

**Wales Race Forum Meeting  
20 May 2020**

**11:00-12.30pm**

**Skype Meeting**

**Meeting Notes:**

Jane Hutt AM (Chair)

Deputy Minister & Chief Whip (DM&CW)

**Race Forum Members**

Rocio Cifuentes

EYST

Kay Denyer

RCC

Iolanda Viegas

Black History Month

Riaz Hassan

Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator

Holly Taylor

Welsh Refugee Council

Shahien Taj

Henna Foundation

Aled Edwards

Cytun

Maria Mesa

Women Connect First

Isaac Blake

Romani Cultural & Arts Company

Prof Robert Moore

NWREN

Shavanah Taj

Wales TUC

Samsunear Ali

BAWSO

**Welsh Government Officials:**

Alyson Francis

Communities Division

Emma Bennett

Equality Branch

Hannah Fisher

Equality Branch

Eleri Davies

Equality Branch

Heather Payne

Dept Health and Social Services

Uzo Iwobi

Specialist Policy Advisor, Equalities

Steven Macey

Knowledge and Analytical Services

Sue Leake

Knowledge and Analytical Services

Matt Andrews

Head of Communication for LGC

**Apologies:**

Laura O'Keeffe

Race Equality First

Daniel Hurford

WLGA

Mutale Merrill

BAWSO

## Welcome by Deputy Minister & Chief Whip

1. The DM&CW thanked Forum members for taking the time to come together once again. The DM&CW advised that although the Forum usually meets four times a year, this meeting has been convened 4 weeks after the last meeting to help inform a robust Government response to concerns raised by BAME communities.

## Actions and Update

2. The DM&CW provided the following update in relation to actions from the Wales Race Forum meeting on 22 April.

Action	Update
DM&CW to confirm, in writing, that Health Boards in Wales are not sharing patient data with the Home Office Immigration service	COMPLETED
Officials to coordinate a letter from the DMCW to Imams in Wales	COMPLETED
Officials to find out more information in relation to the Ramadan Coms Working Group	COMPLETED
Officials to follow up break down of data in relation to ethnicity with KAS colleagues	COMPLETED
WLGA to provide new timeframes for Hate Crime in Schools work	COMPLETED
Sunil Patel to share the link to the new online teachers programmes so that the DMCW can share with the Minister for Education	COMPLETED
DM&CW to share the issues raised with ministerial colleagues	COMPLETED
Officials to arrange the next meeting	COMPLETED

3. The DM&CW shared an update of key work that has taken place since the last Forum meeting.
4. She reiterated that, at the previous meeting, she had shared the written statement, issued by the Health Minister, Vaughan Gething on 21 April, setting out the work taking place in Wales and the links to the wider work in England: <https://gov.wales/written-statement-covid-19-and-bame-communities>
5. The DM&CW advised that the Health Minister issued a further written statement on 2 May, referring to measures to protect the health and social care workforce and endorsed a joint statement by NHS Employers, the Association of Directors of Social Services, trades unions and Welsh Government. <https://gov.wales/written-statement-covid-and-bame-measures-protect-health-and-social-care-workforce>
6. In addition, the DM&CW told Forum members that officials had held a BAME Engagement session with stakeholders on 5<sup>th</sup> May and that over 90 attendees were on the call. She outlined the purpose of the session as being to ensure stakeholders were kept informed of latest developments and had the opportunity to engage in a timely way.
7. The DM&CW expressed her thanks to EYST and Race Council Cymru for their work running forums to engage community members across Wales over the past few weeks. The DMCW joined several of these meetings and welcomed hearing some of the information directly.
8. In response to a concern raised by stakeholders, the DM&CW wrote to the Home Secretary w/c 10 May outlining her concern that data on ethnicity was not recorded on death certificates in England and Wales.
9. In order to support the Gypsy Roma Traveller community, the DM&CW advised that earlier that week she had issued follow up guidance to Local Authorities, encouraging a pro-active approach to offering and providing support to Gypsy and Traveller communities, both on sites and in roadside encampments.
10. The DM&CW also shared that the Welsh Government and Communities Funerals, Burials and Cremations Sub-group has held several meetings. The group are overseeing a number of emerging issues and will be a key resource in Welsh Government work to consider how places of worship can begin to re-open through the phased un-locking work. These matters will also be discussed at the next Wales Faith Communities Forum on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June.
11. The DM&CW shared that Welsh Government have submitted a bid to the UK Responsible Authority (UKRA) for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and are currently waiting to hear from the Home Office if the bid has been successful.
12. The DM&CW said that Welsh Government recognised that many voluntary organisations are under threat due to a decrease in income streams. In response Welsh Government have launched; The Voluntary Services Emergency Fund and the Third Sector Resilience Fund for Wales. Further information in relation to both funds can be accessed via the WCVA website at: <https://wcva.cymru/covid-19-two-new-funds-announced-to-support-voluntary-organisations>

