



# North & South Essex Local Medical Committees

## Local Enhanced Service - *Phlebotomy*

### **Introduction :**

Taking of blood for medical tests has historically been the province of the local hospital. Virtually all the analyses are still carried out in the hospital laboratories either locally or at specialist centers. Whilst some tests are not transportable or deteriorate with storage, most tests, modern storage systems allow to be taken, with reasonable confidence, off site.

With the increasing complexity of medical science in terms of investigation, treatment and monitoring, the quantity of tests both available and performed is escalating. Shared care arrangements and shared prescribing protocols along with direct requests from hospitals to take samples add to the workload.

The population requiring chronic disease management is increasing and is an ageing population with subsequent mobility problems.

There are obvious reasons why a surgery based phlebotomy service is beneficial to patients and the wider population but practices have not had this recognized in terms of resource to provide the service.

Phlebotomy is not difficult but it is time consuming in terms of management and provision. It also requires use of premium consulting space.

### **Service detail:**

The procedure should be provided by a trained health care professional. An appropriate room should be available with adequate lighting, seating, space, washing facilities, a couch and a work surface for equipment. A nurse or doctor should be available.

An appointment system should be run and be available in person or by phone.

Staff booking appointments should have sufficient information to book tests at appropriate times (eg: early a.m. for fasting tests).

Patients should be advised as to when and how to obtain the test results and as to how many results to expect.

### **Costing:**

It is reasonable to expect a test rate of eight patients per hour for up to three specimens per patient. Appointments and result follow-up costs included, the service will cost £16-20 per hour to provide. This presumes employment of an appropriately skilled HCA and that existing transport arrangements remain as now. Use of a fully trained practice nurse would increase the cost to £26-30 per hour.

For the few medically housebound, a domiciliary service would cost £15-20 per patient with an HCA run service. Difficulties around insurance and liability would need to be solved.

Costs to be subject to annual uplift.

### **Audit:**

Phlebotomy is a relatively simple process and clinical audit seems unlikely to be useful. Audits such as DNA rate and patient satisfaction could easily be undertaken at PCT request.