



THE ASSOCIATION OF MANDHATA SAMAJ, UK.

Established 1972

Registered Charity No. 1055169

President: Hasmukh S Patel

Hon. Secretary: Ashok R Patel

Hon. Treasurer: Dilip M Jina

15th August 2020

AMSUK EVENTS/ACTIVITIES - UPDATE

Dear All,

Namaste. Hope you are all well, safe and healthy. As you are aware, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, all AMSUK Events/Activities have been cancelled/postponed until further notice and subject to UK Government's advice/guidelines on easing of the lockdown restrictions.

The safety of our Community members is of utmost priority and as such we believe that we are still a long way from restarting AMSUK Events/Activities. However, we will keep reviewing the situation on a regular basis and update you on any changes. In the meantime, we must act responsibly and follow UK Government's advice/guidelines to keep the Coronavirus under control.

Please also be informed that a comprehensive Report titled "COVID-19 in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic populations: An evidence review and recommendations from the South Asian Health Foundation" has been posted on our AMSUK Website (www.amsuk.org).

Abstracts from the Report titled "Executive Summary and "Culturally Specific Recommendations" are as follows;

Executive Summary

This review provides an overview of the current evidence on ethnic inequalities in the impact of COVID-19, and discusses potential explanatory factors for these observations. Critically, it makes much needed recommendations to protect Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals both in the general population and in key worker roles.

Current evidence suggests marked ethnic inequalities in the risk of hospitalisation and adverse outcome from COVID-19 infection. The available evidence also shows marked ethnic inequalities in the risk of death from COVID-19. Black and South Asian individuals appear at greatest risk, although most BAME groups have been shown to have increased risk when compared to White ethnic groups.

Factors that could explain the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 in BAME communities in terms of differential exposure and increased vulnerability can be categorised into structural, biological, and behavioural reasons. These explanations must be considered in the full context of the wider determinants of health including discrimination.

Immediate actions to prevent increased incidence of disease and further health inequality relate to;

- *Culturally tailored public health messaging*
- *Tailored test, trace and isolate strategy*
- *Priority testing for BAME workers*
- *Mandatory occupational risk assessment for non-NHS staff and NHS staff*
- *Ensuring research quality and equality*



THE ASSOCIATION OF MANDHATA SAMAJ, UK.

Established 1972

Registered Charity No. 1055169

President: Hasmukh S Patel

Hon. Secretary: Ashok R Patel

Hon. Treasurer: Dilip M Jina

- *Protecting migrants*
- *Closing immediate educational gaps*
- *Strengthening science*

Long-term actions to reduce structural inequality relate to:

- *Reducing health inequality*
- *Addressing occupational inequality*
- *Strengthening social security*
- *Addressing housing inequality*
- *Addressing differential educational achievements*
- *Addressing discrimination in the NHS*
- *Improving health literacy and knowledge relating to lifestyle behaviours*

Culturally specific recommendations relate to:

- *Employers and retail*
- *Places of worship and community centres*
- *Religious festivals*
- *Religious schools*
- *Funerals and burials*
- *Weddings*
- *People providing personal health and hygiene services*

In summary, it is clear that a comprehensive multi-sectoral approach – supported by strong policy action - is needed to tackle the multiple and complex structural, biological and behavioural reasons driving the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities. These recommendations are key to reducing health inequalities related to COVID-19.

Culturally Specific Recommendations

While we provide broad recommendations applicable to a wide range of BAME groups, we acknowledge that there are different culturally specific practices across ethnic groups. For specific recommendations please refer to faith organisations/interfaith groups etc. who are able to provide support and guidance such as [Muslim Council for Britain](#), [Hindu Forum of Britain](#), and [Churches Together in England](#).

However, given our organisation focuses on South Asian health, we provide an infographic (see [Figure 2](#)) on suggested measures to help protect South Asian communities.

Employers and retail

We advise that all recommendations from the Health and Safety executive are applied to all retailers and employers.

