

Phlebotomy services update for Kent HOSC

9 December 2021

Background

HOSC members requested an update on the phlebotomy services which have stopped being provided by Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT) from Victoria Hospital in Deal and Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital (QVMH) in Herne Bay.

Historically, Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust provided blood tests at the two hospitals. This service was initially established many years ago to support outpatient clinics from East Kent Hospitals that were run from the community hospital sites. Some GP practices have also used the service for their patients. Phlebotomy services are however part of routine care that all general practices are contracted to provide.

Considering options to maintain local phlebotomy capacity

The KCHFT phlebotomy service was not being directly commissioned/funded by the CCG; and primary care already holds a contract to provide phlebotomy under the Primary Care Quality Standards (PCQS) contract. Therefore, once it was established that general practice was able to provide the equivalent capacity there was no need to seek alternate or new providers to take on the services.

Under the terms of the PCQS general practice can sub-contract the service to another provider and the CCG facilitated discussions on this, however, assurances were received that general practice could provide enough capacity to cover the level of phlebotomy that was being provided by KCHFT.

Public engagement

It was always the intention that phlebotomy services would continue to be provided locally in both Deal and Herne Bay. The intention was for a seamless transition and minimal change for patients as a result of phlebotomy moving from the KCHFT provided service to a general practice provided service from local surgeries. The CCG did work with local practices to plan communications to explain the changes, but there was not a formal consultation. Final agreements did take longer than planned to confirm and as a result the timing of communications about changes did happen close to the switch from KCHFT to local practice provision at the end of October.

Final position now in place

From 1 November 2021 the service arrangements are as follows:

Herne Bay

- **The Park Surgery** provides blood tests at the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital in Herne Bay.
- **The Heron Medical Practice** provides blood tests at one of their surgeries, all of which have already been offering blood tests.

Deal

Patients of the following surgeries will have their blood tests at their registered surgery:

- **Manor Road Surgery**
- **St Richard's and Golf Road Surgery**
- **Balmoral Surgery**
- **Cedars Surgery**

Any patients who have historically had blood tests at Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital, Herne Bay or Victoria Hospital, Deal but are not registered with any of the practices named above, will be able to access blood tests through their surgery.

Concerns about wider impact on Deal community hospital

Some patients and local residents in the Deal area have asked if the change to the phlebotomy service is linked to any other potential removal of service from the Deal Community Hospital. We can give the following reassurances on this:

- KCHFT as the owner of the site has confirmed that it sees the hospital as an important local resource and has no plans to remove other services.
- The CCG also believes local community hospitals like the Deal site are an important part of the overall provision of NHS care and has no plans to decommission services provided at the hospital.
- The CCG has contacted other NHS Trusts that also use the site. Both East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust and Kent and Medway Health and Social Care Partnership NHS Trust (mental health) have confirmed that they do not have any plans for changes to the services they run from the site.

References made on social media suggesting that the hospital is facing closure and is set to lose the x-ray department are entirely without foundation and we have contacted the account responsible to ask that the misinformation is corrected/removed.