

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
BY DEPUTY R.J. WARD OF ST. HELIER
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 26th APRIL 2021
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 4th MAY 2021**

Question

Will the Minister advise –

- (a) what provision is being made to address possible occurrences of ‘long Covid’, in particular for front-line workers who may have been at higher risk of exposure to Covid-19 and are facing longer-term health problems;
- (b) who is responsible for coordinating the medical, psychological, and financial care of people suffering with ‘long Covid’?

Answer

- a) Prevention of infection from COVID-19 remains a key public health priority. Continuing to suppress the virus and keeping the prevalence low will prevent all islanders, including front-line workers, from catching the virus and therefore protect them from long-term health complications, including the possibility of developing Long COVID.

Long COVID is a new and emerging condition that is a serious yet largely unforeseen consequence of the pandemic. There is a growing body of evidence to support the condition and it is acknowledged that it can have a significant effect on people’s quality of life. The recent recognition of long COVID presents challenges when trying to determine the best-practice standards of care. It is anticipated that a multi-disciplinary approach will be required.

Locally, patients admitted to the intensive care unit with COVID-19 are followed up on discharge. Patients with COVID-19 who were managed in the community would likely present to their GP if experiencing ongoing symptoms. National guidance on Long COVID has been produced by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP)¹. Referral to a specialist based on the nature of predominant ongoing symptoms is the current recommendation.

In tertiary centres with a large catchment area, a more specific clinic could be set up. An example of this is the post-COVID clinic at University College London Hospitals. We may have to refer some of our patients to such centres, but have not yet needed to do so.

- b) Scoping work on Long COVID began in early 2021 by the Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance (SPPP) department outlining policy areas for local consideration. SPPP coordinated the meeting of a working group in February 2021 with representatives from government departments, primary and secondary care.

¹ [COVID-19 rapid guideline: managing the long-term effects of COVID-19 \(nice.org.uk\)](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng195)

Feedback and experience of this working group contributed to a presentation to STAC which supported the need for a Long COVID Response and agreed that it would be sensible to adopt the NICE/SIGN guideline locally and quantify local need. This is being progressed.

Increased recognition by primary and secondary care, employers and government agencies is welcomed and will help to facilitate support and provide the basis for planning appropriate services.