

12th May 2020

Human Resources

Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust
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To all LTHT BME employees

Dear colleague

Positive Action for BME Colleagues during COVID-19

National data indicates that people from Black Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and we know this is an exceptionally worrying time for BME colleagues. We have heard that many BME colleagues are understandably worried about their own and their families' health at this time. On behalf of the Trust Board, I want to provide you with reassurance that your safety, health and wellbeing are of the utmost importance to us and we will take all the necessary precautionary measures to protect you and your families.

Following consultation with the Trust's BME Staff Network, we are taking 'positive action' to assure ourselves and the Trust Board that that all steps to protect you during the pandemic have been taken. We have asked your manager to meet with you to discuss any concerns you may have and to ensure all the necessary measures have been taken. This may be a face to face meeting, with appropriate social distancing, a virtual meeting or a telephone conversation.

I would encourage you to feel confident discussing with your manager any concerns you may have about COVID-19 and the impact on you and your family. This means your concerns and any risks are identified and rapidly acted upon. We have prepared a template to facilitate this discussion. You will be provided with a copy of the completed template and a copy will be retained on your personal file, however, the details of your discussion with your manager will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be divulged to anyone else without your permission.

If you have any underlying health conditions, I would also strongly encourage you and your manager to seek advice from the Trust's Occupational Service.

If you are absent from work due to self-isolation, shielding or COVID-19 sickness, you will not experience any financial detriment and it will not affect your future progress or job role. I would also encourage you are your manager to agree mechanisms to keep in touch so that you can be supported and be kept informed.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind and reassure you of the following:

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1. COVID-19 testing for staff who present symptoms is available. This is also available for family members who live with you. I would like to encourage all BME colleagues or their family members with symptoms to get tested as soon as possible. More information is available [here](#).
2. You will be provided with all necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) you need to undertake your role and if you need to use a FFP3 mask this will be provided and you will be supported to be FIT tested prior to using different types of FFP3 mask. More information is available [here](#).
3. A comprehensive range of services to support your health and wellbeing is available. This includes psychology support to all staff as we realise that staff will be experiencing anxiety at this time. Any colleague wanting to access this service can do this by clicking [here](#),

Nationally the government has commissioned Public Health England to undertake urgent research to understand the reasons for the disproportionate impact on BME individuals and as a Trust we are actively reviewing all the national guidance as it comes available. We will make any further necessary changes in light of any evidence-based guidance which becomes available.

Please remember, you can also speak to members of the BME network group in confidence by contacting leedsth-tr.BME@nhs.net about any concerns you may have and the Network will try to respond to your enquiry within 24 hours.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all that you are doing and assure you we will do everything we can to protect you at work and fully understand your concerns. Your manager will contact you as quickly as possible to schedule a conversation, however, I would encourage you to proactively contact them to facilitate this.

Yours sincerely



Jenny Lewis
Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development

Chair Linda Pollard CBE DL hon.DLL Chief Executive Julian Hartley

The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust incorporating: Chapel Allerton Hospital, Leeds Cancer Centre, Leeds Children's Hospital, Leeds Dental Institute, Leeds General Infirmary, Seacroft Hospital, St James's University Hospital, Wharfedale Hospital.