

Impact of Long COVID on nursing staff:

- Many nursing staff are living with the effects of long COVID and continue to suffer physical and emotional pain and distress. Some face financial detriment and some are now unable to work.
- For some their lives have been forever changed by long COVID. Its physical impact coupled with long-term financial insecurity is causing them continued worry.
- It is highly likely that some of these staff will have become infected while working. They have been doubly let down – first through a lack of adequate protection against the virus and subsequently by being left unsupported whilst facing the often-debilitating consequences of long COVID.
- Due to the ending of COVID-19 special leave provisions and lack of financial support, some suffering the impact of long COVID are now facing unemployment.
- Nursing staff who have developed long COVID after contracting the virus at work are not being compensated and are now left with the prospect of having to go through expensive legal processes, such as personal injury cases, to be compensated for the harm that they have suffered.

To better support nursing staff living with Long COVID, RCN Scotland is calling for:

- **Long COVID to be recognised as a disability in law.**
- **Nursing staff who have derived covid from work, and remain impacted, should be compensated without requiring to go through a personal injuries claim.** We currently have a number of long COVID cases which we are pursuing through personal injuries claims against NHS boards, and we expect this to rise now that COVID-19 special leave provisions have ended. Rather than engaging in the costly and lengthy legal process defending these claims, the RCN would like to see the Scottish government establish a different approach to compensating nursing staff who have been harmed at work because of working in the pandemic response.
- The UK Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC) recommended in November 2022 that certain long-term complications following COVID infection be prescribed as an occupational disease for health and social care workers. It is crucial the government acts on these recommendations because classifying long COVID as an occupational disease for health and social care workers could mean those with long-term physical conditions caused by COVID-19 are able to receive much-needed Industrial Injuries Disability Benefit. This report has now been with the UK DWP for over 14 months. **In November the RCN, along with the BMA, wrote to the Department for Work and Pensions to insist long COVID is classed as an occupational disease for health care workers a year after the recommendation was received from the IIAC.** The UK government must act quickly; many who are suffering the impact of long COVID are now also facing unemployment.