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Ymchwiliad i effaith Covid-19, a'r modd y mae'n cael ei reoli, ar iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol yng Nghymru
Inquiry into the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, and its management, on health and social care in Wales
Ymateb gan Arolygiaeth Unigolyn
Response from an Individual

To Whom It May Concern

I have worked at a senior managerial level in Health and Social Services settings in Wales for the past 35 years, and am currently working part time on a freelance, independent basis investigating complaints made against xxxxx. I am xx years old, was very fit and active, and have no underlying health conditions. I have rarely presented at my GP practice throughout my life.

In March 2020 I had two clinical diagnoses of Covid-19, one in early March by my GP and the second by a NHS Wales clinician on 20 March 2020. There were no facilities in Wales for community testing at this time. I refused to be admitted to xxxxx Hospital in late March, electing to be treated at home. I was extremely ill for three weeks.

It is almost 10 months on and I have never recovered..... I do not recognise the person I once was

Since March 2020 I experience the following on a daily basis:

- Extreme and debilitating fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Extremely painful joints, particularly in fingers and toes, and fluctuating pain in hips, knees and ankles
- No sense of smell although, on the rare occasions when I can smell something, it is either cigarette smoke or electrical burning
- High allergy levels

Other symptoms I experience on a random basis, in addition to the above, are:

- Brain fog
- Sudden and significant hair loss
- High fever/night sweats
- Continuous cough
- Inflamed, sore, itchy eyes

I contacted my GP in November 2020 as I was beginning to suffer from low mood, ie was this how my life was going to be from now on, and was very disappointed with the response. There was no recognition of long Covid, was told that as I hadn't had a Covid test or had been admitted to hospital then there was no proof that I had actually contracted Covid, and was given entirely inappropriate advice around needing to exercise more. I then emailed my MP, xxxxx, who was very helpful. She raised the issue of long Covid at Committee and also contacted Aneurin Bevan Health Board on my behalf.

I would like the Welsh Government to be far more proactive in setting up multi-disciplinary clinics where people like myself can be referred for physical, psychological and cognitive tests and the development of an appropriate care planning pathway. Setting up of rehabilitation clinics will not do – how can a rehab clinic be effective when no diagnosis has been made in the first place?

I think there should also be a designated nurse practitioner/GP in all Welsh GP practices who is knowledgeable about long Covid – there have been numerous peer reviewed papers published in the BMJ on the topic – who would at least understand what people like me are experiencing on a day to day basis.

There are many thousands of people like me who are currently suffering from long Covid and this number will continue to increase.

I cannot emphasise enough the dramatic, negative impact long Covid has had on my life – and continues to do so.