



«Forename1People» «SurnamePeople»
«Line2People_Address»
«Line3People_Address»
«Line4People_Address»
«Line5People_Address»
«Line6People_Address»

Dear «Forename1People»,

COVID-19

As a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff member, we are writing to you in light of the worryingly high levels of COVID-19 infections and deaths amongst BAME groups. We want to reiterate our commitment to your health and well-being, signpost you to resources and share with you the actions we are taking to reduce inequality.

At a national level, an inquiry has been launched to understand why people from BAME communities are disproportionately affected by COVID-19. The nature of this relationship is complex and there is still a lot of learning needed to understand why. These complexities include socio-economic determinants of health that play a role in increasing exposure to the virus and lowering resistance.

Directors of Public Health are being given a greater role in the oversight of testing and outbreak management, this includes working with higher risk groups to prevent and protect spread. Cllr Asher Craig, working with the Mayor, is leading work with BAME communities looking at the evidence and identifying action. This work will be linked to access to testing and identification of local cases. The Public Health team will be working closely with our BAME communities in this regard

In the meantime we are taking the following steps to support you at work:

1. Keeping you safe. We are working hard to ensure that all colleagues and especially those working in the frontline roles are appropriately supported. We have developed and put in place a new “vulnerable persons risk assessment” to support colleagues with protected characteristics who are more at risk of acquiring COVID-19. Being from a BAME staff group is included as a specific risk factor.

The benefit of the risk assessment is that it will enable you and your line manager to assess together whether it is safe for you to continue to work in your job, whether adjustments are required or whether your job duties should change on a temporary basis. This is very much to support your health and wellbeing and we want reassure you that completing the risk assessment and any actions you and your manager take as a result should not be seen in any way as detrimental to your role or a barrier to your future career development. It is also important to keep the risk assessment under regular review.

A copy of the risk assessment is attached and has also been published on the Source. Also, if at any point you have concerns about PPE, please raise this immediately with your manager so that these can be addressed.

2. Sick leave due to COVID-19. Please do not hesitate to report any symptoms that concern you and take the time off that you need if you are unwell or need to self-isolate. This will not count against you in any way and sickness trigger points will not be affected. Your manager will keep in touch with you, including if you need to self-isolate. If you are experiencing symptoms, testing is available for you and your family and can be booked directly at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test>

3. Staying healthy is important, and there is advice available through the Employee Assistance Programme (0800 111 6387) and information at <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters>.

There is no evidence at present that Vitamin D deficiency is correlated with COVID-19 although NHS guidance is recommending checking your diet and use of supplements – the current advice is at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vitamins-and-minerals/vitamin-d/>.

4. Ongoing review. We will constantly review and update our advice based on national and local advice the outcomes of the COVID-19 inquiry. We will also be checking our approach against what other organisations are doing so we can learn from their experience and do our best to support BAME colleagues.

5. Speaking up about concerns. Finally, it is important you have confidence that you will be heard if you have any concerns about the current situation. Normally you should raise these with your manager. If you feel unable to discuss issues with your line manager it's important that you talk to the Human Resource team, BMEEG or your trade union. BMEEG are planning a virtual conversation in the near future (details to follow) so that BAME colleagues can share their thoughts and concerns on the current situation and how it affects them.

Thank you very much for everything you do, particularly during this difficult time. We value each and every one of you and we are really grateful for your continued commitment and hard work. By continuing to work together I am sure we can make real, positive and lasting change for our BAME colleagues and our communities.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Jackson – Chief Executive
Bristol City Council

| BMEEG

| UNISON
Bristol Black Members.

GMB

| UNITE

| NASUWT

| NEU

Enc: Vulnerable Persons Advice and Risk Assessment