There is significant concern that social distancing and adequate hygiene measures are not uniformly applied across BAME employers and retail outlets. A single set of standards for the UK applies to all employers and organisations, and we recommend diligent enforcement of custom and practice in line with government guidance. In geographical areas with high levels of BAME retail outlets or BAME employers, we recommend that councils and public health officials provide focused review, assessment, and advice to these outlets and employers, to



THE ASSOCIATION OF MANDHATA SAMAJ, UK.

Established 1972

Registered Charity No. 1055169

President: Hasmukh S Patel

Hon. Secretary: Ashok R Patel

Hon. Treasurer: Dilip M Jina

ensure equitable treatment of employees and customers regardless of ethnic origin or socioeconomic status.

Places of worship and community centres

Places of worship including temples, gurdwaras, mosques and churches will consider opening their doors from 4 July for congregational prayers and services, in accordance with public health guidance. It is important to remember that individuals in BAME communities, particularly those aged over 70 and those with underlying conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease or obesity, remain at higher risk for severe COVID-19 related illness.

Leaders of religious institutions will need to be mindful of this. At present, there is no specific guidance for the number of worshippers allowed at services. However, all places of worship must abide by following public health guidance for physical distancing and hygiene measures.

For any congregation, until further notice, we recommend the maintenance of a register of attendees and contact details in order to inform the test and trace service, should the need arise to contact individuals to recommend isolation in the event of a community member testing positive for COVID-19 at any stage. Likewise, should any community member test positive for COVID-19, contact should be made with the NHS test and trace service (via 119) to enable them to contact others who may be at risk.

Recommendations:

- 1. Places of worship should have guidelines set up locally detailing who should be allowed to enter, wearing of appropriate face coverings and safe social distancing within the place of worship or community centre. They should risk assess to define safe numbers of worshippers at any one time depending upon the space available.*
- 2. Worshippers who are unwell, should not attend places of worship; especially if they have symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, persistent cough and/or loss or change in sense of taste and smell.*
- 3. When greeting each other, avoid shaking hands and hugging each other, especially with people from other households.*
- 4. Everyone should wear face coverings.*
- 5. Everyone should wash hands frequently with soap and water, and if needed perform religious ablutions at home. Alcohol gel is equally effective (if it can be used).*
- 6. Worshippers should take their own religious items where appropriate such as prayer beads, cross, holy books, prayer mats etc.*
- 7. All worshippers should adhere to 1-2 m social distancing even when praying.*
- 8. Individual worshippers should decide independently whether it is safer for them to remain home to pray and attend an online service rather than being physically present at the place of worship.*

Religious festivals

Several upcoming religious festivals will most likely be affected by the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions in the UK.



THE ASSOCIATION OF MANDHATA SAMAJ, UK.

Established 1972

Registered Charity No. 1055169

President: Hasmukh S Patel

Hon. Secretary: Ashok R Patel

Hon. Treasurer: Dilip M Jina

Recommendations:

- 1. When greeting each other for religious festivals, do not shake hands or make any physical contact like hugging, especially with people from other households.*
- 2. When attending places of worship for religious festivals, please observe the measures outlined above.*
- 3. People should avoid gatherings of more than two households and should continue to keep physical distancing, good hand hygiene, face coverings and avoid meeting others if they or someone in their household is unwell.*
- 4. If unwell, social isolation measures should apply.*
- 5. Worshippers should take their own religious items to these places of worship or social gatherings.*
- 6. Worshippers should remember that virtual meets and religious sermons are available for those who cannot attend but also to allow for inclusiveness to these special occasions.*

Religious schools

Faith-based supplementary schools (those out of school/ after school times) are still not permitted to open at present for physical learning. Remote learning is recommended. When faith-based supplementary schools are able to re-open, precautionary measures should be in line with public health and government guidelines.

In addition, further considerations are:

- 1. If children are unwell or have someone at home unwell, they should not attend and instead use remote learning.*
- 2. Teachers and students who are living with someone who is shielding or vulnerable should avoid attending and be involved with remote learning.*
- 3. Student class numbers should be reduced to ensure safe physical distancing.*
- 4. Students and teachers should bring their own religious items and avoid sharing of equipment.*
- 5. All learning and social spaces should be cleaned at the end of each day.*

Funerals and burials

Bereaved families will understand why attending physically to lend support and to grieve in these difficult times during the UK lockdown/ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is not possible. It is possible to perform these religious and community rituals virtually with family and friends via online services.

