

UPDATE ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19):

**AT LEAST 3 MORE WEEKS OF LOCKDOWN BRITAIN
AS 809 CASES OF COVID-19 CONFIRMED IN NEWHAM
AND AGAIN LET'S #CLAPFORCARERS AT 8PM**

FROM MAYOR ROKHSANA FIAZ

16th April 2020

Dear Newham Resident,

Early today, the government confirmed that Lockdown Britain will continue for 'at least' three more weeks to the 7th May, and announced five tests that have to be met before considering lifting any of the restrictions in place.

These tests include confidence that the NHS can cope, a consistent and sustained fall in the daily death rates coupled with a decrease of infection rates to 'manageable' levels. There's also the requirement that the UK's testing capacity and PPE supplies are able to meet current and future demand to prevent a second peak.

All this on a day when deaths caused by coronavirus rose by 861 from yesterday, with a total of 13,729 being registered in UK hospitals. In London, the number of people infected with Covid-19 stands at 19,511; and 809 of those are from Newham.

For our social care workers this means three more weeks of being dangerously exposed to this deadly virus, because they don't have the 'luxury' of the 'working from home' option. For ethnic minority carers and residents in Newham - the most diverse borough in the country - there's the on-going fear of increased Covid-19 death rates because of ethnicity.

New analysis has revealed that of the 54 frontline health and social care workers in England and Wales who have lost their lives to coronavirus 70% were black or from an ethnic minority. This of course includes the heroic pregnant nurse Mary Agyeiwaa Agyapong who died at the weekend after colleagues successfully delivered the baby she was carrying. That's why I'm glad to hear that Public Health England are undertaking an urgent investigation of the possible reasons.

We know that the haphazard delivery of protective equipment to care homes is a national scandal; and that the Government has fallen short on testing of care staff (and our residents) which is critical to stop more and more people dying. The experience in Newham is another spotlight on the government's shameful management of these issues.

At this time of national crisis the Government simply has to recognise the pivotal role local authorities like Newham are playing in holding together our communities; protecting the vulnerable, supporting our young people and small businesses, housing

the homeless and providing vital extra services like delivering food parcels to those most in need. However, all of this comes at a huge cost.

Myself, and other council leaders are concerned that the messages coming back from the Government seem to be stepping back from the original "spend, spend, spend" pledges to fully reimburse already over-stretched local authorities. We must all hold the Government to its pledge to "spend whatever it takes" to get the country through this crisis. We are doing our bit – but it must not come at the cost of further council cuts when the crisis eases.

Tonight at 8pm, I'll be clapping loudly in honour of the work being done by all our carers, NHS staff, and key workers during the weekly #clapforcarers from a grateful nation. Please let's not forget the disproportionate numbers of those from our ethnic minority communities who have died because of this deadly virus.

Watch the powerful #YouClapForMeNow video that powerfully highlights this issue [here](#); and tomorrow please #StayAtHome for everyone's safety.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rokhsana Fiaz" with a stylized flourish underneath.

Rokhsana Fiaz
Mayor of Newham

People at the Heart
of Everything We Do