13. The DM&CW asked if there were any questions or points to raise in relation to the update that she had provided.
14. Professor Moore highlighted that there is a need to be mindful of provisions for foreign nationals, and gave the example of the UK Government's Immigration Bill which had its second reading this week. He gave his view that the underlying message within it was that foreign nationals were not welcome.
15. The DM&CW responded that Welsh Government were concerned and unhappy about this and that the Shadow Home Secretary has ensured robust questioning on this matter of the Home Secretary.

### **BAME Covid 19 Advisory Group update**

16. At the last meeting of the Wales Race Forum, emerging data was discussed which indicated an increased risk of Covid 19 to BAME people. Since then ONS have provided key data including that the risk of death involving COVID-19 among some ethnic groups, in England and Wales, is significantly higher than that of those of White ethnicity.
17. The DM&CW advised that officials are in receipt of a great deal of information in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on people with protected characteristics in Wales. The Equality Branch is working closely with Knowledge and Analytical Services colleagues at Welsh Government to collate, log and analyse all data received.
18. The DM&CW reiterated that that data was crucial to how Welsh Government respond to phasing Wales out of lockdown, as well as Wales' recovery plan. The DM&CW was pleased that that the BAME Advisory Group was mentioned in the First Ministers 'Unlocking our society and economy: continuing the conversation' road map <https://gov.wales/unlocking-our-society-and-economy-continuing-conversation> and that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 was included in 'Leading Wales out of the coronavirus pandemic: a framework for recovery' <https://gov.wales/leading-wales-out-coronavirus-pandemic>
19. The DM&CW invited Dr Heather Payne and Uzo Iwobi to provide an update in relation to the BAME Advisory Group, as well as the Risk Assessment subgroup and the Socio-Economic subgroup
20. Dr Payne provided an outline in relation to the background of the BAME Advisory Group, namely that it was convened in response to concerns about the high numbers of deaths from

Covid 19 in BAME communities. The role of the group was to look at the data and find out why this was happening with the emphasis on acting fast to protect communities - this involved looking at the immediate risk factors, as well as, structural inequalities that are longer term.

21. Dr Payne gave an update on the Risk Assessment sub-group, chaired by Prof Keshav Singhal. The purpose of this group is to develop a risk assessment tool, for workers (beginning with Healthcare workers). This has been developed at a swift pace with the aim for it to be ready for issue in the next few days.
22. Dr Payne advised that a prototype tool that had been developed by Aneurin Bevan Health Board and is currently being used. The toolkit developed by the sub-group is more detailed and more informed by additional evidence. The sub-group are working with Workforce Directors in the NHS and Social Care sector, as well as Trade Unions, and a final version will be reviewed later today.
23. Dr Payne told forum members that Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna is the chair of the Socio Economic sub-group. She stated the purpose of this sub-group is to; recommend options to explore socio and economic issues affecting BAME communities; recommend measures that could be taken in the medium to long term and; to recommend research.
24. Uzo shared that the latest ONS report outlined that BAME people are 4 times more likely to die from Covid 19 than their white counterparts. She conveyed that there are lots of opportunities to engage and provide evidence with each of these sub-groups and encouraged forum members to do so.
25. Uzo also shared that Prof Singhal and Prof Ogbonna are discussing how the risk assessment toolkit could be tweaked to allow all front line service providers to use it and for it to become a toolkit to serve all people of Wales.
26. Uzo also raised that we also need to look at the wider issue in relation to tackling endemic discrimination. Also that, the issues raised as a result of Covid 19 will have an impact on what the Welsh Government's Race Action Plan will contain.
27. The DM&CW invited forum members to respond to the update provided.
28. Professor Moore responded to the information regarding inadequate data. Highlighting that there are very real anxieties and risks around the collection of data and people are right to be worried. In addition, the NHS has an obligation to hand over data to the Home Office. Clarity is

