



Derbyshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

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4 May 2020

Dear BME colleague

There has been much in the press recently about the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on members of BME communities in the UK. Over the last few weeks we have heard this very understandable worry emerging amongst BME colleagues in our Organisation. As part of Team Derbyshire Healthcare, we understand that this is worrying, and we want to do all we can to ensure you feel safe and supported during this difficult time.

NHS England has launched an inquiry to understand why people from BME backgrounds appear to be disproportionately affected by coronavirus. These findings have not yet been shared however in Team Derbyshire Healthcare. While we await these findings, we are taking the following steps to protect you and your families, and to ensure you have the opportunity to specifically share with our BME Network colleagues and senior Executives how you are feeling at this difficult time:

What works best for you

Your manager will be helped and enabled to support you. We are asking all managers to have a conversation with BME colleagues to carry out an individually based risk assessment. We have updated our risk assessment which supports managers with these conversations to ensure they understand the concerns and needs of our BME colleagues and their families. We encourage you to feel confident discussing any concerns you may have about COVID-19 and the impact on you and your family with your managers. This will enable us to create, with you, a specific plan relating to your work environment that keeps you and your family as safe as possible. We would like to extend this conversation and risk assessment to colleagues who live with members of our BME communities, but may not be from a BME community themselves, and we would be grateful if those colleagues could make themselves known to their line managers as well. We have heard from BME colleagues some concerns about their pay if adjustments to where they work are made. As with all colleagues working in our Trust, if you need to have any adjustments made to your work as a result of the risk assessment, we would like to reassure you that this will not affect your pay.

An ongoing discussion

It is important that we have a specific opportunity set up regularly for colleagues from a BME background to ask questions and share their experiences, worries and concerns. To this end we have set up a weekly 'open' BME Network session. This session will be led by the Chair and Vice Chair of our established BME Network and will support honest and open discussion about your worries and concerns, as well as signposting attendees to where information might be available. You do not need to be a member already to attend. The BME Network will then, via a steering group, meet with the CEO, Deputy CEO and Inclusion Non-Executive Director on a weekly basis to share network feedback, ask questions on the network's behalf, and hold the Board to account for agreed actions. The BME Network dates have been shared with all staff who are registered on the BME Network circulation list. If you are not on that list, and want to be, please contact clare.meredith3@nhs.net. The first three sessions are being held on different days and times to see what works best for members. Initial dates and times are as follows:

- Wednesday, 6 May at 15:00
- Thursday, 14 May at 13:00
- Friday, 22 May at 09:00

We recognise that not everybody might feel comfortable in attending one of these sessions, however we are still keen to hear your views, so please email any comments/concerns or worries to:

sharon.rumin@nhs.net	Chair BME Network
bal.singh@nhs.net	Vice Chair BME Network
rubina.reza@nhs.net	Workforce Race Equality Expert
tracey.davidson@nhs.net	Workforce Race Equality frontline practitioner rep
clairewright4@nhs.net	Deputy CEO/Inclusion Lead
ifti.majid@nhs.net	CEO/BME Network Exec Sponsor
clare.meredith3@nhs.net	Network support

We recognise that not everybody may be able to get access to Microsoft Teams. Colleagues in our Network are going to look at finding as many alternative ways to get feedback as possible. A good example of this is that we have a WhatsApp group. If you would like to join this group, please contact Clare Meredith on the email above.

Staff Testing

We have a very robust process associated with staff testing already in place, and as part of that we will support and enable all BME colleagues who report potential COVID symptoms to get a test within 24 hours. You will be aware that this is the approach we are taking with all Colleagues in our Trust, however if this changes

BME colleagues will remain on our priority list. This also applies to any of your family members who live with you (who are also in the first five days of symptoms).

How absence is treated

As with all colleagues working in our Trust, if you need to take sick leave due to COVID-19 related illness, we can reassure you that this will not affect your job role or future progress and it will not be counted towards repeat sickness episodes. Please do not hesitate to report any symptoms that concern you and ensure you are tested to protect yourself and your family. We will ensure that you have regular follow up and contact with your line manager, if you are on sick leave related to COVID-19, or need to isolate due to a family member with symptoms. We want to make sure that you are safe and well-supported during this difficult time.

Your wellbeing is very important

We have heard that many BME colleagues are understandably worried about their own and their families' health at this time. We have asked Jamie Broadley, our wellbeing team lead, to link in with our BME Network to agree with them the best way to develop bespoke wellbeing support for BME colleagues and to remind them of the wellbeing support already available through the Organisation.

Keeping your records up to date

It would really help us if you could ensure, through ESR (electronic staff record), that your personal details including your ethnicity, are up to date, as this will enable us to very closely monitor the variance between colleagues from different ethnic backgrounds who become unwell with COVID-19. Our BME Network will monitor this information and it will allow us to act quickly as any local trends emerge.

We look forward to receiving ongoing feedback from conversations at the virtual BME Network and, as that conversation shapes our support offer, and as national guidance changes or clarifies, we will ensure you are kept up to date.

As we have often talked about in our Organisation, ensuring that we value all colleagues and actively seek out diverse views, beliefs and ideals, is central to our people first culture. You are a vital part of Team Derbyshire Healthcare and we would like to take the opportunity to thank you for all your effort, motivation and commitment during this very difficult time.

Please be assured that your health and wellbeing is our highest priority.

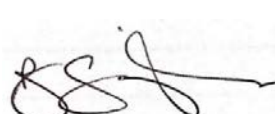
With best wishes



Ifti Majid
Chief Executive



Sharon Rumin
BME Network Chair



Bal Singh
BME Network
Vice Chair



Lee Fretwell
Staff Side Chair