

21 May 2020

Dear Colleague

Our response to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME people in Sussex

We are writing to update you on an important piece of work taking place across the Sussex Health and Care Partnership (SHCP) in response to the emerging evidence of a disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities.

A recent analysis by the Office of National Statistics has shown that the risk of death involving the coronavirus among some ethnic groups is significantly higher than that of those of white ethnicity. When taking into account age in the analysis, black males are 4.2 times more likely to die from a COVID-19-related death and black females are 4.3 times more likely than white ethnicity males and females. People of Bangladeshi and Pakistani, Indian, and Mixed ethnicities also had a statistically significant raised risk of death involving COVID-19 compared with those of white ethnicity. When fully adjusted for other factors, the model showed Black males and females are 1.9 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than the White ethnic group. Males of Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnicity are 1.8 times more likely to die; for females, odds of death are reduced to 1.6 times more likely. Individuals from the Chinese and Mixed ethnic group have similar risks to those with White ethnicity.

You can see more details of the emerging evidence here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronavirusrelateddeathsbyethnicgroupenglandandwales/latest>

This is something that we are taking extremely seriously and we are working closely with national, regional and system partners to ensure that immediate and long term action can be taken to support those at increased risk.

At a national level an inquiry is taking place to understand the situation and across Sussex we have launched a significant rapid response programme to enable us to collectively take urgent action. This is being led by Lola Banjoko, Executive Managing Director for Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group.

The programme is based on national guidance and focusses on staff in all health and care settings as well as patients and communities in the Sussex. It will bring together the NHS Trusts, GPs, and local authorities as well as the voluntary sector and local community to address this very important situation.

We have developed a system-wide programme plan and some of the immediate actions we are taking include:

- Revising our risk assessments for all health and care staff to ensure that risks associated with ethnicity are taken fully into account;

- Refresh communications and engagement with BAME staff and communities to ensure culturally appropriate information on COVID-19 prevention and management is reaching the right people at the right time;

We will also be undertaking work to engage and listen to our BAME health and care staff and communities in Sussex, which includes a range of future events.

Further information on the broader programme and action plan can be found at <https://www.seshealthandcare.org.uk/priority/supporting-bame-communities-during-covid-19/>. If you would like to directly contact the programme please email sxccg.bmedisparityresponseprogramme@nhs.net

Thank you for your ongoing support and we hope you are able to actively be involved and champion this important piece of work.

Yours faithfully,

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