

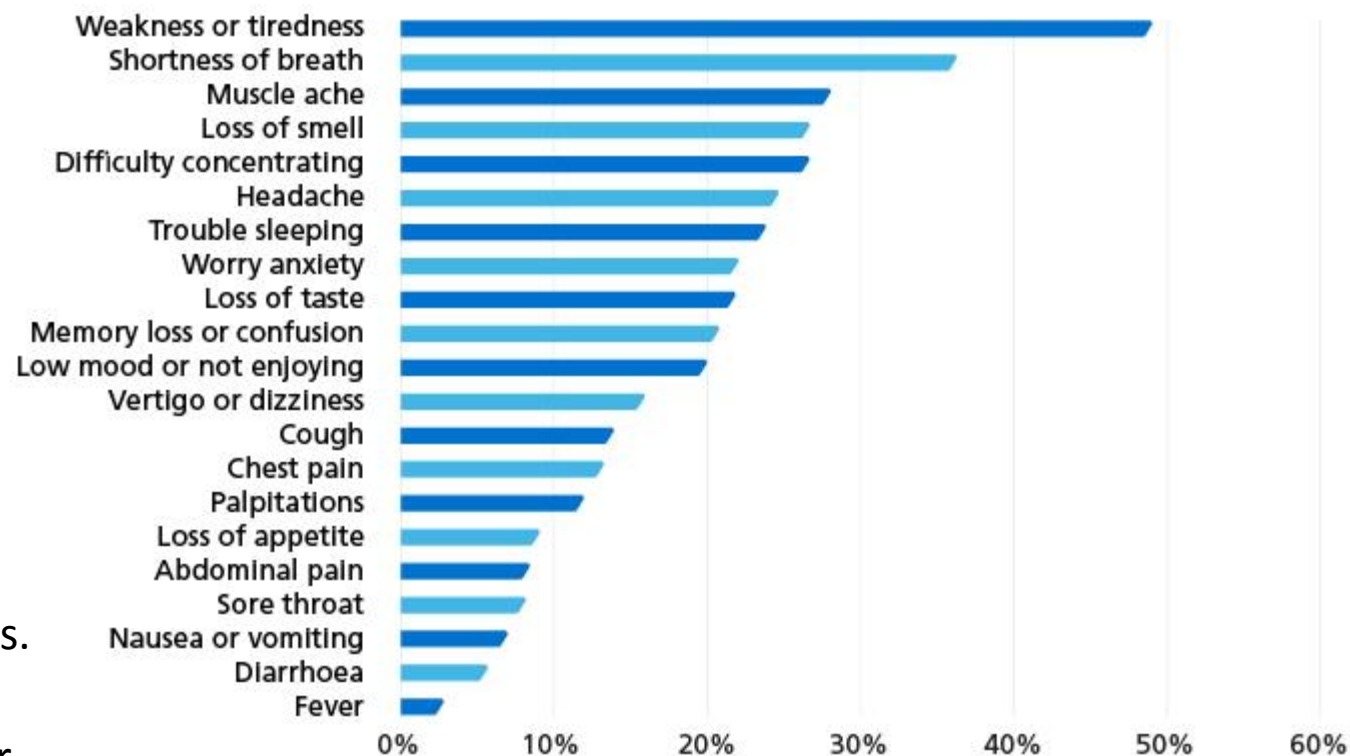
# Long COVID and Musculoskeletal Clinics

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# Long COVID

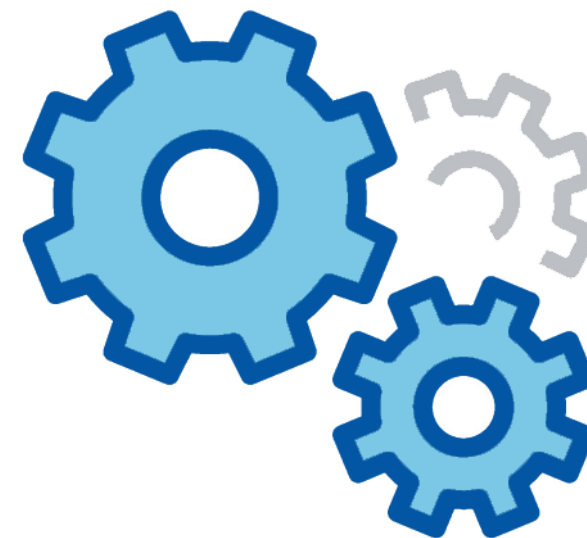
- Long COVID is the colloquial name given to persistent symptoms following COVID-19 infection.
- Post-COVID-19 syndrome refers to signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19, which continue for more than 12 weeks, and are not explained by an alternative diagnosis.
- Most people recover from COVID in a few weeks. However, some people continue to experience continuous, relapsing or recurring symptoms for months after contracting the virus.



