CASE STUDY

Driving testing excellence through the pandemic

In 2020, in rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a Lighthouse Lab was established in Alderley Park, Cheshire to provide testing capabilities in order to safeguard and protect the lives of people across the UK.

In November 2020, x3 Associates were asked to assist the Alderley Park facility to increase testing capacity and improve sample flow as increases on testing demand grew during the pandemic.

We worked in partnership to identify and address the key areas of focus and mobilised improvement interventions:

- rapid improvement events (3-day 3 events, 18 team members trained)
- Lean production training to 122 leaders, managers and the lab teams
- capacity confirmation tools and techniques.

The training covered Lean thinking and metrics, workflow, visual management and effective team working.

All of the improvements were 'shop floor' based - in the laboratory through the engagement of the expert frontline teams – what we refer to as 'go see' (as opposed to larger consultancy 'desk-top consulting').

The feedback from the delegates is exceptional and the laboratory improved the testing capacity from 40K samples per day to over 80K samples per day within weeks.

'I was really impressed and intrigued, I used to think that great leadership and exceptional results are produced by someone who has natural talent or by someone who has to work exceptionally hard to achieve those results, but I was shown a blueprint that has been proven to work over and over again helping businesses and organisations to surpass their expectations and achieve their true potential. The Lean way is my new approach to work and life.' - Bioscience Lead.

The lab ceased operating on 31 March 2022 when their contract for Covid-19 PCR testing with the UK government ended.



'fantastic effort, very impressive level of detail and enthusiasm'
- Director, Alderley Park Lighthouse Lab

Significantly improved the daily COVID-19 testing capacity at the Alderley Park facility:

- 40K tests per day to 80K tests per day
- 18 staff trained through rapid improvement events
- 122 laboratory colleagues trained on Lean production
- 24-7 working to assist teams during a national lockdown
- simplified the flow of samples
- developed and provided capacity confirmation tools and techniques.

'Amazing work from all the team.'

- Head of Laboratory, Alderley Park Lighthouse Lab

The lab won both the 2020 OBN Covid-19 Responder Award and the 2021 Bionow Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic Award.

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