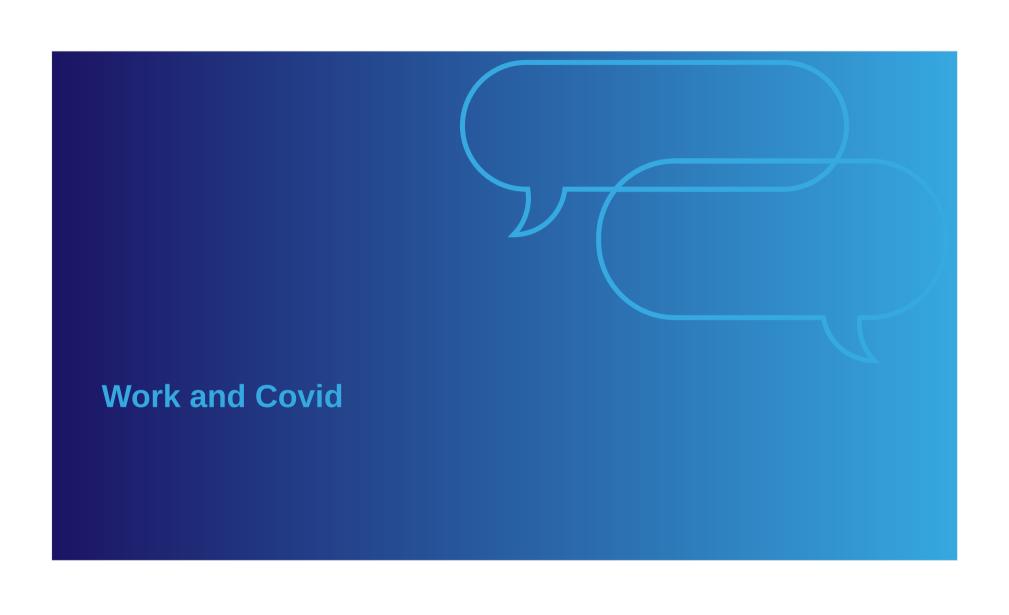


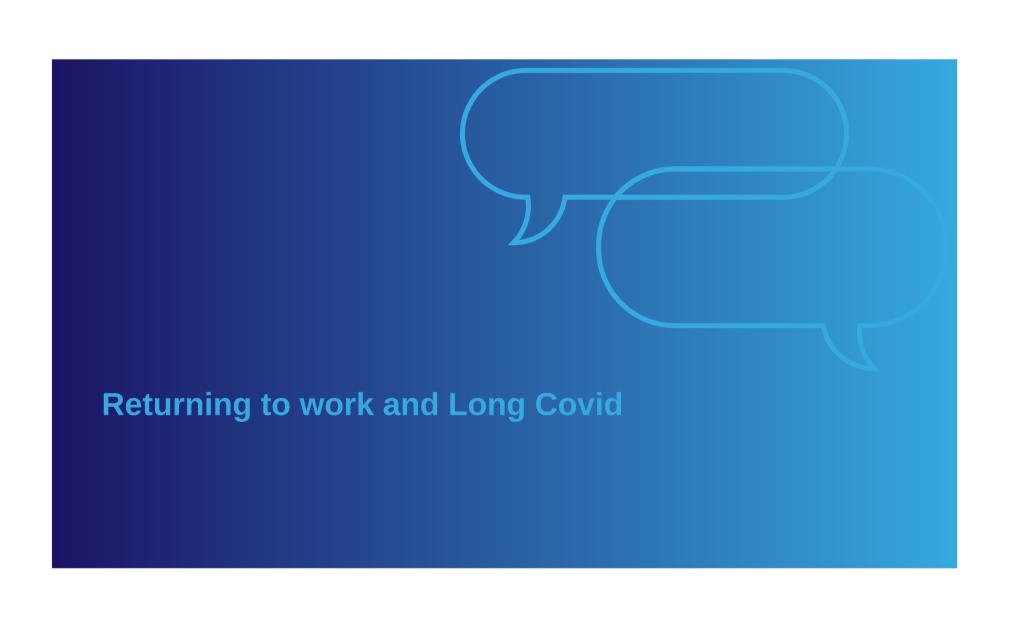
# **Working with Long Covid**

- 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/



#### **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 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.

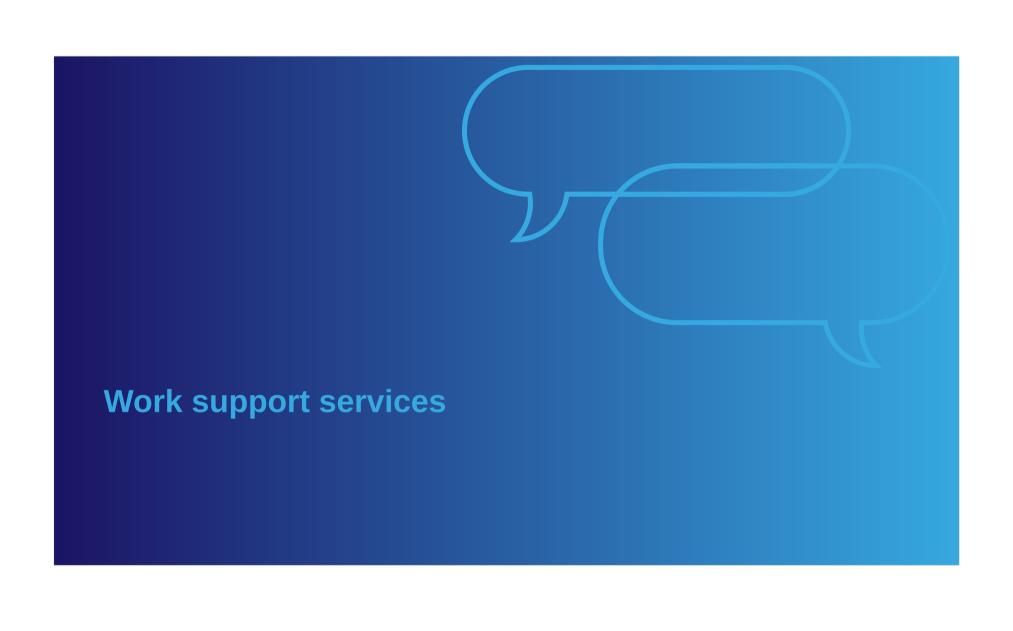
#### When to go back

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.



