



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

REPORT, DOCUMENT

COVID-19 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Socio-economic Sub Group Report: Welsh Government response

Our response to the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic COVID-19 Socio-economic Sub Group's report and recommendations.

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Foreword

Over the course of devolution, successive Welsh Governments have worked hard to reduce inequalities wherever they exist in Wales, we have made some progress, but in some areas inequality remains a stubborn stain on our society, blighting people's lives and life chances.

The coronavirus pandemic has thrown these deep-rooted inequalities into sharp relief, in particular those which affect members of the Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities here in Wales.

We continue to learn more about this new virus with every week and month that passes. What is clear is that coronavirus has had an adverse and disproportionate impact on people from BAME communities. In response to this, I set up the BAME COVID-19 Advisory Group under the leadership of Judge Ray Singh, with its two sub groups chaired by Professor Keshav Singhal and Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna. Professor Singhal's group examined the immediate risk to black, Asian and Minority Ethnic health and social care workers during the pandemic, which led to the development of the two-stage self-assessment Welsh Workforce Risk Assessment Tool. This is now in widespread use in the NHS and social care in Wales and has been rolled out in other workplace settings, helping to safeguard people's health and wellbeing.

Prof Ogbonna's group examined the socio-economic factors which contributed to this disproportionate impact. Its subsequent report highlighted the entrenched inequalities experienced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people which COVID-19 has highlighted in the most tragic and worrying of ways.

I am grateful to the BAME COVID-19 Health Advisory Group, and its two sub groups, for the work undertaken. I am equally grateful for the recommendations and actions undertaken to begin to address inequalities. Their insights, knowledge and continued leadership have been invaluable. I am pleased these

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groups have agreed to continue to meet and to advise and inform Welsh Government policy and decision making. The Socio-economic Sub Group has agreed to monitor the implementation of its recommendations and to be one of the key stakeholder groups informing the development of the Race Equality Action Plan for Wales.

Work to develop a Race Equality Action Plan is underway and will provide the foundation for bringing about systemic and sustainable change for Wales. It will be developed before the end of this Senedd term and will be achieved through extensive engagement and will be co-constructed with Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities, community groups and organisations.

The Socio-economic Sub Group's Report is a call to action and not only for Welsh Government. Organisational, societal and structural changes are needed. I call on leaders in Wales, at all levels, to pledge to do commit to positive and constructive action to drive racism and race inequality out of our country. I ask everyone to take a stand against inequality wherever and whenever they see it or experience it. I urge all leaders across all sectors in Wales to seek out the inequalities in their organisation and take action where they can to address them. We have to look carefully and honestly at the structures and systems in society, and consider where and how to bring about changes that benefit everyone in it and which will address inequalities of outcome and experience.

I am pleased we have been able to publish this response and progress update at this early stage as it responds positively to the recommendations of the Socio-economic Sub Group's Report.

This is a time for action and this government is committed to creating a lasting legacy for Wales where there is fair treatment and advancement for all.

First Minister

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Introduction

The First Minister's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) COVID-19 Socio-economic Sub Group's Report places race inequality in Wales in the context of COVID-19. It provides a clear framing of many of the issues we need to address and forms an important foundation for the Race Equality Action Plan.

Action in response to many of the recommendations is already underway, has been completed or commitment has been made by the Welsh Government to take further work forward. Many of the recommendations are to be captured within the priorities of the Race Equality Action Plan for Wales. Where responsibility is not devolved, we will continue to use every lever at our disposal to influence the UK Government to address those recommendations. We will build relationships at official level to ensure we are sighted on relevant issues and can effectively challenge where necessary.

This initial response to the Socio-economic Sub Group Report is not an exhaustive list of actions being undertaken but captures our progress so far against its recommendations. Progress will be revisited regularly as the Socio-economic sub- group continues to meet and as many of the recommendations become further developed and embedded in the Race Equality Action Plan.

With the support, advice and insights of the Socio-economic Sub-Group, the Welsh Government has taken immediate action to mitigate the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people.

These actions include:

- the development of the Welsh Workforce Risk Assessment Tool which was rolled out initially to health and social care settings. A version was adapted for education settings. More recently, a more general workplace version has been made available.

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- ‘Keep Wales Safe’ communications which are available in 36 languages.
- our communications campaign ‘Home shouldn’t be a place of fear’ aimed at providing information to those in lockdown with perpetrators about how to safely seek help, encouraging bystanders and concerned others to recognise the signs of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) and safely help victims to get support
- Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) services have been expanded to include the tracking app as well as work to establish Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic outreach workers within communities.
- taking forward, at pace, the Race Equality Action Plan by the end of this Senedd term.
- scoping a Race Disparity Unit which will be integral to pressing forward race equality in Wales and driving equality
- establishing the ‘Communities, contributions and cynefin: BAME experiences and the new curriculum’ working group to advise on and improve the teaching of themes relating to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and experiences across all parts of the school curriculum.
- as part of ‘Stay Safe, Stay Learning’ we have committed up to £3m as part of the Hwb EdTech programme, to support digitally excluded learners in maintained schools where there was no existing provision in place from their school or local authority.
- Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) is reviewing the mandatory equality training package and will undertake the revisions needed.
- we expect employers and employees to consider the working environment for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people more broadly than health workplace settings. We are examining across the Welsh Government how this can be undertaken effectively including the delivery of anti-racism training.
- EYST in partnership with other organisations (Women Connect First, Henna Foundation, ProMo Cymru, Wales TUC, and key Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic stakeholders) has received funding from the Welsh Government via

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the Voluntary Services Emergency Fund managed by WCVA to deliver a BAME advice helpline, initially as a six-month pilot project.

- taking forward the public appointments strategy, launched shortly before the pandemic. This has actions to address the under-representation of BAME and disabled people in public appointments including developing a high level leadership training programme for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and disabled people.

The list outlines some of the immediate actions that have been undertaken with more actions and more detail in the body of this document. The Report in its entirety has been accepted and the actions are either already being taken forward, completed or will be further developed in the course of the development of the Race Equality Action Plan for Wales.

The Deputy Minister and Chief Whip Jane Hutt MS, together with Welsh Government officials, have met with Lord Simon Woolley to establish the learning, outcomes and approach to consider plans for a Race Disparity Unit in Wales.

