

Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP  
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25 June 2020

Dear Ms Nokes

### **Women and Equalities Committee inquiries into the unequal impact of coronavirus**

I am writing in response to the launch of three inquiries from the Women and Equalities Committee on the unequal impact of coronavirus. I understand these reviews will look at the impact of coronavirus on BAME people, the gendered economic impact, and disability and access to services.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is deeply concerned about the emerging evidence highlighting that mortality rates from Covid-19 are disproportionately higher amongst those from ethnic minority groups, including our registrants.

You will be aware that the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) recently released the results of a survey of its members, which revealed that twice as many Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) nursing staff are likely to have problems accessing personal protective equipment (PPE) than their white counterparts.

In addition to the RCN survey, the results of the Public Health England (PHE) report, '*Disparities in the risk and outcomes of Covid-19*', published last week, has provided further evidence that Covid-19 has disproportionately impacted groups that already face significant challenges. I have published statements on behalf of the NMC on both the RCN survey, and PHE report, which can be found [here](#).

While the NMC is not in a position to submit formal evidence to the inquiry at this stage, I want to take this opportunity to update you on the work that we are undertaking on this important issue:

We have heard concerns from many of our partners across the health and social care sector that the virus is exposing and exacerbating existing inequalities. We are currently monitoring evidence on this from a variety of sources, including our Employer Link Service team, who regularly speak with employers and stakeholders across the UK, and other regulators and professionals working in a health and social care setting.

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We are the UK nursing and midwifery regulator. Our role is to protect patients and the public through efficient and effective regulation.  
Registered charity in England and Wales (1091434) and in Scotland (SC038362)

We are examining the relevant information we hold about the nursing and midwifery workforce, including new data on the diverse make-up of the professionals on our temporary register, that we recently established to support the response to the pandemic. We believe in an inclusive approach to regulation, and we are committed to working with our partners to have a full picture of who is on both our permanent and temporary register, and the challenges they face.

The NMC Code requires nurses, midwives and nursing associates to prioritise people, to treat them fairly and without discrimination, and to challenge any discriminatory attitudes and behaviours toward those receiving care. We expect our registrants to be treated by others using these same principles.

I welcome confirmation from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care that the Government will be leading a review into the impacts of Covid-19 on BAME communities. For information, I am copying in Elizabeth Truss MP, the Minister for Equalities, and Kemi Badenoch MP, the Under-Secretary of State for Equalities, into this correspondence, who I understand are leading on this review.

I hope the voices of ethnic minorities, and groups representing them, are listened to and taken seriously as part of these reviews. Also, the views of all groups raising concerns about the impact on those with protected characteristics.

We hope to be able to provide the Committee with full written evidence on the NMC's analysis of this issue in the near future. However, if you have any comments or queries in the meantime, please contact Ian Pendlington, Senior Public Officer, at [IanJames.Pendlington@nmc-uk.org](mailto:IanJames.Pendlington@nmc-uk.org).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Sutcliffe', enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

Andrea Sutcliffe CBE  
Chief Executive and Registrar

cc Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, Minister of State for Women and Equalities  
Kemi Badenoch MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Equalities)