#### **Access to Work**

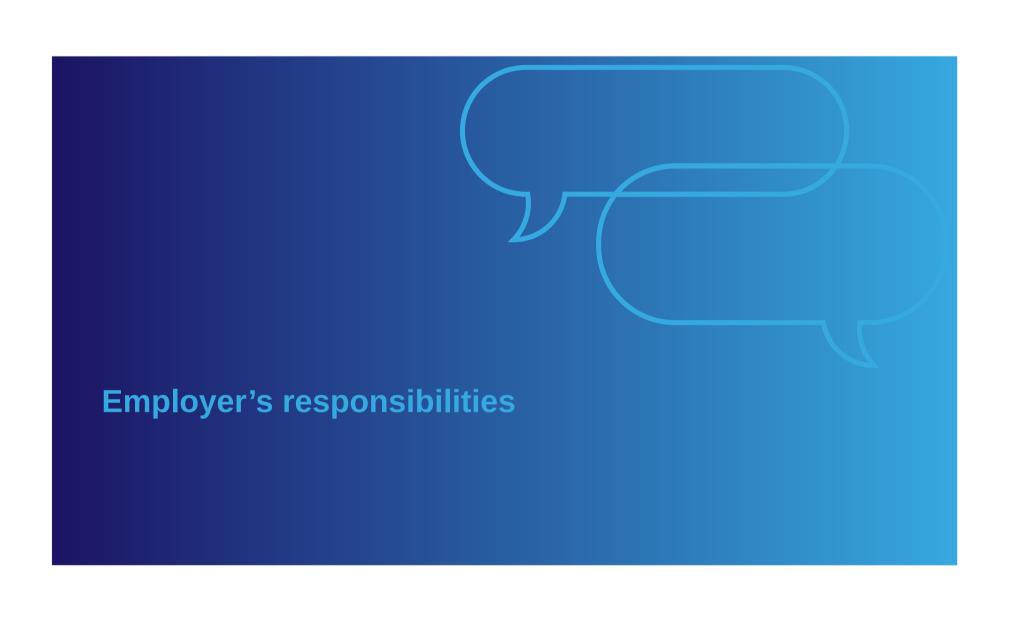
- Access to Work is a government scheme to support people who are in work, entering work, or self-employed and who need help to accommodate illness or disability.
- You may be able to get financial support to pay for work equipment or adaptations.
  You may also be able to get a support worker.
- If 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 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:

