

## **HIPS/23/08 – Long COVID And Frontline Public Service Occupations: Impacts On Employees And Organisations**

Nearly 2 million people in the UK have COVID symptoms more than 12 weeks after infection. This is often called Long COVID. Symptoms vary but can include extreme tiredness, breathing difficulties, muscle aches, memory/concentration problems, joint pain and many more. Long COVID affects people's lives and ability to work. No one is yet sure about the best ways to help people to recover.

People in essential, frontline public sector services (e.g. nurses, teachers, ambulance workers, police officers) often work under a lot of pressure, and this can affect their health in negative ways. Many have been exposed to COVID at work because they usually have to deliver services in person instead of online. We want to understand what having Long COVID is like for people who work in these jobs, and what makes it easier or more difficult for them to work. We also want to know how colleagues and employers deal with long sickness absences or changed hours, roles or responsibilities, to deal with Long Covid and other illnesses, and whether there are new ways to support these people too. We will interview about 60 staff in these jobs (40 with Long COVID and 20 without) and about 40 people in service delivery, planning and management roles, including occupational health and unions.

At the end of the study, we will organise online workshops for different staff groups to report our findings and discuss ways of supporting people with Long COVID in frontline service jobs and their colleagues.