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Dear volunteer,

The covid-19 pandemic is the biggest challenge we've faced in our lifetimes and the measures being taken to respond to it reflect that. We're staying at home, staying safe and protecting each other.

As Scotland's Communities Secretary, I want you to know how much we value your contribution to Scotland's community response. As we respond to covid-19 together I want to be in regular touch to let you know how that effort's going, and what kind of difference you, our volunteers, are making.

Across the country, hundreds of voluntary and community groups are coordinating folk picking up shopping, delivering meals and dropping off medicines, providing advice on critical issues like money worries, and, sometimes just as importantly, keeping in touch with people who might be vulnerable or lonely – offering a friendly voice and a listening ear. And volunteers have signed up to help in record numbers through the Scotland Cares initiative – over 53,000 in one month— joining the thousands of people who were already helping, either with one of Scotland's many voluntary and community sector groups or informally with neighbours.

For those of you who may have volunteered but not yet been asked to carry out any specific tasks, I would also like to say thank you. We're still all being advised to stay at home apart from the essential exemptions, so – in addition to the vital short-term, practical help I've just described – you are making a big difference by following that advice. But when the lockdown restrictions start to ease, we're going to need people in the weeks and months that follow to help renew and build our communities back up again.

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So what volunteers do will change over the coming months. We're working closely with a wide range of other organisations and groups up and down the country, including Volunteer Scotland and the British Red Cross, to offer you opportunities to help where needed, to support you all and make sure you have what you need. As the weeks go on, we will continue to support you in any way we can.

We will get through this by working together and the First Minister and all of us in the Scottish Government are very grateful to you for your personal part in that.

Best wishes,



AILEEN CAMPBELL

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