Progress update

Race Equality Action Plan

The recommendation to produce a Race Equality Strategy for Wales is being taken forward. We made a commitment to this in March 2020 with the clear signal that it would be in the form of an action plan, but underpinned by a clear strategy designed to address the structural and systemic inequalities experienced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people. The plan will include actions designed to bring about long-term, sustainable change for our society in Wales. Co-construction will be one of the central principles

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underpinning our approach.

Fundamental to co-construction principles is ensuring wide engagement and involvement of people with diverse experiences, knowledge and skills from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to develop shared objectives and actions to include in the Plan. We will be listening, learning and seeking to ensure the voices, experiences and ideas of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people are heard and captured in the development of this plan.

Work has already begun and a governance structure is being put in place. A community engagement grant was launched in August, inviting organisations that represent Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to bid to undertake work gathering views and insights from people across Wales. These will inform the priorities and actions that will be contained within the plan.

Over the past decade academics, race groups, and organisations have produced multiple research documents the experience of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in Wales and wider and recommendations for action on race equality. There have also been a number of official inquiries and reports which have done the same. A rapid review of this research has begun. The analysis of the reports will be overlaid with data about racial disparity across all policy areas. The emerging themes will be an integral part of forming areas in which we will co-construct objectives and develop actions as part of the action plan.

The current timeframe aims for a draft plan to go out to full public consultation by the end of this calendar year with a final plan developed by the end of this Senedd term.

It is not enough to just develop the plan. It will need clear, purposeful actions and direction in order to drive it forward. As part of the development of the plan, and recognised in the Ogbonna Report's recommendations, structures, resources and policies will need to be identified and implemented to ensure race

inequalities and systemic racism are not only effectively addressed but to ensure changes are embedded and sustained.

Welsh Workforce Risk Assessment Tool

The Risk Assessment Sub Group, chaired by Professor Keshav Singhal, was established rapidly once evidence emerged about the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on individuals from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background. The immediate priority for that group was to review all the emerging evidence about the risk factors and to develop a tool to help identify those individual at greatest risk of harm if they contracted COVID-19 and to identify ways to mitigate the risk. This was developed for the workforce in health and social care settings as these are where people were likely to be exposed more frequently and for longer periods of time to COVID-19 and where the nature of the roles mean social distancing measures are generally impractical.

The work of the Welsh Workforce Risk Assessment Sub Group to develop a tool to identify and mitigate risk was swift and effective. The Welsh Workforce Risk Assessment Tool uses Welsh Government guidelines, and the most up to date research, evidence and data available to identify known risk factors, in relation to COVID-19. It combines these factors into a scoring matrix to identify an individual's risk of harm from COVID-19 infection and then suggests actions that the individual and line manager can take to mitigate the risk. The Tool acts as a focus for conversations between the line manager and individual and supports employers to meet their statutory duty of care to their employees.

The Welsh Workforce Risk Assessment Tool is a live resource and is therefore subject to ongoing review and evaluation as the evidence base builds and we learn from implementation. All emerging evidence about COVID-19 impact and practical implications of implementing the tool will continue to be reviewed by the Risk Assessment Sub Group.

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The COVID-19 Welsh Workforce Risk Assessment Tool has been rolled out across health and social care with the support of the Risk Assessment Subgroup and Social Care implementation Group. The Tool is made available online through the national e-learning platform [Learning@Wales](#) which is compatible with screen reading and speech recognition software that will be beneficial to users with special requirements. An Easy Read version has also been developed and published. It is supported by an animation which describes how to use the Tool, this includes provision for subtitles. The Tool itself is available in English and Welsh. It is accompanied by guidance and FAQs developed in social partnership with NHS Wales Employers and Trade Unions to ensure it addresses discrimination and signpost to further support.

The implementation of the Tool is supported by a comprehensive communication plan for the health and social care sector and is integrated as part of a wider cross cutting communications strategy which continues to develop as it is rolled out wider.

The Welsh Workforce Risk Assessment Tool, guidance and FAQs have all been further revised to accommodate changes in Welsh Government Guidance for those who were shielding prior to 16 August.

We are monitoring use of the Tool and the practical impact of implementation on the workforce as whole. We will consider, as part of this work, any emerging evidence about how any mitigating actions applied following risk assessment may affect the individuals involved. We will take action in social partnership with employers, Trade Unions and members of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workforce if experience shows that implementation is resulting in any detriment to the workforce. This will include tracking concerns, for example, that individuals who may be moved from frontline duty or be re-deployed to a different area of low risk work could risk having their pay reduced or career prospects undermined.

We are working with NHS employers to implement the Tool nationally in a

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consistent way. Practically, this will include addressing any issues through the NHS Wales Social Partnership mechanisms such as regular monitoring of impact through organisations networks and regularly reviewing NHS employers COVID-19 workforce policies which are set out in their COVID-19 FAQs developed in social partnership with Trade Unions. The Social Care Forum, which is due to have its inaugural meeting in September 2020, will also be tasked with considering what steps should be taken to improve fair working conditions for the social care workforce in Wales.

Since this Welsh Workforce Risk Assessment Tool was first produced, the aspiration was for it to be flexible enough for it to be rolled out across other workplace settings in Wales. Considerable progress has been made on this work and the Tool, amended to suit the different context of different workplaces, is now in use in a number of setting outside health and social care. The Tool was referenced in guidance for the education sector to support the return of pupils to school for 29 June 2020. On 7 August 2020 an adapted version of the Tool and sector specific guidance for the education, childcare, playwork, youth work and further education sector was published. It has been made available for the Education, Childcare, Playwork, Youth Work and FE sector to complete online through the [Learning@Wales](#) national e-learning platform. Police forces in Wales have confirmed that they are using an adapted version of the Tool and there has been interest in the Tool from across other areas of the UK.

The generic version of the [Welsh Workforce Risk Assessment Tool](#) is suitable for other workplace settings.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Effective supplies of suitable quantities of PPE are essential to protect the workforce in conditions where the risk of COVID-19 infection cannot be mitigated

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in other ways. The report of the Socio economic Sub Group emphasised the need to ensure sufficient PPE was available both now and for the future.

The NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) supply PPE to the NHS and social care sectors in Wales, as well as to GPs, optometrists, dentists and pharmacies. PPE has been provided free of charge to social care providers in Wales. Significant work has been done during the pandemic to try to ensure there is a robust and secure supply of PPE across Wales. This includes working with employers and Trade Unions in social partnership to provide transparent evidence about the supply of PPE equipment, report regularly on the availability and usage rates of a range of PPE equipment and discuss any concerns raised by the workforce. These mechanisms will continue during the winter to maintain confidence about the supply of PPE to the workforce.

Support and advice

In the report there is a call for more mechanisms for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to access advice and support. These include recommendations around establishing staff networks, supported by Trade Unions as well as helplines for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to seek information, advice and support on matters of concern in confidence. EYST, working in partnership with Women Connect First, Henna Foundation, ProMo Cymru, Wales TUC, and key Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic stakeholders has received funding from the Welsh Government via the Voluntary Services Emergency Fund managed by WCVA to deliver the helpline, initially as a six-month pilot project.

The helpline will provide an accessible first port of call for information from a range of specialist, mainstream and community organisations, with call handlers speaking a range of community languages. It will link to existing specialist helplines and support provided by BAWSO, Welsh Women's Aid, the Wales TUC and others.

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Available from Monday to Friday, 10.30am to 2.30pm, those looking for help on a number of issues such as; employment and welfare, education, housing, personal safety and health issues can be referred or signposted to a range of mainstream and community organisations for advice and support.

Helpline number: 0300 2225720

SMS text: 07537 432415

Website

This helpline will provide an opportunity for increased partnership working amongst relevant organisations to meet the needs from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Ethnicity data

Meetings are taking place between officials from Welsh Government and the Cabinet Office Race Disparity Unit to establish learning, outcomes and approaches to inform plans for the development of a unit to identify and address race disparity in Wales.

The Welsh Government's statisticians drew together a range of analyses relating to the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group population in Wales across a range of topics for which data is available, highlighting areas where there are disparities by ethnicity which could lead to a disproportionate impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic on different communities. We are committed to continuing to assess what further data can be made available by ethnicity and how we can make data about race more accessible for users.

Within the context of the NHS it was noted in the recommendations that data in general is poor and not transparent. We agree it is important to use innovative techniques including data linking to help improve the quality of data available on

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the population disaggregated by different characteristics. Through the Administrative Data Research Unit and the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) Databank we will explore ways to link data on outcomes to enable this. This will involve exploring the specific data sharing arrangements to understand any limitations and how these can be addressed. We have secured access to the 2011 Census to support our ambitious linked data research agenda. This needs to be done alongside work to improve the quality of the administrative data held, and with the commitment of UK government departments to share administrative data that will help us understand the outcomes of different population groups.

We also recognise that a health and social care workforce that reflects the population it serves will help to support better health outcomes and deliver more effective services. Understanding the experience of the workforce from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background will enable us to tackle issues that may result from direct or indirect discrimination and data collection is an important foundation for this work. Collection of information on ethnicity within the NHS staff records has improved very significantly in recent years and we will continue to encourage all staff to complete their records to enable us to better identify and tackle any differential experience across the workforce.

The recording of births and deaths is a reserved matter for the UK Government. The information currently recorded in a death registration (and subsequently on any certified copies (certificates) issued) is prescribed by law; and there is currently no provision to record ethnicity in a death registration.

Apart from in coronial cases, the personal information recorded in a death entry is supplied by a qualified informant who is usually, but not always, a member of the deceased's family. The medical cause of death is provided by a medical practitioner.

In addition to the information shown in the record, statistical information is collected and provided to the Office for National Statistics, which has the

responsibility of confirming, analysing and publishing statistics relating to deaths within England and Wales. This does not currently include the ethnicity of the deceased, as ethnicity is self-declared. Collecting this information at the time of the registration places the responsibility for declaring the deceased's ethnicity on the informant, who may not be able or willing to provide such information.

The Deputy Minister and Chief Whip Jane Hutt MS has written to the Home Secretary on this matter several times. We understand that consideration of several options as to how best to collect and use ethnicity data has commenced and the Home Office has confirmed that the Welsh Government will be engaged in this work.

Training and development

It was recommended that the Welsh Government considers the training offer for employers and employees on the Equality Act 2010 to include anti-racist and cultural awareness training, and how it can be used to improve working environments for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people with comorbidities.

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) is reviewing the mandatory equality training package and will undertake the revisions needed. For NHS staff and broader public sector, there is training on the Equality Act 2010 and other equality and diversity learning currently available on the national [Learning@Wales e-learning platform](#). Diversity training and development forms part of the All Wales Induction Framework and qualifications required by social care workforce.

It is recognised that bespoke training is required for employers and employees to consider the working environment for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people more broadly than health workplace settings. We are examining across Welsh Government how this can be undertaken effectively, including the delivery of

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anti-racism training.

The Welsh Government's ethnic minority staff development programme is a structured and bespoke yearlong learning programme which includes networking sessions, strengths profiling, Future Engage Deliver (FED) leadership training, experiential face-to-face training, online learning, executive coaching and tailored Short Term Experience Programme (STEP) placements. Some of the members of that development programme have come forward to support the development and delivery of the Race Equality Action Plan.

Mentoring and coaching is on offer to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and they also reverse mentor senior staff in the organisation.

It was also recommended that the Welsh Government work with Welsh Police and Crime Commissioners to provide a unified standard of anti-racist training to raise awareness of cultural and racial sensitivities.

The First Minister and the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip alternate the chair of the Policing Partnership Board. At the next meeting the Socio-economic Report, its recommendations and the development of the Race Equality Action Plan are all items for discussion.

Participation and leadership in public life in Wales

Several recommendations within the Report relate to the need to address the representation and encourage further the engagement of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in public life in Wales.

The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for Public Appointments seeks to raise awareness of public appointment opportunities and the work of public bodies in

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Wales.

The Strategy has identified that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people (as well as other protected groups) are under-represented in public appointments and sets out a number of actions to tackle this issue including developing a high level leadership training programme for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and disabled people. We are actively engaging with people from protected groups and plan to set up mentoring and shadowing opportunities to help us to build a pipeline of candidates interested in applying for public appointments.

We are in the process of recruiting Senior Independent Panel Members to sit on the recruitment panels for significant appointments. We ran a targeted campaign aimed at attracting candidates from diverse backgrounds. We hope that having more diverse panels will result in more diverse appointments being made.

