

Written evidence submitted by Prerana Issar, NHS England and NS Improvement (WBR0110)

Rt Hon. Jeremy Hunt MP

Chair, Health and Social Care Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

22 March 2021

Dear Mr. Hunt,

Thank you and the panel for the helpful conversations at the hearing on 24th February.

I am writing to you to address the request made by Dean Russell MP to provide respective sources to support my responses given against Q235, so that this can be understood in its full context.

I mentioned that in April 2020, we launched a website that has been accessed more than 400,000 times – this is the [Supporting Our NHS People website](#).

Again, in April, we added a bereavement support helpline with the Samaritans which is available 12 hours a day together with a text support helpline, which is available 24 hours a day, both of which be found on the same website via [Support now](#). The coaching offer for primary care staff can be accessed via [Looking after you too](#). Access to all our wellbeing apps, including the suicide prevention app, can be found at [Wellbeing apps](#). In May, we added virtual common rooms, so that people could leave a stressful situation, come in and talk about what was on their mind which can be accessed via [NHS Staff Common Rooms](#).

I also mentioned the support available from the Association of Christian Counsellors ([Staff Counselling Service](#)), the support being provided for working parents and carers at [Place2Be](#), and [online yoga](#). Since the hearing, we have also launched a [counselling service](#) for our staff who are of Muslim faith.

The Minister and I referred to the People Pulse survey which we launched in July 2020, and which will be taken forward during 2021/22. So far more than 100 organisations across the NHS have signed up to use this survey. This tool gives staff a regular channel and a voice about their health and wellbeing and wider experience, which enables the NHS to evaluate and improve the way they are supported.

I also talked about the long-standing differences in the experiences of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, which have been reflected in the responses to the People Pulse survey. The responses from Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff indicate that they feel around 10% more anxious and 10% less supported compared with non-minority colleagues.

We have used this information to increase the level of support available to ethnic minority staff. For example, the national health and wellbeing offer includes a bereavement support service for Tagalog speakers ([Support offers](#)), for our Filipino colleagues, and the [Liberate app](#) which provides culturally sensitive and diverse meditations and talks, curated by the ethnic minority community.

At the hearing, I also talked about how we used the survey responses to augment our national health & wellbeing offer and associated communication, which complements local offers of support. Informed by that data, the introduction of mental health hubs was announced in November ([Staff mental health and wellbeing hubs](#)), which are now operational and providing rapid access to psychological support for those that need it.

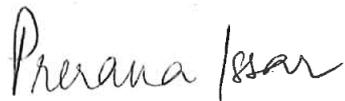
Finally, since I gave evidence at the hearing in February, the results of the annual NHS staff survey have been published and which showed some encouraging progress, with most areas maintaining improvements or moving forwards compared to 2019.

I was particularly pleased to see that the scores for both the health and wellbeing and safety culture themes are the highest for five years, while the morale score is the highest since the theme was introduced three years ago.

Our enhanced Health & Wellbeing offer, which includes individual health and wellbeing plans and enhanced occupational health & wellbeing for all staff will provide even further support to those that require it.

I hope this provides the additional context sought by the Committee.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Prerana Issar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Prerana Issar

NHS Chief People Officer

March 2021