Recommendations:

- 1. It is essential to observe strict personal hygiene when coming into contact with the body of a deceased individual and/or their bodily fluids. This means using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).*
- 2. When preparing a body for the funeral this should be performed by those fully trained in putting on and removing PPE. This may exclude family or friends.*



THE ASSOCIATION OF MANDHATA SAMAJ, UK.

Established 1972

Registered Charity No. 1055169

President: Hasmukh S Patel

Hon. Secretary: Ashok R Patel

Hon. Treasurer: Dilip M Jina

3. *When paying last respects, viewing should be arranged in the mortuary parlour but may be difficult to perform and should be avoided if possible, especially for those who are in vulnerable and shielding groups.*
 4. *Funeral prayers in the places of worship should follow public health guidance as detailed above.*
 5. *Funeral meetings at home should be restricted to only two households, keeping personal hygiene and physical distancing.*
 6. *Memorial prayers that are held for the departed should be restricted to two households.*
 7. *A full service in memory of the departed could be held after restrictions are eased.*
- As noted above, we recognise there will be a wide range of practices regarding funerals, burials and wakes across ethnic minority groups. For example, people of Jamaican heritage and/or diaspora in the UK, commonly hold a nine-night extended wake – alternatively called a ‘dead yard’ or ‘set up’. For nine nights following a person’s death, significant numbers of friends and family typically gather at the home of the deceased, sharing their condolences and memories, playing music and sometimes singing hymns, while consuming food and drink for the duration of this period. In accordance with national guidance these types of traditional practices are not advocated and it is therefore recommended that these ceremonies are delivered virtually and/or by telephone.*

Weddings

From 4 July in England, weddings with a strict limit of 30 guests will be allowed. This may be challenging for BAME communities who traditionally host large wedding functions.

Recommendations:

1. *Consider postponing the wedding.*
2. *Check alternative dates with your venue and suppliers as soon as possible. Many venues and suppliers will have lost significant sums of money and therefore will require finding a solution that works for everyone.*
3. *Consider a small wedding ceremony limited to 30 guests with appropriate social distancing and personal hygiene (including face coverings), and then celebrating with further friends and family in a larger function at a later date.*

Those providing personal health and hygiene services

E.g. healthcare workers, beauty therapists and hairdressers.

Social distancing in these occupations will be almost impossible. It is therefore imperative to keep both employees and clients safe when work recommences.

Recommendations:

1. *Complete risk assessment forms, discuss with Occupational Health and liaise with line manager/ employer to understand risk of severe illness with COVID-19 and whether other lines of work/ precautions need to be organised.*
2. *Wear PPE regardless of where working, and this also includes a face visor or goggles.*
3. *Practice good hand hygiene, regular hand washing with soap and water. Alcohol gel is equally effective if it can be used.*



THE ASSOCIATION OF MANDHATA SAMAJ, UK.

Established 1972

Registered Charity No. 1055169

President: Hasmukh S Patel

Hon. Secretary: Ashok R Patel

Hon. Treasurer: Dilip M Jina

4. If an employee is contacted by the NHS test and trace service having been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they should be recommended to undergo self-isolation.

The comprehensive Report is posted on our Website.

For information about AMSUK and its activities, please log on our Website (www.amsuk.org). Our website has particular need for our members to assist with the development of the website for AMSUK Affiliated Towns and Gaam Mandals regarding the activities of respective Organisations. Dedicated pages on the website are provided free of charge for publication of material that is commensurate with AMSUK's Objectives.

Can we please request all the Affiliated Towns and Gaam Mandals to let us have their valuable information about their local Organisations, their activities, events calendar and other information that can be shared with our Mandhata Community at large.

Thank you for your continued support. Please get involved and let us thrive together.

Kind regards,

Hasmukh S Patel
President

Ashok R Patel
Secretary