One of the actions included in the Strategy is to develop a package of training and development on diversity and inclusion for Chairs and Board members. The strategy also says that ‘senior civil servants, independent panel members and Chairs will receive training in fair recruitment practices.’

Finally, one of the Strategy’s five goals is to ensure we gather reliable, qualitative and quantitative data particularly diversity data. We are keen to improve our data collection of all protected groups, which includes ethnicity.

In terms of recruitment practices, Welsh Government is looking to procure a new online recruitment portal and, we have requested that the new portal includes the facility to allow name blind recruitment. All external senior civil service and apprenticeship recruitment is anonymised. Anonymisation on its own, does not go far enough and all members of recruitment panels are mandated to have complete equality and inclusion training as well as training in unconscious bias. We will use the levers at our disposal to increase the use of name blind recruitment across organisations in Wales.

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The Welsh Government has signed up to the Business in the Community Race at Work Charter. The Charter contains five calls to action, which the Welsh Government are already doing:

- appointing an Executive Sponsor for race
- capturing data and publicising progress
- ensuring zero tolerance of harassment and bullying
- making equality in the workplace the responsibility of all leaders and managers
- taking action that supports ethnic minority career progression

We are currently externally recruiting to multiple Senior Civil Service Deputy Director roles for the Welsh Government for which we have developed a detailed outreach plan. We are implementing a Wales-wide campaign focusing on recruitment at grade rather than role specific and are looking for people who can bring different lived experiences to our decision making, work effectively with Ministers and lead collaborative teams that will help change Wales for the better. The advert has stated we particularly welcome applications from women, Black and Minority Ethnic and disabled people in our Senior Civil Service and our commitment to supporting all staff to thrive in an inclusive working environment.

More broadly, we are setting stretching targets for the recruitment, retention and progression of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan which is currently being finalised.

The Welsh Government is undertaking a programme of “democratic renewal” primarily resulting from electoral reforms around the franchise for devolved elections. Educational resources and communication tools are being developed to support young people’s understanding of democracy and their right to vote from the age of 16 in devolved elections. The new curriculum’s ‘Statements of What Matters’ will support learners in “exercising their democratic rights and responsibilities” and that learners should understand “how systems of government in Wales operate both now and in the past.”

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Work is also underway to engage qualifying foreign citizens as newly enfranchised electors in a similar manner. While initial work will focus on newly enfranchised groups, subsequent work will look to increase voter awareness of democratic institutions and encourage democratic participation. This will include improving access to elections. This work is part of a wider agenda of improving democratic participation being undertaken by the UK Government, Senedd Commission, local government, the Electoral Commission and a number of third sector organisations.

A working group has been established with the specific aim of engaging those newly enfranchised qualifying foreign citizens. A part of the group's remit will focus specifically on engaging Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and we are working with third sector organisations and advocacy groups to ensure appropriate resources and materials are available for use during these engagement exercises.

Health and social care

The Report asks the Welsh Government to undertake a review of existing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people's health and social care in partnership with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, organisations and patients to evaluate appropriateness of services to improve future delivery and reduce health risks for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people. The Chief Medical Officer for Wales has already had an initial review of the evidence on the disproportionate effects of Covid-19 and the wider underpinning health inequalities affecting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities that can drive this work. We are committed to developing this work and working with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups to consider its findings and what may be done to drive service and health outcome improvements.

Within the NHS in Wales there are policies in place to support individuals to

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raise concerns in the workplace and to address issues where they have experienced bullying and harassment. The work of the Socio Economic Group suggests that the lived experience of some Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members of the workforce means that these policies are not fit for purpose, and individuals may not feel confident to use the policies for fear of negative consequences. This is clearly unacceptable and we will work with Social Partners and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members of the workforce to explore this evidence and take coordinated action across NHS Wales to implement the recommendations of the Group designed to tackle these experiences.

Communications

The Report recommends that we should develop a clear multi-channel communications strategy for health and social care which identifies effective channels to disseminate information and includes funding for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic targeted outreach and consultation activities. Reflecting this recommendation we have formed a cross-government group to develop a communications strategy which includes health and social services but also wider policy areas to ensure greater joined-up thinking. Following recently-completed insight work and stakeholder channel mapping, the next steps will be to develop an integrated strategy with key messages and a forward look media plan based on key milestones.

The Welsh Government's Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) programme has developed a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Outreach Plan to be delivered by Health Boards in Wales. This will have outreach workers engaging directly with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and communities.

Work is well underway to develop materials in appropriate formats to be used across social media channels that can be shared with trusted intermediaries for

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disseminating to community groups. For example, the Test, Trace, Protect programme has engaged with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic stakeholders and produced materials in a wide range of community languages to ensure that there is wide access to information that is essential to safeguard communities, including those from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background. We are developing further multilingual campaign assets for Test, Trace, Protect and are also working on the launch of the new NHS COVID-19 app with UK Government teams, on multilingual and diversity stakeholder mapping and developing assets on how to use the app in 11 different languages. A community outreach toolkit has been developed to present the important test, trace, protect information and to encourage community leaders, third sector organisations and others to understand the key messages and address concerns on issues such as surveillance, immigration and scamming, and circulate these within their communities. This will be followed by a range of community outreach materials, such as a film delivering the main TTP messages.

Communications on “Keep Wales Safe” have been translated into 36 languages. [Multilingual Keep Wales Safe leaflets](#) are available.

The Report also advises that we should monitor health and social care communication strategies to assess the effectiveness of reducing cultural and language barriers and increasing the uptake of screening and health promotions from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people. Public Health Wales has a Screening Engagement Team who engage with communities to improve access to and uptake of screening. We have highlighted the recommendations from this Report to the Group and PHW will report regularly on progress on their delivery and effectiveness to the Wales Screening Committee.

We are developing more detailed proposals to develop a health promotion programme co-produced with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representatives aligned to our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Strategic Communications Plan in partnership with PHW and Welsh Government’s public health team. We are committed to co-producing these proposals to ensure they are well developed to

deliver culturally appropriate activities.

We have communicated a clear message to patients that GP services are open and will continue efforts. Ensuring easier access for people in areas of deprivation, or those from our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities will be picked up with Health boards and built into work on access standards due to complete in March 2021. The Welsh Government is committed to the approach of seeing the right person at the right time in the right place and the Primary Care Model for Wales.

