COVID-19 Inquiry confirms airborne transmission and recognises Long Covid - but gaps in protection and care remain

Friday 20 March, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Long Covid Advocacy responds to Module 3 Healthcare findings during Long Covid Awareness Month

The UK COVID-19 Inquiry has now confirmed a critical truth: COVID-19 is spread through the air.

As the Inquiry states:

> *"Initial guidance on preventing the spread of infection was flawed. It assumed the virus was spread by contact transmission, failing properly to consider the extent to which it was also spread by airborne transmission."*

This is a significant and necessary acknowledgment. It reflects what patients, clinicians, and researchers have long argued - that airborne transmission is central to how the virus spreads.

The Inquiry also recognises the long-term consequences of COVID-19:

> *"Long Covid is one of the direct long-term impacts of the virus. While the symptoms vary, for some people Long Covid can be life-changing."*

It further acknowledges that:

> *"During the pandemic, there were concerns about the length of time taken for sufferers to have their symptoms taken seriously and to be diagnosed."*

And that:

> *"Access to healthcare for Long Covid has been and remains variable across the four nations…"*

Importantly, the Inquiry notes that:

> *"Research into Long Covid continues, [but] it has been significantly scaled back while the need to develop a greater understanding of Long Covid remains."*

It also recognises the profound impact on younger people:

> *"Long Covid in children and young people has profound impacts on their lives at an important stage in their development."*

These acknowledgments matter. They validate the lived experience of millions of people, including those who have been dismissed, misdiagnosed, or left without adequate care.

The timing of these findings is particularly significant, as they come during Long Covid Awareness Month - a time when the focus is on

Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits :: Coronavirus (COVID-19) :: Health ::

Related Keywords:

COVID-19 :: Long Covid :: Airborne Transmission :: UK COVID-19 Inquiry :: Healthcare IPC :: Infection Control :: Public Health Policy :: NHS :: Patient Safety ::

Scan Me:

visibility, recognition, and action for those living with the condition.

But recognition alone is not enough.

Long Covid Advocacy member Claire Higham said:

> *“This report confirms what so many of us have experienced: that Long Covid is real, serious, and life-changing - and that too many people were not taken seriously when they first became ill.*
>
> *It also confirms that the virus spreads through the air. If that was properly understood and acted on from the beginning, many infections - and many cases of Long Covid - could have been prevented.*
>
> *But while the Inquiry recognises these facts, the systems around us have not caught up. Access to care remains inconsistent. Research has been scaled back. And people are still becoming ill.*
>
> *Long Covid is not a historical issue. It is ongoing. It is still affecting adults, children, and families across the country.*
>
> *If we truly understand airborne transmission, then our response must reflect that - in how we protect people, how we design healthcare, and how we prevent future harm.”*

Despite growing awareness, Long Covid is not slowing down.

Healthcare systems remain uneven in their response. Many people still struggle to access appropriate diagnosis, care, and support. Research, while ongoing, has been reduced at a time when deeper understanding is urgently needed.

Meanwhile, airborne protections in healthcare settings remain inconsistent, leaving both patients and staff at continued risk.

This is not just a matter of historical accountability. It is a question of current policy and ongoing harm.

Every infection carries risk. Every preventable infection carries the potential for long-term illness and disability.

If airborne transmission is now clearly acknowledged, then prevention must follow.

Long Covid Advocacy calls for:

- Immediate implementation of airborne-first infection prevention and control across all healthcare settings
- Access to appropriate respiratory protection, including FFP3 masks, for staff and patients
- Investment in ventilation and air filtration as core public health infrastructure
- Restoration and expansion of Long Covid research funding
- Consistent, equitable access to Long Covid care across all four nations
- Protection and inclusion of clinically vulnerable people in healthcare and public life

The Inquiry has taken an important step in recognising both airborne transmission and the reality of Long Covid.

But the work is not finished.

Recognition must now be matched with action.

Because Long Covid is not slowing down.

And people are still being left without the protection, care, and support they need.

ENDS

Company Contact:

_

Long Covid Advocacy

T. 07708836858
E. hello@longcovidadvoc.com
W. https://www.longcovidadvoc.com/

Additional Contact(s):
Rupert Higham: 07752247386
ruperthigham@gmail.com

View Online

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.longcovidadvocacy.pressat.co.uk