



National Ambulance
BME Forum

Letter from the Chair of National Ambulance BME Forum (NABMEF) to Ambulance Service colleagues

11 May 2020

Dear Colleague,

Re: Supporting our BME colleagues in the Ambulance sector during the COVID-19 Pandemic

We will have all seen in the media the sad news about the disproportionate numbers of BME NHS staff that have sadly lost their lives to COVID-19. It is equally impacting on our communities in ways that we would never have imagined.

There has been a groundswell of concerns shared with senior leaders in the NHS to look into this further. These discussions are not just happening locally within our networks but are also taking place at the highest level within the UK and the devolved parliaments and assemblies. This is a system wide challenge and requires a system wide response.

There has been a hive of activity due to this concern, and I wanted to share some of the things that are happening as I'm aware that not everyone will be sighted on this. I have included a summary of some of these below:

- A government-ordered review is currently underway to investigate the links between ethnicity and COVID-19, which is being led by Public Health England. Public Health England will be analysing the data forensically as part of their review, but timescales for the outcome and recommendations of this work are not yet clear.
- [NHS Confederation shared a briefing on the 23 April 2020.](#)
'This briefing considers the evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and health and care staff. It explores potential underlying factors, recommends areas for improvement and offers practical advice on how to mitigate risks. Intended for senior health and care leaders, it aims to inform decision making and influence change.' For further information see the attached link.
- [NHS Employers issued guidance](#) last week about risk assessments for staff, including those from a BME background. The guidance also provides additional evidence to expand the risk assessment across the protected characteristics.
- [The Kings Fund](#) also issued a reminder by Professor Michael West on the need for compassionate leadership in this time of crisis and notes that;

“Now, more than ever, it is essential to focus on addressing these inequalities and to value the diverse staff who make up the health and care workforce by developing and sustaining inclusive and compassionate workplaces.”

In summary, the governments in the UK and the devolved nations have:

- ordered a review to take place of the data and evidence on the disproportionate impact,
- all have been asked to risk assess our BME workforce
- continue to ensure the safety of our people

The ambulance sector echoes these concerns and wants to protect its staff and look after their wellbeing. The NABMEF strongly recommends and expects that all Ambulance Trusts follow the guidance set out above.

The NABMEF’s role is to support the interests of BAME staff and patients in the ambulance sector and to influence and work with our HR Directors and Chief Executives nationally. As such, we have valued the joint discussions regarding this with the ambulance leadership community.

Each Trust will be making or has made contact with its BME workforce. I appreciate some colleagues may not want this; however there may be many others who do and are grateful for this support. We all have a choice and opportunity to seek as much or as little support as we need.

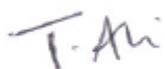
The NABMEF is keen for you to share with your organisations what will help you at this difficult time. Maintain the dialogue with your managers; ask for help when needed, ask others if they need help. This is truly a time for reflection and action.

We encourage you to seek out your local BME staff network leads or NABMEF representative for your Trust. They will be able to listen to your concerns and signpost you to appropriate help. If you are unsure of who this is, who can email me at Tasnim.ali2@nhs.net or visit our website <https://nabmef.uk/>. I’m also happy for you to email me directly regarding your experiences if you would prefer.

We have shared a number of COVID resources in multilingual and accessible format on our website. Please do access these and share with your communities.

Stay safe, stay well.

Kind Regards



Tasnim Ali

Chair of the National Ambulance BME Forum