

31 January 2022

Dear colleagues,

As we mark two years since the first confirmed domestic case of COVID-19, we wanted to express our profound thanks and gratitude to the whole public health community.

The pandemic has been difficult and demanding for all – both professionally and personally. The commitment to your work and the skilful way in which you have delivered it in a rapidly changing environment amid considerable uncertainty has saved countless lives.

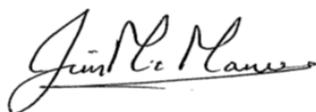
Public health teams have been under a spotlight like never before. Across the country, you and your teams responded with integrity, skill, and determination. The long hours, personal and professional sacrifices were all for the public good. This has been widely recognised by the public.

As we know, the pandemic is not over; we need to remain responsive to new events, provide expert advice as appropriate and build on the responses of the past. Our collective expertise on COVID will continue to develop for years to come, and work needs to continue to increase vaccination rates and advance research.

As is always the case with public health, the work is never done and much of the most important work is never noticed. We need to look after each other, rest and support others to take leave before returning for the next challenges – of which there are many important ones.

The indirect effect of COVID and the necessary societal response to it has left many medium and long term public health issues in addition to major pre-existing ones. It has shone a light on the repeated effects of deprivation on health which existed before the pandemic and will continue to. Many of you will focus on health improvement and the significant non-communicable disease burden, some exacerbated by the pandemic. Some of you have continued to progress this important work over the last two years. These are not easy problems with quick fixes, but they are very important and we need to reduce health inequalities significantly. That is why most of you do what you do.

Your expert knowledge, local insight, leadership and collection and use of data have been outstanding. We have been immensely proud to work alongside you and are profoundly thankful for all you and your teams have done.



Professor Jim McManus
President of the Association of Directors of Public Health



Professor Maggie Rae
President of the Faculty of Public Health



Professor Sir Chris Whitty
Chief Medical Officer, England



Sir Frank Atherton
Chief Medical Officer, Wales



Professor Sir Gregor Smith
Chief Medical Officer, Scotland



Professor Sir Michael McBride
Chief Medical Officer, Northern Ireland