

19th October 2020

Dear colleague,

This has been an extraordinary year. And it has called for an extraordinary effort by colleagues working across all our organisations, and within the community and voluntary sector.

We want to say thank you for your dedication and contribution to the Leeds response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For those working in health and care, usually at this time of year our attention turns to managing so-called 'winter pressures' and the impact these have on our services, our patients and ourselves. This year is no different in some respects but, of course, so much is different.

We have seen so much change in our health and social care system in Leeds over the last few months. Never have we had to work so flexibly; so intensely; so together. Our days have been longer, we've worked extra days when called upon, we've had to adapt to new ways of working and we've kept going even when things have been really tough.

Thanks to you we've kept services running for our patients, our citizens and our communities. And we also thank you for looking after each other too.

Right now is a time for us to remind all of you to continue to take care of your own health and wellbeing. All of our organisations have support services set up to help you, which you can access through your line manager or find more information on your intranet. There are also national resources available, from NHS England <https://people.nhs.uk/> and the Local Government Association <https://local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/wellbeing/covid-19-social-care-staff-wellbeing>.

We do not know what the next couple of months will look like. Here in Leeds, or indeed across the country. We know it's going to be tough and we know that thought is one that affects many of us.

Although the vast majority have done what we have asked them to do this year, we also recognise your concerns that some people in our communities may not be following the latest guidance to reduce the spread of the virus. We are working together to support you all the best we can. This includes community engagement from our third sector partners, introducing new technologies to support our workforce and our citizens, and supporting people to access services in a way that keeps everyone safe.

We will get through this thanks to your support but your safety and your health and wellbeing will always be our top priority. Please look after yourselves first and foremost.

We cannot do this without you.

Signed

Julian Hartley

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NHS Trust*

Pip Goff

*Third Sector and Community Local Care
Partnerships Lead*

Rachel Cooper

Chief Executive, Leeds Older People Forum

Dr Sara Munro

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Tom Riordan

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