

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

Julia Lopez MP  
Member of Parliament  
For Hornchurch & Upminster  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

**Professor Oliver Shanley OBE**  
Chief Executive  
Trust Head Office  
West Wing  
CEME Centre  
Rainham  
Essex  
RM13 8GQ  
T: 0300 555 1201 ext. 64290

Our Ref: KH29880R  
Your Ref: JL8413

25<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Ms Lopez, MP

**Re: Blood Tests**

Thank you for your email dated 14 September 2020, regarding your two constituents who reported that they were not able to book a phlebotomy appointment for over two months; one constituent has booked an appointment for December. Your email was forwarded to my office for investigation.

I am now in a position to provide you with the following response, which is as follows:

NELFT is currently providing Phlebotomy services from Elm Park, Harold Hill clinics and the Long Term Conditions centre in Havering. Due to Covid-19, our Phlebotomy services had to implement an appointment only service to provide a safer service for our patients and visitors. We have also had to implement additional cleaning regimes between patients and a controlled flow of people into these sites to maintain social distancing. At the same time, we have increased our opening hours for all of the above Phlebotomy clinics.

Prior to the Covid-19 first wave, the majority of NELFT Phlebotomy clinics in Havering were only open for morning clinics. We have now opened all of the above 3 clinics for morning and afternoon sessions from Monday to Friday. Despite the longer opening hours, we have seen an increasing demand for phlebotomy services. This means that our waiting times for the next appointment at Elm Park is in 18 weeks, Harold Hill is in 13 weeks and it is 8 weeks in the Long Term Conditions Centre. The longer wait at Elm Park Health centre is because it is a very popular site and there is only 1 phlebotomy chair operating at this health centre. NELFT has set up a dedicated urgent blood test service which your GP can refer people for and the current waiting time is 1 week.

In Havering, NELFT is planning to add a second phlebotomy chair in Elm Park Health Centre for 3 months, which will reduce the waiting time while the CCG agrees a longer term provision of Phlebotomy services by Havering GPs in addition to the NELFT's phlebotomy services. NELFT is also planning to re-start the phlebotomy clinic from Cranham Health Centre as soon as the building has been declared Covid-19 secure. We are also encouraging our patients to book at any of the NELFT 14 phlebotomy sites in BHR to secure an earlier appointment if they can travel.

NELFT has been working closely with BHR CCGs to address this increase in demand for Phlebotomy services as part of a BHR-wide collaborative response to the withdrawal of services by BHRUT. This has included the formation of a BHR-wide Executive Working Group, chaired by a CCG Director, to oversee the entire Phlebotomy position including the development of a training programme in liaison with the Training Hub and the implementation of primary care based Phlebotomy services.

Currently, BHR CCGs are finalising arrangements to enable GP practices to provide in-house phlebotomy services from late September with some practices already starting to provide services from Monday 14 September 2020. Practice- based phlebotomy will not only address the increased demand but will also expand the choice of providers for patients.

As at Monday 14 September 2020, only a small number of practices have signed up to provide this service across Havering and as such, targeted work is being undertaken to try to change this position. Simultaneously NELFT and the CCGs are working together to identify any opportunities for NELFT to increase capacity in the Havering area.

Alongside this piece of work, we have been working with BHR CCGs and other Phlebotomy providers on a review of current phlebotomy services and to agree a long term plan for BHR phlebotomy provision. The aim is to complete this review and propose a new phlebotomy service model by the end of February 2021. This will require a public consultation and we anticipate that a new phlebotomy service will be in place from April 2021.

I would like to thank you for bringing this to my attention and I hope this provides you with the answers to the issues you raised. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.

Yours sincerely,



**Professor Oliver Shanley OBE**  
Chief Executive

C.c. Complaints Team  
Integrated Care Director for  
Assistant Director of