



## **Coronavirus | Joint message from Unison, Unite, GMB and SBC**

Colleagues,

We are currently facing challenges which are unprecedented in modern times.

The spread of the Coronavirus, with the signs that this will widen, together with the restrictions placed on everyone, both workwise and socially, has placed a large burden on everyone, and particularly on Council employees.

We recognise and appreciate your efforts to continue providing our vital services at this time.

We appreciate that you will have your own anxieties and concerns, whether on your own behalf or for family members, and that this is a time in which contact with family and friends is severely reduced.

That you continue to provide such a high standard of service is worthy of the highest praise.

You have already had to adjust to new and unfamiliar ways of working, and as the situation develops things will continue to change.

This means that we will all have to be flexible to ensure services continue to be provided. This may mean working in a different way or in a different role.

We need to keep essential services running for the safety and welfare of the most vulnerable in our community.

This means that you may be asked to work in one of these services as the situation develops.

We are currently asking for volunteers to assist with care provision for Care at Home and Residential Care, Catering, Cleaning and Laundry services and Delivery Driving.

Our primary concern is for the health and safety of both you as employees and of service users.

We, the Council and the recognised trades unions, are working together to ensure workplaces are as safe as possible.

During this time, meetings between union representatives and Council officers are being held by conference call twice a week, and there is additional contact on a daily basis as issues arise.



You will only be asked to carry out a role different from your usual when you have received any required training.

We will continue to follow the latest health guidance, and will provide appropriately safe systems of working and safety equipment.

While we will use our very best efforts to have as many supplies as possible, it should be recognised that current circumstances mean that some may be unavailable for certain periods. We are making every effort to maintain supplies and deliveries are coming in on a daily basis.

However, your safety will not be compromised.

The Council's Health and Safety department is working with services in the development of risk assessments.

Everyone must follow the social distancing rules as far as possible while at work.

If you do have any concerns about safety please raise this with a manager, or with colleagues directly if you feel able to do so.

Advice is available from the HR Case Management Team: phone 01835 825015; e-mail: [askhr@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:askhr@scotborders.gov.uk)

We do face more challenging times ahead, but if you continue to show the enthusiasm and commitment you have to date, we can get through these together.

We are committed to the protection of employees' terms and conditions in these uncertain times. You will continue to be paid your contractual salary.

We would stress though that flexibility will be required to meet the challenges ahead, and you will be expected to take up alternative duties as required.

We appreciate the efforts people have made so far and do not doubt this will continue.

Your efforts are not just appreciated by us but by the people of the Borders.

Regards,

Unison, Unite, GMB and SBC