



ReDIRECT
Remote Diet Intervention to
REduce long COVID symptoms Trial

The ReDIRECT study newsletter

December 2022 - issue 2

Welcome to the second issue of the ReDIRECT study newsletter.

ReDIRECT is funded by the UK National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and led by the University of Glasgow. The study is testing a remotely supported weight management programme for people living with Long COVID.

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Study progress update

Recruitment to the ReDIRECT study is now complete. Most (>90%) participants have completed the 3-months or 6-months time points. Some who joined the treatment arm have already completed, whilst people who were randomised to the control arm have started to access the “waitlist” weight management programme (read [below](#) on why we have a control group). We thank all the participants for their continued input into the trial!

Completed time points	0 months	3 months	6 months	Waitlist entry
	235 (98%)	216 (90%)	171 (71%)	89 (75%)

Meet the trial team



Dr David Blane and Prof Emilie Combet are the co-leads for the ReDIRECT study. David is a GP and health services researcher and Emilie is a nutrition scientist interested in lifelong health. They work with the broader ReDIRECT multi-disciplinary team at the University of Glasgow, which combines expertise in cardiovascular medicine, process evaluation, health economics, statistics and weight management.

Why do we need a control group?

Does weight management help improve Long COVID symptoms? To answer this question, ReDIRECT participants are enrolled in a weight management programme. After six months, the effect of the intervention on Long COVID symptoms is evaluated by comparing symptoms before and after six months on the programme.

However, if there was only one group of participants receiving the treatment and a change is observed after six months, how could we tell that the change in symptoms is due to the diet intervention and not just due to a natural recovery over time? This is where **the control group plays an essential role. This group does not receive the intervention and thereby functions as a reference.** The type of reference can be different for each clinical trial, for example the control group may receive a placebo, or a different type of treatment to test which works better. Because there is no established treatment for Long COVID yet, the control group in the ReDIRECT study continues with the care they received before entering the study. After 6 months, our control group exits the “waitlist” and gets access to the weight management programme, which is not a standard arrangement in all trials.

By Laura Haag, ReDIRECT research associate

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LONG COVID SCOTLAND

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Publications



We have published the **ReDIRECT Study protocol** in NIHR Open Research. The protocol describes the study in detail and is open access (free of charge). You can read it here:

<https://openresearch.nihr.ac.uk/articles/2-57/v1>



LONG COVID SCOTLAND Long Covid has published the

Impact on our Lives report detailing the damaging impact long COVID is having on the thousands of sufferers across Scotland. People with Long COVID were asked to respond to a number of questions regarding their symptoms, the progression of their condition and how it impacted various areas of their life such as financial stability and family life.

[Click here to read the full report.](#)

Health economic evaluation in ReDIRECT

Just as it's important to understand how effective a healthcare intervention is for those receiving it, it's also important to **understand the value of the intervention to the health system as a whole.**

In a world with finite resources, we need to make sure that the money we spend on healthcare results in the best possible health outcomes across the population. If an intervention is very expensive and results in only very small changes in health outcomes, then we may be better off spending money elsewhere, on interventions that bring about greater health improvements.

To check whether ReDIRECT delivers value for money, we are conducting a **health economic evaluation.** This means that we look at the costs and health effects of ReDIRECT, compared to what is currently available (called a cost-effectiveness analysis). As part of ReDIRECT, we are measuring all costs involved in the intervention, as well as any changes in health-related quality of life. For a broader perspective, we are measuring changes in work-related productivity, as well as personal food, drink and medical costs. *By Heather Fraser, ReDIRECT research associate*

Conversations about Long COVID

The ReDIRECT team joined other Long COVID researchers, members of the public and patients to exchange ideas and opinions at the recent *Conversations about Long Covid* event, co-organised by Chris White of Long Covid Scotland and Tracy Ibbotson of the Glasgow University Covid Public and Patient Involvement Steering Group, at the ARcadia Festival of Ideas in Glasgow.

Chris said *"We have to keep in mind that health research is not just about the academic community, it is about exploring innovations for the public benefit, particularly people and communities impacted by illness. ARcadia offered space to bring people from Long Covid communities together with academics to share learning."*

[Read more about this event on the ReDIRECT study website.](#)



KEEP IN TOUCH

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More about ReDIRECT:

<https://redirectstudy.co.uk/>

Sharing findings – save the date!

We are planning a 'roundtable' event with stakeholders, academic colleagues and participants on **May 5th, 2023.** Please save the date! The meeting will be hybrid, to enable as many colleagues to join us to discuss ReDIRECT. Please contact us with suggestions for questions or topics that you would like to see discussed.

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