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The word 'unprecedented' has been used a lot to describe the times we are living in as we seek to cope with the challenges posed by this pandemic. And this unprecedented situation requires unprecedented action from government to do what we can to support our people and communities as best as we can.

That is why I announced a £350m funding package in March, that would help support the most vulnerable in society and also support our partners in local government, third sector, social enterprises, and community groups.

In amongst the challenge however, what has gladdened my heart has been the tremendous effort of individuals, groups, and organisations found across Scotland who have stepped up to do their bit. We've seen over 75,000 people register to volunteer and help communities and public services during the Covid-19 pandemic, we've seen organisations refocus and reprioritise what they do to help, and we've seen countless acts of kindness and compassion all motivated to ensure folk are looked after and supported.

And that same agility and action is visible through Social Enterprise Reset Week. It's a fantastic initiative to provide a platform to bring together the knowledge, skills, and experience of the social enterprise sector to help support each other.

I've no doubt that now more than ever, this mutual and peer support is critical to help social entrepreneurs navigate the ever changing landscape around us.

From the small, local social enterprises that contribute throughout Scotland, to our larger social enterprises, that deliver both Scotland-wide and internationally, our social enterprises are well placed to be at the forefront to help us get through this current crisis. More importantly, you will also be crucial to help Scotland look to the future to not just recover, but to renew, reform and rebalance to enable our communities and country to emerge through this guided by the principles of fairness and equality.

I would like to take this chance to thank you all for the work you have done and continue to do. These are challenging and uncertain times which makes our strong relationships and ability to work together all the more important.

Stay well, stay safe and stay in touch and let's work together to build the fairer Scotland we all seek.

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