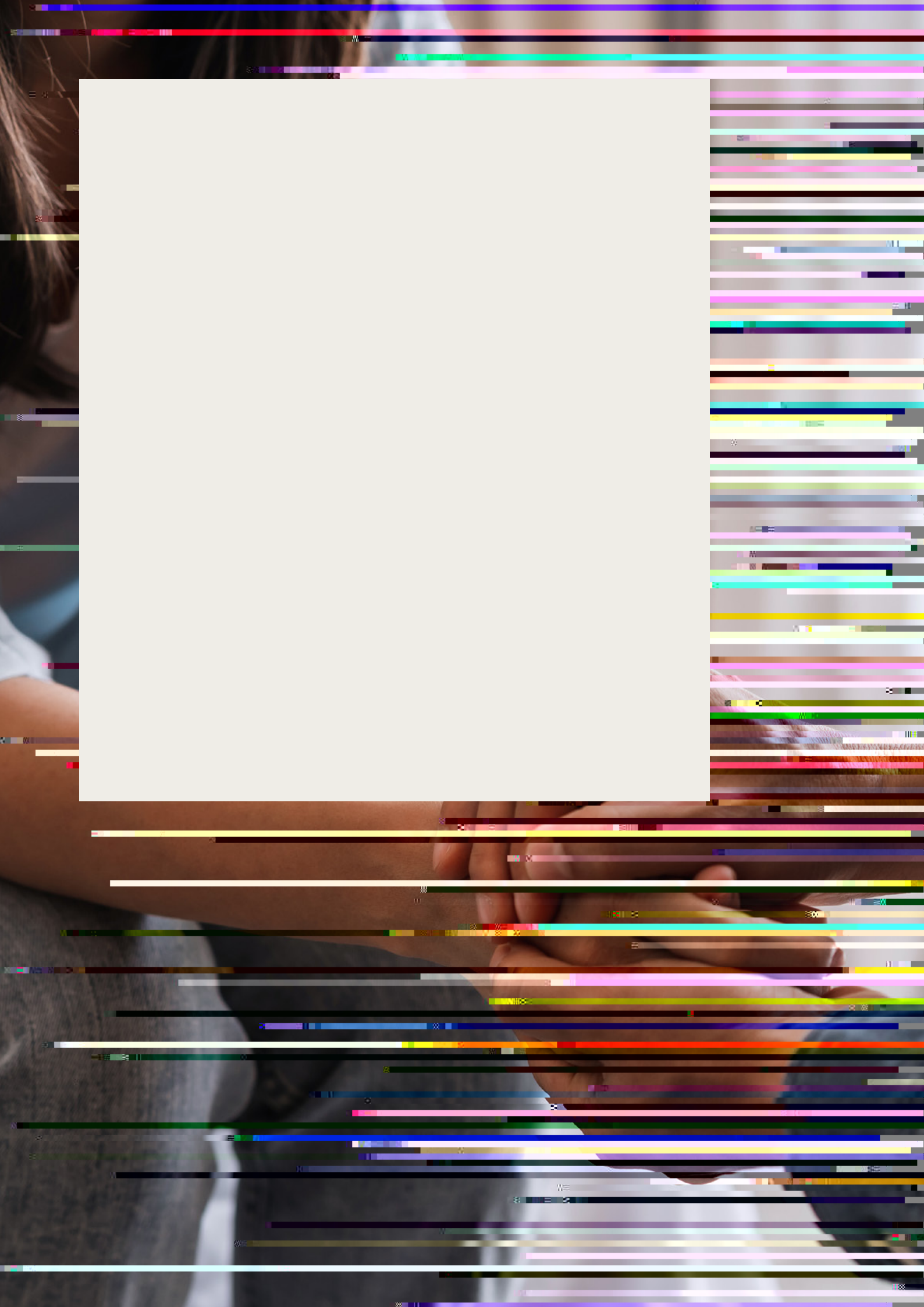




UCL

Policy brief:
identifying mental
health support gaps
for people living
with Long COVID

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What is Long COVID?

Long COVID may refer to patients who experience COVID-19 symptoms 5 weeks or more after the initial diagnosis who continue to experience signs and symptoms after 12 or more weeks. According to the NHS, these symptoms impact patients' physical, psychological and cognitive health, including but not limited to:



Physical symptoms



(impaired attention, anxiety, depression)

In February 2023, the [COVID-19 Long-Term Effects Study](#) estimated there to be 2.5 million people in the UK with Long COVID. Although there are NHS support clinics for Long COVID patients, access to these clinics is inconsistent across the UK; England has 89 Long COVID clinics since July 2021, Northern Ireland currently has one, and Wales and Scotland have none.

GPs are able to provide some support, medication or referral for further investigation. However, access to these services is inconsistent across the UK. Some patients may experience symptoms that are not covered by the current NHS Long COVID framework, such as hair loss, skin rashes, and joint pain. These symptoms are often referred to as 'atypical' Long COVID symptoms.

