

BAME staff working within Caretech Care/Supported Living Services

A published PHE report [“Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19”](#) recognises that there is evidence of wide disparity in deaths from COVID-19 amongst BAME people within the health and social care workforce. The disproportionate death rate is also reflected in the general population within the UK after taking into account age/gender and other socio-demographic characteristics.

Now, more than ever, it is essential to value the diverse staff who make up the health and care workforce by developing and sustaining inclusive and compassionate workplaces.

Particular groups of black and minority ethnic people have higher rates of long term conditions associated with COVID19 fatalities, such as high blood pressure and diabetes.

African Caribbean people have higher prevalence of high blood pressure, and South Asian people (particularly first generation) have higher prevalence of Coronary Heart Disease (British Heart Foundation). South Asian people are up to six times more likely to have Type 2 diabetes (Diabetes UK). African Caribbean, South Asian, and people of Mediterranean origin are also more likely to have Sickle Cell Disease, which is one of the conditions identified by the NHS as being at highest risk of mortality relating to COVID19.

Whilst there is no specific Government guidance for BAME staff working within social care settings there are a number of existing good practice guidelines which should be followed to mitigate risk within all Caretech settings.

IF any BAME staff member has any concerns, they should raise this with their line manager and where required complete the **COVID staff risk assessment**.

Other measures in place to support and protect BAME staff from physical and psychological harm are:

- Protection of staff (including returning staff), including improved risk assessments that specifically consider the physical and mental health of BAME staff.
- **PPE:** Appropriate PPE should be made available as a priority for all staff
- **Staff testing:** There is now a national testing process for England. It should be offered to all staff with consideration given to prioritising BAME staff and their families, as a means of identifying those who are infected and to rule out infections, to enable healthy staff to attend work.
- **Other infection prevention and control measures** like social distancing in all work areas including patient areas, staff areas and communal areas and hand washing as per national guidance need to be strictly maintained.
- **Psychological Safety:** We want to provide wellbeing support during and after the crisis. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities is taking a significant emotional toll – both personally and professionally. [CareTech-Wellbeing-Poster-APR-2020.pdf](#)
- We are aware that BAME staff may have an increased fear of raising concerns and our Freedom to Speak Up Guardian (FTSU) Amanda Sherlock (Amanda.sherlock@caretech-uk.com) is available to all, including BAME staff.
- Can we remind you of the CareTech Foundation www.caretechfoundation.org.uk who are fully aware of the huge strains on CareTech staff, their families and communities.

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Useful links:

<https://raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/health-care/coronavirus-information-and-resources/>

The Sickle Cell Society have produce advice and guidance for people with sickle cell disease during the coronavirus crisis: <https://www.sicklecellsociety.org/coronavirus-and-scd/> <https://mcb.org.uk/mcb-updates/coronavirus-guidance-for-mosques-and-madrassas/> <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/sikh-officials-announce-uk-coronavirus-17948715>

Public Health England advice in multiple languages: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance> <http://www.awp.nhs.uk/news-publications/publications/patient-information/translated/>