



ETHNIC MINORITY NATIONAL RESILIENCE NETWORK

**For the attention of Karen Reid, Chief Executive of Perth & Kinross Council,
and Drew Walker, Director of Public Health for NHS Tayside.**

RE. Emerging best practice in joint responses to COVID19 in Scotland's Minority
Ethnic Communities

cc: *Eastern Perthshire Elected Members*

Ward One Councillors – Alasdair Bailey, Angus Forbes, and Beth Pover

*Ward Two Councillors – Provost Dennis Melloy, Fiona Sarwar, Lewis Simpson and
Colin Stewart*

Ward Three Councillors – Bob Brawn, Tom McEwan and Caroline Shiers

***Scottish Government Race Equality Unit / COVID and Ethnicity Expert
Reference Group Secretariat – Hilary Third and Ian Turner***

Dear Ms. Karen Reid and Mr. Drew Walker,

Background

We are contacting you on behalf of the Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network (EMNRN). The network set up and coordinated by the Scottish Governments national Race Equality strategic intermediary partner BEMIS Scotland has been in place since March 2020 and comprises 86 community organisations, agencies and academics supporting and informing localised responses based on community intelligence to the social and health impacts of COVID19.

Detailed information about our strategic aims and objectives, membership and impacts thus far alongside previous newsletters outlining our work and service provision can be found here: <http://bemis.org.uk/emnrn/>.

Developing Perthshire Situation

EMNRN members are concerned to hear about the localised cluster of Covid cases in Perth & Kinross relating to the 2 Sisters factory in Coupar Angus. We are aware that many of the employees of the factory and its agency staff are members of minority ethnic communities, in particular Eastern Europeans. We write to offer our support to Perth & Kinross Council and Public Health Tayside as you navigate this challenging situation.

Need to engage expert trusted, local partners

As you will be aware, guidance from the Scottish and UK Governments and SAGE groups recommends making use of existing community groups and assets to tackle challenges related to localised outbreaks. In this instance, the EMNRN would like to encourage both Perth & Kinross Council and Public Health Tayside in the strongest terms to co-produce a response with PKAVS, who are the key organisation supporting minority ethnic communities in Perth & Kinross and an integral member of our network. PKAVS have strong ties with the local community in Perth & Kinross and are trusted by vulnerable and marginalised individuals to offer them support and information during difficult times.

In addition, PKAVS have the benefit of drawing from the expertise and experience from across minority ethnic communities in Scotland in responding to the social and health impacts of COVID19. For example, our experiences during full national lockdown 1 and in the further regional lockdown in Aberdeen is that priority areas include

- emergency sustenance support for families and individuals and
- bespoke, bilingual and multicultural counselling support led by BACP registered professionals.

PKAVS have been informed by the network, coordinated by BEMIS Scotland that these services are at their disposal should a multi-agency response in Perthshire require their integration to your work via our local partners PKAVS.

Their track record of communicating with local minority ethnic communities affords PKAVS a unique position in informing the response to this situation and providing information and reassurance to community members. PKAVS have offered proactive solutions to community challenges throughout the pandemic, including translating information and advice about Covid and sharing this in an accessible format for local communities; working with partners such as yourselves, local employers, and the local police to ensure understanding of the guidance; and providing practical support to hundreds of individuals who have found themselves in difficulties during the course of the pandemic.

As part of our human rights-based approach, EMNRN members collectively view the wellbeing of individuals and access to essential services as the absolute priority in situations such as these. We are certain that Perth & Kinross Council and Public Health Scotland share this view and look forward to hearing updates from PKAVS on the collaborative approach used in this instance.

Finally, we know this is an emerging situation and that best practice and learning is being developed on a day by day basis. As such we attach for your information the EMNRN recommendation responses to national expert reference group on COVID / Ethnicity in minority ethnic communities in the immediate, medium, and longer term.

Recommendations include the request that the Scottish Government and relevant regulatory bodies carry out spot checks on vulnerable factories and sectors in the

coming period to ensure that minority ethnic workers and others safety via individual risk assessments, PPE and social distancing measures are being adhered to.

In this regard we would welcome any learning you generate from the Couper Angus factory outbreak to be shared in order that it can be utilised to prevent such further scenarios occurring in Aberdeenshire, Dumfries and Galloway and other local authorities with similar minority ethnic employment demographics.

We thank you for your time in these regards, developing a mutually beneficial partnership in time ahead and look forward to supporting your multi-agency response via our local partners PKAVS in the weeks ahead.

Kind regards

Signed on behalf of the EMNRN

Danny Boyle (BEMIS Scotland Senior Parliamentary and Policy Officer / EMNRN National Coordinator)

Charmaine Blaize (Frontline Workers EMNRN Subgroup chair / UNISON Black Workers Committee)

19/08/2020