Mental health services

The Report also asks us to commit to support and fund practical ongoing actions in providing appropriate, equitable, and culturally competent mental health services to individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds to help address the acknowledged inequities that exist in mental health take-up and service provision. It suggests that this should be achieved through utilising the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Wales endorsed Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Mental Health Cultural Competence Certification Scheme and any other such practical actions.

We are already committed to reducing health inequalities and promoting equity of access to mental health services is a key underpinning action in the Together for Mental Health Delivery Plan 2019 to 22 (TfMH). The plan also includes the commitment for Health Boards to deliver more appropriate care and support through adoption of Diverse Cymru's Cultural Competency toolkit. We will work with Diverse Cymru to accelerate this action and ensure it is embedded.

The TfMH plan also commits to improving data on mental health through the introduction of the Mental Health Core dataset. This includes to capture information on ethnicity. The new data set for s135 to 136 detentions developed

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by the Mental Health Crisis Concordat Assurance Group was implemented in April 2019 and includes data on ethnicity. The data is published on Stats Wales.

We are also revising the TfMH delivery plan in response to COVID-19. This will include ensuring closer alignment with the Race Equality Action Plan and actions to strengthen engagement with groups disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 in order to improve awareness and access to mental health services.

Employment and disproportionate Socio-economic impact

The Report called for the Welsh Government to take action to monitor and mitigate where possible the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus pandemic and likely recession on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people.

The Welsh Government is working with Working Wales on its online Job bulletin. Working Wales will offer advice and guidance to individuals in supporting them to find relevant jobs. Also we are liaising with the Department of Work and Pensions on their job help and employer help websites and promoting these through the Skills Gateway for Business.

To support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people specifically we are working with DWP Job Centres and Working Wales to organise jobs fairs in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities to highlight the opportunities and employability support available.

Three Regional Employment Response Groups (RERG) have been established with the aim of protecting and supporting employers, workers and communities affected by local labour market changes, resulting from COVID-19. They will provide an oversight of the labour market by reporting on and responding to redundancies, increased unemployment levels and NEETs. The Groups will

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receive high level data, concentrating on the number of redundancies in the region. They will also focus specifically on the employability issues facing Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people.

The membership of the Regional Response Groups includes employer organisations, Trades Unions, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Regional Skills Partnerships, Public Health Services, Careers Wales, Community representatives and Welsh Government Employability officials and Chief Regional Officers.

Ensuring equality of opportunity and broadening access to apprenticeships is a key priority in our apprenticeship policy. Since 2016 a Champion role, now called a Strategic Equality and Diversity Lead (SEDL) works with the network to drive-up the sector's commitment to increasing the participation of individuals from protected groups on to an apprenticeship. The current SEDL was a member of the Socio-economic Sub Group.

The SEDL is developing an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and a suite of actions in conjunction with Work-Based Learning providers to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to access apprenticeships, for example hosting targeted events for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic young people to promote apprenticeships. It will also include amongst other things online events that will target Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, delivered in conjunction with third sector organisations and employment support agencies. All apprenticeship programmes support both the private and public sector.

New recruitment incentives being introduced will stimulate hiring of young people 16 to 24, and support apprentices made redundant as a result of the COVID-19 crisis to secure new employment to continue learning. These incentives will include support for young people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

A list of all businesses that have received government support is available.

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A breakdown of investment is provided by local authority, although for reasons of commercial confidentiality the Development Bank for Wales (DBW) does not publish names of businesses receiving loans or the related value of those loans.

In 2018, as part of its creation, the Development Bank of Wales commissioned an equality impact assessment which considered the barriers experienced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in accessing finance. The Report made a series of recommendations that resulted in a review of the systems and processes for gathering diversity data.

Diversity and unconscious bias training was rolled out across the group in 2019 and understanding of the issues raised forms part of our rolling programme of monitoring

In the 2 years since this training, the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic proportion of the workforce has increased from 2% to 8%. Engagement with representative organisations such as the Centre for African Entrepreneurship and the Muslim Council of Wales has increased. 3% of directors/shareholders of businesses supported by the Development Bank are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people.

COVID-19 Wales Business Loan Scheme data, where completed by the business, is available as follows:

BME	Number
Black and minority ethnic owners	67
Non black and minority ethnic owners	1130.5
Prefer not to say	154

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Further to the two part Gender Review undertaken over the last few years, the Minister for Transport, Economy and North Wales, Ken Skates MS has set up a **Working Group** to examine diversity in the transport sector.

The first informal meeting quickly got into some of the issues affecting Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and will be a focus for the thinking of the group going forward. The work has been on hold due to COVID-19, but we are planning a first official meeting of the group to agree terms of reference during September 2020.

Companies in receipt of direct funding from the Welsh Government are required to complete an Economic Contract. This contract requires businesses to demonstrate how they provide a fair working environment. This includes consideration of a wide range of factors, including recruitment policies. The contract is currently being refreshed and guidance updated to reflect the Welsh Government's commitment to a Values Based Recovery.

It was recommended the Welsh Government should establish a special fund for workers facing COVID-19 risk that is extended out to all who do not qualify for company sick pay across all sectors.

The Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales has raised this issue for the gig economy, along with other sectors of the economy which fell through the gaps in UK Government provision, with the Secretary of State for Business and the Secretary of State for Wales on a number of occasions, and will continue to do so.

The Welsh Government's Economic Resilience Fund (ERF) is designed to plug gaps in financial support from the UK Government and to complement existing Welsh Government support for the economy. We specifically recognised the gaps in support for the newly self employed by providing £5m specifically to support start-up firms not helped by the UK Government's Self Employment income support scheme. The grant scheme will support up to 2,000 start-ups in

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Wales with a grant of £2,500 each. We continue to assess the gaps in financial support and how we can best deploy the financial resources we have available to support the economy.

The majority of social care workers are reduced to statutory sick pay (SSP) when they need to stay off work. The Minister for Health and Social Services, Vaughan Gething MS has indicated he wishes to use monies arising from the Infection Control Fund to 'top up' the income of care home workers and some other care staff for a temporary period. This will remove the financial disincentive for care staff to stay off work when they may be symptomatic or ill with COVID-19.

