

Medicines Management FAQs

Is oxygen beneficial in the treatment of breathlessness associated with COVID19 in the community for patients in the last days of life?

Alternative pharmaceutical ways to manage the symptom of breathlessness of a patient dying from COVID -19 disease can be found within the [Managing Symptoms of Covid-19 \(End of Life\) in Adults in Community and Non-acute Hospital Settings guideline](#). Similar approaches are valid for non-COVID19 terminal breathlessness.

Oxygen is a licenced treatment that is prescribed and must be used safely. National experience is that there is limited evidence of benefit for the use of oxygen to manage breathlessness of a patient dying from COVID 19 in the community.

Establishing a ReSPECT plan will help set out key decisions for others to follow subsequently for any planned or emergency reviews. The reviews may include a broader range of health and care issues than just oxygen therapy.

Further supportive care and techniques to help manage breathlessness can be found within [NICE COVID-19 rapid guideline on managing symptoms \(including at the end of life\) in the community](#) . Clinicians must use their clinical judgement on an individual basis and refer to the most up to date NICE guidance as above for further information.

It should be noted that if signs of improvement are seen consistently, then treatment and care plans will need to be reassessed.