



London Ambulance Service

NHS Trust

8th February, 2022

Two years ago this week, the first confirmed London patients were admitted to hospital with Covid-19. On reaching this milestone, I want to pay tribute to the awe-inspiring dedication of my colleagues here at the London Ambulance Service and the NHS as a whole, for giving their all to care for patients throughout this pandemic.

Since that time two years ago, London Ambulance Service has responded to unprecedented demand in incredibly difficult circumstances. We have taken more than 4 million 999 calls and 3.6 million 111 calls, and attended 2.2 million emergencies.

It's been physically and emotionally exhausting for our staff and volunteers, and we owe them huge thanks for adapting to radically new ways of working and making huge personal sacrifices. Every day they stayed away from home to protect loved ones, every extra shift they picked up, every dinner with friends and family missed because they were working late, has made a very real difference to our patients and colleagues.

The superhuman effort to keep responding to the pandemic continues. 2021 was our busiest year ever at London Ambulance Service. On average we took 700 more 999 calls each day than in the first year of the pandemic and we are still navigating our way through a very challenging winter.

To each and every one of our staff and volunteers, I know that the words 'thank you' simply do not reflect the sheer hard work and commitment you have put in over the past 24 months, but I am inspired by your selflessness and professionalism, and remain beyond grateful to you all.

The pandemic has taught us all many lessons, but as our Service looks to the future, we can see that the training, development and retention of our incredible staff will remain key. That's exactly why we're embarking on our most ambitious recruitment campaign ever, are expanding our apprenticeship schemes and are working with every member of the team to improve their working day.

When we pull together, our Service is a formidable force: we can adapt quickly and work together as one team to overcome challenges. For example, in the midst of the pandemic, our logistics hub at Deptford was overhauled and scaled up to help us deliver more than 2 million items of protective equipment all over London. We built a new 999 control room in a single weekend. We trained student paramedics to triage Covid-related calls. We redeployed qualified clinical staff back to patient-facing roles and corporate teams stepped up to deliver refreshments directly to teams as breaks for staff and volunteers became impossible.



All the while we have continued to drive forward innovation. From technology that allows us to connect to mobile phone cameras remotely to help diagnosis, to new access for our clinicians to digital patient records to assist their decision-making, these advances offer real improvements to the care we offer.

Outside our organisation, we forged ground-breaking partnerships with NHS partners and our blue-light colleagues, with more than 400 London Fire Brigade firefighters and Metropolitan police officers driving ambulances to bolster our workforce. To these partners and the volunteers that came forward to help us, we are extremely grateful. And to the public who donated food and toiletries or showed random acts of kindness to staff on the road or sent us letters – thank you. When times were tough, these kind gestures made a difference to us, knowing how much we were appreciated.

I am immensely proud of what highly-skilled colleagues across London Ambulance Service have achieved. But the virus has taken a huge toll on the country. So at this time, I also remember and honour all those 26 colleagues from our 'green family' who were among those who sadly died during this pandemic. The people of London owe you a debt of gratitude which I hope will never be forgotten.



Daniel Elkeles
Chief Executive, London Ambulance Service