# Oiling the cogs

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- **Collaboration** along the pathway
- Most providers use SystemOne
- Trusted assessments
- Holistic approach, individualised care
- Community partners MDT, hosted by CLCH
- Breaking down the boundaries of traditional models of care



# CLCH Long Covid service

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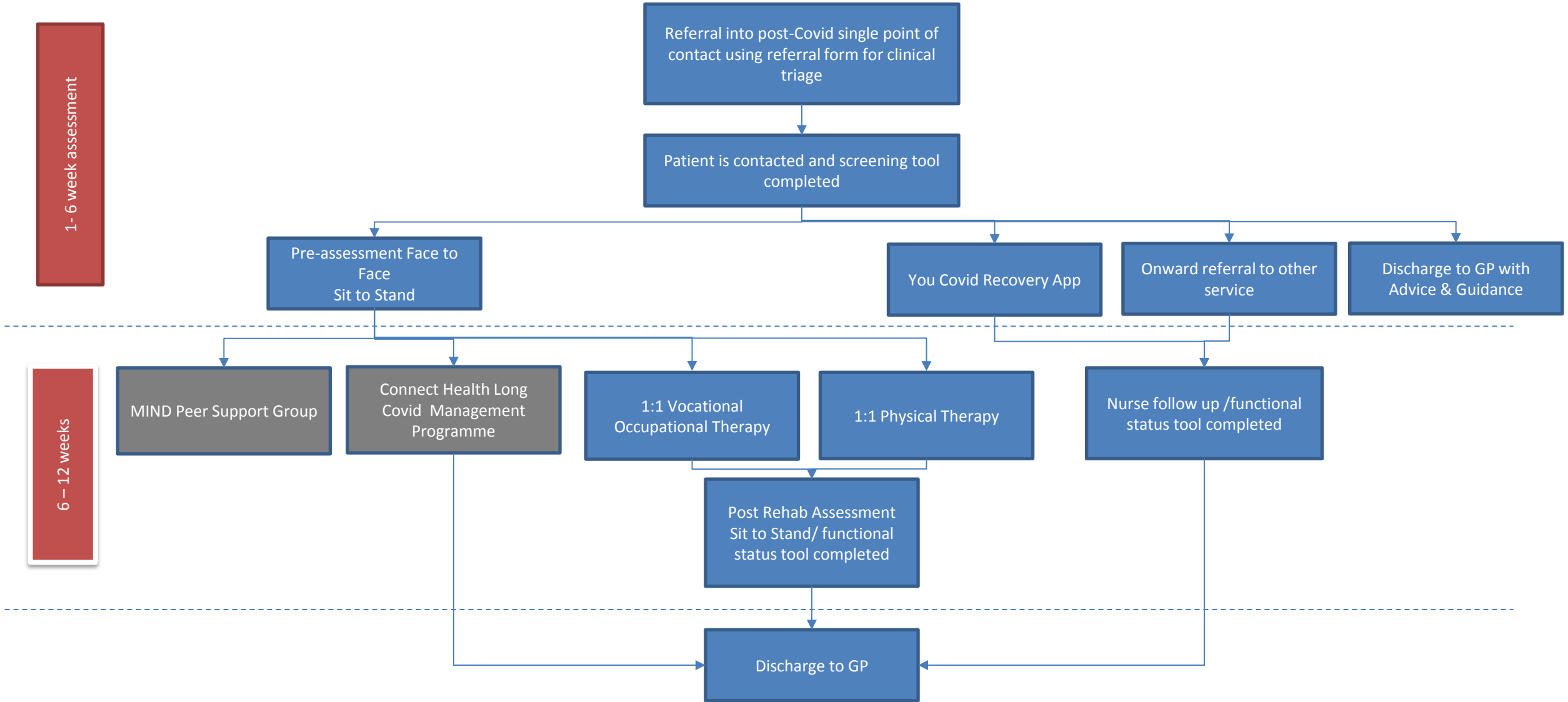
- Growing team  
OT, Physio, SLT, GP, Nurse, Rehab assistant, CBT therapist
- Holistic screening
- 1:1 support
- Emphasis on evidence-based practice
- MDT for complex support

# Case study

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- Owen is a 58 yr old residential home manager. He led a sedentary lifestyle, had hypertension, mild depression and obesity. He lives with his wife, who is a district nurse.
- He contracted COVID in April 2021 about 10 days after his first vaccine
- He became breathless but paramedics advised that he did not need to go to hospital
- He stayed in bed for 3 weeks and then started mobilising. However, he was fatigued at rest and found it difficult to walk more than 20-30 metres
- His fatigue has remained a significant barrier to him returning to work as he is unable to concentrate
- He has become frustrated at his lack of improvement, and this has triggered his depression

# CLCH Enhanced Long Covid Service



# Long COVID fatigue management service

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- 500 patients over 12 months
- Virtual group programme: 6 x 2hr sessions over 12 weeks
- Individual therapy with clinical psychologist, face to face or remote
- Rehabilitation programme if no post-exertional malaise and mild symptoms
- May switch to pain management programme if prominent myalgia rather than fatigue

