

Long covid and its impact on health and social care



By [Elaine Maxwell](#) | 26 October 2020

Health and social care services need to focus on meeting the unmet needs of people with ongoing covid, writes Elaine Maxwell

When covid-19 first emerged, little thought was given to what would happen to people who survived an acute infection. It is now clear that a significant proportion of people infected with covid-19 will experience ongoing symptoms or 'long covid'.

The list of potential symptoms is huge and covers every part of the body and brain. And, as the [review](#) we have just published makes clear, the adverse impact on people's daily lives can be severe.

We heard from people who are still unable to work, study or care for dependants seven months after their initial infection.

Much of the research on enduring covid-19 symptoms to date has focused on people who have been hospitalised with their initial infection. We don't know exactly how many people in the UK currently have 'long covid'.

Many people with ongoing covid symptoms have never been tested. These people are not included in the studies, driving estimates of around 60,000 people with it in the UK.

There is now evidence of growing numbers of people with complex healthcare needs who have never been admitted and who are presenting to their GP surgeries months after they originally fell ill. We