

FOI REF: 20/243

Tel: 0300 13 14 500
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9 June 2020

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

I am responding to your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. The answers to your specific questions are as follows:

Q1. Please state (yes or no) whether your trust has carried out a risk-assessment of staff at potentially greater risk of COVID-19, including people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. [If answer to Q1 is yes, please answer questions 2-5]

Yes.

Q2. Please state when this risk assessment was carried out.

All East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust staff who identified themselves as BAME on the electronic record system were written to on 13th May 2020 and asked to make themselves known to their manager if they were vulnerable to or suspected that they are vulnerable to COVID-19.

Q3. Please provide a short summary of what the risk assessment entailed.

The COVID risk assessment is based on current national and condition speciality guidance. The approach encourages an open discussion with staff and managers where mutual agreement on workplace adjustments can be made.

Q4. Please provide a copy of the findings of the risk assessment.

These risk assessments are currently being audited – the audit has not yet finished and will continue as the risk assessments need to be updated to reflect emerging guidance throughout the pandemic.

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Q5. Please list and provide brief details of any measures that your trust has subsequently put in place to offer protection to staff who are at higher risk from COVID-19.

All staff have to undergo fit testing for appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and if they fail this are deployed to work in areas where PPE is not required. Alternative products are being procured for staff who fail fit testing, such as hoods, that meet the safety specifications.

In addition all staff have been offered the opportunity to have a wellbeing assessment and/or encouraged to see their GP if they suspect they may have a currently undiagnosed health condition.

- Wellbeing assessment clinics for COVID 19 vulnerable staff commenced on 26th May which provides a safe space with a wellbeing advisor. The face to face sessions encourages staff from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds to access a safe space to discuss their physical and emotional wellbeing and impact of COVID 19. The sessions last around 30 minutes and advisors provide advice on exercise, eating and alcohol. Blood pressure checks, BMI and waist measurement are also included with discussion around Vitamin D.

The clinics have been well advertised through all communication channels. Emotional wellbeing of our staff has also been explored; staff has access to appropriate Employee Assistance support (EAP) and a 24 hour counselling service through Care First. Additional wellbeing resources are provided in the clinics which are delivered weekly across both acute and community sites.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Should you be dissatisfied with the Trust's response to your request, please write to Lynette Wells, Director of Corporate Affairs, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (lynette.wells2@nhs.net) quoting the above reference.

Yours sincerely

Linda Thornhill (Mrs)
Corporate Governance Manager
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