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced on 21 May 2020 to exempt health and care workers from the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) as soon as possible, with a following announcement on the 17 June, that those that have paid the IHS since the initial announcement will be refunded. This currently only applies to non-EEA migrants, but will extend to EEA migrants following the end of freedom of movement on 1 January 2020 when the new Points-Based Immigration System comes into effect. Welsh Government officials along with the other Devolved Administrations are working with the Department of Health and Social Care on the precise eligibility of those to be exempted from paying IHS and the mechanisms on refunding individuals.

Work is currently underway designing the third phase of ERF, and employment funding considerations form part of the options being prepared for ministers.

It was recommended the Welsh Government make representations to the UK Government on reducing visa costs, especially for those that fall in the lower income bracket of the required income (salary) to sponsor spouses or their children from abroad.

We have pressed the UK Government on many occasions to lower (or scrap) the salary threshold, and we've worked closely with a large number of external

stakeholders in relation to the Shortage Occupation list. The Counsel General, Jeremy Miles, wrote to the Home Secretary in May and said in light of the current crisis there are some immediate changes required to ensure that everyone in the UK can access vital services. Therefore, in line with some other European countries, we have suggested that all migrants should be granted leave to remain (LTR). Or at the very least, we urged the Home Secretary to lift No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) restrictions and remove the Habitual Residency Test to ensure the welfare of migrants during and after the pandemic.

The response provided by the UK Government Immigration Minister was disappointing and we will continue to press on this matter.

Working practices, terms and conditions

Although terms and conditions are a matter for individual employers and not all levers to change employment legislation are devolved to the Welsh Government, we are committed to protecting the rights of workers in Wales. We are developing and strengthening the role of social partnership across Wales through legislation as part of our commitment to a Social Partnership Bill and to deliver the Fair Work agenda. This will, in the longer term, enable us to address some of the underpinning issues that lead to inequality across the workforce in Wales. In non-devolved areas we are committed to using our influence with partners and the UK Government to support us to achieve our aims for a Fair Work nation.

The Report recommends the Welsh Government should do all it can to protect the income, job security and career progression of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic workers at high risk of the impact of COVID-19 infection who need to be removed from front line duties.

In sectors where we have direct levers we are able to address this directly. For

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example, the NHS in Wales has clear and robust policies to protect the pay terms and conditions of workers who are removed from frontline duties. These have been agreed in social partnership and incorporated into the NHS Employers FAQs which may be found on the NHS Employers website. These address the expectation that those organisations employing staff from the NHS Staff Bank should honour payments for shifts booked but not worked due either to COVID-19 infection or the need for self-isolation or redeployment as a result of risk assessment. These arrangements will be kept under review through the NHS Wales Partnership Forum to ensure they work effectively and fairly. Redeployment to other areas of work, working from home or where these are not possible, remaining absent from work on full pay whilst an individual's risk is assessed as high are all in place for the workforce in the NHS.

Within social care we have slightly less direct levers, as most social care employers are in the private sector. However, we are monitoring the implementation of the risk assessment tool across all of social care and will consider what further steps need to be taken to support social care workers. We are looking at the levers available to us to help with wider improvements in terms and conditions and continue to work with Trade Unions and employers in the sector, including through the Social Care Forum which will be convened in September 2020.

The Report also makes three recommendations calling for us to address unfair or illegal discrimination at work or by service users through renewed focus through renewed attention on anti-oppressive practices, diversity competences and the introduction of ethnicity specific Equality Impact Assessments. It makes some specific suggestions about establishing 'safe spaces' and confidential helplines to challenge safety and raise concerns.

We will work with the workforce from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, Trade Unions, employers and the members of the existing NHS equalities networks to take forward these recommendations on a consistent national basis. We will consider the improvement of data collection through

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existing workforce tools and establishing new mechanisms such as introducing and monitoring progress against the Workplace Race Equality Standard. We will also examine the ways that existing mechanisms and safeguards can be strengthened to improve the lived experience of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic colleagues in the NHS.

Housing

The Report's recommendations highlighted the need to take action to support individuals living in close proximity where social distancing may be difficult, and where action may be needed to address or avoid over-crowding. We have provided guidance on how to stay safe and self-isolate in houses of multiple occupation, but we recognise that this is extremely difficult in shared accommodation.

- Overcrowding may occur for a number of reasons, but available evidence suggests it is often related to poverty. There is also a disproportionately higher number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people living in poverty and we know that those on lower incomes are more likely to live in the private rented sector. Analysis of the latest available data for Wales shows that:
- half of the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population in Wales live in rented properties, compared to just under a third of the white population. (Statistics for Wales, 2020)
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people who rent are more likely to live in privately rented properties than socially rented properties (compared to broadly similar proportions of white people who live in privately rented properties and socially rented properties). (Statistics for Wales, 2020)

There is statutory provision to tackle overcrowding and all landlords and agents must be licensed. If demands for improvements under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System ("HHSRS") are made by a local authority, then these must

be acted upon. Local authorities enforce fitness for human habitation regulations, which include space standards designed to avoid overcrowding. Nevertheless, it is clear that overcrowding still continues and we recognise that it is imperative to understand better the relationship between overcrowding which disproportionately affects some Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people and vulnerability to COVID-19.

We will look at existing research on overcrowding and scope potential research to better understand the link between overcrowding in housing and the greater risk from COVID-19 amongst Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people. This should consider where overcrowding occurs (including tenure), and the reasons for it. It is important to note that overcrowding can occur in rented or owner occupied accommodation and for a number of reasons including where multi-generational families live together.

The research will need to consider how the greater risk from COVID-19 amongst Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people interacts with issues of overcrowding and seek to identify any mitigating actions.

The Minister for Housing and Local Government, Julie James has made clear the need to ensure no-one was left on the street during the pandemic, including those with no recourse to public funds, and that people were provided with safe and decent accommodation.

Equality data on homeless people, and those threatened with homelessness is poor and we are **working with local authorities** to address this gap. We do not want anyone provided with temporary accommodation during the coronavirus crisis to be forced to return to the streets or unsuitable accommodation and have announced up to an additional £50m, both revenue and capital, to support the next phase of our response to homelessness. The focus is on quickly supporting people back into permanent housing, providing high quality and dignified interim options and being clear that street services are prioritised for professional assertive outreach focused on resolving homelessness.

