

**UPDATE ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19):**

**WE'VE PASSED THE 'PEAK', 26,771 HAVE DIED SO FAR FROM COVID-19  
AND OVER 140,000 HAPPY BIRTHDAY CARDS FOR CAPTAIN TOM**

**FROM MAYOR ROKHSANA FIAZ**

**30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2020**

Dear Newham Resident,

Earlier this evening, many of you, like me, would have been on your doorsteps or balconies or in your front gardens to #ClapForKeyWorkers and #ClapForTheNHS as part of the national weekly tribute that starts at 8.00pm.

There are many reports of how touched our frontline key workers are with this outpouring of support, providing comfort and encouragement in light of the challenges they face every single day. We now know they endure fear, stress and anxiety as they battle the deadly coronavirus to save the lives of our residents in Newham and elsewhere.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) published survey results today showing how 40 per cent of key workers reported they felt worried about their health and safety at work (compared to 17 per cent in the general population) while 71 per cent said they are feeling stressed or anxious as a result of the crisis (compared to 65 per cent in the general population).

Meanwhile NHS England has issued with new guidance about protecting Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority (BAME) NHS workers; after evidence has emerged that they featured disproportionately in the death rates from Covid-19. Advising health bosses that BAME personnel should be 'risk-assessed' and reassigned to duties that leave them at lesser risk of contracting coronavirus. You can read more about it here: <https://tinyurl.com/y7net7rl>, including concerns about how this can be achieved without leaving local health and social care services, where the majority of the workforce are from BAME communities, bereft of front line staff. That's why it is right that there is special attention paid on prioritising these staff with the required personal protective equipment and testing access.

Today the number of deaths in all settings, including hospitals and care homes rose to 26,771 – that's 674 more people lost to the virus, in the last 24 hours. In London, the number of infections today stands at 24,297 – and 943 are Newham residents. I wish them all a swift recovery and despite a fall in hospital admissions, we are clearly still at a delicate stage in the battle against Covid-19.

Today, while the prime minister said that the country has passed the 'peak', he stressed any changes to the current lockdown measures would only be confirmed once the government was confident the Covid-19 outbreak was under control. Next

week, the government will be publishing a comprehensive plan how to restart the economy; how to get children back to school; and how to get people into work. But we are far from returning to 'normal' – whatever the 'new' normal will mean. The government's comprehensive plan will set out how it can continue to suppress the spread of Covid-19, avoid a second peak, and at the same time restart the economy.

Let's see what the plan sets out, but it is important to note that the Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty has cautioned that we are 'nowhere near the end of this epidemic'. It's right to be cautious, as none of us want to see another increase in deaths, or a dread second 'wave', which is now happening in Germany sparking fears that it lifted restrictions too soon.

As it is, an Ipsos Mori poll published today suggests that two thirds of people think government imposed lockdown too late. Worryingly, the poll also reveals that people are also becoming less concerned about the risks to them personally from the outbreak. In the past month, the percentage of people expressing concern about the risk to themselves over time has dropped nine points to stand at 69 per cent. You can read the survey here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycno4qqd>.

That's why I urge everyone in Newham to please keep up with the restrictions in place, stay at home and only travel if essential, to stop the spread of Covid-19 in our borough and save lives.

On a heart-warming note, it was wonderful to hear about the 140,000 happy birthday cards posted to centenarian Captain Tom Moore, who celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday today, alongside his achievement of raising £31 million for the NHS through his sponsored walk. Happy Birthday to him from all of us!

As ever, stay well and stay safe.

**Best wishes,**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rokhsana Fiaz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

**Rokhsana Fiaz**  
**Mayor of Newham**

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