
APPG on Long Covid - 15 July 2025

Four Key Asks: Long Covid Research Policy Proposal *12 Month Funding & Coordination Model*

1. Funding Request for Research Studies: £20 Million

We welcome the Application Development Award announced by the NIHR EME programme. We recommend that the NIHR complement this up by commissioning a £20 million call within the next 12 months dedicated to the priority studies below. Some of this money could come through existing UKRI infrastructure projects such as Biomedical Research Centres (BRCs), MRC Centres of Research Excellence (CoRE) and MRC Infrastructure Funds.

2. Maintain Network of Clinics

Despite NHS England's baseline allocation for Long Covid clinics, many are closing due to inadequate demand calculation methods. Preserving this clinic network is essential for both patient care and research infrastructure. These specialized clinics provide critical patient access for recruitment, clinical expertise for study design, and real-world settings for trial delivery. Without maintaining this network, the proposed research studies would lack the clinical foundation necessary for successful implementation. We recommend ring-fencing funding to ensure clinic continuity during the critical research phase, preventing the loss of specialized expertise and patient pathways that have taken years to establish.

3. Priority Studies (2 Flagship Projects)

Current evidence supports targeted, well-designed trials for Long Covid. We recommend rapidly commissioning two flagship studies requiring high-level clinical-research collaboration:

a. Diagnostics & Biomarkers

There is already a large body of literature on biomarkers for Long Covid, with hundreds of candidate biomarkers that researchers propose using for patient diagnosis and as measurable endpoints in clinical trials. **Suggested research project:** Shortlist the top 20 biomarkers and conduct robust efficacy studies.

b. Drug Targets & Therapeutics

Dozens of promising drug and therapeutic targets have already emerged in Long Covid. **Suggested research project:** Launch well-powered, nationally coordinated trials of the top candidates. Emulate the ongoing RECOVERY trial by mobilising NHS research infrastructure, and ensuring rapid, robust discovery.

4. Establish a National Long Covid Research Task Force

To ensure coordination, transparency, and accountability, we propose establishing a DHSC-led task force. This recommendation builds on discussions at the 'Research Roundtable to discuss Long COVID' meeting on 17th October 2024 with former Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Prevention Andrew Gwynne and Professor Lucy Chappell (DHSC Chief Scientific Adviser). This task force would:

- Consolidate and coordinate expertise amongst members.

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- Set research priorities in consultation with patients, clinicians, scientists and patient charities.
 - Provide public updates and promote data sharing.
 - Identify and mitigate duplication, waste, or ethical concerns.
 - Ensure effective patient involvement in research, with patient charities as equal partners.

Membership would include: clinicians, researchers, public health experts, charity representatives, patient representatives, public affairs and policy advisors, parliamentary and industry representatives.