

The Berkshire Long COVID Integrated Service (BLIS) Clinic

This leaflet explains what happens at the BLIS Clinic. The clinic provides multi-disciplinary team (MDT) assessments for patients experiencing prolonged symptoms following Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Who is the service for?

This service is for patients (adults or children) who are experiencing symptoms for more than 12 weeks following the start of COVID-19 – known as ‘long COVID’. This includes patients treated in hospital for COVID-19 infection and also those treated in the community who did not require hospitalisation.

Patients do not have to have had a positive COVID-19 test to be eligible for the clinic, but there must just be signs and symptoms consistent with long COVID.

What are the symptoms consistent with a COVID-19 infection?

Symptoms that patients may experience as part of long COVID include (but are not limited to) the following: fatigue, shortness of breath, cough, heart palpitations, joint/muscular pain, sore throat, altered smells, reduced concentration, impaired memory, anxiety, appetite changes.

What happens in the BLIS Clinic?

You will have an assessment by a multidisciplinary team (MDT). This is a team made up of different specialists, including: specialist pain consultant, GP, psychologist, physiotherapist and occupational therapist.

The MDT will assess you and set up a management plan to help manage your symptoms and help you with daily living. Depending on your individual symptoms, the team will arrange for you to have further physical assessments, such as further blood tests, cardiology (heart) investigations or respiratory (breathing) investigations, as appropriate. We can also help you with a management plan for your wellbeing and mental health, if necessary.

The BLIS service is also able refer you on to specialist services and has the potential to offer a plan for further rehabilitation, if you need it.

Where and when are the clinics held?

We are located on Level 2 South Block, in the Royal Berkshire Hospital Pain Management Unit. BLIS Clinics are usually held every Monday, but we also offer the option of ‘virtual’ consultations. Virtual consultations may be by video or telephone and are a measure to minimise face to face consultations / trips to the hospital during the pandemic. We will be in contact with you to discuss the best way of carrying out your consultation with the team.

How do I get referred to the service?

Referrals need to be completed by your GP or a medical professional involved in your care. The referral will be reviewed, and you will be asked to complete an online questionnaire (also available in paper form via the post if necessary, for those who do not have online access). The MDT will review the information and may request further investigations, if needed. Depending on the outcome of the review, you may then be offered an appointment, if appropriate.

Further information

Until you are referred to the BLIS service, speak to your GP or the medical professional involved in your current care, if you'd like to know more or have any questions about symptom management

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Tarryn Ashworth, Occupational Therapist, January 2021

Reviewed by Emily Davis, PMU Service Manager, January 2023

Next review due: January 2025