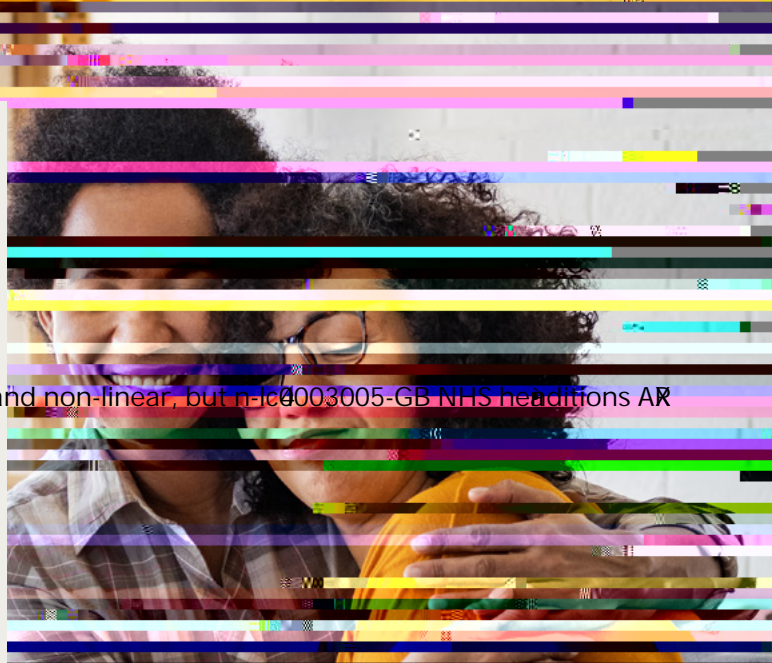
Recommendations from data collected through a series of qualitative interviews with individuals as we draw on the lived experiences of individuals

Aims

- Long COVID patients
- drawing on qualitative evidence
- recommendations to improve Long COVID mental health care both in healthcare and

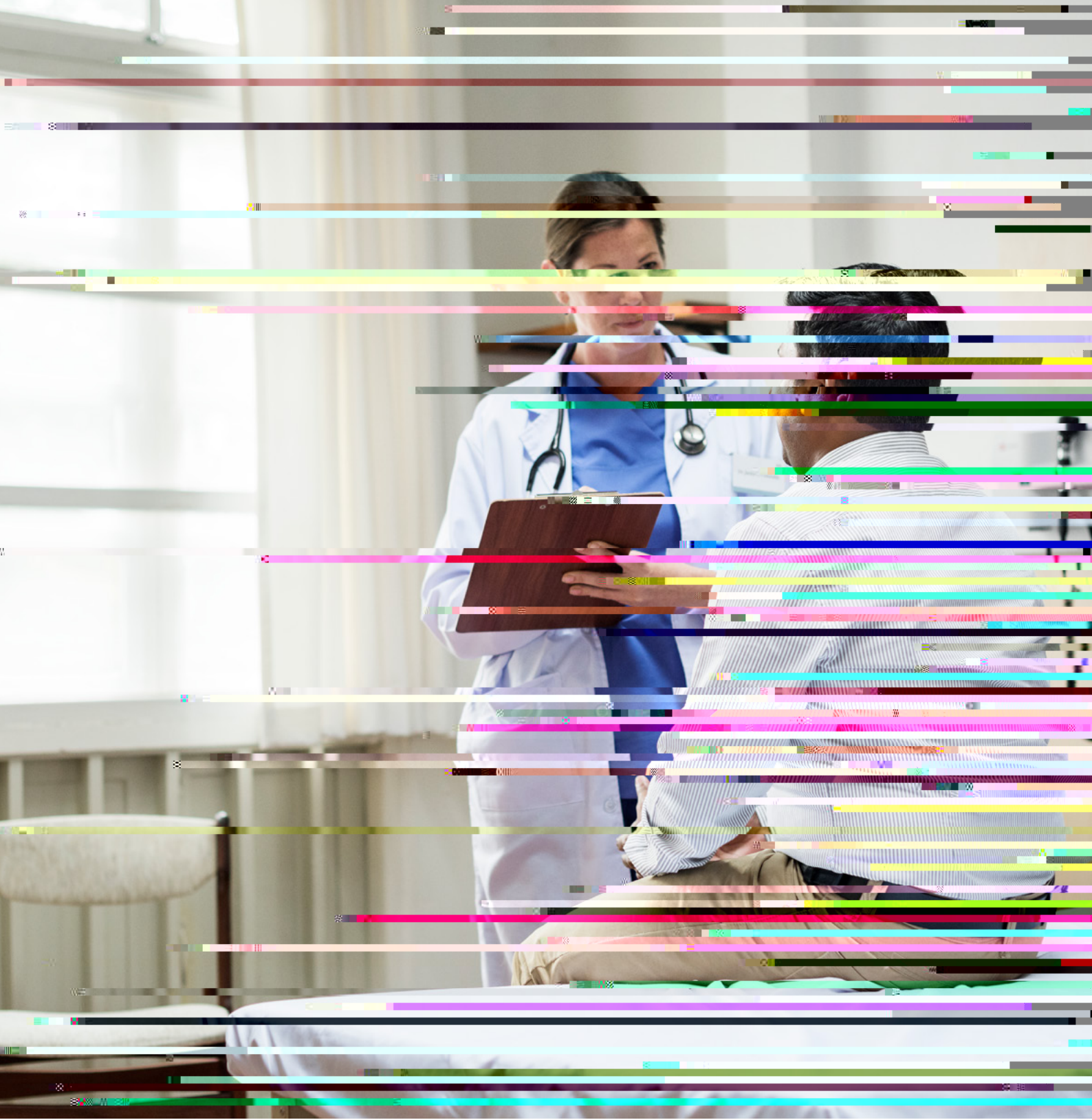
Our findings

Improvements in quality of life and mental health can be incremental and non-linear, but experiences within the NHS for chronic conditions and non-linear, but not available for chronic conditions



Burden of advocacy

A lack of knowledge and understanding of Long COVID patients' experiences and limited resources in NHS could create serious barriers to accessing a YbHJ` \YU'h WfY' UbX' hfYUha YbH' #i]gWfi VJU' hc' remember that these are patients who are already ZUh] i YX' UbX' gi Yf]b[']' \YU'h' k \c' UfY' \Uj]b[' to do the 'hard and heavy work' of understanding and managing the illness and trying to navigate UbX' cVhU]b' \YU'h WfY' gi ddcfhf6UnžYhU'ž



Cohort studies

