

Siobhian Brown MSP  
Convener  
COVID-19 Recovery Committee

Date 9 February 2023  
Your Ref  
Our Ref JMC/CC  
Enquiries to Cathie Cowan  
Direct Line

Sent by email:  
[covid19.committee@parliament.scot](mailto:covid19.committee@parliament.scot)

Dear Siobhain

## **Enquiry into Long COVID**

Thank you for your recent letter requesting information for submission to the Covid Recovery Committee.

NHS Forth Valley and Partners are committed to delivery of safe effective efficient and person-centred care for the people in Forth Valley living with the long-term impact of Covid 19.

Forth Valley was awarded £154k for the year 22/23 being the proportionate monies allocated based on agreed calculation. As you will be aware, this money is recurring over the next 3 years and most Health Boards in Scotland have proceeded to service provision on a time limited basis.

NHS Forth Valley took the decision to delay recruitment in order to secure agreement across our HSCPs to proceed to recruitment on a permanent basis and our recruitment campaign is in hand. Our service delivery offer includes a full time permanent Long Covid Coordinator, a full time permanent Respiratory Physiotherapist and permanent Clinical Psychology staffing.

We have a Long Covid oversight group which is multi-professional and strategic and tasked with taking forward the pathway developed for people living with Long Covid to access support. We are linking with the National Groups and ensuring our workforce are fully briefed on the expectations in respect to referral and support for people presenting with the impacts of long Covid symptoms.

The lived experience of people with Long Covid is central to our service delivery and design and our Long Covid Lead is meeting with the local lived experience group to understand their frustrations and needs. Two people from our local long covid lived

Chair: Janie McCusker  
Chief Executive: Cathie Cowan

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experience group who are permanent members of our strategic oversight group, will be pivotal members of our implementation group which will be established to support our Long Covid staff group in developing and evaluating our service offer. In respect to barriers to development and provision, one of the most significant barriers is the recruitment of skilled staff to develop and provide services.

There are significant current pressures in Allied Health Professions in respect to recruitment and we are experiencing difficulties in recruiting skilled staff to all roles across the system.

We are hopeful we will recruit to the staffing to develop our offer however we must be realistic about how we will develop supports in the absence of recruitment to the roles supported by the funding from Scottish Government.

We are working with our Simulation Centre to develop learning supports for our workforce. This is one of the key barriers described by people with lived experience: the lack of understanding in the wider workforce regarding the needs of people living with Long Covid and the confusion in the system re how to access help and support.

We are currently offering referral into specialist services based on the individual needs of individuals. We are implementing the Long Covid pathway based on the SIGN guidance.

Forth Valley is committed to inclusion and engagement with people with lived experience at a practical level and plan to continue to develop this as key to our understanding of how best to meet the needs of our people.

The National Service Leads group is an excellent group focussed on meeting people's needs and developing innovative services. It may be useful for the Covid 19 Recovery group to meet with the NSS Service Leads group to discuss the national picture in respect to service development and delivery and the challenges being experienced in development of services which are being experienced across Scotland.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

**Cathie Cowan**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**