# How is COVID impacting the Herts Valleys Integrated MSK service?

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- Effect of COVID – 25% of referrals
  - People who held back consulting during 2nd and 3rd waves and want treatment 'now'
  - People whose lifestyle changed: e.g. reduced physical activity resulting in increased frailty and symptomatic osteoarthritis
- Incidence of shoulder and arm problems following vaccination  
SIRVA – shoulder injury related to vaccine administration
- GP Referrals not reached pre-COVID levels
- Tier 1 and 2 services carrying vacancies



# How is Long COVID impacting the Herts Valleys Integrated MSK service?

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- Herts Valleys CCG Long COVID pathway:
  - For people with fatigue, myalgia, brain fog
  - Pilot opens in December
- General physiotherapy clinics – 5% of people
  - Rehab for deconditioning
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome clinic – 5% of people
  - Most have had Chronic Fatigue Syndrome before developing long COVID
- Pain service – 5% of people
  - Most have exacerbation of pre-existing chronic pain, multifactorial causes

# Fibromyalgia

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- Chronic widespread pain or fibromyalgia may be triggered following COVID infection, particularly in people who had more severe COVID. This syndrome, unlike traditional fibromyalgia, affects men and obese people more commonly

(Ursini 2021) <https://rmdopen.bmj.com/content/7/3/e001735.long>

# Impact of Long COVID pathway on workforce

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- Won't impact tier 1 and 2 musculoskeletal services
- Will impact pain and CFS services as staff diverted to long COVID clinic
- Funding for new staff  
Out to advert for physio or occupational therapist, and a clinical psychologist
- Difficult to recruit
  - Short term contracts because funding envelope is unknown
  - Competing with better paid vacancies in first contact practitioner (FCP) roles

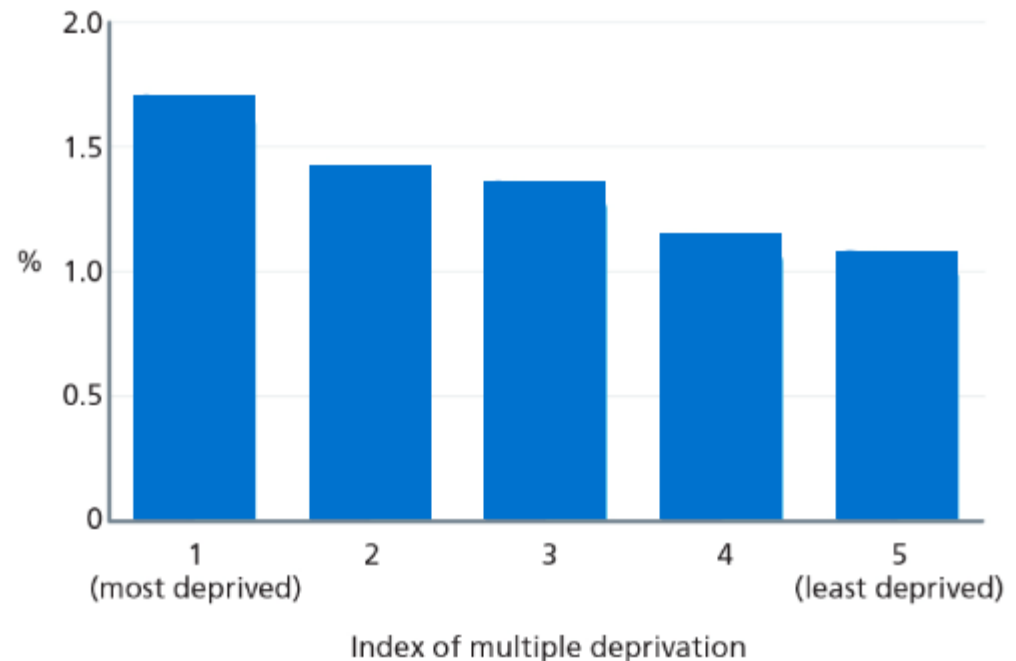
# Training for clinicians

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- Internal staff training, particularly to be aware of red flags
  - Undiagnosed: fatigue, breathlessness, chest pain, palpitations,
  - Post-exertional malaise
- Online
  - <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/long-covid/>
- Shadowing and supervision

# Health inequalities

- In contrast to deaths from COVID-19, surveys suggest that long COVID:
  - may more commonly and severely affect younger age groups
  - may affect women more than men, particularly with symptoms of fatigue, breathlessness and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Avoidable inequalities in long COVID
  - Long COVID appears more common in areas of higher deprivation, in those working in health and social care, and those with pre-existing poor health



# Vocational rehabilitation

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<u>Self management</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial symptoms improving</li> <li>Either back to work or planning to</li> <li>In touch with OH department</li> <li>Advice and support</li> <li>Any professional can give advice – likely primary care input</li> </ul>	<u>Needs some support</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persistent symptoms, not improving</li> <li>Unable to return to work or struggling once back</li> <li>Limited support or access from OH</li> </ul>	<u>Specialist service</u> <p>Long term symptoms (6 months or more)</p> <p>On sick leave, or no longer employed</p> <p>Needs help to plan return to work</p>