

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



**Llywodraeth Cymru**  
**Welsh Government**

The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP  
The Home Office  
2 Marsham Street,  
London,  
SW1P 4DF

12 May 2020

Dear Priti,

I am writing to share concerns of the Welsh Government in relation to the growing evidence that the COVID-19 infection is having a disproportionate impact on Black, Asian, Minority or Ethnic (BAME) communities.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has today published an analysis of deaths involving COVID-19 by ethnic group. This provisional analysis has shown that the risk of death involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) among some ethnic groups is significantly higher than those of White ethnicity.

Urgent investigation is required to better understand what factors might be influencing this emerging research. In particular, there is a need to quickly identify the data and evidence that will enable us to act in an informed way and do all that we can to minimise avoidable harm in vulnerable groups. I welcome the recent announcement that the UK Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) is launching a formal review into the disproportionately higher percentage of Covid-19 mortality among people from BAME backgrounds and the contribution of Public Health Wales to that wider UK analysis. I hope to see swift action and constructive advice as a result of this inquiry soon.

The First Minister and I have established an advisory group to support the Chief Medical Officer and Welsh Government in advising, guiding and assisting officials to gather as much data and evidence as possible to better understand the risks facing BAME individuals disproportionately affected by Covid-19 in Wales; both in terms of contraction and death. This group will work closely with other UK Administrations in the development of work and also with Public Health England.

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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.

An area of concern to stakeholders is that data on ethnicity is not recorded on death certificates in England and Wales. Death certification and registration are non-devolved issues and are the responsibility of the Home Office through the General Register Office. Recognising there may be some challenges and many considerations to work through in doing so, will you consider revising the current process to include the opportunity to capture ethnicity on death certification and/or registration forms. The impending digitisation of the Medical Certificate of Confirmed Death (MCCD) might provide an opportunity to amend the MCCD and/or registration forms to introduce an ethnicity question, as is currently the case in Scotland. There may be other demographic factors which may be useful to include in the process, such as recording the country of birth, and we would be happy to explore this further with you.

The improvement to ethnicity data and evidence that this change could offer would enable us to act in an informed way and do all that we can to minimise avoidable harm in vulnerable groups. It will also efficiently target any actions required to address the problems of particular groups and areas

I look forward to receiving your response in relation to this matter.

Yours sincerely,



**Jane Hutt AC/AM**

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