June 2020



Thank you for contacting me about the impact of the Coronavirus outbreak on ethnic minorities.

The Health Secretary commissioned Public Health England (PHE) to complete an urgent review on the disparities in risk and outcomes of the Covid-19 pandemic and has now published its findings.

The report confirms that being black or from a minority ethnic background is a major risk factor, both in contracting the disease and, sadly, dying from it. Importantly, this racial disparity holds even after accounting for the effects of other factors such as age, deprivation, region and sex.

PHE was asked to produce a rapid data review and this has been published in full. I understand that this was contributed to by Professor Kevin Fenton alongside a wide variety of PHE colleagues. Thus the analysis did not adjust for factors such as comorbidities, so there is much more work to be done to understand the key drivers of these disparities, the relationships between the different risk factors and what must be done to close the gap. Things like this may explain statistical differences between the PHE report and other findings and so it is vital we build on this initial work.

Equalities Ministers have reassured me that in the wake of the report, PHE has been commissioned to carry out further work to better understand the key drivers of the disparities identified in the initial report and the relationships between the different risk factors. I understand the Race Disparity Unit will be closely involved in this work, but if we are to get to the heart of this racial inequality, a number of government departments will need to be involved in our response.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**