



What we have been doing?

In the last 12 months the face of the NHS and General Practice has rapidly changed to in order to cope with the COVID pandemic. In the last six months we have been involved in a hugely successful rapid roll out vaccination programme and have vaccinated over 8000 of our patients. Throughout this time we have continued with our full-time work in general practice ensuring that we are COVID safe at all times.

The practice continued to see patients face to face, do home visits, and maintain safe services for patients, carers and staff following **national guidance**. We have adopted modern ways of working and where appropriate, use digital technologies such as online services and text messaging to enhance patient care. The majority of nursing appointments have continued to be face to face throughout the pandemic and we have continued to undertake blood tests and provide our babies and children with their immunisations and vaccinations.

The work involved in implementing the vaccine programme has been extensive and time consuming. It has involved all members of staff working extra hours including weekends, evenings and Bank Holidays. We have had huge numbers of queries to deal with, either at the front desk, by telephone and by email and at times we have felt overwhelmed.

We have employed an additional Advanced Nurse Practitioner and increased our Clinical Pharmacist hours to provide more minor ailment appointments. We also have two doctors who are training to be GPs and we are providing training support to help train student nurses, physiotherapists and pharmacist to enhance their clinical skills.

Our patient numbers continue to rise as new housing developments continue throughout Saddleworth. We have looked at many possible solutions to increase the space in our surgeries and we have had some extra clinical workspaces built within the Uppermill surgery. We have been using our Delph surgery to deliver the COVID vaccine to our patients and we will be increasing nursing services at Delph in the coming weeks

How we are improving

Our capacity for appointments has not changed since the onset of the pandemic. In fact, we are offering more appointments than ever and our waiting time for an appointment has dropped from five weeks, 12 months ago, down to within 48 hours for a clinical contact; however, the demand for appointments over the last few months has accelerated exponentially, leaving our phonelines blocked and availability sparse. We want to keep our access at this level of outstanding service, but we need some support from you.

We introduced an online consultation/total triaging model this time last year, far in advance of this system being adopted at a national level. This has given increased access to a clinician and, as long as the service is not abused, this level of service should continue.

We are extremely lucky to have patients like you who use the minor ailment service with the Clinical Pharmacist on a regular basis and take responsibility for your own health and self-care. We will need you to continue doing this.

What we hope Saddleworth Medical Practice will be like in the future

Our priorities over the next 12 months will be to provide safe care with the appropriate access to clinicians. The areas we think are particularly important are early cancer diagnosis, cancer care and palliative care, chronic disease management such as heart disease, strokes and chronic lung disease and mental health. We will also continue to provide extra services including minor surgery and joint injections, contraceptive services, cervical smears and child health immunisations.