

# Phlebotomy update

19 February 2021

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## Background

Due to the lengthy waits experienced by BHR residents for a blood test after the first wave of Covid-19, in October 2020 a Serious Incident (SI) was declared.

An Oversight Committee met throughout quarter 3, when as a result of Covid-19 pressures, these meetings were stood down. Escalation updates were still provided to the Chairs as necessary during this period.

NHSE granted an extension on the SI investigation to mid-February 2021. A further extension has been requested to May 2021.

During the February Executive Phlebotomy Steering Group, an update on the recovery position and the collaborative and extraordinary efforts of all involved was given. **It was noted that recovery has, in effect, been delivered.**

As such this will be your last phlebotomy update, and we will use this opportunity to highlight the progress made since October 2020.

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## Capacity levels then:

- In order to maintain stringent infection protection and control measures, in March 2020, BHRUT temporarily ceased to provide community based phlebotomy as part of the initial Covid-19 response. Focus of provision was on phlebotomy services for priority groups only; inpatients, oncology, haematology, children under 12 and a small number of other patients with ongoing treatment and reliant on blood testing.
- Other community provision reduced to a smaller number of sites and all primary care phlebotomy provision (33 clinics) ceased.

## Capacity levels now:

- A running total of 24,741 extra appointments were made available between October 2020 and Jan 2021.
  - At maximum capacity, 64 community and primary care sites were providing phlebotomy services/clinics across BHR (prior to the pandemic, there were 53).
  - Owing to a reduction in demand, some of these sites have now been stood down and will re-open should demand require it.
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## Waiting times then:

- In October 2020 there were 23,000 patients waiting over 8 weeks for a blood test.
- The longest waiting time across BHR in October 2020 was 19 weeks.

## Waiting times now:

- As of 15 February 2021, 7,023 patients are booked in for a blood test.
- 6,689 of these patients have a slot booked between now and 15 March 2021 (i.e. within 4 weeks).
- The longest waiting time in sites across BHR is 6 days.
- You can book an appointment within 2 days at 9 of 15 sites.

**NB:** Due to the current lockdown, bookings remain low.

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We will continue to monitor this situation closely, and as mentioned previously, we are working to ensure that there are measures in place should there be a surge for appointments once current lockdown measures are lifted. This will include continuing with our focus on the induction and training of new bank staff, making sure we have the flexibility to utilise additional sites should they be required and continuous and pro-active discussions looking at how we can now move to a sustainable model for this service.

We would like to thank our partners at NELFT, BHRUT and our GP colleagues for their relentless efforts during this period and we look forward to continued partnership working.

Ceri Jacob  
Managing Director  
BHR CCGs