

In recent COVID-19 messages, we have emphasised the importance of protecting and supporting our BME colleagues, the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 is having on certain communities, particularly BME communities. The importance of this work was stressed in [Sir Simon Stevens' letter last week to all NHS trusts](#).

As you will have seen in recent messages, our approach has been to develop a risk assessment template, in collaboration with the BME Staff Network. We are asking each BME colleague to **complete that risk assessment with their line manager** as part of a wider conversation about health and wellbeing.

If you line-manage a colleague who has confirmed they are of BME origin – or lives within a BME family or household – please provide your support with this process as soon as possible.

A series of suggested steps and recommendations is set out below. In addition, two **manager briefings** have been arranged through Microsoft Teams. These will be chaired by Ifti Majid, Chief Executive, and will seek to provide support to managers in preparing the risk assessment. Outlook invitations have been sent out for these two briefings, or you can click on the links below to join one of the briefings:

[Briefing 1: Tuesday 5 May, 9.30am to 10am](#)

[Briefing 2: Tuesday 5 May, 12.30pm to 1pm](#)

Please take the following steps and consider the following recommendations over the coming days:

1. Check that your BME colleague receives a letter from the Trust

On 4 May a letter is being sent to nearly 400 BME colleagues – primarily those who have recorded their ethnicity as being black, Asian or another minority ethnicity on the Employee Service Record (ESR) – explaining the approach that we would like them to take and the support that is available to them. If a BME colleague's ethnicity is not recorded on ESR, it is possible that they may not receive a letter.

If your BME colleague does not receive a letter before Wednesday (6 May), please ask them to update their personal details on ESR. This can be done by logging in to [MyESR](#) on a PC or smartphone – or if this is not possible, by emailing dhcft.esr.enquiries@nhs.net

2. Please arrange the conversation with your BME colleague

Now that the risk assessment document has been finalised, please start to arrange the date and time of the conversation.

Clearly the conversation doesn't have to take place face-to-face if you or your BME colleague are currently working from home or working in different locations. You may find that Microsoft Teams works best; a guide to [scheduling a meeting using Microsoft Teams](#) can be found on Connect.

If you do meet face to face, please follow social distancing guidelines and remain two metres apart at all times.

Please allow yourself and your BME colleague plenty of time for this conversation; we would recommend setting aside at least an hour.

3. Please study the risk assessment document before discussing it with your BME colleague

Please look over the risk assessment and ensure that you feel confident about how you will complete it with your BME colleague – always bearing in mind that this will be a two-way conversation and a collaborative process.

If you are unsure or would like to access further guidance, please join one of the manager briefings on 5 May, detailed above.

4. Please hold the meeting/conversation with your BME colleague as soon as possible and complete the risk assessment in an individualised way

It is very important that each risk assessment is personalised and based on the specific needs and circumstances of the individual BME colleague. The risk assessment document will help with this, by setting out different scenarios and the resulting recommended actions.

Based on the conversation, however, you may have further questions or areas that you wish to explore together before you complete the risk assessment. Possible teams and services that may be able to help you with this include:

- Occupational Health – uhdb.occhealth@nhs.net
- Wellbeing team – DCHST.Wellbeing@nhs.net
- Employee Relations – dchst.employeerelations@nhs.net

Above all, we would ask that you complete this process **in a compassionate and caring way**. For many BME colleagues this may be a difficult and worrying time, and they may be concerned about the outcome of this risk assessment process in particular. Please be sensitive in how you address this subject and carry out the steps described above.

Please follow the processes that result from the actions that are agreed – for example, notifying First Care if your BME colleague needs to be shielded and work from home. (See the [‘do I need to record an absence?’ document](#) for more guidance.)

If you have any general questions about this process, please contact the Incident Management Team’s workforce group led by Celestine Stafford: celestine.stafford@nhs.net

Thank you very much in advance for your support with this process.