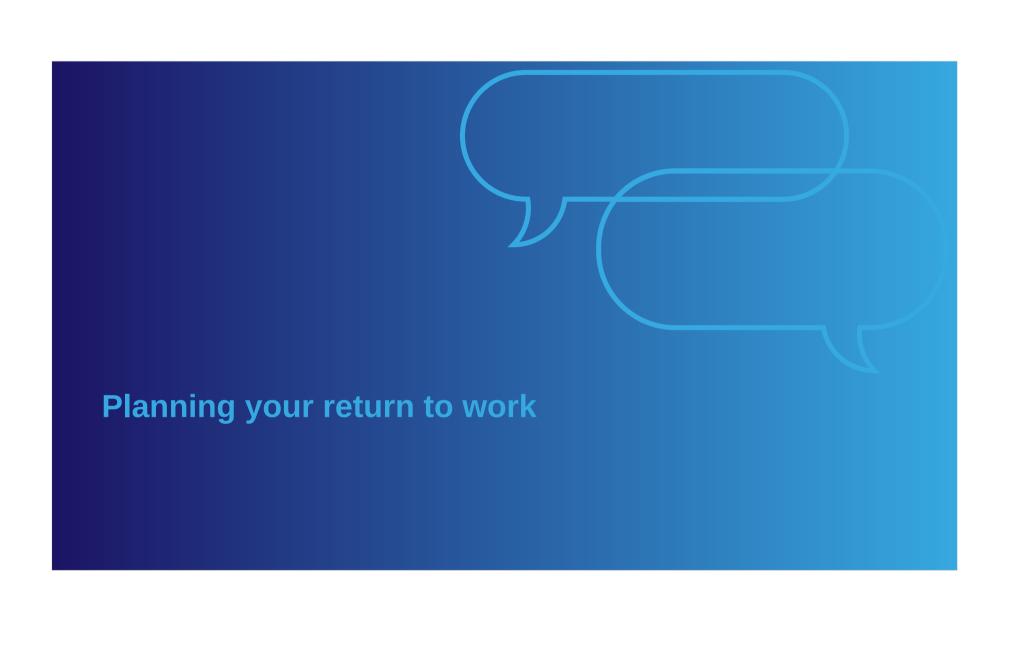
- The Equality & Human Rights Commission is an organisation which promotes and upholds equality and human rights ideals and laws across England, Scotland and Wales.
- It is a good source of advice about discrimination at work.
- It can help if someone wants to consider lodging a claim at an Employment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

More information about the Equality & Human Rights Commission at: www.equalityhumanrights.com



## Returning to work when you are self-employed

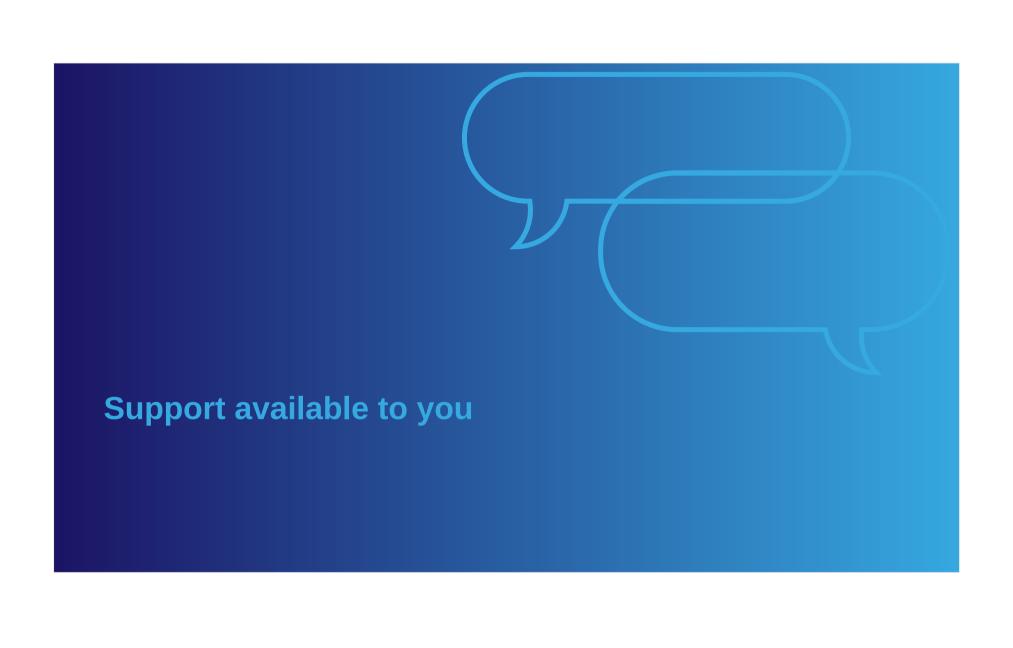
- If you are self-employed, there is some support available to you.
- You may have more flexibility in your work patterns and workload.
- Self-employed people should be especially careful not to overwork or take on too much responsibility.
- Family, friends, and doctors may be able to offer support and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



# 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 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: adviceline@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 edinburghagainstpoverty.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-effectsof-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-afterstroke/

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**

If you have any comments or feedback about the contents of these slides, please contact CHSS directly:

tailoredtalks@chss.org.uk

#### This presentation was created by Quinn Porter



The following organisations contributed to this presentation