needed in relation to the situation in Wales. What is the position of NHS in Wales in terms of handing over data to the Home Office? Also, is the research data adequately anonymised?

29. Professor Moore also shared that there is extensive research in the USA highlighting that there is a direct impact of racism on health and well-being. In the UK there is a need to look at the psychological impacts of racism as this is a factor which makes individuals more vulnerable to ill health.
30. Iolanda Viegas responded in relation to ethnicity data and felt it was strange that we do not have the data as it is included at the bottom of most forms that people have to complete. She also felt a review was needed in relation to options provided as current options may not apply to many people.
31. Shahien Taj expressed her concern in relation to challenges faced in employment. Career development for people from BAME people was considered to be tough and so can the risk assessment tool put protective measures in place to ensure job security. Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken for the risk assessment tool?
32. The DMCW agreed that there needs to be an equality impact assessment of the tool to ensure that it doesn't impact on career opportunities.
33. The DMCW also confirmed that ethnicity data from health boards is not being handed over to the Home Office.
34. Dr Payne agreed with Professor Moore's comments and told the group that the ethnicity data is self-identified and not shared or compulsory to complete. She recognised that the recommended ethnicity datasets are potentially confusing and suggested commissioning a review of how to go about getting effective data collection that is acceptable.
35. Shahien Taj stated that questions need to be asked to the wider community, including the public sector, allowing for communication to take place to protect people and promote the economy.
36. Uzo added that these points were discussed in the last socio economic subgroup and suggested one recommendation for the group could be to undertake robust research into inequalities, with involvement from the Race Forum.

37. The DM&CW asked Steven Macey and Sue Leake to provide an update in relation to data collection.

38. Steven Macey updated the group on the work is undertaking in relation to trying to log the impact of Covid 19 on different groups. A wealth of data has been sent to the Welsh Government. Steven and colleagues are logging, collating and analysing all of the data and pulling out key themes. This will be used to inform decision making and ensuring it is evidence based. Steven asked for forum members to send any research or links to research they may have to the Equality Branch mailbox

**Action:**

Forum members to send research/ links to research to Equality Branch mailbox

[EqualityBranch@gov.wales](mailto:EqualityBranch@gov.wales)

39. Sue Leake advised that, taking into account the wider statistics, as provided by ONS, she and colleagues have looked at a number of key areas such as; demographics, employment, self-employment, key workers, housing tenure. More work is needed in relation to housing that is, looking at deprivation as well as crowded accommodation. Further work may also be needed in relation to Covid 19 related deaths by occupation, that is are they disproportionately high for people from BAME backgrounds?

40. Sue also told members that the information gathered has been shared with the BAME Advisory Group and socio economic subgroup.

41. Information from the Intensive Care Audit and Research Centre is updated on a weekly basis, this involves information on admissions to critical care. A third of these admissions are recorded as from BAME communities.

42. In addition, PHW have made their enhanced reporting form available, this allows for ethnicity to be recorded.

43. In relation to the Census, Sue shared that the next Census will take place in 2021. The Census Order is going through Parliament – setting out which questions are to be included – including one on ethnicity. There has been a shift in approach meaning that the categories are more inclusive. If this is adopted for the 2021 Census this will become more standards for others to use when recording ethnicity.

