



Legal & General comments on latest NICE Long Covid guidelines

Dr Tarun Gupta, Medical Officer at Legal & General Insurance:

“Legal & General welcomes NICE [National Institute for Clinical Excellence] guidance, published recently, which provides GPs and treating clinicians with recommendations for Long Covid care in line with evolving evidence.*

“It’s important that, as a group income protection insurer providing dedicated [Long Covid support](#) we keep up to speed with such recommendations to ensure that our services complement public sector support as far as possible. Following careful analysis of the guidelines, it’s clear that our newly designed programme does that, with the potential to help relieve pressure on NHS rehabilitation services in the process. Our programme helps meet the typical psychological and physical needs of those classified by NICE as having Ongoing Symptomatic Covid-19*, a group that is not explicitly or necessarily being served by the NHS in this way at present.

“Legal & General’s income protection claims management approach is based on early intervention, proactive case management and rehabilitation where appropriate, with the ultimate outcome being to help support the individual back into the workplace. Because our Long Covid support kicks in early, following an absence of four to six weeks, it dovetails nicely with public sector services. It fills a current void where individuals would otherwise be unable to access such services. The NICE guidelines indicate that referral into the NHS for multi-disciplinary assessment via the NHS’ newly commissioned specialist clinics is from 12 weeks onwards.

“Our Long Covid support package, which includes up to eight hours of bespoke therapy and rehabilitation sessions, is designed to capture as many people as possible, providing a level of support at an early stage that is clinically appropriate. If symptoms persist beyond 12 weeks, deeper and broader therapeutic input - appropriate for the challenges faced by this group - is then available via the NHS post Covid-19 clinics.”

*Notes to editors

NICE published [Covid-19 rapid guideline: managing the long-term effects of Covid-19](#) on 18 December 2020. It provides advice to the public healthcare sector on organising services for Long Covid.

In developing these recommendations, NICE uses the following clinical definitions for the initial illness and Long Covid at different times:

- **Acute Covid-19:** signs and symptoms of Covid-19 for up to 4 weeks.
- **Ongoing symptomatic Covid-19:** signs and symptoms of Covid-19 from 4 to 12 weeks.
- **Post Covid-19 syndrome:** signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with Covid-19, continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis.

At present, referral in to NHS post Covid-19 assessment clinics for multidisciplinary (MDT) assessment is from 12 weeks. These patients are likely to have complex physical / mental health needs. Some may require therapeutic input, rehabilitation, psychological support, specialist investigation or treatment once they have been assessed at the clinic, and it is the responsibility of the clinic – as opposed to the GP – to refer patients on to existing services as needed.

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