

# Cambridge Breathlessness Intervention Service and COVID-19

## Information for health care professionals (13.05.20)

The Cambridge Breathlessness Intervention Service (CBIS) supports patients with chronic breathlessness that persists despite optimal management of the underlying disease(s). Patients and carers are supported to self-manage, using mostly non-drug approaches including breathing techniques, anxiety management and building up activity. The aim is to reduce the impact of breathlessness, and the use of health care.

**CBIS is providing significant community consultations during the COVID-19 pandemic by telephone and/or video calls.**

### CBIS can help the following patient groups:

- **People with long term conditions who are self-isolating and need support to self-manage breathlessness.** Self-isolation can exacerbate anxiety and deconditioning, and these can both worsen breathlessness.
- **People who are recovering from COVID-19 and are experiencing breathlessness.** As well as viral lung involvement, causes of increased breathlessness include anxiety, deconditioning and dysfunctional breathing patterns.

Please avoid referring:

- People likely to be in the acute phase of COVID-19 (use Coronavirus 111 helpline and primary care, and hospital care if needed)
- People requiring oxygen assessment alone (consider community respiratory team)
- People dying imminently from COVID-19 (consider palliative care referral and pharmacological breathlessness management)

### Referral criteria:

- **Diagnosed and investigated cause for breathlessness.** Causes include long term cardiac and respiratory conditions, and/or COVID-19.
- **AND may benefit from self-management approaches.** People with cognitive impairment may still benefit if their carers can support them with the approaches.

### Referral process:

- **Download a CBIS referral form** from [www.cuh.nhs.uk/breathlessness-intervention-service-bis/how-refer](http://www.cuh.nhs.uk/breathlessness-intervention-service-bis/how-refer) and email to [add-tr.breathlessnessinterventionservice@nhs.net](mailto:add-tr.breathlessnessinterventionservice@nhs.net)
- **OR telephone 01223 274404** (Palliative Care team office) from 09:00-17:00 and ask to make a Breathlessness Intervention Service referral.