

Whether long covid is a disability

By law, a disability is a physical or mental impairment that has a 'long-term and substantial adverse effect' on a person's ability to do normal day-to-day activities.

'Long term' means either:

- it will affect them or is likely to affect them for at least 12 months
- it's likely to last for the rest of their life

'Substantial adverse effect' means more than just a minor impact on someone's life or how they can do certain things. This may fluctuate or change and may not happen all the time.

Long covid is still a new illness and it may take time to understand it fully. It can affect a person's day-to-day activities and it's currently understood that it can last or come and go for several months, even years. The effects of long covid could also cause other impairments.

Employers should focus on the reasonable adjustments they can make rather than trying to work out if an employee's condition is a disability.

Find out more about:

- [reasonable adjustments](#)
- [disability discrimination](#)
- [supporting mental health](#)

Avoiding discrimination

As well as disability, employers must be careful to avoid other types of discrimination when considering long covid.

Long covid has been found to more severely affect:

- older people
- ethnic minorities
- women

Employers must avoid discriminating by age, disability, race or sex.

Find out more about:

- [discrimination and the law](#)
- [avoiding discrimination during covid-19 \(coronavirus\) from the Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)

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