**Long COVID support services for local residents**

Feeling unwell and not sure why? If you have any of the symptoms below and think you may have previously had a COVID-19 infection (you do not need to have had a positive COVID test), there is a chance you may have long COVID.

This leaflet gives you more information on the symptoms to look out for and how to access support.

 **COVID-19**

COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus that mainly affects the lungs. It is transmitted through droplets created from sneezing and coughing from those who have the infection. The virus enters the body through the nose, mouth and eyes.

 **What is Long COVID?**

It is estimated that one in 10 people have ongoing symptoms from the time they initially become unwell with the virus for 12 weeks or longer.

Long COVID is diagnosed when these lasting symptoms cannot be explained by an alternative diagnosis. Symptoms can vary a lot, fluctuate over time and may have an impact on your ability to do your day-to-day activities.

Being diagnosed with Long COVID does not seem to be linked to how ill you were when you first got the virus. As this is a new condition, lots of research is being done to better understand what causes it and how to help people living with it.

**What are the symptoms?**

Common symptoms include:

* extreme tiredness
* depression and anxiety
* breathlessness
* fast heart beat
* widespread pain
* chest pain or tightness
* changes in taste and smell
* changes in sleep/difficulty sleeping
* pins and needles
* difficulty concentrating and memory

Please note: there are many others symptoms which might not be listed. If you are experiencing any ongoing symptoms, it is important to get support as soon as possible.

**How do I access support?**

If you are registered with a doctor, please speak to your doctor immediately.

They will discuss your symptoms with you in more detail. They may take your blood pressure, check your pulse rate, listen to your chest and check your oxygen levels. You may be asked to have a blood test and may also be sent for other investigations such as a chest x-ray or heart scan.

If you and your doctor think you may have Long COVID; you are aged 18 years and above; with symptoms which are having an impact on your everyday life, then you may benefit from a referral to our local Long COVID services, which provide a range of support according to your symptoms.

**Registering with a doctor**

If you are not registered with a doctor, we encourage you to register with a local doctor, which is free of charge and you do not need proof of address or immigration status, ID or an NHS number.

Alternatively, you can have a chat with your local support or care worker.

**Further information**

First of all, if you think you have symptoms, please speak to your doctor or support worker.

More information is also on the NHS website: <https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/> and details of our local long COVID services are here: <https://www.eastlondonhcp.nhs.uk/ourplans/long-covid-2.htm>