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In our Nation of Sanctuary plan, we committed to fund support for newly recognised refugees to start rebuilding their lives in Wales. We fund the Welsh Refugee Council to deliver this crucial 'Move On' service to prevent homelessness and destitution amongst those who have been recognised as having already fled persecution and trauma.

In recent years we have worked closely with the Home Office and other partners to increase the effectiveness of this process and we are currently engaged in ongoing conversations about how to improve the system further, in the context of resuming services as coronavirus restrictions are lifted. We will continue to work with partners to improve Move On options for newly recognised refugees.

We have recently published a **feasibility study on providing accommodation for refused asylum seekers** who have valid grounds to appeal or submit a fresh asylum claim to the Home Office. We will work with the Welsh Refugee Coalition and Housing organisations in the coming months to ensure the Report recommendations can be implemented effectively. This should increase capacity for hosting schemes and legal advice for refused asylum seekers in Wales.

Tackling overcrowding will also be helped by building more affordable housing. Housing need has been identified as a priority work stream by the independent panel undertaking the **Review of affordable housing supply**. We have committed to an ambitious target of providing 20,000 additional affordable homes in this term of government and are making good progress, with £2 billion investment in housing.

The Welsh Government funds an advice and advocacy service for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers delivered by TGP Cymru. This service provides direct practical support to those living on Gypsy and Traveller sites and can support residents encountering overcrowding issues to access pitch waiting lists or provide some support for those seeking to develop their own private sites to address their own accommodation needs.

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As the COVID-19 pandemic spread in Wales, it became essential to ensure that public health information was reaching all groups of people in our society. In response to this, the Welsh Government convened an expert Gypsy, Roma and Traveller stakeholder group drawn from local authority and third sector service providers working directly with communities. The group has been meeting regularly with the Welsh Government and other organisations, such as Public Health Wales, to identify issues affecting communities and to provide cultural insights, knowledge and advice on the likely impacts of policies and service provision.

Responding to concerns raised through engagement with stakeholders, the Welsh Government issued guidance on 15 May 2020 to local authorities to identify risks and support needs faced by Gypsies and Travellers during the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance highlighted the specific circumstances around overcrowding in trailers, sharing of facilities and the barriers to being able to self-isolate. The guidance included specific advice on measures to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 including additional toilets or sanitation, providing gloves for use in certain communal areas or making sure that self-isolating residents could access food, fuel, medicines and cleaning products.

On 15 May 2020 the Deputy Minister and Chief Whip Jane Hutt, confirmed that the £10m additional funding to support those at risk of sleeping rough or in inappropriate accommodation could be used to provide additional sanitation and hygiene facilities in existing

Traveller sites or roadside encampments and provide additional accommodation to manage incidents or outbreaks on Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Education

It was recommended that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history and The

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Commonwealth history be developed in the National Curriculum for Wales 2022 for primary and secondary pupils to prevent racism and to promote cultural diversity.

From 2022, there will be a new **Curriculum for Wales**. One of the four purposes at the heart of this framework is that learners should develop as ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world, who 'are knowledgeable about their culture, community, society and the world now and in the past', and 'respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society'. These have been central to every decision made about the new curriculum.

While the new curriculum does not prescribe a full list of subjects or dictate specific areas to be taught, the Welsh Government has published comprehensive guidance to support schools to construct their own curricula that sets expectations on the breadth of learning. The guidance states that in designing a curriculum, practitioners should incorporate opportunities for learners to celebrate diverse backgrounds and values and promote an understanding of the ethnic and cultural diversity within Wales.

We recognise the development of some aspects of the new curriculum is a sensitive matter. There is clearly a particular need for us to work with communities and all interested parties in developing the learning and teaching for relationships and sex education in schools and in developing a shared understanding of the issues. We have established a BAME and Faith Communities Involvement Group to ensure we work with communities to engage them on what this will look like in the new curriculum. We have worked closely with faith groups throughout the development of the new curriculum and the feedback phase ensuring opportunities to input.

On 21 July 2020 Professor Charlotte Williams' (OBE) was appointed by the Welsh Government to lead a new working group to advise on and improve the teaching of themes relating to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and experiences across all parts of the school curriculum. The working group will

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complete a review of learning resources currently available to support the teaching of themes relating to Black Asian and Minority Ethnic people and 'cynefin' across all parts of the curriculum. The group will also review associated professional learning opportunities and resources. The group will be closely aligned to the review of Welsh history by Estyn, the education inspectorate. They will present their initial findings in the autumn, and a full report in the spring.

Learning about the histories of our nation is central to the curriculum guidance, so that young people are engaged in rich learning experiences about the histories, geography and cultures of Wales.

Further to this, in July the First Minister Mark Drakeford appointed a Task and Finish Group, with Gaynor Legall as Chair, to audit public monuments, street and building names associated with aspects of Wales' Black history, particularly the slave trade and the British Empire but also touching on the historical contributions to Welsh life of people of Black heritage. The objective of the audit is to collect and review the evidence, after which the Group will identify issues for a possible second stage. The Group will report in the autumn.

Another recommendation around education was to promote the Welsh Government's Continuity of Learning Plan to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic families and young people to better understand how to work together and target support to reduce potential widening of attainment gaps as set out in the **Continuity of Learning Plan – Stay Safe Stay Learning** and to ensure the technology and resources are available to learners and to those responsible for them.

Ensuring all learners continued to receive a suitable education despite the necessary disruption caused by our response to the COVID-19 pandemic was one of the underpinning themes of Stay Safe. Stay Learning.

We recognised that the repurposing of schools and settings risked having the

greatest impact on some of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged learners. We were also very aware that the steps taken as we moved into a new phase of education would be crucial for our vulnerable and disadvantaged learners – first in terms of their well-being, then in terms of their learning.

Guidance issued to parents sought to specifically target the parents of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Guidance has been issued in a variety of minority languages to provide particular support to those parents and carers who may have English as an additional language. Schools will have the best understanding and knowledge of their learner population and are best placed to promote the Continuity of Learning plan as they remain responsible for the delivery of learning.

Guidance to help all parents and carers was issued and a dedicated section set up on Hwb.

As part of ‘Stay Safe, Stay Learning’ the Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams, committed up to £3m as part of the Hwb EdTech programme, to support digitally excluded learners in maintained schools where there was no existing provision in place from their school or local authority. A digitally excluded learner is defined as ‘a learner who does not have access to an appropriate internet connected device to engage in online learning activities from home’.

