

Impact of Covid-19 on our BAME (Black, Asian and Minority ethnic) Communities and Colleagues

During Covid-19 many issues have come to light which we did not anticipate at the beginning of this pandemic, particularly in relation to the disproportionate impact of the virus on our BAME communities.

National Response

We are aware of a number of developments which are happening at the national level including an NHS England programme of work which will detail a system response to the impact of Covid-19 on our BAME workforce. NHS England have contacted all NHS Trusts this week setting out requirements to undertake enhanced risk assessments to support staff placements during Covid-19.

Prerana Issar, Chief People Officer for NHS England has met with BAME Network Chairs and a select number of Trust Chairs this week, to understand the lived experience of BAME staff during Covid-19. In addition Public Health England will be publishing guidance in May 2020 regarding an inquiry into Covid-19 and its impact on BAME communities. This enquiry will be led by Professor Kevin Fenton, Public Health England (PHE) National Director for Health and Wellbeing.

Keys issues faced by BAME Workforce:

- BAME staff have been identified as being at higher risk of contracting Covid-19
- Ensuring access to vital PPE for BAME staff who may be at risk and potentially more vulnerable to contracting Covid-19
- BAME staff are less likely to feel safe speaking up about safety issues
- BAME staff could be vulnerable to increased incidents of racial harassment particularly staff of East Asian descent

Key issues faced by BAME Patients

- Overrepresentation in ITU – BAME patients make up 35% of ITU occupancy nationally, but represent only 14% of the population UK population
- Ensuring BAME communities whose first language is not English have access to Covid-19 information in their chosen language
- Potential indirect impact on BAME communities of clinical service changes for particular conditions e.g. diabetes, cardiovascular services
- Existing health inequalities experienced by BAME communities being compounded as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic

Organisational partners within the LLR System should ensure that line managers are supported to have thorough, sensitive and comprehensive conversations with their BAME staff. They should identify any existing underlying health conditions that may increase the risks for them in undertaking their frontline roles, in any capacity. Most importantly, the conversations should also, on an ongoing basis, consider the feelings of BAME colleagues, particularly with regard to their safety and their mental health. Managers should also seek and follow occupational health advice where appropriate.

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) System Response

Once we received a national steer as set out above, we will be developing our system response. Our LLR system EDI Taskforce will then work through how we can consistently implement any recommendations, and or policy changes across our system.

Insert your organisational sources of support here. For example

UHL Response

Our acting Chief Executive Officer Rebecca Brown has written to all BAME staff to provide reassurance that the health, safety and wellbeing of all of our staff including BAME colleagues is key priority for the Trust. In her letter Rebecca has set out a number of actions which the Trust is taking to ensure the health and wellbeing of BAME staff and highlighted opportunities for BAME staff to raise concerns and access support.

The letter from Rebecca Brown to all UHL BAME staff and additional information on where to access support is available on our EDI INsite pages.

We want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all staff for how you have responded to the challenge we are facing. You are making a real difference for our patients and service users from diverse communities. Keep well and stay safe.