BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL

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Dear Annemarie Plas,

I am grateful for you for creating the clap for the NHS movement. During the coronavirus pandemic, death rates were rising exponentially and draconian measures were implemented by the government in the form of a lockdown. This resulted in a wide range of negative consequences such as a strain on the NHS and the rapid escalation of the mental health crisis.

The NHS has suffered decades of spending cuts, the coronavirus unfortunately highlighted this. With efforts focused on preventing the spread of the virus, other areas of healthcare were neglected. This meant that doctors and nurses were left to make difficult decisions, for example, delay in chemotherapy or other life lengthening treatments. The clap for the NHS brought an air of positivity to the healthcare providers who were left in dangerous circumstances with a lack of PPE. This increased their determination in working full hours, isolating from their families and saving lives to get us through this crisis.

The lockdown has had a dramatic effect on the mental health of all ages. School children are missing out on months of education, visiting their friends and sporting activities. Middle aged people are missing out on experiencing their normal work environment and seeing their colleagues. Older people are fearful for their lives as they are most affected. It is negatively impacting their mental health as it has damaged their social lives due to two metre distancing, facemasks hiding emotion, and the rule of one household. The news has only shown fear and anxiety throughout this, however the 'Clap for Carers' saw neighbours open their doors and joyfully clap and cheer to celebrate all the NHS has done. This brought back some human interaction and let them see it positively.

I am grateful to you for creating the clap for the NHS movement. It has helped mental health and to motivate the healthcare professionals, as well as to inspire more movements.

Thank you.

Zoe

Zoe Walker, Year 10