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## **Phlebotomy services in the South Cotswolds**

Changes were made to blood testing services across Gloucestershire to improve the quality and equity of the service and ensure that patients receive care in the right place at the right time.

In the South Cotswolds, as elsewhere in the county, GP surgeries are now providing blood testing services for patients when the surgery requires this. For many patients, having the test carried out at their GP surgery is more convenient, helping them to avoid unnecessary delays and journeys to hospital and giving more certainty around appointments. GP surgeries are receiving additional funds to do this and surgery staff have received additional training.

In the South Cotswolds, outpatient blood testing on the day of the appointment continues to be available at Cirencester Hospital. However, for safety reasons, blood tests on a drop-in basis are no longer being carried out. This is due to COVID-19 and the need to ensure that patients and staff can maintain social distancing.

During October, there is a bookable blood testing clinic at Cirencester Hospital every Monday morning between 8.30am - 12.15pm. This service is available for patients who need to have blood tests as part of their consultant outpatient care.

However, we recognise that service arrangements need to be strengthened and improved and we are working with the service providers and taking urgent action to progress this.

From 1 November, the bookable blood testing clinic (currently on Mondays only) will be available on three days every week (clinic times will be confirmed soon).

Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust (GHC), who will be providing the service, are taking the following steps:

- recruiting additional staff who are qualified to take blood tests
- transferring and training one member of staff with phlebotomy skills from another department to the service to provide the additional appointments

There are also plans to develop the current capacity and from 1 December, the service will be provided on five days per week, with capacity to provide around 5,000 blood tests every year.