**Action:**

- Sue Leake to share information in relation to Census questions with Forum members
- Prof Moore to share the link to the US research with Forum members

**Leading Wales out of lockdown – Feedback from the Welsh Government funded forum run by EYST, on Wales post lockdown**

44. The DM&CW was keen to spend time on this agenda item and encouraged Forum members to share their thoughts so that the DMCW could provide feedback to Cabinet colleagues.

45. The DM&CW invited Rocio to provide an update from EYST's online Forum.

46. Rocio shared the key themes highlighted by attendees in relation to coming out of lockdown. These included:

- BAME people are confused about the evidence and would like to see and know what the evidence is in relation to increased risk. Wales specific data is needed in relation to BAME deaths so that informed decisions can be made. If there is data showing an increased risk then there is a need for specific targeted advice for BAME communities.
- There is interest and support in relation to the risk assessment question. How widely will it be rolled out? Is it specific to the health and social care workforce?
- There are huge concerns around the ability of BAME communities to return to work safely. That is, high risk communities are being asked to return to high risk jobs. This needs to be addressed by Welsh Government with specific advice for front line workers.
- Despite progress made in relation to social distancing there is concern that people do not know about the legislation. People don't know how to ask their employer about it to make sure places of work are safe. If questions are asked about this then there are concerns



individuals will be targeted by employers. More support and advice is needed for employees and those that are self-employed.

- An equivalent furlough scheme for BAME people working in high risk jobs. Welsh Government to take this forward with UK Government in relation to offering financial support for people who think are too high risk to return to work.
- Returning to school safely. BAME children live in multigenerational homes and some in small houses and so there is concern about being able to self-isolate. Could local authorities provide houses to allow for people to self-isolate?
- Reassurance to BAME community's that if schools do open there is recognition that BAME communities are less confident to send their children back. There needs to be more focus and effort from Welsh Government to support home schooling i.e. support with IT equipment and Wi-Fi connections. There have also been delays in relation to free school meals.
- Long term impacts on unemployment – BAME people don't have access to advice, information and support to take up any concerns. Even if the Welsh Government is issuing this it is not trickling down to individuals.

47. The DM&CW thanked Rocio for her contribution and responded that a cautious approach is being applied to reopening schools, this is being done with involvement of the relevant Trade Unions. Schools are currently open to children of key workers and vulnerable children and there has been an increase in numbers. Recent statistics have also recorded a big upsurge in claiming free school meals – this now stands at 60,000, with the overall figure being 66,000. In relation to the issue of furlough, this was raised with the Finance Minister yesterday and will be discussed at a meeting across the 4 nations.

48. The DM&CW invited members to provide any thoughts in relation to coming out of lockdown.

49. Aled shared there needs to be consideration of the complexity of the traffic light system and suggested that protocols need to be established across the board. For example, how to make sure that a place of worship remains uncontaminated between services.

50. Kay Denyer added that communities do not feel empowered to make choices. For example, what protection is there when an individual tells an employer that they have a right to make a

choice about work? Communities know what the right choices are but feel powerless to share this.

51. The DM&CW asked Heather and Uzo to share the above points at the BAME Advisory group meeting later this afternoon.
52. Isaac Blake raised concerns in relation to the Welsh Government £3 million Stay Safe, Stay Learning programme. Gypsy Roma Traveller communities have shared that they have not had IT equipment which should be available as part of this fund. Isaac asked whether Welsh Government are able to send a letter to local authorities to check whether equipment is being disseminated.
53. The DM&CW responded that as conveyed in her update at the beginning of the meeting a letter, with guidance, was sent to all local authorities, encouraging a pro-active approach to offering and providing support to Gypsy and Traveller communities. However, she will take this back straight away and raise with the Minister for Education. She also said officials will follow this up.
54. Isaac also raised concerns regarding access to water and water meters on traveller sites. Isaac suggest a conversation in relation to this to look at a way forward.

