- Self-employed people should be especially careful not to overwork or take on too much responsibility.
- Family, friends, and doctors may be able to offer support and help.
- It can be helpful to discuss work with your doctor or another health professional to get advice on working safely.



Planning your return to work

Allied Health Professional (AHP) Health & Work Report

- You can ask for an AHP & Work Report to be completed by someone who is treating you for Long Covid.
- This form provides you, your GP and your employer with information to help manage your and your employer's expectations regarding a return to work timeframe, or a review date to look at this again.

The AHP form is available online at: www.nottingham.ac.uk/helmopen/rlos/professional-development/AHP-health-and-work-report/index.html



Support available to you

Support from Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS)

- Advice Line Nurse Services is a free, confidential service providing support and information on Long Covid. Nurses are available to chat confidentially about any worries or concerns from **Monday to Friday 9.30am-4pm**.
 - Telephone: **0808 8010899**
 - Email: **advice@chss.org.uk**
 - Text: **NURSE** to **66777**
- Health Information Services are producing a range of up to date publications and information leaflets including work & financial support resources.
 - More information at www.chss.org.uk/chss-publications-dvds-and-resources/
- **CHSS peer support:** contact CHSS for more information and to find out about potential Long Covid peer support groups in your area

Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty (ECAP)

- ECAP are an organisation who can offer support when applying for Universal Credit, PIP, or any other welfare in Edinburgh.
- ECAP was set up by people affected by low incomes, unemployment, too sick to work, lone parents & all those affected by poverty.
- For more information go to edinburghagainstpoverity.org.uk/
- You can also call **0131 557 6242** any time and leave a message. You can email **ecap@lists.riseup.net** any time. If you have access to Facebook, you can message the ECAP Facebook page.

Working Health Services/Fit for Work Services

- This is a voluntary organisation providing free, expert and impartial advice to anyone looking for help with issues around health and work.

Through this scheme, a number of vocational rehabilitation services are being developed around the country.

- Tel: **0800 019 2211**
- Web: www.healthyworkinglives.scot

Further information & support

- For more information on effects of Long Covid: www.nhsinform.scot/longer-term-effects-of-covid-19-long-covid/
- For more information on government services, benefits and schemes available to you: www.gov.uk/
- Further advice can also be obtained from Citizens Advice Scotland: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/
- You can get support with workplace disputes and understanding your rights through ACAS: www.acas.org.uk/

Information used to create this resource

Information used to create this resource has been taken with kind permission from:

- STARS Advancing Module 10 available @:
<https://www.chsselearning.org.uk/advancing-modules/resuming-daily-activities-after-stroke/>

Other websites are also referred to/signposted in this resource including:

- Gov.uk- The best place to find government services and information simpler, clearer, faster available @: <https://www.gov.uk/>
- CHSS Publications available @: <https://www.chss.org.uk/publications>

Comments and feedback

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