

Jane Hutt AS/MS
Y Dirprwy Weinidog a'r Prif Chwip
Deputy Minister and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref JH-/00321/20

Mark Koziol,
Chairman
The Pharmacists' Defence Association
The Old Fire Station
69 Albion Street
Birmingham
B1 3EA

19 June 2020

Dear Mark,

Thank you for your letter of 27 May addressed to the First Minister, Mark Drakeford MS, concerning the safety of frontline pharmacists, particularly from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, during the coronavirus pandemic. As equality falls within my portfolio I have been asked to reply and I apologise for the delay in doing so.

The safety of all our frontline staff is of paramount importance to us and a priority for the Welsh Government. Following the growing evidence that Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on people from BAME communities the First Minister established an Advisory Group to urgently investigate and gain a better understanding of the factors that might be involved. The Group comprises a wide membership and has been working closely with stakeholders from the BAME communities, including the Wales Race Forum and other expert advisers within Wales and across the UK.

The Advisory Group is chaired by Judge Ray Singh and is being supported by two sub-groups, one considering the wider issues of risk assessment and the other investigating the socioeconomic factors influencing poorer Covid-19 health outcomes in BAME communities and the subsequent work which needs to be progressed.

You may be aware that a risk assessment tool has been developed and was issued for implementation on 26 May. This tool has been developed for use in the workplace, primarily within health and social care, including pharmacists, to assess individual risk from Covid-19. Its use should form part of the discussions between all front line staff and their managers to help address any concerns and agree actions to be taken to help mitigate the risks from Covid-19. This is something which all pharmacists need to explore to help reduce their individual risk of contracting the virus, as well as alleviating individual concerns.

The second sub-group, which has been considering the wider socioeconomic factors affecting BAME communities as a result of Covid-19 will shortly be submitting its final report on its findings, including a set of recommendations for Welsh Ministers to consider. Once

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

agreed, these recommendations will be taken forward through a new Race Equalities Action Plan currently being developed.

I hope this demonstrates that as a Government we are listening and we are determined to improve the outcomes of our BAME communities in Wales from the effects of Covid-19, by better understanding the increased risks they face and taking actions to help reduce those risks and any further deaths. The recommendations are also wider reaching than Covid-19 and will aim to address the inequalities which people from BAME communities encounter on a daily basis.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Hutt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line above the first letter 'J'.

Jane Hutt AS/MS

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