



## Terms of reference: Review into disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19

Health disparities are differences in health across the population, some of which may be unfair and avoidable. There is emerging evidence from the United Kingdom and other countries that some population groups have an increased risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19 including some ethnic groups, males, levels of obesity, those in deprived communities, older people, some occupations, people living in care homes, and other vulnerable groups. This may exacerbate existing health inequalities in the population.

The Chief Medical Officer for England, Professor Chris Whitty, has already asked Public Health England (PHE) to examine inequalities in the risk and outcomes from COVID-19 by ethnic group.

However, there is a need to examine disparities across all dimensions of inequality and among other population groups, where possible. PHE will undertake a review of the epidemiological evidence on disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19 using available data sources.

The objectives of the review are to:

- analyse and present disparities in COVID-19 infection, hospitalisation and mortality
- describe the association between age and sex and COVID-19 cases and outcomes
- quantify disparities in excess mortality by comparing against previous years
- consider possible explanations for the findings such as the presence of obesity or underlying health conditions that are associated with increased risk of complications from COVID-19
- determine the impact of occupation (including healthcare workers), where data are available, on hospital admissions and outcomes from COVID-19 infection
- suggest recommendations for further action that should be taken to reduce disparities in risk and outcomes from COVID-19 on the population

The review will not ascertain root causes of findings that are likely to be driven by complex interactions. Consequently, the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) was commissioned to examine these in more detail. The review will complement the research call being conducted by NIHR.

This work will be led jointly by Professors Yvonne Doyle and John Newton, and initial findings should be available by the end of May.

PHE will work with external experts, independent advisors and stakeholders to consider the results of the review and any suggested recommendations.