

## WEN Cafe: Impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and minority ethnic women

15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

### Summary of discussion and outcomes

As we said in our Letter to the First Minister, Covid 19 is exacerbating inequalities that already existed for women and nowhere is this more apparent than with BAME women who are 4.3 times more likely to die as a result of Covid-19 than their white counterparts. (ONS Stats). As our speakers pointed out, it is not only inequality at play here, but also racism. This racial inequality runs deep in our society and we all need to work together to change the culture of our country, to make it a positive place for BAME women and young girls to thrive.

What is critical is swift action around the socio-economic area – in terms of alleviating poverty for BAME women and the risk assessments for those at front line.

Below is a synopsis of the key points raised. We look forward to hearing how these are being tackled.

- **BAME Women are over represented in the Health and Social care service provision**, not just Windrush, but migrant frontline workers, adversely affected by COVID 19.
- **A rise in deaths of Filipino workers has been stark.** Case of Husband and Wife keyworkers in Newport died recently, leaving 3 young children, BAME Women who pass away from COVID and leave children, often **do not have the typical family structure** available to step in to care, as they are in another country. **Children then in care system, without the cultural sensitivities and needs being provided for at a difficult time.**
- **Migrant workers often have dual financial responsibilities**, with contributions being sent “home”, often working more than one job to support families.
- **Discrimination being experienced by health workers at work has increased** since COVID epidemic, with black women feeling they are being into forced into the frontline of COVID 19 and experiencing **racism in the distribution of PPE. BAME Women workers feel unsafe in the work place.**
- **Government forums are very important** and must continue during and post Covid but they must result in action – e.g. risk assessments must be done and acted upon to remove BAME people from front line, where requested and where appropriate
- Economic Situation of BAME Women must be considered going forward, no choice but to continue work, low paid work,
- **Make work places safe** and ensure individual health risk assessments, with **inclusive campaign information provided in multiple languages and easy read** to let BAME people know what does a safe workplace look like, what are their rights.
- **Language Barriers** means greater isolation and lack of information.
- **BAME Community members are working and volunteering**, looking after members of the community unable to understand or aware of the full situation, **not being recognised for their efforts to support.**

- **Funding pots need to be made available for grassroots BAME community groups.**
- **Institutional racism and structural inequalities throughout the system needs further enquiry**, with an increase in representation at all levels needed sooner, with a push for measures, checks and inclusive practices in place
- **There will be a big rise in need of mental health support** for both nurses / carers and families who lose loved ones and have been discriminated against, in this time
- In the longer term, asked if either of the speakers were First Minister and they could wave a magic wand what would they do:
- Leila Usmani, RAW – **Introduce BAME quotas for representation & Independent NHS Wales Enquiry**
- Mymuna Soleman, Privilege Café, **Create the BAME Peoples Parliament**
- Shavanah Taj, would **act immediately on the advice already provided and known** within the government, to improve Welsh BAME Women's lives.
- Uzo Iwobi – continue the good work the First Minister and Deputy Minister are doing.