



THE LODGE HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

The Lodge Health Partnership is a GP practice on 3 sites serving approximately 20,000 patients in St Albans and Redbourn.

We have 74 doctors, nurses, advanced nurse practitioners, physiotherapists, pharmacists and administrative/reception support staff.

We look after Alban Manor and St Matthews Care home and some small Learning disability residential homes.



What has Lockdown Life been like for your group?

At the beginning of the pandemic the staff at the surgery were scared as they all have families too and realised they were working in a high risk environment. Guidelines and procedures were changing every day which led to anxiety and confusion of how to keep everyone safe, both staff and patients whilst still providing a service to the community.

The staff gritted their teeth and carried on despite the early PPE struggles and changes enforced to their working day. We were so grateful to receive donations of PPE from local schools and businesses. We quickly had to change to a telephone triage model of working where patients are spoken to on the telephone first and only brought into the surgery if a physical examination is required. Changes to the premises had to be made to be Covid secure.

As we are on three sites we had to change locations for some staff to try and maintain bubbles to prevent cross contamination- if one surgery had an outbreak at least we could continue providing a service from the other two sites.

There have been challenges in providing care as routine referrals were stopped and the backlog this created will take a long time to catch up. The mental health toll of lockdown on our patients is clear to all of our clinicians.

Like any business we had staff shortage issues due to staff being sick themselves or having to self-isolate. We miss the social interactions of coffee and lunch breaks; we have had milestone events such as retirements that we have not been able to celebrate and there was no traditional Christmas party.

Then came the announcement of the Covid vaccination programme - 9 St Albans GP practices collaborated together to take over Club Batchwood to deliver the vaccine. The 'can do' attitude and spirit shown by all involved has been amazing and all staff have been proud to be part of this mammoth task.

The staff are tired - it has been a long year and we have all worked hard and done our best.