#### **Action**

DM&CW to raise Isaac's feedback re: Stay Safe, Stay Learning Programme with the Minister for Education

Officials to follow this issue up also

DM&CW to follow up Isaac's concerns re: access to water, with Jenny Rathbone (MS)

### **Comments and Questions Received via Skype Chat Facility**

#### **1) Shavanah Taj**

I have some questions in relation to the Unlocking Our Society and Economy: continuing the conversation, in relation to Working or running a business.

- **Amber** - trial some personal services under appointment, again a sector dominated by low wages and women workers and BAME workers Will the trialling of workplaces include government guidance on PPE? Will hairdressers be told to wear facemasks for example?
- If so, will WG give guidance on how to use PPE. For example, people wearing facemasks who aren't used to them may feel the need to touch them or adjust them once on. This

renders them as useless and could place that worker at harm. The Government is skirting around the facemasks issue instead of providing proper advice on how to use them. This is a big issue for BAME communities many who are self-employed and run their own businesses.

- At what stage is the WG recommending that it is safe to work as a shielding person, red, amber or green?
- What work is WG doing to adequately prepare guidance on how to conduct a business during the amber or green stages? Are they helping businesses to convert their business structure to allow click and collect? Are they providing guidance on times between appointments for hairdressers and those carrying out personal services so that clients don't meet? How about a requirement on washing before appointments?
- How does Welsh Government intend to engage/communicate with BAME run businesses and workers – many on zero hour and precarious terms and conditions
- WTUC will be submitting a formal response to the document. We have some genuine questions. BAME communities and workers are very anxious to safely return to work

## **2) Heather Payne**

We're happy to take any questions and points to add to any guidance being developed. In Wales we don't recommend the use of face coverings outside recommended PPE settings for just the reasons you mention.

## **3) Shavanah Taj**

Lots of concerns as many do not know or understand that Welsh Government does have enforcement powers under social distancing and 2M rule

## **4) Heather Payne**

Further shielding advice is being prepared for issuing in the near future

## **5) Kay Denyer**

RCC completely support the RA being developed and the speed of delivery however - what are the protections in place to support those employees that find themselves in the high and mid risk groups to keep their jobs - keep their income and be supported whilst reducing risk - being removed frontline

## **6) Isaac Blake**

Anti-Gypsyism is a cultural and moral crisis throughout UK.

## **7) Heather Payne**

Isaac I'm aware this is a long term problem - is there a report you could share with us on impacts and experiences?

## **8) Robert Moore**

Impact of racism on health and wellbeing; see work of Professor David R Williams, Harvard University.

1989 Williams, D.R. and Bryant, S. "Race Differences in Hypertension: Identifying the Determinants." Proceedings of the 1989 Public Health Conference on Records and Statistics. DHHS

Pub. No. (PHS) 90-1214:422-427

1990a Williams, D.R. "Socioeconomic Differentials in Health: A Review and Redirection." Social Psychology Quarterly, 53:81-99.

1990b Williams, D.R. "Social Structure and the Health Status of Black Males." Challenge: A Journal

of Research on Black Men, 1:25-46. As a sample of his publications which are extensive!

## **9) Shavanah Taj**

- NHS porters and cleaners and social care staff have been left out of a Home Office scheme granting families of health workers indefinite leave to remain in the UK if they die of coronavirus.
- The exclusion of some of the NHS's lowest-paid workers – many of them employed by private companies under outsourcing arrangements has been branded as an "outrageous scandal" by UK trade unions.
- Some 8 per cent of social care home workers are foreign nationals from outside the EU, while non-UK nationals are also strongly represented among the ranks of hospital cleaners, porters, security guards and catering staff who are regarded as key workers but do not qualify for the bereavement scheme.
- Can the Minister please advise us what the position is for NHS workers in Wales and whether the Welsh Government has any intention of raising this issue with the UK Govt?

