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# Communities are key to improving and protecting public health

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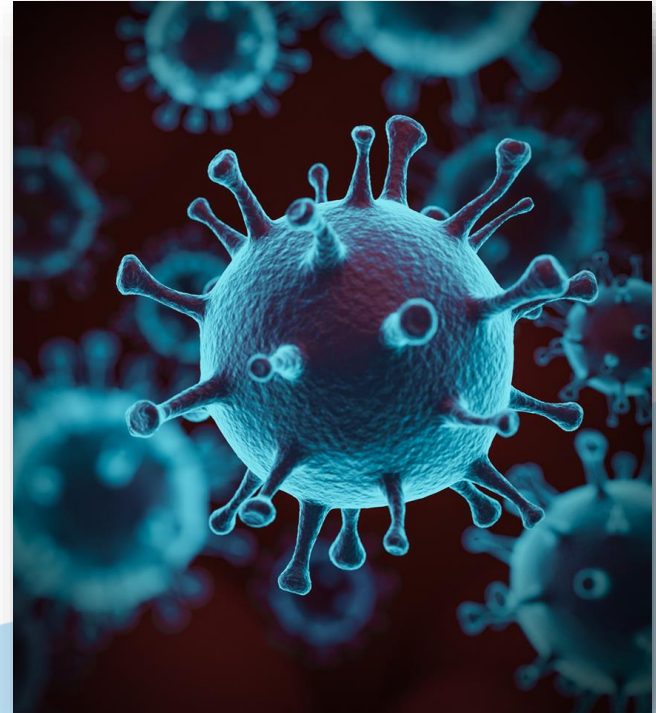
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# COVID-19 pandemic

Over 45,000 deaths in the UK directly attributable to COVID-19

As of 29 October

- 45,955 deaths across the UK
- 4,482 deaths in Scotland
- And we now have the highest number of cases since the pandemic began



# Pre-pandemic

- Scotland faces severe health inequalities such as:
  - Deprivation
  - Homelessness
  - Drug and alcohol dependency
  - Stalling life expectancy
- Rising rates of child poverty
- These inequalities have been exacerbated by austerity



# Impacts of COVID-19 that will hit communities

- Further waves of COVID-19 will result in
  - Increased self-isolation for some
  - Reduced earnings and growing unemployment
  - Increased homelessness
  - Poor mental health
  - Increased deaths



# The importance of voluntary and community assets



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As Voluntary Organisations you have demonstrated your ability to...

- Engage with communities at a time of need
- Tackle problems and reach solutions
- Attract volunteers to extend the reach of your organisations



**You are a big part of the solution**

# Why are voluntary organisations so important?



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Because they...

- Are trusted and well connected to the communities they serve
- Can be more responsive to the needs of local populations
- Are very efficient and cost-effective



# What the people of Scotland deserve



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The voluntary health sector supports people in Scotland in their basic rights to...

- Have a chance of a fair life – not one impacted by place of birth
- Good access to education
- Not to have to live in poverty
- Be treated with respect and kindness

This is what the voluntary sector does so well, and I congratulate you for all you do for the people of Scotland





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Thank you!

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