**Long COVID service referrals update**

The Long COVID service is designed to provide specialist help and support to the people of Barnsley registered with a Barnsley GP.

Long COVID is being recognised widely as a long-term condition that is having a debilitating impact on a large proportion of the population. It is diagnosed when symptoms, which have developed during or after infection with COVID-19, continue for more than 12 weeks.

GPs in Barnsley are required to complete and review the following information before referring into the Long COVID service:

* Long COVID bloods including, but not exhaustive of, FBC, LFT, U&E’s, TSH, HBA1C, BNP, Ferritin, Vitamin D and Lipid profile.
* A recent chest x-ray if the patient is suffering breathlessness.
* An ECG for any palpitations or cardiac related symptoms.
* Any further investigations to rule out a cause for their symptoms, including peri- menopause & menopause. An information sheet regarding the link between Long COVID and female hormones is attached below.



Once these are completed the results need to be reviewed by the GP and actioned as needed, prior to referral to the Long Covid Service. **Please note**: At present, there is no medical cover in the service.

**What happens next?**

The referral goes to our Single Point of Access and is triaged by the Long COVID team.

The patient will be given an initial face to face assessment, this could be with a specialist nurse, physiotherapist, or occupational therapist. At this appointment they will be issued with a Long COVID information booklet and a username and password to C19-YRS (online tool) to help with self-management until their follow up appointment.

Once assessed, patients will be supported by the relevant clinicians for their condition; they may receive ongoing support from the Specialist Respiratory Nurses (Breathe) or further therapy support.

Interventions may include education around teaching techniques to help with:

* Breathlessness and coughs,
* Advice to manage fatigue and poor sleep,
* Gentle exercise to help return to activity, mindfulness, and relaxation.

This may be offered via 1:1 face to face support, online sessions or in a group setting.

Alternative therapies such as Reflexology and Acupuncture can also be offered by a physiotherapist if indicated.

If you have any further queries regarding our Long Covid Service offer please contact us on: rightcarebarnsleyintegratedspa@swyt.nhs.uk