## **10) Isaac Blake**

Developing measures to combat anti-Gypsyism after 2020: Guidance for European and national stakeholders [http://ergonetnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019\\_05\\_31-Antigypsyism-Guidance-to-combat-antigypsyism.pdf](http://ergonetnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019_05_31-Antigypsyism-Guidance-to-combat-antigypsyism.pdf)

Please click on the link to download: "Stories of Health and Wellness: Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Communities in Wales" <http://www.romaniarts.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2017-05-02-HealthWellReportFinal.pdf>

## **11) Isaac Blake**

We work very closely with the Gypsy and Traveller community in South Wales.

There is a need for support for many families with food donations.

Is there any food parcel or food voucher availability that we could access and provide to site-based residents?

## **12) Hannah Fisher**

Gypsy Travellers Wales are providing food parcels in Cardiff and into the Vale and there is work underway in Torfaen. I'd be happy to share other links. Is this a national concern or would you like me to look at other specific areas?

## **13) Robert Moore**

One issue detected in North Wales (and may be universal) is that the stress on the vulnerability of BME population is leading some people to think that BME people pose an especially high risk (the majority population) as carriers of Covid-19. This might influence white parents in deciding whether to send their children back to multi-racial schools. Also likely to generally exacerbate racism. Bit of a dilemma for us in how we present the heightened vulnerability of BME populations.

## **14) Samsunear Ali**

Any guidance for the Muslim community regarding EID this weekend

## **15) Heather Payne**

We will be able to draw on the already published IPC advice for a wide range of public and commercial services, e.g. shops, education etc. - there have been a number of ideas already developed by education settings which cover similar settings

There is a plan to reinforce the gratitude for restraint in meeting during Ramadan, and through a Virtual Eid, also to reiterate the social distancing and hand hygiene measures. Wishing you Eid Mubarak!

## **16) Rocio Cifuentes**

Agree rollout of IT programme has been very slow - your input would be appreciated Minister

## **17) Kay Denyer**

We are not aware of any of our many HUB community asylum seeker or refugee members having received any equipment as yet either

## **18) Maria Mesa**

Same issues for some of our families

## **19) Aled Edwards**

Displaced People in Action (DPIA) has been helping a little by supplying pads on loan.

## **20) Rocio Cifuentes**

There was also a rumour that Home Office would deduct the value of any gifted equipment from asylum seeker allowances. If true this needs to be robustly challenged

When asking on behalf of children our staff in EYST have been told that Swansea Council is having to procure the laptops from WG and that the process is ongoing.

## 21) Hannah Fisher

Rocio, I understand that the Home Office deputy director gave John Davies his assurance last week that deduction would not happen

## 22) Iolanda Viegas

I'm glad and grateful Wales can do things differently, it's too early to ease the lockdown, we can learn a lot from other countries and how there's being an increase already. Wales post lockdown should be a great opportunity for society to re-think! we've learned that the most valuable people from our society are the LOW SKILL workers, and we should re-think how we treat them, Not to forget we still have after Covid issues going on, such as BREXIT and universal credit. It's clear we are going to be suffering as we don't have the same opportunities. Small community groups are essential to support all the BAME and most work without any funds, we need to think in funding all equally.

## 23) Robert Moore

Vulnerable agency workers in NHS. Does Welsh Government have plans to bring all health service workers back in house?

## 24) Rocio Cifuentes

Thank you Hannah. I will email John Davies as others are not clear, so are holding back from getting IT equipment out, or are loaning rather than gifting until there is clarity.

### Actions:

Action Number	Action
1	Forum members to send research/ links to research to Equality Branch mailbox <a href="mailto:EqualityBranch@gov.wales">EqualityBranch@gov.wales</a>
2	Sue Leake to share information in relation to Census questions with Forum members
3	Prof Moore to share the link to the US research with Forum members
4	DM&CW to raise Isaac's feedback re: Stay Safe, Stay Learning Programme with the Minister for Education
4a	Officials to follow this issue up also
5	DM&CW to follow up Isaac's concerns re: access to water, with Jenny Rathbone (MS)

