



**Barking and Dagenham,
Havering and Redbridge**
Clinical Commissioning Groups

16 July 2019

Sent via email: julia.lopez.mp@parliament.uk

Julia Lopez MP
Member of Parliament for Hornchurch & Upminster

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Dear Julia

Thank you for your recent correspondence on 4 and 11 June 2019 regarding phlebotomy services in Havering.

There are currently several locations across the borough providing phlebotomy services and on average around 950 patients are seen every day in Havering. I would like to reassure you that ensuring we commission services to meet the needs of our patients is a priority for us.

BHR Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are currently working with providers, Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals Trust (BHRUT) and North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT), to conduct a review of phlebotomy services currently commissioned and whether these services are sufficient for future demand.

In autumn we will launch a consultation on phlebotomy services to help shape future phlebotomy services to better manage demand, improve access, and improve equality across the three boroughs. We plan to consult on proposals for improving phlebotomy services as part of a wider 12-week public consultation. We will ask local people their views on when services need to be available (opening times, weekend availability), suitable locations, (distance that patients would be prepared to travel) and whether booking appointments (eg online booking) would improve patient experience.

We have held positive discussions with Healthwatch and with all Council Health Scrutiny leads to explain the review and outline our proposed approach to a consultation.

We know moving some existing services will help ease the pressure across the system and part of the review will explore:

- Extending opening hours at Queen's Hospital to include evenings and weekends – Saturday opening will commence in summer 2019 as a pilot.
- Change to single providers at both Elm Park Clinic and the Victoria Centre. Currently BHRUT and NELFT both run a blood testing service from these sites. We plan to change so that NELFT operate only from the Victoria Centre and BHRUT only from the Elm Park Clinic therefore making it less confusing for patients and making best use of clinical space and staff.
- Pilot an appointments system at Queen's Hospital and King George Hospital, whereby patients can book ahead to avoid lengthy wait times.

Accountable Officer: Jane Milligan
Managing Director: Ceri Jacob
Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Groups

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Thank you for bringing to my attention the concerns from your constituents. We would be pleased to hear their views during our autumn consultation.

In regards to availability at Harold Hill Health Centre, as this is a walk-in clinic it is not always possible to identify how many people will attend on any given day. However, we are aware of the higher than usual demand for blood testing and this has resulted in unexpected delays. The increased demand is most likely because of recent changes at two locations in Havering:

1. Rainham Medical Centre where the provider, NELFT, advised it was no longer safe for a phlebotomist to operate from that site due to lack of reception service. This site will need to close.
2. South Hornchurch Health Centre where the provider, BHRUT, has not been able to provide a service for the last six months due to staffing issues. The site is now closed.

To address the Havering issues, part of the review will look at proposals to re-open the service at South Hornchurch Health Centre in October 2019 and re-direct patients to that site from Rainham Medical Centre. However, we are keen to work with our patients to understand what is best when it comes to location and opening hours.

We believe bringing together the service in one location will make the service cost effective and more efficient.

I hope this response is helpful. If you would like to discuss further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ceri Jacob', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Ceri Jacob
Managing Director