

UPDATE ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

DETAILS OF HORRIFIC MURDER OF NHS WORKER DAVID GOMOH ON THE DAY WE FIND OUT THAT 219 PEOPLE HAVE DIED BECAUSE OF COVID-19 IN OUR BOROUGH

28TH APRIL 2020

Dear Newham Resident,

Ordinarily, when I post my daily updates, I'll start by providing a snapshot of the lives lost and the numbers of those infected by the coronavirus. Not tonight.

Because tonight, I need to tell you about the unbelievable outrage that has devastated a Newham family. David Gomoh, who was 24-years-old, was stabbed to death in Custom House on Sunday night, and following initial police investigations they've confirmed today that it was a random attack on an innocent member of our community.

David was one of those heroes we clap for on Thursday nights, because like his mother, who is a matron at Newham University Hospital in Plaistow, he worked for the NHS as a key worker helping to keep NHS staff supplied with essential personal protective equipment during this global pandemic that has impacted on us in our borough.

This local hero was brutally stabbed just yards from his home on Freemasons Road in Custom House at around 10.25pm on Sunday night. Adding to this sheer act of inhumanity, David was grieving – as was his mother and other siblings – the death of his father who recently died of an illness linked to Covid-19. The family were preparing for the funeral that was due to take place tomorrow.

It is unimaginably cruel that this young man, who was doing so much good for the community and our country, has been ripped from his family in such a horrific and mindless way. On behalf of Newham Council and the whole community, I want to send my deepest condolences to his family and friends.

The only thing we can do to help this distraught family is to help them gain some measure of justice. Police say David was attacked by a group of men wearing masks, while he was on the phone to a friend. He was not involved in any argument.

His killers left the scene in a stolen Silver Dodge Caliber car that was abandoned at about 10.30pm in nearby Lincoln Road, E13. Police need to speak to anyone who was in the area or anyone who remembers seeing this car, either before or after the attack. They are particularly keen to speak to anyone who has dash cam footage, or CCTV of the area around where the car was dumped.

Please if you know anything that can assist the police and help bring David's killers to justice ring the incident room on 0208 345 3985. You can also contact via 101 or twitter at @MetCC, quoting CAD 8371/26APR.

At a time like this, when so many families are grieving, no doubt this murder and the added heartache of this family will break your hearts, as it has mine. We owe it to them to do anything we can to help.

Today the latest Covid-19 deaths and infection rate in hospitals and the care sector were published by the Department of Health (DoH) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS). They both show very different but worrying trends.

The number of people dying in hospital is beginning to slow (subject to variations due to a lag in weekend reporting), with 586 people losing their lives in the past 24 hours. However, the figure for people dying outside hospital settings seems to be accelerating at an alarming rate.

The ONS data shows a sharp rise of more than 4,300 deaths registered from Covid-19 in care homes across England and Wales in a fortnight since 10th April to 24th April, with 50% recorded in the past five days alone – indicating an acceleration and how care homes are now at the centre of this crisis. This marks a sharp rise in the official death toll in care homes, which stood at 1,043 up to 10th April.

The Government has since announced that from tomorrow, care home deaths will be 'tracked' in the same way as hospital deaths, which means daily as up until now they've been published weekly and are a week out of date. The ONS has always cautioned that its figures may be an underestimate because of reporting delays, which means that the true figures will be higher.

In Newham, because of the ONS figures published today, we've been able to calculate that there have now been 214 Covid-19 related deaths in our borough, but this is only those officially recorded, and up to the 17th April (which is the number of deaths recorded, not registered).

What that means is that the figure is almost certainly an under-estimate of those that have died, because there will be some deaths that have not been recorded as Covid-19 deaths but which were Covid-19 caused; or are deaths that occurred indirectly caused by the virus, for example through limited access to healthcare. Additionally, the number of Covid-19 infections in Newham has now reached 936 of the 23,979 confirmed cases in London as of today.

Included in the death figures, are more than a hundred health and social care workers who have lost their lives to the disease since the start of the crisis, and there will be many more in key service areas like public transport who have, and continue to put themselves in harm's way, so we can stay safe.

That's why we wanted to join the national minute's silence held at 11am this morning. As a Council, we wanted to pay our own tribute to the dedicated workers who have lost their lives to Covid-19 because they were serving their communities during this desperate time.

It was a very moving moment where we could all come together, not physically, but emotionally to say thank you to those who have paid for their service with their lives. They will not be forgotten.

Today has been an unimaginable solemn day of shock, sadness and remembrance, and tonight as I reflect on the enormity of what we are all facing, I pray for your safety and that of your loved ones tomorrow.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rokhsana Fiaz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rokhsana Fiaz
Mayor of Newham

**People at the Heart
of Everything We Do**