

## **Long Covid case study - Nicola Brown**

Nicola, 46 and a mum of two from Havering, recalls her experience of having Long Covid following her initial Covid diagnosis in September 2020.

“After the initial set of symptoms, I was ill for ten days. But after the infectious period had passed, the symptoms started to affect me more and more and some even persist today.

“Although I wasn’t infectious ten days after the initial Covid diagnosis, I had a temperature every day which lasted for nine months, which was odd. The doctors thought it may be my immune system fighting the range of symptoms I was experiencing.”

Her other symptoms included extreme fatigue, disturbed sleep, joint and muscle pain, brain fog, breathing and gastric issues.

“I noticed I couldn’t function well enough on a day-to-day basis. I remember my driving being very erratic and I didn’t feel my responses were quick enough. For example, I remember at the traffic lights, as they turned green, it wouldn’t register in my mind that I should go.

“I’d usually class myself as fit and well yet my health was having an impact on my family life too.” As a mum, Nicola also recalls the impact it was having on her children. “The kids suffered too because we weren’t able to do the joint activities we loved so much...so they missed out too.”

Nicola, who works in a school recalls the impact it had on her job: “My employer was very accommodating and they referred me to the Occupational Health team after I’d been signed off sick. I haven’t been able to go back to teaching full time so I now do three days per week in a desk-based role. However, I still feel anxious about my symptoms and am continuing to wear a mask at school.”

## **Long Covid Support Services**

She speaks highly of the support she received from the NHS. “Although I wasn’t hospitalised with Covid, I did get good support from my GP over the telephone who was sympathetic. I was referred to the Long Covid Clinic at [King George](#) Hospital in March 2021 and was seen in May. Following an initial consultation with the doctor I was referred to an occupational therapist and a physiotherapist, both of whom were great! They both visited me every few weeks and the physiotherapist also referred me to exercise classes which I’ve recently started.”

Nicola was also referred to online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for the anxiety she was suffering from, through Talking Therapies. She still suffers from some nerve damage in her back and the brain fog is still there. Generally, she feels her symptoms, including her sleep patterns are improving, albeit gradually.

## **Speak to your GP if you have symptoms**

Key to her recovery was coming forward and speaking to her GP about her symptoms, so that she could be diagnosed and referred to a long covid clinic.

Common symptoms to look out for include:

- extreme tiredness
- depression and anxiety
- breathlessness
- fast heart beat
- widespread pain
- chest pain or tightness
- changes in taste and smell
- changes in sleep/difficulty sleeping
- pins and needles
- difficulty concentrating and memory

If you think you have any of these symptoms, please speak to your doctor. Please note that before long covid can be diagnosed, your doctor will undertake further tests to rule out any other conditions first (it is really important to make sure your symptoms are not being caused by other conditions, for example cancer).

For more information on our long COVID services, visit:

<https://www.eastlondonhcp.nhs.uk/ourplans/long-covid-2.htm>