

Progress update on Swiftqueue and Synnovis concerns raised at Public Forum

1. Accessibility for patients who are unable to use the booking facility

- A phlebotomy service is provided across all three acute hospitals; St Thomas', Guy's and Denmark Hill, KCH and two locations in the community; Gracefield Gardens and Tessa Jowell. All sites, except Guy's provide service for both patients referred by GP's and from secondary care services. Guy's only provides a service for patients referred for phlebotomy by GP's
- When the Swiftqueue service commenced a 50/50 split of bookable and walk in appointments was created. Prior to swiftqueue the service was entirely a walk -in service with long waiting times, particularly at the traditionally busy times of the day.
- The activity data is monitored daily to ensure the best balance of bookable and walk in capacity split
- The table below shows how this is currently being split at each site – reflecting the different types of patients that are accessing each site. This table reflects weekly activity numbers.
- With DNA's and speed of Phlebotomists, frequently Swiftqueue adds appointments or converts any unused Prebookable appointments to Same Day appointments”, so there may well be more on the day.
- This approach is addressing the need for those patients who are unable to book in using the booking system
- The booking system is enabling us to deliver a higher volume of phlebotomy activity. Patients now rarely wait to be called in for their blood test – most patients are seen before, at or on the time of their appointment.

	St Thomas	Gracefield Gardens	Guy's	Denmark Hill	Tessa Jowell HC
Prebookable appointments	1128	1183	475	1701	1003
Same Day appointments	439	101	35	780	200
Total	1567	1284	510	2481	1203

Same day appointment %	28%	7.90%	6.8%	31.43%	16.63%
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2. Information for patients is not clear

- The comms teams have developed the communication materials that are available on the acute websites and the Synnovis website;
 - <https://www.synnovis.co.uk/swiftqueue> there is also a helpful video you can watch via this link.
 - [Swiftqueue Poster - Phlebotomy clinic_GSTT Digital](#)
 - [Blood tests - Overview | Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust](#)
 - [Phlebotomy \(blood tests\) | King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust](#)
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- The Synnovis team have also updated posters in the departments following your feedback
 - Each of the comms sets out how to book an appointment in advance or that walk in appointments are available for patients that are having difficulty booking
 - If there are any comments on the clarity of the communications, please do feed this back to Vicky and Jo and they can continue to improve the information we have available to patients
 - Synnovis have been able to put additional staff to support their units, who are able to help patients
 - Unfortunately, this is not sustainable longer term. But the management team do routinely visit each of the different sites to ensure that the service is running smoothly.
 - Staff have been asked to support those patients who need additional help to access the service

3. GP's are being asked to book phlebotomy appointments

- Communications are routinely provided to General Practice to ensure they are able to provide their patients with the most up to date information on how to access the phlebotomy services.
- Unfortunately the GP workforce changes frequently and there are a number of locums working, which can make it more difficult to keep everyone well informed. Synnovis are about to recirculate their communications across Primary Care again.
- GP's and their administrative teams are able to book swiftqueue on behalf of their patients – this is one of the features that we have enabled the system. And we advise patients that someone else is able to book an appointment on their behalf but we do not suggest in any of our communications that this is a role the GP should fulfil. It is entirely optional where there is capacity to do so in primary care.

4. Mystery Shopping

- In our meeting we discussed how we can use mystery shopping to support the continuous feedback and improvement of the service
- The management team routinely visit the different sites to ensure everything is running smoothly
- Also in my role with responsibility across Community Sites I am a frequent visitor particularly to the Gracefield Gardens site and can use these visits to provide this oversight
- We recognise that the geography of the phlebotomy service at Gracefield Gardens is particularly difficult to support patients as much as we would like and are looking to see if we can improve this

5. How to continue to provide feedback into the service or make complaints

- Whilst there is good oversight of the phlebotomy services, patient feedback and complaints remain invaluable
- Complaints can be directly made to Synnovis – details are on their website [Customer Service | Synnovis](#)
- Complaints can also be made to each of the acute trusts and these will be responded to by the most appropriate team
- The team are really keen to receive feedback via either route – it is incredibly helpful to provide feedback as soon after the interaction with the service to complete a full investigation

6. Quality and Performance data

- Synnovis are continuing to improve the data that they report through their contract with GSTT and KCH through the Pathology Business Unit to SEL ICB.
- These data includes focus on both qualitative and quantitative elements within the contract; including turnaround times and complaints etc
- These data are routinely shared with the ICB and discussed with the borough leads in our monthly contract meeting – this covers all 6 boroughs and each borough is represented at this meeting.
- As per the FOI that was responded to by SEL ICB, it is not possible for GSTT or KCH to share this report and SEL ICB advised they would not be able to share the report. However, you may wish to make your request directly to your local borough leads who would have access to this information.

7. Did the Synnovis Cyber Attack disproportionately affect those patients with Severe Mental Illness (SMI)

- I have met with Lorraine Gordon to discuss this. The phlebotomy service provided by Synnovis doesn't capture enough data points to be able to determine this.
- However we are not aware of any concerns that have been raised by those teams referring patients for phlebotomy with SMI and any concerns that they have been inequitably affected by the Cyber Attack in June 2024.
- Phlebotomy bled all patients who had been deemed urgent by their requesting clinician.
- The Synnovis and Pathology Business Unit work closely to support SLAM and our local Mental Health patients.

In summary, we are grateful for the interest you have shown in the phlebotomy service and the representations and advocacy you have shown for patients across our communities. I hope the above provides the detail and assurance you have asked for to address the concerns raised and clearly sets out the actions we have taken and will continue to take to deliver excellent and equitable patient care.

Kind regards,

Alice

Alice Jarvis ([she/her](#)), Director of Operations and Partnerships (ISM)

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust