

**FAO: All Primary Care BAME Colleagues**  
**Practice/HR Managers - for information and distribution to BAME staff members**

Sent by email  
15 May 2020

NHS Buckinghamshire CCG  
Study Centre, New County  
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Dear Colleagues,

As you will probably be aware, a concerning emerging theme is the reported potential impact of COVID-19 on BAME colleagues in the UK. We understand that this may therefore be a worrying time and we want to ensure BAME Primary Care colleagues feel safe and supported. This communication is intended to raise awareness for practice managers/partners (as employers) of what support can be offered to their BAME and other 'at risk' staff backed up by the wider PHE/NHSE national initiative.

At a national level an inquiry has been launched to understand why people from BAME backgrounds appear to be disproportionately affected by COVID-19. While we wait for these findings the following are steps below which can help protect you and your families.

In highlighting these requirements to you, we have considered national guidance: NHSE 1 May <https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/note-for-all-bame-colleagues-working-in-the-nhs/> as well as best practice from other NHS institutions both locally and nationally.

**1. Your Practice Manager/HR Manager (or other delegated staff) will be supported to support you to manage Covid19 related risks:**

National guidance is that BAME colleagues should be included in an occupational "high risk" category for COVID-19. As such, all Primary Care 'at risk' staff should be offered a risk assessment which includes discussions about existing underlying health conditions that may increase the risks of undertaking frontline roles, in any capacity. Please see NHS Employers guidance on risk assessing staff

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/covid19/health-safety-and-wellbeing/risk-assessments-for-staff>

We are awaiting publication of a national, validated BAME risk assessment tool to provide further support to Practice Managers when implementing staff risk assessments which we will share once available. However, on 12 May a national Risk Reduction Framework for NHS staff at risk of Covid-19 infection was launched <https://www.fom.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Risk-Reduction-Framework-for-NHS-staff-at-risk-of-COVID-19-infection-12-05-20.pdf> which provides further support for managers to have honest and sympathetic conversations with BAME and 'at risk' staff, to ensure they understand the concerns and needs of BAME colleagues and their families and to enable conversations about reasonable adjustments for staff in the workplace which support good health and wellbeing.

We therefore ask managers if not already completed to begin to have conversations with BAME colleagues, as they would for all colleagues who are within the high risk group using the frameworks identified above.

For PMs - Below is an illustrative staff risk assessment template which can be adapted for practice use.



BAME PC Risk  
Assessment template

**2. Occupational Health and Wellbeing support:**

Practices Managers/HR Managers are the first port of call for conversations about feelings of anxieties, particularly with regard to staff safety and concerns around Covid19 risk. They should also seek and follow occupational health advice where appropriate to help in decision making about any reasonable adjustments that may be needed in the workplace for BAME staff once they have been risk assessed. The CCG is also committed to considering the provision of extra OH support for practice managers if this is highlighted as being required within Buckinghamshire.

- 3. Support for staff/household testing:** There is currently capacity for primary care Covid19 symptomatic staff and their families to be tested at local sites at either Stoke Mandeville or Wycombe Hospitals in the first four days of the onset of symptoms. We encourage all BAME colleagues, or their family members with symptoms, to get tested as soon as possible. You will be put forward for swabbing through informing your Practice Manager/HR Manager on Day 1 of absence due to becoming symptomatic or of 14 day self-isolation (if a member of your household is symptomatic). PMs will request a test for you using the following form [GP Staff Covid-19 Swab Testing Request Form](#) and swabbing will aim to take place at the local site by Day 3 of symptoms.

If you have any queries about the local staff testing option please email: [bucksccg.pc.covid19.stafftesting@nhs.net](mailto:bucksccg.pc.covid19.stafftesting@nhs.net) directly.

There is also the option of government regional testing sites that can be used if preferred or more suitable. The nearest for Buckinghamshire are Thornhill Park and Ride, Oxford and Milton Keynes booked via the online portal - [detailed guidance for employers and employees about booking tests online at regional sites.](#)

- 4. Support if you are off work:** If you need to take sick leave due to COVID-19 related illness, this will not affect your job role or future progress. Please do not hesitate to report any symptoms that concern you to your Practice Manager/HR manager and ensure you are tested to protect yourself and your family. Practice Managers should ensure that you have regular follow up and contact if you are on sick leave related to COVID-19 or needing to isolate due to a family member with symptoms, or are shielding due to medical specialist advice.

**5. Support with PPE:**

NHS employers have a responsibility to ensure that staff has access to PPE appropriate to their clinical setting and needs as indicated by PHE national guidance. Practice Managers will be aware of the usual PPE order routes as well as the process for ordering emergency PPE stock as per PHE guidance, provided by the CCG. The CCG is working with ICS partners to structure an approach across BOB which will continue to ensure that appropriate PPE is offered in a timely manner to all Primary Care staff and which takes into account risk assessed BAME staff PPE needs.

For staff information the following online training has also been provided for Primary Care staff to show the correct PPE donning and doffing process for carrying out non aerosol Covid19 procedures – see PC Covid19 daily brief 07 April:

**Non aerosol Covid19 including don and doff of all PPE and surgical mask.**

[Video - Non aerosol Covid 19 including don and doff of all PPE and surgical mask.](#)

6. Finally, the CCG is committed to considering what further support could be offered to practice managers/partners to support their BAME and ‘at risk’ staff around Covid19 specific risks. Potential offers could include:
- Training for Practice Managers to use the national risk assessment framework/tools including how to consider its implementation mindful of staff sensitivities, HR/employment and equality and diversity requirements.
  - Provision of an external bespoke occupational health screening service for administering the BAME and ‘at risk staff’ risk assessment tool on behalf of practices.
  - Access to advice and counselling telephone support service for practice teams/staff members/family concerned about or having been negatively affected by Covid19.

With this in mind a simple survey monkey is attached with this communication, to all Practice Managers for an indicative interest in whether wider support is required to help them support the specific needs of their BAME staff around Covid19 risk. (Survey monkey link Ctrl and click)

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/6ZHHTVL>

For any further queries related to BAME staff risk assessment please email: [bucksccg.covid-19@nhs.net](mailto:bucksccg.covid-19@nhs.net)

Thank you very much for your contribution during this difficult time. We will continue to communicate any updates in guidance around the national initiatives and requirements as they are received. You are very valuable members of the primary care community; we are really grateful for your on-going commitment and hard work and for the support and understanding of your family.

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