

Dr Tony Sewell CBE

Chair

Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

CC. Minister for Equalities Kemi Badenoch MP

13 April 2021

Dear Dr Sewell

Re. Race equality in the UK report

We are writing to express our deep concerns about the recently published report into race equality in the UK and ask that we can meet with you to discuss this in further detail.

Since publication of the report we have had a significant response from our members, including through our new national Black, Asian and ethnic minority forum, indicating that the report neither reflects their experiences, nor progresses the conversation about how to address racial inequality at an organisational or societal level. We accept that racism and race equality is an immensely complex issue, but the report appears to be underpinned by a single narrative that attempts to minimise racism in the UK, with in our view the flawed interpretation of selected data.

The BMA, representing our over 150,000 doctor and medical student members, [submitted to the Commission's consultation for the report](#), and I also provided evidence to the commission's health sub-group on behalf of our Association. We do not believe that the report appropriately reflected our submission. The report celebrates the *"onward march of minorities into positions of power and responsibility in professions such as...medicine"*. Yet it provides shockingly little analysis of the challenges faced by many ethnic minority and overseas-trained doctors, including differential attainment and under-representation among the highest ranks within the NHS. In the NHS, there is irrefutable evidence of discrimination faced by ethnic minority doctors at all stages of their career commencing from medical school.

Notably, the report also failed to mention that 85% of doctors that died from Covid-19 in the UK were from minority ethnic backgrounds. As outlined in our submission, BMA member surveys during the pandemic found that doctors from ethnic minority backgrounds were more than twice as likely to feel pressured to work without adequate PPE in high-risk settings, and more afraid to speak out about safety concerns for fear of recrimination or it affecting their careers.

We were also troubled by other parts of the report, particularly the section on health, where there is a failure to acknowledge that it is often root structural inequalities that directly lead to many ethnic

Chief executive officer: Tom Grinyer



minorities being more greatly affected by social determinants of health. Our submission urged the Commission to fully investigate the link between poverty and racism and we do not believe this was satisfactorily done.

Finally, it is not clear from the report how the recommendations will be implemented and who will be responsible for overseeing this. We would be grateful if you could clarify this, as well as the Commission's plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the recommendations and the report overall. We strongly encourage you to engage with the feedback that this report has received and to engage with stakeholders in reconsidering some of the messages and conclusions in the report.

Despite our disappointment in the report, its publication reaffirms the BMA's commitment to tackling racism in all forms, interpersonal and structural. We are currently preparing a further analysis of the issues tackled by the report and will share this with the Commission. We remain committed to working with government to tackle racism in the UK and hope we can meet to discuss this further in the near future.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of the name 'Chaand Nagpaul' written in a cursive style. The first name 'Chaand' is written in a larger, more prominent script, and the last name 'Nagpaul' is written below it.

Dr Chaand Nagpaul CBE
BMA council chair