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Blood Test changes.

For many years the hospital has sent phlebotomists (blood taking specialists) to the surgery to take blood tests for all patients. We also provided nurses and health care assistants to take blood tests and worked as a happy team welcoming all comers for many years. The Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG) has changed this arrangement from 1st July 2020. We will no longer be provided with phlebotomists and we are no longer contracted to take most hospital blood tests where capacity does not allow us to do so. Unfortunately capacity in our organisation does not allow for hospital tests to be taken, with some exceptions.

Please know that this change is not of our making. We did not want this to happen and we raised objections throughout this process but were unsuccessful in changing the mind of GCCG. Below we have tried to explain who can have a test. The text is complicated as the rules get complicated but we are sure it is right to be fully open and honest with you about what we are contracted to do and what we cannot do. You will probably find the answer to your question about blood tests below, please take time to read the detailed information provided.

What do I do if your advice below tells me you cannot take my blood test in the surgery?

- **I have a hospital blood test form** (See below for an example. Usually green, red and white and has a plastic bag attached to the back) – simply take this to the Cheltenham or Gloucester blood test departments. They will happily take your blood and send the results to your consultant.
- **I do not have a blood test form** – please contact your consultant’s secretary and arrange a test form to be posted to you. We know this can be inconvenient but this responsibility remains with the hospital. We are really sorry if this process is difficult, please let the hospital know if this has been a problem for you. Their contact details can be found by [clicking here](#).

From 1st July 2020 the only patients **WHO CAN HAVE BLOOD TESTS** in the surgery are the following:

- **Patients over 12 years of age with a white A4 size blood test form generated by the surgery (see below for an example).** The simplest way to see this is: “my GP wants me to have a test, my hospital consultant is not involved”
- **Patients who have been in hospital as an inpatient and who require ONE follow up blood test who have been DISCHARGED to primary care,** i.e the patient will not be followed up by the hospital. The simplest way to see this is: “ I have been in hospital and was told I had to have a blood test in a week as there was a problem with my blood but it wasn’t enough that I had to stay in hospital. The results go to my GP as the hospital is no longer involved” AND



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“I have not been given a hospital follow up appointment where the consultant will want to see the results of this test as my treatment depends on the result”.

- **Patients who have a shared care agreement** – you take a specific medication and there is an agreement with the hospital that the surgery will take blood tests to monitor your medications. You must have been stabilised on the medication and not have been given a hospital blood test form. Examples include some drugs for Rheumatoid arthritis and other immune suppressant treatments. They are too numerous to list here but you will usually know if this applies to you. If not please do ask reception who will clarify with your usual GP.

Examples of patients WHO CANNOT HAVE BLOOD TESTS here:

- **Children 1-5 years of age** – they go to paediatric outpatients, this gives them an age appropriate service. This is not a change.
- **Children 6-11 years of age** - they go to West block, this gives them an age appropriate service. This is not a change.
- **Patients who need blood tests in advance of / after a consultant outpatient appointment.** This is a major change as previously this was available at the surgery and we are truly sorry we no longer have the capacity to provide this service. The easiest way to see this is: “My consultant has asked for a blood test in a letter that they sent to my GP, I know my GP surgery is no longer able to provide this for me and they are very sorry about this”. If you see an out-of-county consultant you will need to arrange the tests with them – we have asked GCCG to find a better way for this to be managed, once this is in place this advice will be updated.
- **Patients who are under secondary care for a condition even if they also see the GP for that condition, if it is the consultant that has asked for the test.** This is a major change to previous availability. The easiest way to see this is: “I see both my GP and my consultant for my condition and my consultant wants a blood test in advance of my clinic appointment with them. My GP always used to arrange this, but I know that as I am under the consultant and they want the test done, my GP is no longer able to do this for me” OR “I see my consultant and my GP for my condition and my consultant has advised that I have blood tests every 6 months to monitor my condition. In the past my GP always arranged this for me but, as it is the consultant who wants this test, I understand the GP cannot arrange it for me”.
- **Patients who have seen a private consultant,** either in or out of county, cannot have the tests converted to NHS and taken here. The test must be arranged and taken in the private setting it was requested from as this forms part of the private episode of care, we are not contracted to provide NHS tests in this circumstance. This is a major change in what is available, we will be writing to the local private hospitals to notify them of this change. The easiest way to see this is: “I chose to use private services to speed up my treatment and my



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GP is happy for me to do this but I know they are not able to take responsibility for tests that the private consultant has requested. This can cost me money if I am not insured but I know my GP is no longer able to convert this to an NHS test. I know I am not being treated differently just because I chose to go privately”.

- **We do not take private blood tests.** This is not a change.
- **Housebound patients** – there are no changes to the district nursing blood service, this remains available only for patients physically unable to be moved from the home.
- **Patients who we cannot obtain blood from despite trying.** We will usually try twice to obtain your blood. Sometimes this is very difficult and we are really sorry if we can't obtain it. If this happens you may be referred to the hospital service who will try again.
- **Complex pathology tests** that need immediate processing in the lab. This would be a very rare event but your doctor will inform you if your test specifies it can only be taken in hospital.

We appreciate this will not be welcome news for some patients. Please know that this is not what we wanted to happen. However, we are commissioned to provide specific services and it is fair to all patients that we follow these contractual obligations to preserve the future security of the surgery and allow access for patients who we are commissioned to provide tests for. If you want to complain to the GCCG about this contract they can be contacted by phone on 0800 0151 548 or on this email address: glccg.pals@nhs.net

Example Hospital blood test form

Example GP blood test form

