



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

REPORT

COVID-19 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Socio-economic Sub Group Report: Welsh Government response

Our response to the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic COVID-19 Socio-economic Sub Group's report and recommendations.

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there has been interest in the Tool from across other areas of the UK.

The generic version of the **Welsh Workforce Risk Assessment Tool** is suitable for other workplace settings.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Effective supplies of suitable quantities of PPE are essential to protect the workforce in conditions where the risk of COVID-19 infection cannot be mitigated in other ways. The report of the Socio economic Sub Group emphasised the need to ensure sufficient PPE was available both now and for the future.

The NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) supply PPE to the NHS and social care sectors in Wales, as well as to GPs, optometrists, dentists and pharmacies. PPE has been provided free of charge to social care providers in Wales. Significant work has been done during the pandemic to try to ensure there is a robust and secure supply of PPE across Wales. This includes working with employers and Trade Unions in social partnership to provide transparent evidence about the supply of PPE equipment, report regularly on the availability and usage rates of a range of PPE equipment and discuss any concerns raised by the workforce. These mechanisms will continue during the winter to maintain confidence about the supply of PPE to the workforce.

Support and advice

In the report there is a call for more mechanisms for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to access advice and support. These include recommendations around establishing staff networks, supported by Trade Unions as well as helplines for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to seek information, advice and support on matters of concern in confidence. EYST, working in partnership with Women Connect First, Henna Foundation, ProMo Cymru, Wales TUC, and key Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic stakeholders has received funding from the Welsh Government via the Voluntary Services Emergency Fund managed by

Within the context of the NHS it was noted in the recommendations that data in general is poor and not transparent. We agree it is important to use innovative techniques including data linking to help improve the quality of data available on the population disaggregated by different characteristics. Through the Administrative Data Research Unit and the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) Databank we will explore ways to link data on outcomes to enable this. This will involve exploring the specific data sharing arrangements to understand any limitations and how these can be addressed. We have secured access to the 2011 Census to support our ambitious linked data research agenda. This needs to be done alongside work to improve the quality of the administrative data held, and with the commitment of UK government departments to share administrative data that will help us understand the outcomes of different population groups.

We also recognise that a health and social care workforce that reflects the population it serves will help to support better health outcomes and deliver more effective services. Understanding the experience of the workforce from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background will enable us to tackle issues that may result from direct or indirect discrimination and data collection is an important foundation for this work. Collection of information on ethnicity within the NHS staff records has improved very significantly in recent years and we will continue to encourage all staff to complete their records to enable us to better identify and tackle any differential experience across the workforce.

The recording of births and deaths is a reserved matter for the UK Government. The information currently recorded in a death registration (and subsequently on any certified copies (certificates) issued) is prescribed by law; and there is currently no provision to record ethnicity in a death registration.

Apart from in coronial cases, the personal information recorded in a death entry is supplied by a qualified informant who is usually, but not always, a member of the deceased's family. The medical cause of death is provided by a medical practitioner.

In addition to the information shown in the record, statistical information is collected and provided to the Office for National Statistics, which has the responsibility of confirming, analysing and publishing statistics relating to deaths

Health and social care

The Report asks the Welsh Government to undertake a review of existing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people's health and social care in partnership with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, organisations and patients to evaluate appropriateness of services to improve future delivery and reduce health risks for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people. The Chief Medical Officer for Wales has already had an initial review of the evidence on the disproportionate effects of Covid-19 and the wider underpinning health inequalities affecting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities that can drive this work. We are committed to developing this work and working with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups to consider its findings and what may be done to drive service and health outcome improvements.

Within the NHS in Wales there are policies in place to support individuals to raise concerns in the workplace and to address issues where they have experienced bullying and harassment. The work of the Socio Economic Group suggests that the lived experience of some Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members of the workforce means that these policies are not fit for purpose, and individuals may not feel confident to use the policies for fear of negative consequences. This is clearly unacceptable and we will work with Social Partners and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members of the workforce to explore this evidence and take coordinated action across NHS Wales to implement the recommendations of the Group designed to tackle these experiences.

Communications

The Report recommends that we should develop a clear multi-channel communications strategy for health and social care which identifies effective channels to disseminate information and includes funding for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic targeted outreach and consultation activities. Reflecting this recommendation we have formed a cross-government group to develop a communications strategy which includes health and social services but also

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wider policy areas to ensure greater joined-up thinking. Following recently-completed insight work and stakeholder channel mapping, the next steps will be to develop an integrated strategy with key messages and a forward look media plan based on key milestones.

