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Vital Long Covid Services Closing Across the UK Despite Ongoing Need, New Research Warns

[London, UK] – New research has revealed alarming gaps in Long Covid care, with many specialist services either closing or at risk of shutting down. Despite NHS England confirming funding for Long Covid services through 2025/26, responses to FOI requests and direct communications with services suggest that a number of them are already closing or facing an uncertain future. At the peak, over 120 Long Covid services were operating across the UK, but only 46 have confirmed they will remain open, while 31 are under review, 24 have already closed or are set to close, and 20 did not respond. Children and young people are also affected, with just 8 of the 13 specialist pediatric hubs established in 2021 confirming they will stay open.

With NHS England's ring-fenced funding for Long Covid services ending in March 2025, it is feared that even more clinics could shut down, leaving thousands of patients without access to specialist care.

Further concerns were raised regarding the quality of care. A survey of nearly 700 people with Long Covid found that 28% of adults and 26% of children and young people received neither an in-person nor a remote consultation with a healthcare professional, despite NHS commissioning guidelines requiring physician-led care.

Contrary to public opinion, Long Covid is an ongoing and growing public health crisis. The [2023/24 ONS Study](#) recorded 2 million cases in England and Scotland, including over 100,000 children, as of March 2024. Cases continue to rise, with 30% occurring in the year leading up to the survey and 178,000 new cases recorded during the 16-week survey period.

The government's failure to provide adequate care and treatment for people with Long Covid is a crisis it cannot afford to ignore. Many of those with the condition are completely unable to work, while many more struggle with reduced capacity, forcing them into part-time roles or long-term sick leave. According to [The Economist's Long Covid Impact](#) report, the condition cost the UK economy an estimated £12.2 billion in lost GDP in 2024 alone. However, this figure likely understates the true impact, as it does not account for the wider economic fallout, including the costs of reduced quality of life, increased demand on healthcare services, and the burden placed on unpaid carers.

The research, conducted by Long Covid Support and Long Covid Kids, two leading charities representing those affected by Long Covid and both core participants in the UK-Covid 19 Inquiry, highlights the urgent need for action to prevent further clinic closures and ensure that care effectively meets the needs of those living with the condition. The charities are calling on policymakers and health authorities to:

1. Halt clinic closures immediately and fully utilise allocated funding to maintain and improve services in line with NHS commissioning guidelines.

2. Launch a comprehensive Long Covid surveillance system to measure health, employment, education and the economic impacts.
3. Develop and implement a National Long Covid Strategy to ensure the condition is properly managed, treated and resourced.

The Clinical Post Covid Society (CPCS) raised similar concerns in their [October 2024 position paper](#):

“From April 2024, in line with the NHS operating framework and the establishment of Integrated Care Systems, commissioning of long COVID services became the responsibility of Integrated Care Boards. This is being supported by ongoing funding, and the expectation is that dedicated services should continue to be offered to support people with long COVID. Concerningly, financial constraints in some ICBs mean this funding has been recently repurposed in some areas with their long COVID services instructed to close. This is completely against the intention of NHSE commissioning guidance.”

Dr Margaret O’Hara, Trustee and Co-founder, Long Covid Support, said:

“The NHS is under immense pressure, but closing Long Covid clinics is not the answer. Funding for these critical services is already allocated through ICB budgets and must be used to keep them running. Long Covid remains an ongoing public health crisis, straining both our healthcare system and our economy. These clinics have proven their value by improving patient outcomes and enhancing healthcare efficiency. Rather than closing them, effective treatment of Long Covid will allow thousands upon thousands of affected individuals to take a more active role in the economy, in their communities and in society - yielding significant financial benefits through increased autonomy and reduced costs of inactivity.”

Sammie McFarland, Founder and CEO, Long Covid Kids, said:

“Clinic closures must stop immediately, experienced staff must be retained, and closed clinics must reopen. Many people have endured devastating symptoms for over five years, while new cases continue to emerge. More than 100,000 children and young people are living with Long Covid (ONS), yet the infrastructure needed to support those who require ongoing care into adulthood is being dismantled. Demand is growing, yet services are being cut instead of expanded. We need urgent action to keep clinics open and a long-term strategy for research, treatment, and specialist care.”

Jo Platt, Labour MP and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Long Covid, said:

“This latest report on Long Covid clinics highlights that Long Covid is still prevalent today and continued support is needed for those affected. As Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Long Covid, I hope to work with the Government to take meaningful action and ensure that the over 2 million people in the UK living with Long Covid have access to the care they need.”

Lord Strasburger, Liberal Democrat peer and officer of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Long Covid, said:

“Closing Long Covid clinics is the exact opposite of what is needed. We should be ramping up our support for the 2 million people (ONS) suffering from this debilitating illness, not cutting back. There is still a lot of Covid around and a proportion of those patients are going on to add to the total with Long Covid. This is a public health crisis that is seriously diminishing the quality of life for many of its sufferers. Many are unable to work and so are significantly increasing the number of people who are economically inactive due to ill health, at a cost of many billions of pounds to the UK economy. The Government should be redoubling its efforts to support Long Covid sufferers and researching new ways to fight this illness. Instead some specialist clinics are being closed and others are being merged with general clinics.”

The full report will be published on Monday at 9 AM on the Long Covid Support and Long Covid Kids' websites.

The FOI data can be found [here](#)

We expect the report to be finalised by the end of Friday, March 14th, and will be able to send it over once completed.

For more information and to arrange interviews with spokespeople, please contact:

Oonagh Cousins (Long Covid Support) 07388 067798 oonaghcousins@longcovid.org

Sammie McFarland (Long Covid Kids) 07807090013 smcfarland@longcovidkids.org

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