

Dear Secondary Care colleagues

Re Blood tests – this replaces previous letter sent

Background

Outpatient Blood tests require a patient to come to a healthcare setting for a F2F appointment with clinical staff wearing appropriate PPE.

This has affected the efficient working of clinics and phlebotomy services across the whole system and has reduced capacity in both primary and secondary care.

Before you order a test, ask if it is absolutely necessary and will it affect your management significantly.

As with all tests we have had to recalibrate the risks and benefits during the coronavirus pandemic. **COVID BRAN** – **B**enefits, **R**isks, **A**lternatives, do **N**othing

Remote / Virtual clinics

If you need to perform a blood test then you are responsible for organising that test in your clinic with a F2F appointment. Think about whether you might be able to help the patient by taking the opportunity to do other necessary bloods monitoring at the same time.

We expect some out-patient monitoring clinics to start in July to help with additional capacity for some key specialties initially.

Existing shared care agreements (SCAs) for monitoring of certain drugs are under review to ensure that we are doing the minimum number of tests required to safely continue treatment that is deemed absolutely necessary. Information on SCAs are available on the NHS Lothian intranet. General practice will continue to perform tests as per SCA but is not in a position to take on any further monitoring tests not covered by existing SCAs.

General practice will also honour existing arrangements (e.g. pre-chemo SACT, virtual haematology bloods, PSAs for prostate cancer follow up, phlebotomy if required for a house bound patient, and situations where previously Practices would have done bloods).

Please do not ask practices to perform blood tests that historically you would have normally done in out-patients.

Thank you for your help in ensuring the whole system works as effectively as possible at this challenging time.

Dr Caroline Whitworth Dr Drummond Begg

Co-Chairs,

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cc to all Primary Care colleagues