The Welsh Government's Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) programme has developed a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Outreach Plan to be delivered by Health Boards in Wales. This will have outreach workers engaging directly with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and communities.

Work is well underway to develop materials in appropriate formats to be used across social media channels that can be shared with trusted intermediaries for disseminating to community groups. For example, the Test, Trace, Protect programme has engaged with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic stakeholders and produced materials in a wide range of community languages to ensure that there is wide access to information that is essential to safeguard communities, including those from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background. We are developing further multilingual campaign assets for Test, Trace, Protect and are also working on the launch of the new NHS COVID-19 app with UK Government teams, on multilingual and diversity stakeholder mapping and developing assets on how to use the app in 11 different languages. A community outreach toolkit has been developed to present the important test, trace, protect information and to encourage community leaders, third sector organisations and others to understand the key messages and address concerns on issues such as surveillance, immigration and scamming, and circulate these within their communities. This will be followed by a range of community outreach materials, such as a film delivering the main TTP messages.

Communications on “Keep Wales Safe” have been translated into 36 languages. **Multilingual Keep Wales Safe leaflets** are available.

The Report also advises that we should monitor health and social care communication strategies to assess the effectiveness of reducing cultural and language barriers and increasing the uptake of screening and health promotions from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people. Public Health Wales has a Screening Engagement Team who engage with communities to improve access to and uptake of screening. We have highlighted the recommendations from this

The TfMH plan also commits to improving data on mental health through the introduction of the Mental Health Core dataset. This includes to capture information on ethnicity. The new data set for s135 to 136 detentions developed by the Mental Health Crisis Concordat Assurance Group was implemented in April 2019 and includes data on ethnicity. The data is published on Stats Wales.

We are also revising the TfMH delivery plan in response to COVID-19. This will include ensuring closer alignment with the Race Equality Action Plan and actions to strengthen engagement with groups disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 in order to improve awareness and access to mental health services.

Employment and disproportionate Socio-economic impact

The Report called for the Welsh Government to take action to monitor and mitigate where possible the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus pandemic and likely recession on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people.

The Welsh Government is working with Working Wales on its online Job bulletin. Working Wales will offer advice and guidance to individuals in supporting them to find relevant jobs. Also we are liaising with the Department of Work and Pensions on their job help and employer help websites and promoting these through the Skills Gateway for Business.

To support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people specifically we are working with DWP Job Centres and Working Wales to organise jobs fairs in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to highlight the opportunities and employability support available.

Three Regional Employment Response Groups (RERG) have been established with the aim of protecting and supporting employers, workers and communities affected by local labour market changes, resulting from COVID-19. They will provide an oversight of the labour market by reporting on and responding to redundancies, increased unemployment levels and NEETs. The Groups will receive high level data, concentrating on the number of redundancies in the

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region. They will also focus specifically on the employability issues facing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people.

The membership of the Regional Response Groups includes employer organisations, Trades Unions, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Regional Skills Partnerships, Public Health Services, Careers Wales, Community representatives and Welsh Government Employability officials and Chief Regional Officers.

Ensuring equality of opportunity and broadening access to apprenticeships is a key priority in our apprenticeship policy. Since 2016 a Champion role, now called a Strategic Equality and Diversity Lead (SEDL) works with the network to drive-up the sector's commitment to increasing the participation of individuals from protected groups on to an apprenticeship. The current SEDL was a member of the Socio-economic Sub Group.

The SEDL is developing an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and a suite of actions in conjunction with Work-Based Learning providers to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to access apprenticeships, for example hosting targeted events for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people to promote apprenticeships. It will also include amongst other things online events that will target Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, delivered in conjunction with third sector organisations and employment support agencies. All apprenticeship programmes support both the private and public sector.

New recruitment incentives being introduced will stimulate hiring of young people 16 to 24, and support apprentices made redundant as a result of the COVID-19 crisis to secure new employment to continue learning. These incentives will include support for young people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

A list of all businesses that have received government support is available.

A breakdown of investment is provided by local authority, although for reasons of commercial confidentiality the Development Bank for Wales (DBW) does not publish names of businesses receiving loans or the related value of those loans.

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