

# Deputy Minister Jane Hutt welcomes new BAME Helpline Launched



Many BAME organisations in Wales have witnessed increased service demand from BAME community members impacted by Covid-19 needing advice and support around a range of areas. A partnership of organisations working together has today launched a brand new national multi-lingual BAME telephone helpline to respond to this demand.

EYST, working in partnership with Women Connect First, Henna Foundation, ProMo Cymru, Wales TUC, and key BAME Stakeholders has received funding from the Welsh Government via the Voluntary Services Emergency Fund managed by WCVA to deliver the helpline, initially as a six-month pilot project.

The helpline will provide an accessible first port of call for information on a range of specialist, mainstream and community organisations, with call handlers speaking a range of community languages.

Available from Mon - Friday : 10.30 - 2.30, those looking for help on a number of issues such as; employment & welfare, education, housing, personal safety and health issues can be referred or signposted to a range of a range of mainstream and community organisations for further advice and support. **The helpline number is 0300 2225720 and SMS text on 07537 432415 the website is [www.bame.wales](http://www.bame.wales) .** **The helpline will go live on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September.**

Building on years of experience working with partners, the helpline will provide an opportunity for increased partnership working to meet the needs from the BAME community during the Covid-19 Pandemic and beyond.

Deputy Minister and Chief Whip Jane Hutt welcomed the new initiative stating "I'm delighted to be supporting the new BAME Helpline through the Voluntary Services

Emergency Fund. Its launch will help remove language and cultural barriers to ensure all communities in Wales can access the support they need.

Welsh Government is committed to creating a more equal Wales, and we're working to break down the long-standing inequalities that still exist. We're currently inviting BAME organisations to work with us to develop a Race Equality Action Plan, which aims to implement and embed the systemic change we want to see."

Wales TUC General Secretary Shavanah Taj said "Many workers in Wales from BME backgrounds have been disproportionately impacted by COVID19, due to a range of long-standing socio-economic factors. A high number of anonymous reports into the Wales TUC whistleblowing site and grassroots community feedback, demonstrated the need for trade unions to play a key role in accessing often hard to reach workers, not covered by union recognition. More often than not, BME workers are left feeling ostracised, vulnerable, exploited, work zero hours, on precarious contracts faced with bad bosses, unfair and dangerous work practices with no recourse to public funds. We hope to change this through working with EYST and other organisations involved in this important project. All workers deserve to be safe and protected at work with a strong voice at the negotiating table but to do this they first need to understand how to access their rights at work."