

Camden's Workforce

Understanding impact of Covid on our BAME workforce

Overview:

- Camden is committed to supporting all colleagues at all times and especially during this pandemic
- Since the beginning of the pandemic we have been working hard to ensure we
 1. Protect our most vulnerable colleagues
 2. Make our workplaces as Covid safe as possible
 3. Ensure we have the workforce working on the right things, at the right time
- As the pandemic progressed it has become clear that BAME individuals are being disproportionately affected.
- As soon as this was apparent we began work to
 - a) understand what the impact on our BAME workforce is, and
 - b) what else we need to do to support BAME colleagues

Context:

- This is a very serious issue and one that causes risk to individuals physical health but has very real potential to impact on an individual's emotional well-being even if someone remains physically well
- We know that BAME communities being more affected by the virus, and staff may have anxieties around coming into work and general wellbeing may be affected
- ONS report finds that 'low skilled' workers are dying from covid19 at nearly 4x the rate of professional workers – this is something we need to consider for parts of our workforce. Particularly cleaners and security.
- 40% significant proportion of our workforce are BAME and a large number are in our lower graded roles – this means this issue is of great importance to us.

Looking at our workforce sickness data

Full Council Breakdown

BAME/Non-BAME	Sick and Self-Isolating	Sick and Self-Isolating (%)	Council Actual	Council Actual (%)
Unknown	63	42%	1541	20%
Non-BAME	60	40%	3703	49%
BAME	27	18%	2386	31%
Grand Total	150	100%	7630	100%

Sick/self-isolating BAME and Non-BAME staff are underrepresented compared to their actual numbers in the council. The large amount of “Unknowns” is because Camden Schools do not record ethnicity/BAME status information rigorously.

Full Breakdown (excluding Camden Schools)

BAME/Non-BAME	Sick and Self-Isolating	Sick and Self-Isolating (%)	Council Actual	Council Actual (%)
Unknown	10	15%	580	13%
Non-BAME	36	54%	2051	47%
BAME	21	31%	1723	40%
Grand Total	67	100%	4345	100%

If Camden Schools are removed, BAME staff continue to be underrepresented, whilst Non-BAME switch to being overrepresented in terms of sickness/self-isolation proportionate to their actual numbers.

This analysis is different / almost opposite to what we are seeing in national data sets.

Looking at our workforce sickness data

To further investigate (as overall workforce data can hide local variation) we looked at key service areas (ASC, Caretakers and Repairs) who we know are out on the frontline during Covid

BAME Status and If Caretaker or works in Repairs Team(s)

BAME/Non-BAME	Sick and Self-Isolating	Sick and Self-Isolating (%)
Non-Caretaker/Repairs Team		
Unknown	60	40%
Non-BAME	53	35%
BAME	25	17%
Caretaker/Repairs Team		
Unknown	3	2%
Non-BAME	7	5%
BAME	2	1%
Grand Total	150	100%

BAME Caretakers and Repairs staff are the least likely to be sick/self-isolating compared to their Non-BAME (and Unknown) colleagues – forming only 17% of the total in those roles/services. Comparisons against council level are difficult due to irregularities in job/role names etc. and thus hasn't been included.

At present we have no sick or self-isolating individuals within ASC.

Summary of workforce data:

- Our workforce sickness data **does not show any disproportionate impact** on BAME individuals.
- We did one piece of further analysis which was looking at all divisions/services where we have anyone sick or self-isolating as a result of Covid and we looked at difference by ethnicity.
- This did not show any disproportionate impact on BAME staff either. This is not shared due to low numbers in each division and risk of identification.
- **However, we are not complacent.** We will continue to monitor our sickness data by ethnicity on an on-going basis and there are other measures we are putting in place to ensure we are supporting our BAME workforce.

Understanding the experience of our BAME colleagues

- On-going good and regular communication with our staff network group – the Camden Black Workers Group
- Pulse Survey – out to all organisation to understand current experience of all staff with the ability to break responses down via ethnicity. Results due w/c 18th May
- Following this we intend to directly reach out to all colleagues who are more vulnerable to Covid-19, including our BAME workforce. The aim is for this to be as personal as possible to see how people are feeling and what support colleagues may need.
- The results of the survey will also be used to inform further work e.g. possible focus groups and more in-depth qualitative work

Supporting well-being of colleagues:

Example of what is available on Essentials for all staff

Click on each of the icons below to discover what support is available to you during this time



Physical



Mental



Teams



Bereavement



Ramadan



Social



Financial



Childcare and home
schooling

We know many people will have anxiety as a result of the current situation and this is likely to be especially true for communities who are more vulnerable than others.

We have a comprehensive well-being offer for all staff to access.

Supporting well-being of colleagues

- We want to make sure support is targeted and specific where needed.
- We are supporting managers to understand how to support their staff during this period and what that may need to look like for different people – including thinking specifically about our BAME workforce
- We will also use the pulse survey and feedback from CBWG to dedicate bespoke support where needed.

Ensuring safety as lockdown eases

- For the time being the message to all our workforce is clear those who can work from home should continue to do so.
- All staff on the frontline have access to the necessary PPE
- As lockdown eases we are making our workplaces as Covid secure as possible
- **But most importantly** we have said no service can begin to return to a ‘new normal’ before a risk assessment is in place and has been consulted on – this will include looking at impact on BAME workforce
- We are also planning for EQIA on all of our vulnerable staff groups

Our immediate actions

- Keep monitoring sickness data to inform our approach
- Analyse the pulse survey data by ethnicity
- Ensure all staff who need a test for Covid have access
- Ensure effective PPE equipment
- Gaining further qualitative understanding of the experience of our BAME workforce
- Following ONS report setting our higher risk staff groups (namely security and cleaning staff) we revisit these roles to see whether further protective measures are necessary
- Risk and Equality Impact Assessments