

In March 2020 I was working as a community midwife at xxxx hospital and in the surrounding area. I fell ill on March 15th - long before we were wearing PPE etc. I was unable to get a test as I was not able to prove I'd had contact with a confirmed case. By the end of the first week I began to feel better and wondered if I'd even had Covid as in the media there was so much about it being so serious. Over that first weekend however, I started to get very breathless and on the Tuesday night, my partner called for an ambulance. I stayed at home after the ambulance came as I was keeping my oxygen levels up.

By April 1st I was in hospital as I was still so breathless, despite having had a few days of antibiotics for a chest infection. The respiratory consultant told me that although the test he did would be negative (as it was too late) from clinical observations and my X-ray, I had covid pneumonia. I had further antibiotics and was sent home as again my O2 levels were satisfactory. Throughout all this period, my partner would watch over me when I slept and when he took me to xxxx he thought he wouldn't see me alive again. That's how ill I was.

Over the next couple of months I began to feel better until mid June when I told my boss I was hoping to return to work in July. Less than a week later I was back in A&E, struggling to breathe again. At the beginning of July I was diagnosed for a second time with pneumonia and had 5 weeks of antibiotics. This was when the Long Covid really began.

In August I attended the Coverscan trial and had multi organ MRIs which showed that I have stage 3 liver disease - post-Covid fatty liver with inflammation. I also, due to the breathlessness, was admitted to xxxx hospital with a suspected Pulmonary Embolism. This was ruled out via CT scan and I now have severe asthma.

Since the onset of Long Covid, my main symptoms have been brain fog, huge temperature fluctuations, shortness of breath, fatigue, pins and needles, leg pains, sleep disorders, amongst others. I have raised ocular pressure and raised intracranial pressures. The brain fog means that at times I feel like I have dementia, and I've given up driving as I don't feel safe currently.

The fatigue means that some days I don't get out of bed. A good day is one where I manage to wash my hair. No day is as it was before Covid. I use a stick to walk and I can't walk more than a few metres without resting.

My life has changed in every way. I'm not the mum I used to be - I feel so guilty for not being the mum my children need. My relationship with my partner has changed - he's now my carer, reminding me to take my tablets and helping me shower etc. I haven't worked since I first fell ill and it's now ten months. In two months, my sick pay from the NHS will stop and I don't know what we'll do then as there is no way I could work currently. I only qualified in September 2019 so I feel like my life has been stolen and the guilt I feel at not being with my colleagues throughout the pandemic is enormous.

It's hard not to feel like life is pointless but I try to keep positive. It's hard not to feel angry - at the British government who failed to act in the early days, at people who continue to flout the rules.

Covid has been hard for everyone but it's changed everything for me and my family, and no one can know if or when it will end.

Thanks for reading this. There's so much more I could say, but I'd never stop! I would be happy to provide oral evidence if required.

xxxx