# Cough/breathlessness pathway for children ≥ 1 year of age

**Clinical support tool for remote clinical assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinical findings</th>
<th>Green – low risk</th>
<th>Amber – intermediate risk</th>
<th>Red – high risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Colour Activity   | • Normal colour of skin, lips and tongue  
                   | • Content/smiles  
                   | • Stays awake/awakens quickly | • Pale  
                   | • No smile  
                   | • Decreased activity/lethargic | • Blue or grey colour  
                   | • No response  
                   | • Unable to rouse or if roused does not stay awake  
                   | • Confused  
                   | • Clinical concerns about nature of cry (Weak, high pitched or continuous) |
| Respiratory       | • None of amber or red symptoms | • RR >40 breaths/min if age 12 months - 23 months  
                   |                           | • RR >35 breaths/min if age 2-5 years  
                   |                           | • RR >30 breaths/min if age 5-12 years  
                   |                           | • RR >25 breaths/min if age >12 years  
                   |                           | • Mild / Moderate resp distress  
                   |                           | • Audible stridor on exertion/distress only | • Grunting  
                   |                           | • Audible stridor at rest  
                   |                           | • Severe tachypnoea: RR > 10 breaths per minute above amber levels  
                   |                           | • Severe respiratory distress  
                   |                           | • Unable to complete sentences |
| Circulation / hydration | • None of amber or red symptoms  
                        | • Able to tolerate some fluids  
                        | • Passing urine | • Cold hands and feet in absence of fever  
                        |                           | • Reduced urine output  
                        |                           | • Not tolerating fluids / repeated vomiting  
                        |                           | • Unable to swallow saliva |
| Other             | • None of amber or red symptoms | • Fever for ≥ 5 days  
                   |                           | • Risk factors for severe disease – known asthma, chronic lung disease, bronchiectasis/CF, immunodeficiency etc.  
                   |                           | • Additional parental/carer support required | • Sudden onset and parental concern about inhaled foreign body |

**Green Action**

Provide cough/breathlessness >1 year safety netting advice  
Confirm they are comfortable with the decisions/advice given.  
Always consider safeguarding issues

**Amber Action**

For face to face review (consider if video consultation is appropriate).  
If timely clinical review cannot be facilitated in primary care, low threshold for referral to ED.

**Red Action**

Refer immediately to emergency care – consider whether 999 transfer or parent/taxi most appropriate based on clinical acuity etc.