Long COVID and ME/CFS current awareness bulletin

August 2026

The aim of this current awareness bulletin is to provide a digest of recent guidelines, reports, research and best practice on Long COVID and ME/CFS

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Guidelines, Policies and Reports

REACH-OUT: Caring for the healthcare workforce post-COVID-19
NHS Race and Health Observatory, August 2026
Available at: NHS Race and Health Observatory
The study set out to understand both the medium and long-term impacts on the mental, physical and occupational health of workers including nursing, allied-health professionals and administrators to produce evidence to support workforce recovery and actions for national policy recommendations. 40% of HCW developed Long COVID, with 27% still having symptoms a year after infection.

Published Research

A cardiometabolic perspective on post-exertional malaise in myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) and Long COVID
Cardiovascular Diabetology, August 2026
Available at: Springer
Post-exertional malaise (PEM), the defining feature of ME/CFS, is increasingly recognized in individuals with Long COVID. This perspective outlines a conceptual approach for investigating PEM through longitudinal assessment of post-exertional physiological trajectories while considering disease severity and underlying cardiometabolic health, including obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Association between myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome and irritable bowel syndrome: a systematic review and meta-analysis
Frontiers in Medicine, July 2026
Available at: Frontiers
IBS and ME/CFS are strongly associated, suggesting shared underlying mechanisms. These findings support integrated screening approaches and coordinated, multidisciplinary management to improve outcomes in affected patients.

Cerebrospinal fluid opening pressure in relation to symptomatology and craniocervical anatomy in patients with myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome
Frontiers in Medicine, August 2026
Available at: Frontiers

This study suggests that a proportion of patients with ME/CFS have elevated cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) opening pressures and may experience symptom relief following CSF subtraction. Our data indicate that some anatomical structures in the craniocervical area may be related to CSF pressure, although interpretation is challenging and merits further investigation.

Guidance on Home-Based Care for People with Severe ME/CFS: A Transdisciplinary Expert Statement
Wiener medizinische Wochenschrift, July 2026
Available at: PMC
Many patients with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) have significant care needs. However, post-exertional malaise—the defining feature of ME/CFS—means that even minor physical, orthostatic, cognitive, or sensory stressors can trigger a disproportionate worsening of symptoms. The objective of this guide is to structure care measures in a way that prevents overexertion and promotes stability.

Healthcare utilisation and cost among individuals with Long COVID in England and Wales: potential value of specialised post-COVID services
Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, August 2026
Available at: Sage
Long COVID is associated with sustained increases in healthcare utilisation and costs in England and Wales. Our findings suggest that system-level service design may influence healthcare use and costs following COVID-19, warranting further evaluation of post-viral care models.

Neurodegenerative and Cognitive Consequences of Long COVID
International Journal of Molecular Science, August 2026
Available at: MDPI
The aim of this manuscript is to present and highlight the impact of SARS-CoV-2 on patients suffering severe symptoms and the risk of developing neuropsychiatric disorders and neurodegenerative diseases. Possible pathomechanisms of changes in the central nervous system are discussed, including the role of the blood–brain barrier, the NLRP3 inflammosome, cytokine storms and their effects on the brain, and potential therapeutic targets in patients with long COVID.

Orthostatic intolerance with small heart and/or disequilibrium in patients with myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome: clinical update and paradigm shift
Frontiers in Medicine, July 2026
Available at: Frontiers
Orthostatic intolerance (OI) is characterized by the inability to maintain an upright posture without experiencing severe signs and symptoms, including hypotension, palpitations, light-headedness, pallor, fatigue, weakness, dizziness, impaired concentration, tremulousness, and nausea. The majority of patients with myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) or chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) exhibit OI, which is the primary factor restricting daily functional capacity.

Pacing and energy management with digital tools for conditions with chronic fatigue: What we know so far in ME/CFS and Long COVID
PLOS Digital Health, July 2026
Available at: PLOS

Modern wearables such as smart watches, rings, and phones can record pulse rate, step count, and pulse rate variability. When data streams are coupled with a smartphone app, they can provide in the moment prompts that nudge users to slow down before they cross a threshold associated to symptom exacerbation. This is the core concept behind just-in-time adaptive interventions for pacing

Persistent physical and mental health effects of COVID-19 hospitalization
Frontiers in Pediatrics, July 2026
Available at: Frontiers
The long-term health effects of the COVID pandemic on children remain an area of active investigation. Viral infection, immune responses, and societal disruption have been implicated as contributing factors. We conducted a retrospective survey-based study of children infected with SARS-CoV-2 and uninfected controls.

Postural control and trunk mobility impairments in adults with long COVID: A cross-sectional study using computerized posturography and clinical biomechanical tools
PLoS One, August 2026
Available at: PLoS One
Long COVID is increasingly associated with persistent neuromuscular and functional impairments, including deficits in balance and trunk control. This cross-sectional study examined postural stability and trunk biomechanics in adults with Long COVID, comparing them to matched healthy controls.

Rehabilitation in long COVID: a systematic review and meta-analysis
ERJ Open Research, August 2026
Available at: PMC
The long-term effects of rehabilitation in individuals with long COVID remain unclear. This systematic review and meta-analysis evaluated the short- and long-term impacts of rehabilitation programmes on exercise capacity, health-related quality of life, pulmonary function, chronic dyspnoea, anxiety, depression and fatigue in people with long COVID.

Tele-rehabilitation for individuals with long COVID: a randomised clinical trial
ERJ Open Research, August 2026
Available at: PMC
Tele-rehabilitation does not improve mobility in long COVID but improves overall health status, reduces persistent symptoms, and shows high adherence, no severe adverse events and strong participant satisfaction.

Therapeutic plasma exchange and immunomodulatory strategies in post-infectious syndromes: A review of immune dysregulation in PTLDS, long COVID, ME/CFS, and PANS/PANDAS
Transfusion and Apheresis Science, August 2026
Available at: Transfusion and Apheresis Science
Increasing evidence suggests that immune dysregulation—including persistent inflammation, autoantibody production, and cellular immune dysfunction—may underlie conditions such as Long COVID and ME/CFS. This narrative review synthesizes peer-reviewed literature describing immune abnormalities across these syndromes and evaluates the rationale for immunomodulatory therapies, including intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG), rituximab, and therapeutic plasma exchange (TPE).