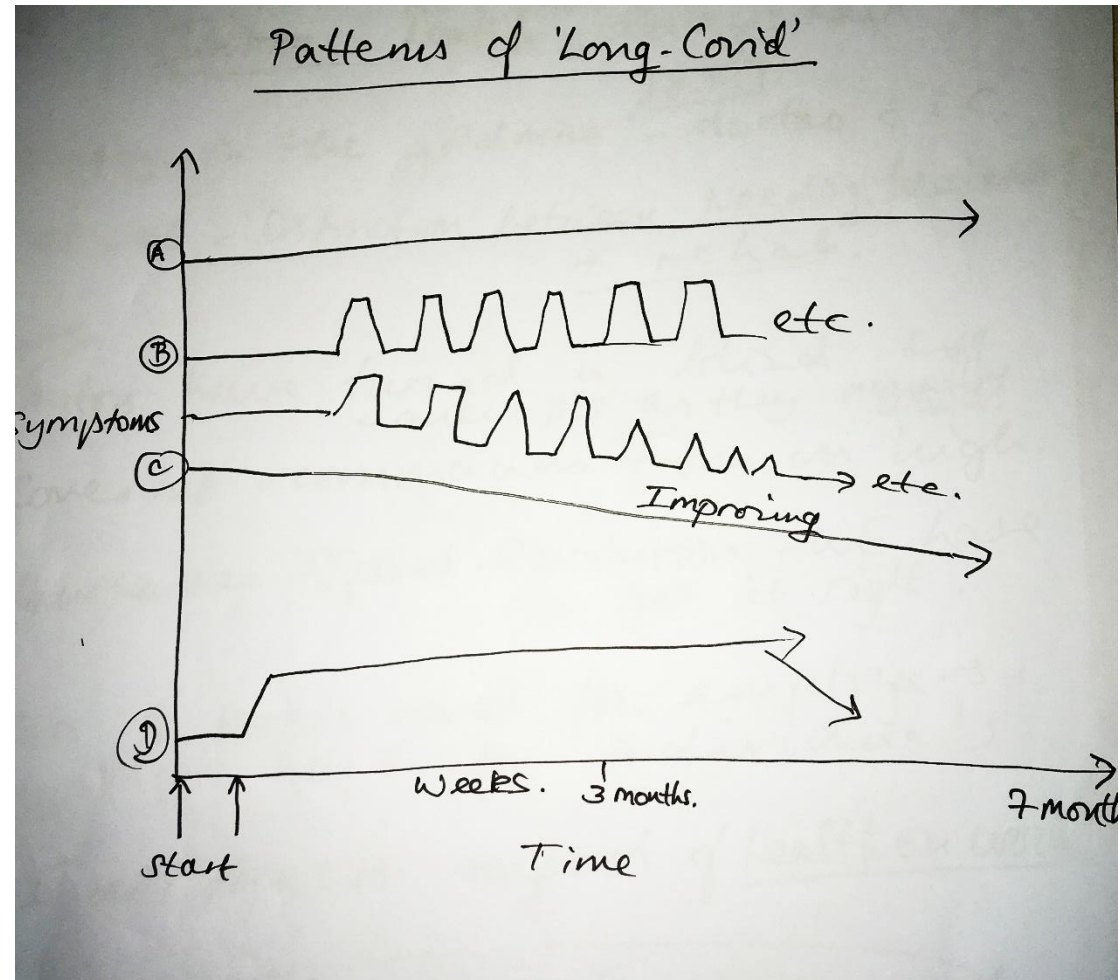# Patterns of 'long-Covid' illness

What is 'Long Covid'? Changing definition

- **Multisystem disorder-**affects every part of the body. Primarily a disease of blood vessels, not lungs!

- "Crisis of access to healthcare"

- Who and how many? Any age, huge numbers, ?dose of virus

- It is NOT

  - Chronic fatigue Syndrome
  - Not mild
  - Not researched
  - People who were not assessed and not admitted to hospital

How does it manifest? (symptoms)

- **Chest pain (angina) + breathlessness on exertion }**
- **Palpitations, dizziness   } Limiting factors**
- **Memory, understanding, concentration   }**
- Headaches, severe facial pain
- Pins and needles, neurological pains in legs/arms
- **Hoarse** voice, sore throat
- Fatigue
- Sleep disturbance

What Health Problems does it cause?

- **Heart**
- **Autonomic nervous system** e.g. heart rate and blood pressure
- **Allergies and hypersensitivity reactions**
- **Low oxygen** saturations on exertion-NOT INVESTIGATED
- **Physical brain** effects (neurocognitive e.g. memory, attention, concentration)
- **Extreme deconditioning** more than expected with viral infection
- **Extreme distress** and sense of **trauma** (experience of being not-believed)
- Nerve damage (hands, feet, face, pain, numbness,)
- Headaches, muscle pains
- Pulmonary emboli (clots on lungs)
- Inflammation throughout the gut
- Diabetes/thyroid disease
- Fevers
- Secondary infections …..

How workers can be supported. What needs to be put in place (checks), what else we could/should be doing.

Practical support -individuals
    Treatment
    Rehabilitation
 	
    The Effect of Health on Work: fitness for work and safety assessments <u>as usual.</u>
	• Access to tests/treatment e.g. Slow physio; OT.
	• Specific treatments for symptom
	• EAP/Fit for Work Service models
	
	    • **Individualised risk assessment**
	    • **Risk assessment of work tasks and duties**
	    • **'Reasonable adjustments'**

Systems Management of sickness absence Understand	**Training** (managers) in good sickness absence management: ongoing and recurrent. Most people will NOT have a POSITIVE test.
Employers' needs Job retention	The answer is not to get rid of people-the numbers are too great.