From the UK CMOs and Medical Directors of Public Health England NHS England.
1 May 2020

Dear medical colleagues

We would like to express our immense gratitude to every medical professional working in the NHS and public health. Over the past four months, the health system and its staff have been tested in a way no currently practicing healthcare professional has experienced. In the face of a new virus with many unknowns and the difficulties of PPE supply, you have risen to the challenge for your patients and the public and have done so with admirable determination, imagination, courage and flexibility.

The result of the work of the NHS and public health colleagues was an incredible collective effort. This combined with the remarkable support from the general public heeding the advice to stay at home unless necessary, means that our emergency capacity has not been overtopped at any stage in the first wave of the COVID-19 epidemic.

The way care has been provided has been changed as services have been reconfigured whilst many staff have been moved into different roles. This has been central to our response. Some of these changes are actually improvements. Some inevitably have however led to a reduced capacity to provide non-emergency care and preventive services. As soon as circumstances permit we all want to bring these services back on line.

This is why this week, the process of turning these services back on is underway and this will help minimise the indirect harm of COVID-19. We need to do so in a way that acknowledges that this epidemic is far from over. While we are coming past the first peak due to collective efforts the risk of further upswings in COVID-19 will be with us for the foreseeable future. In the weeks and months ahead we need to run as normal a service as we can for our patients, whilst retaining the ability to move swiftly if we get further waves later in the year.

The medical profession and the multidisciplinary teams that you are part of have responded remarkably to this epidemic. You have our heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the profession, as well as the public.



Prof Chris Whitty
Chief Medical Officer
England



Dr Frank Atherton
Chief Medical Officer
Wales



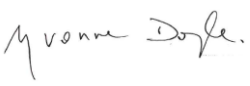
Dr Gregor Smith
Chief Medical Officer
Scotland



Dr Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer
Northern Ireland



Prof Stephen Powis
NHS England Medical Director



Prof Yvonne Doyle
PHE England Medical Director