



The First Minister  
The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

18/08/2022

**Re. Taking action on cost emergency**

*CC: Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government  
Minister for Equalities and Older People*

Dear First Minister,

Since March 2020 BEMIS Scotland have been coordinating and facilitating the Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network<sup>1</sup> (EMNRN) in response to the significant challenges generated by the pandemic.

In response to the pandemic, we instigated an emergency sustenance grant support<sup>2</sup>, transition fund<sup>3</sup>, vaccine information fund<sup>4</sup>, tackling isolation and loneliness programme and free to access provision of culturally sensitive and multilingual mental health provision.<sup>5</sup>

The intelligence developed by members of the EMNRN across Scotland has been pivotal in informing local and national responses to the pandemic via the direct experience and perspective of diverse ethnic minority communities.

Thus, we are concerned to outline that the emerging cost of living crisis and rapid increase in inflation will have a significant and disproportionate impact on Scotland's ethnic minority communities. It is highly likely that these impacts will begin to be felt in October 2022 and continue at this stage at least until Summer 2023.

Those most likely to be significantly and disproportionately impacted are

- Those subjected to No Recourse to Public Funds (**Reserved**)
- The disproportionate number of ethnic minority people in precarious employment, zero hours contracts, small business holders and students. (**Reserved / Devolved**)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bemis.org.uk/emnrn/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://bemis.org.uk/emergency-sustenance-grant-scheme/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://bemis.org.uk/emnrn/transition-fund/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://bemis.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Vaccine-Information-Fund-Report-May-2022.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://bemis.org.uk/emnrn/counselling/>

- Asylum seekers and newly arrived refugee families and individuals (**Reserved / Devolved**)
- Elderly ethnic minority people (**Devolved**)
- Single parents and mothers (**Devolved**)

The likely disproportionate outcomes for ethnic minority people are

- People will struggle to feed themselves and their families
- People and families will struggle to keep warm leading to an increase in significant ill-health
- People will suffer significant mental health burden and trauma
- People will fall into significant and irretrievable debt affecting them and their children's life chances and future
- The most vulnerable through ill health and frailty may not get through the winter
- Isolation and loneliness will increase significantly

One of the complications we have identified in responding to the costs of living crisis and inflation in Scotland is that necessary interventions to alleviate the most acute impacts of the crisis reside across the Scottish and UK Governments.

- **In response we have convened a meeting of the national membership of the Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network on Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September from 10am – 12pm via Zoom.**

In the intervening period we will be liaising with members to identify areas of critical need and interventions required to respond to these.

We have also written to the UK Government to request relevant officials' attendance at this meeting to outline how they intend to respond to reserved areas of governance that will have a direct and disproportionate impacts on ethnic minority communities in Scotland.

Therefore, we request that relevant senior officials are made available in the run up too and to attend the EMNRN meeting on Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September to update members on the Scottish Governments response. We need to understand how the needs of ethnic minority people and communities across Scotland have been considered in our national planning.

Our experience informs us that specific interventions will be required, and we must begin to plan for these now.

In addition, we extend an invitation to relevant Cabinet Secretary or Minister to attend the meeting and engage directly with community organisations and members from across Scotland on our collective response to these emerging challenges.

Kind regards,

**Rami Ousta**, BEMIS Scotland CEO

**Danny Boyle**, BEMIS Scotland Senior Parliamentary and Policy Officer / National Coordinator of the Ethnic Minority National Resilience Network