



Jen Holland
Chief Operating Officer, SBC

30th April 2020

Dear Jen,

In these exceptional times many of us will have taken comfort from HM The Queen's messages of encouragement and gratitude as the nation battles against the Covid 19 pandemic. As the three Lord Lieutenants representing Her Majesty in the Borders we wished to reflect on these messages locally, and especially to express appreciation through you to all those individuals working as social care staff in both SBC run and private care homes as well as those delivering care at home who are doing so much to help the elderly and vulnerable in our communities

We have all become vividly and painfully aware of the challenges which these wonderful people are facing day in day out, the relentless hours, the anxiety and often the isolation. Their clear dedication is inspirational to all of us as is the spirit of partnership developed by organisations across the region including NHS Borders. The whole care community has come together to ensure that care is always there for those in need. It has been a magnificent response.

Sadly, as elsewhere in Scotland, we know the number of deaths in care have risen and we express our warm sympathies both to the relatives who have lost loved ones in exceptionally difficult circumstances and to their carers who have borne the enormous responsibility of offering love and support at such a time. We are humbled by the sensitivity and courage they are showing.

On a more positive note it is encouraging to learn that essential supplies of Protective Equipment have been maintained, with a few brief exceptions, throughout the Borders. Given the competition for such scarce resources those involved in meeting the logistical challenge are richly deserving of our congratulations. They, and many others not in the limelight, are doing vital tasks, be they cleaners or caterers or general maintenance staff. Many more have emerged as volunteers, including council staff helping with food deliveries and telephone support, and those in schools producing protective masks on 3D printers. The spirit of community which is strong in the Borders has been seen at its very best.

Last but not least we wish to particularly recognize and thank the very special group of Personal Assistants, the discreet payment carers of whom there are some 250 across our region. Quietly but effectively they are proving to be a vital link in the support network along with the army of informal and family carers looking after friends and relatives, without whom this would be an impossible task

We all now realise that the danger posed by this virus stretches into the foreseeable future and that it will affect our pattern of life for months and perhaps years ahead. There will be little let up in the demands placed on those offering care but we have no doubt that the shining spirit of commitment and service to people across the Borders will remain as steadfast as ever.

To all the organisations in the care sector and to every individual involved we send the deepest gratitude and the warmest good wishes for the weeks ahead.

The Duke of Buccleuch
HM Lord Lieutenant
Roxburgh, Ettrick and Lauderdale

Professor Sir Hew Strachan
HM Lord Lieutenant
Tweeddale

Mrs Jeanna Swan
HM Lord Lieutenant
Berwickshire