

Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS) Long COVID Service

Midlothian HSCP Long COVID Pathway Implementation Project

Equality Impact Assessment Report

1. Purpose of this report

This report sets out the results of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the implementation of the CHSS Long COVID Service to the 12 GP practices within Lothian.

The service is for residents within Midlothian who have a diagnosis of Long COVID and is part of a Lothian wide project to provide 1:1 information and support from an advice line. This will help patients understand their condition, how to manage symptoms and refer people to other support. It will not provide clinical treatment.

The support is provided through an App or web-based digital platform called Tailored Talks, where patients receive personalised health information before being offered up to 12 weeks support from a CHSS member of staff.

This report explains how we will ensure the service:

- is non-discriminatory
- will help to advance equality by meeting people's needs, removing or minimising disadvantages and encouraging participation
- fosters good relations by increasing diversity, integration and understanding of, and respect for difference, and reducing prejudice.

2. How we did the EIA

As this is an existing service provided by CHSS and is a pan Lothian project there was no requirement to establish a group to undertake this EIA. We researched evidence about the needs and experiences of the different equality groups this proposal will affect.

3. Evidence of impact

Identification of people most likely to be affected by Long COVID:

- **Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland Webpage/Guidance [Long COVID - Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland \(chss.org.uk\)](https://www.chss.org.uk)** – states women, people over the age of 60, people of Afro-Caribbean background and people with long-term conditions are most likely to be affected
- **[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Strategic Framework Update February 2022: Equalities and Fairer Scotland Impact Assessment \(EQFSIA\)](#)** – states that women, older people and those who have a socio-economic disadvantage are most likely to be affected by Long-COVID.
- **[Scottish Governments COVID Recovery Strategy – Equality Impact Assessment Results](#)** - also states that older people and women are more likely to be affected by Long-COVID. It also finds that it is more likely in those with poor pre-pandemic mental health, and those with poor general health. There is also evidence to suggest that it has an effect on the mental health of minority groups and those who are disabled, along with a negative impact on their physical wellbeing.

Impact of a digital service:

- **[Near Me Video Consulting, Scottish Government Equality Impact Assessment](#)**
- **[NHS 24 – Report on Findings from an Equality Impact Assessment of NHS 24 Digital Developments](#)**

We also considered the impact on people who don't have English as their first language, black and ethnic minority groups and people with visual and hearing impairment.

Our research suggests that the population groups who are most likely to be affected by this service are:

- Women
- Older People
- Disabled People – Physical Disability, Learning Disability, Mental Health, Deaf and Sensory Issues
- People from Black and Ethnic Minority backgrounds, in particular - – People with English as a second language and Gypsy Travellers
- People who experience socio-economic inequalities – this includes inequalities associated with unemployment/low income, homelessness and housing, low literacy and substance misuse,
- People with Long Term Conditions

All of these groups should be able to access the service being offered in full or in part using either the app or advice line.

Potential benefits for users of the service:

Potential Benefits	Group who are most likely to benefit
1. Reduces risk of infection as do not need to travel to appointment	Disabled/Older People
2. Improves access by removing travel barriers – particularly for those who are disabled/less mobile or those on a low income.	Disabled/Older People/Socio-Economic inequalities
3. More convenient around work/family/caring responsibilities.	Women/Older People/Socio-Economic inequalities
4. Supports family member/carer involvement as can be involved in sessions with family member/person being cared for/Translator. Helps to build family support networks, resilience and community capacity.	Disabled/Socio-Economic inequalities/ BME people
5. Promotes healthier lifestyles, general wellbeing and mental health by promotion/ encouragement of self-management.	All
6. Promotion of self-management helps to empower people to take control over decisions and therefore promotes participation, inclusion and dignity	All

The potential barriers for people using the service:

Lack of inclusive communication

Mitigating Action	Owner	Timescale
Review and improvements to Tailored Talks as not yet available in different format such as alternative languages to English. Look at updating for one additional language first then look at bringing in other additional languages as project moves forward.	NHS Lothian Long COVID Steering Group	Feb – July 2023
CHSS Leaflets available in alternative formats via Advice Line. Work ongoing to add more languages to options.	NHS Lothian Long COVID Steering Group	Feb – July 2023
Explore option to add functionality to GP referral form (SCI Gateway) to highlight if patient has specific communication needs. Will explore alternative options. Patients also have access to NHS Lothian translation services to assist with access.	MHSCP Implementation Group	Feb – July 2023

Mitigating Action	Owner	Timescale
Tailored Talks available in spoken language as well written to address varying levels of literacy. Currently in English language only, consideration of alternative language to English to be explored.	NHS Lothian Long COVID Steering Group	Feb – July 2023

Digital exclusion – Disproportionally experienced by disabled and older people and people experiencing socio-economic inequality

Mitigating Action	Owner	Timescale
Review of resources to ensure all relevant information contained within Tailored Talks are available in leaflet format; these should be available in different formats such as Easy Read/Large Print/Different languages.	NHS Lothian Long COVID Steering Group	Feb – July 2023
Potential for technical assistance to be provided for service users will be explored to enhance the service users digital experience.	NHS Lothian Long COVID Steering Group	Feb – July 2023

Some equality groups cannot access the service because of something we've not identified in this EIA

Mitigating Action	Owner	Timescale
Collect equality monitoring data about people referred to the service Use this equality monitoring data and patient experience to evaluate the actual impact of the service on everyone and implement any necessary improvements.	NHS Lothian Long COVID Steering Group	Feb – July 2023

As part of the action plan, Midlothian HSCP will evaluate the service within Midlothian and the results will be shared with the NHS Lothian Long COVID Steering Group approximately 6 months from the launch date of 31st January 2022. This will help us to understand any positive and negative impacts and to learn from the experiences of people using the service. We will use data from the Pogo Platform which hosts the Tailored Talks and collated by the CHSS Advice Line. We will also carry out a representative survey or consultation with patients who have used the service.

4. Next Steps

The EIA was approved, along with the actions identified at the Midlothian HSCP Long COVID Project Group meeting on 17th January. This document will also be presented at the NHS Lothian Long COVID Pathway Steering Group meeting on 23rd January for final approval