The Welsh Government secured a national connectivity deal with major mobile operators for MiFi devices and established a technical solution which allowed local authorities to repurpose existing school devices. The implementation varied from local authority to local authority, but it was very much driven by the school’s understanding of the individual learner needs. To date, there have been 10,848 MiFi devices and 9,717 software licences provided to local authorities across Wales.

Based on local authority feedback, through their own arrangements or via our nationally provided support, we understand that provision for digitally excluded

learners is now in place. [Further information is available.](#)

Guidance for supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged learners as schools and settings increase operations was published on 17 August 2020. It includes advice relating to learners from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. The guidance recognises the specific challenges learners may face and provides advice and guidance to help schools support their well-being and learning during the next academic year.

Specific consideration is now being given to these important issues through the Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards (RRRS) programme, a newly funded programme to address issues of disengagement and learning loss as consequences of full time education being disrupted.

There are four important areas in which the needs of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and other more adversely impacted groups of learners are being taken into account.

First, the total value of the RRRS project is in the order of £30m. The vast majority (98.5%) of this goes direct to schools, and the funding model includes a weighting to ensure that schools with higher numbers of Free School Meals, Additional Learning Needs, English as a Second Language and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners receive greater proportions of funding. This funding is in addition to existing funding streams, including the £100m Pupil Development Grant and £10m funding that goes to local authorities to support minority ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners.

Second, the guiding principles include reference to support for learners in greatest need, those most affected cohorts that include Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic learners. The principles also reference a balanced curriculum offer that is designed to re-engage learners with school regardless of their starting point, and an imperative to spend the funding on people who can help learners return and make accelerated progress. Finally, we have set out the

principle of collaboration so that schools can work with each other, their local authorities and regions and other community groups and agencies to meet the needs of individual learners and families.

Third, we are providing a level of funding for regional collaboration to enable the regions, local authorities and other partners such as universities and the voluntary sector to work together to ensure that the solutions provided to and by schools are strategically coherent and make best use of the capacities and abilities of agencies on the ground. Finally, as part of our national Covid-19 Control Plan we will set out our expectations of schools in case of further disruption to full time school-based education.

We expect schools to develop a plan which sets out how, what and when they will deliver continuous access to the curriculum, specifically:

- delivery of high quality teaching and assessment approaches to promote progression from the beginning of the autumn term
- achievement of blended learning pedagogical approaches which are relevant in all scenarios to improve the teaching offer
- implementation of flexible pedagogical approaches to ensure that learners do not miss out if they are away from school for a period

We will require schools to set out in a school or cluster level plan how they will ensure:

- entitlement to contact based on a number of hours daily
- entitlement to 'live' synchronous learning activities on a number of hours daily
- entitlement and learners' commitment to resource-based asynchronous self-study time
- entitlement to specialised learning and teaching especially linked to those learners and qualifications

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

We have put in a wide range of measures to support victims to seek help. Our 'Live Fear Free' helpline provides support to speakers of other languages through the Language Line. Bawso provides specialist frontline services to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic victims and migrant victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence, human trafficking, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. We have also provided campaign materials relating to available support in Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Polish, Punjabi and Urdu.

We offer e-learning to staff at testing stations and contact tracers; have put up posters in testing stations and information in home testing kits; promoted our 'Live Fear Free' helpline; offered e-learning to volunteers, delivery drivers, postal workers and anyone who may have contact with households, and delivered 'Ask and Act' training to front line professionals and in particular primary health care. We also provide grant funding to support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic victims and survivors of VAWDASV.

We promote our main 'Live Fear Free' helpline and website which is a free 24/7 helpline for all victims of domestic abuse. The helpline staff have access to the Language Line, so are able to provide support to victims/survivors in other languages. We also promote 'silent' methods of contact, such as text, email and web chat. In an emergency we encourage contacting the emergency services by dialling 999, and if a caller is unable to speak, dialling 55 when the operator answers. Bawso is core-funded by Welsh Government. It has its own stand-alone 24hr helpline specifically for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women fleeing VAWDASV.

The Welsh Government co-chairs the Honour-based Abuse Leadership Group, with Bawso and the Crown Prosecution Service. The Leadership Group's action

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plan is under review and the recommendations in the Socio-economic Report will inform the development of part of a new action plan. In particular, the Leadership Group will be charged with identifying the particular risks posed by Covid-19 for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic victims/survivors of VAWDASV, the barriers to accessing support that are different to the barriers faced more generically, and what additional measures should be put in place to overcome those specific risks and barriers.

Our communications campaign 'Home shouldn't be a place of fear' is aimed at providing information to those in lockdown with perpetrators about how to safely seek help, encouraging bystanders and concerned others to recognise the signs of VAWDASV and safely help victims to get support, and to take the e-learning to help them to do this. The second burst of the campaign was based on easing of restrictions and aired on TV, radio, in the newspapers, and on Twitter and Facebook. We have provided campaign materials for sharing in Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Polish, Punjabi and Urdu. Each of our communications campaigns have differentiated messages aimed at groups with protected characteristics, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

We want to do more and are working with Public Health Wales to consider multi-lingual information leaflets. We are also looking at how to make use of a video presentation in different languages informing victims of how to seek emergency police help through the 999 or 55 option.

Conclusion

This response sets out actions underway and our intention to further progress the recommendations set out in the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic COVID-19 Socio-economic Sub Group's Report. The actions are not exhaustive and will be built upon further. The continued role of the Socio-economic Sub Group in monitoring progress is an important one in relation to this response –

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ensuring remains relevant and is making the difference that the recommendations intend.

The development of the Race Equality Action Plan has begun and this will be a critical vehicle to carry forward not only these recommendations but to identify and deliver changes that will address the deep rooted inequalities Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic peoples experience in their lives. As part of the development and delivery of the plan, the recommendation to implement a Race Disparity Unit for Wales will be taken forward as will other mechanisms and structures needed to effectively drive forward and embed the societal changes that are being so urgently needed in order to address race inequality in Wales.

The insights and advice of the Socio-economic Sub Group, amongst others, will be essential to the effective development and subsequent delivery of this essential plan for addressing race inequality in Wales.

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