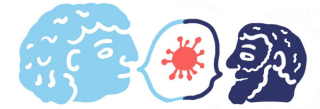


# What is life like with Long Covid?



## Sense of Self

'Losing autobiographical memories of decades or days ago means you start to lose the sense of who you are, struggle to find enthusiasm for life, now mourning my old life. I am a hugely dulled and dialled down version of my previous self'



## At Work

'I'm unable to read effectively and miss words and letters when writing. When I try to use a laptop too many words to distract. [Long Covid] It affects my work life. I am about to give up on my job as I've had so much sick leave. I guess it's up to my boss to decide'



## Getting Around

'We had gone to London, walking up the stairs of the tube station I had my first panic attack. And the minute I couldn't breathe and I'd got hot breath, it took me back to when I thought I was going to die on the stairs at home before I went to hospital'



## Spare Time

'Ten months on I am now better able to predict some of the impacts of any activity...'



## At Home

'Opening a packet of crisps uses as much energy as making a full meal. No energy to do even the smallest of household tasks. So, my partner pretty much took over all of the cooking, and cleaning, and house management'



This poster is part of an illustrated series inspired by the stories shared in interviews for the REACT-LC study and via the Defining Long Covid activity on the VOICE Long COVID Hub.

Thank you to all those who shared their experiences with us. Illustrations and design by Monique Jackson.



Imperial College  
London

Voice



# What can Long Covid feel like?



## Shortness of Breath

'...lower ribcage has a tight band round so I can't inflate my lungs'



## Loss of taste or smell



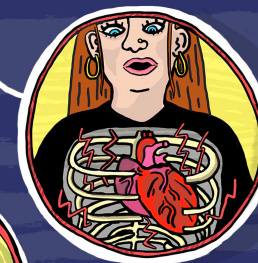
## Reflection of impact of symptoms on life:

'I feel like I'm trapped in a body that I don't recognise. I used to run 5k 3-4 times per week, was very sociable and a high achiever at work.'



## Palpitations

'...like my heart is hitting ribcage and is going to jump out of my chest'



it's more like a brick wall in my brain cutting off half of what's in there... just trying to access it is like taking a hammer to it; completely useless, painful, emotional, exhausting, and stressful

## Gastric issues, bloated stomach and nausea

'I have episodes anything from a few weeks to a couple of months apart with the same - onset whilst eating or immediately on finishing - severe lower lower abdominal pain, cramp & diarrhoea for 24hrs to a week.'



## Joint Pain

'my body feels as though my joints have been smashed with a sledge hammer'



## Brain Fog

'My head feels as if it is full of cotton wool. I'm unable to read effectively, miss word order & forget what I'm saying'



## Tinnitus



## Insomnia

'its like I have an electric charge making it impossible for any part of me to relax'



'While the level of fatigue can vary in intensity, it never gives you a break. You always start the day like a phone with a partly charged battery, and have to plan the day's activities accordingly''

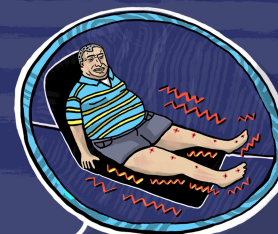
## Fatigue

'it encompasses my entire being, it floods in uncontrollably like a weight on my body. Leaving me unable to move...'



## Body Buzz

Buzzy or restless legs feels like they are constantly 'on' and tense, with a tingling sensation



## Headaches

'The brain fog is often preceded by a vice that connects to my skull and begins to squeeze.'



Thank you to those who provided their time to share their experiences on the VOICE\_Global platform.

Special thanks and credit to:

Sam, Wendy Irving, Emma Brackenbury, Lesley-Anne James, Georgie T, Ian T Bell, JanRob, imissmylife, becky.mole, TLA77, Emily Parrett and Nikki Smith, whose experiences have been used in developing this poster.

Illustrations and design by Monique Jackson



Imperial College London

Voice