



ETHNIC MINORITY NATIONAL RESILIENCE NETWORK

Dear NHS Board

I am writing on behalf of the Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network (Scotland)¹ to ascertain key information on the following two questions in relation to your minority ethnic employees and their safety at work during COVID19

Request A

- 1) What is the ethnic diversity of your health boards employees disaggregated by Scottish census codes?
- 2) How many of these employees have been recipients of individual health risk assessments in line with new Scottish Government guidance on safety in the workplace in respect of COVID19²?

As has been established Minority Ethnic individuals and communities have been disproportionately affected by COVID19 both within the workplace³ and within the community⁴.

¹ The Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network (EMNRRN) was set up on Friday the 20th of March 2020 and is being coordinated by BEMIS Scotland. The network has 86 organisation members across Scotland.

Full network details and access to funding, counselling and other support available here: <https://bemis.org.uk/emnrrn/>The network is a collaboration of organisations who all fall within the scope of Article 1 International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination protections on the basis of colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin thus no exclusions are permitted on the basis of a racial characteristic or on the basis of communities immigration status.

The network includes long standing ethnic minority communities (Pakistani, Jewish, Irish, Indian, Polish and others) what are termed newer 'migrants' (Polish, Romanian, Roma, Asian and South East Asian, African [various] and others) and what are termed as asylum seekers, refugees and some organisations who support undocumented migrants. Our evidence indicates that all of these communities are facing challenges as a result of the social and medical impact of this public health crisis.

In addition, the network includes representatives of NHS frontline workers. Including the UNISON and STUC Black workers committees.

² COVID-19 Occupational Risk Assessment Guidance – Scottish Government – 27th of July 2020 – available here: <https://bit.ly/3alecYk>

³ <https://www.oxfordstudent.com/2020/06/05/why-are-so-many-filipino-healthcare-workers-dying/>

⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-53334624>

As such we are keen to ascertain that the disproportionate impact observed across England and Wales is being responded to appropriately within the devolved healthcare system in Scotland.

We note the publication of the '*NHS National Services Scotland Equality Mainstream and Workforce Data Report 2015 Supporting Scotland's Health*'⁵.

This report contains on Page 16. a useful disaggregation of the ethnic composition of Scotland's NHS staff. However, what cannot be ascertained is within which health board are these staff located and what are there up to date figures as of August 2020.

In light of the ongoing COVID19 challenges, in relation to which we extend our gratitude and respect to our NHS, we feel that it would be beneficial and prudent in light of existing and emerging evidence across the UK to provide a Scottish specific report on the experience of minority ethnic staff in Scotland's NHS boards.

Request B

The report should ascertain,

- 1) Have any Minority Ethnic⁶ NHS staff died as a result of COVID?
- 2) How many NHS staff contracted the virus at work and what was their ethnicity?
- 3) What is the current ethnic composition of the NHS staff under your board?
- 4) How many staff have received individual risk assessment to ensure that they are protected appropriately from exposure to the virus?

As such this communication contains two specific requests for information. Request A can be considered a Freedom of Information request if required.

Request B reflects a need for Scotland's NHS boards to conduct similar robust analysis of the impact of COVID within their employees to ascertain if there has or has not been a disproportionate impact on minority ethnic employees. The Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network subgroup on Frontline Workers believe that such a report would provide a highly beneficial evidence base not only for those frontline workers potentially affected but for Scottish society more generally to understand the multi-ethnic workforce striving to protect our citizens at this time.

We look forward to your response in due course and thank you for your continued diligence and professionalism.

Kind regards

Charmaine Blaize (UNISON Black Workers Committee and EMNRN Frontline Workers subgroup chair)

Danny Boyle (BEMIS Scotland / EMNRN Coordinator)

⁵ <https://nhs.uk/media/1742/equality-mainstream-and-workforce-data-report-2015.pdf>

⁶ The Equality Act 2010 defines Race as 'Colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin' – Thus for the purposes of our request this includes any ethnicity outside the White Scottish / British majority categories.