

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1A 2AA

11 June 2020

Dear Prime Minister

**COVID-19: FUNDING FOR FOOD AND ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES FOR THE VULNERABLE**

I noted your announcement in the House yesterday, regarding a further £63 million which will be made available to local authorities to provide food and other essential supplies to vulnerable residents.

Of course this additional funding is welcome, but the total funding available to local government will not be sufficient to meet the acute needs of these vulnerable residents, both those identified at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and those identified during the pandemic. The Government must live up to the Communities Secretary's commitment to fund "whatever's necessary" to support communities through this crisis.

As Ministers and DEFRA officials consider the basis for allocating this new funding, I repeat again the point made in my letter to you of 7 May (a response to which I am looking forward to receiving), that the distribution of funding must take far more account of local circumstances.

MHCLG has distributed the two previous tranches of £1.6 billion funding to local authorities on the basis of the Adult Social Care Relative Needs Formula and on a simple population basis. Neither formula adequately reflects the need for additional money required for Newham in light of the deprivation and inequalities that manifestly exist and disadvantage our residents, including our residents from minority ethnic backgrounds who are disproportionately affected by Covid-19.

London Borough of Newham  
Newham Dockside  
1000 Dockside Road  
London E16 2QU

T +44 (0) 20 8430 2000  
W [www.newham.gov.uk](http://www.newham.gov.uk)

Poor quality and overcrowded housing, particularly in the private rented sector; the worst air quality in London - leading to some 97 people dying each year as a consequence; and the reality that many of our residents figure disproportionately in low paid, insecure and high risk occupations on the frontline (such as the transport and care sectors) has meant that the COVID-19 death rate in Newham is, tragically, among the worst in the country.

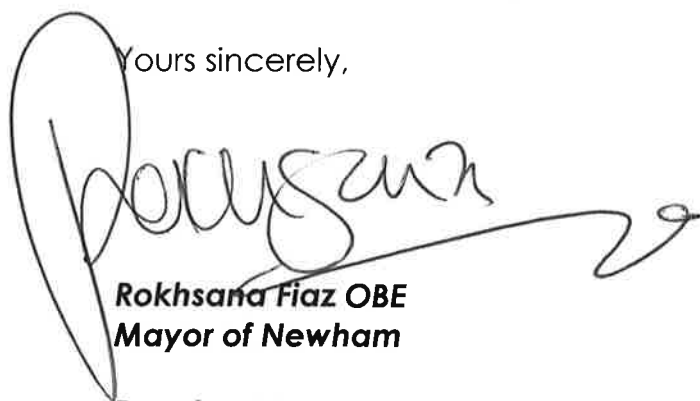
Our resident population comprises of 73 per cent from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority communities are at particular risk from the COVID-19 pandemic, as detailed in the recent report published by Public Health England. Underlying health conditions and deprivation, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic, have meant that many more residents have had to look to the council for support during the crisis.

Using either previous formula of allocating funding would be wholly insufficient in meeting the desperate level of need in Newham. That's why distributing the £63 million on a simple per capita basis is grossly inequitable. Even if the funding is distributed according to the Adult Social Care Relative Needs Formula the London Borough of Newham's share would only be around £0.4m. We currently need to spend around £150,000 per week just to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents. Newham has already provided over 32,000 deliveries of food and supplies over the pandemic.

Without substantial additional funding based on an enhanced equitable formula - previously referred to in my last letter to you in the form of a 'COVID-19 Deprivation premium' - Newham residents will once again be further significantly disadvantaged.

That is why, I am urging you and your Government to apply a COVID-19 Deprivation Premium to ensure that funding properly reflects the scale of the challenge we face in tackling deprivation, and to recognise the significant impact that COVID-19 has had, and will continue to have, on communities like ours here in Newham. We want to do whatever it takes to help our most vulnerable residents during this crisis, but we need more money to do so.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rokhsana Fiaz', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

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

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

C.c. Rt Hon, Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State MHCLG  
Victoria Prentis MP, Minister lead, Food and Essential Supplies to the  
Vulnerable Task Force.