

UPDATE ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19):

**PRESTON RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE FROM MIDNIGHT, MORE COUNTRIES ON
QUARANTINE LIST AND NO SEEMS TO KNOW IF TRANSMISSION OF VIRUS IS REALLY
LEVELLING OUT**

**FROM MAYOR FIAZ
FRIDAY 7th AUGUST 2020**

Dear Newham Resident,

On the hottest day in August for 17 years, where temperatures passed 36 degrees in the UK, this evening the government announced that Preston in Lancashire has become the latest city in England where a ban on households mixing in homes or in gardens is being put in place from midnight tonight till at least the 14th August following a request by the Council. It comes as the government confirmed that restrictions imposed in parts of Greater Manchester will remain in place for another week.

The government has also announced that people arriving from Belgium, Andorra and the Bahamas will have to quarantine for 14 days, after increases in cases; and it looks as if France may well be next. Already, Norway has announced that it is re-imposing quarantine restrictions on France.

Last weekend I reported concerns that the community spread of the Covid-19 was increasing, but the latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that between 27th July to the 2nd August,, there appears to be a 'levelling off' with approx. 1 in 1,900 individuals with the virus, equating to some 3,700 cases per day. This is lower than the previous week but still higher than a few weeks ago. But there still remains uncertainty, as for a second week the committee that advises the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has said that it is not confident that the 'R' rate in England is below 1 in England.

As of today, according to Public Health England (PHE), there's been a total of 309,005 Covid-19 lab-confirmed cases in the UK, with 46,511 Covid-19 associated UK deaths, an increase of 871 and 98 respectively. In London, so far 36, 061 people have been tested positive for Covid-19 with 1,351 from Newham. Sadly 308 people in Newham have lost their lives to Covid-19 so far and my deepest condolences to all families affected by the loss of their loved ones.

Earlier this week, the government announced that it was going to launch 90 minute 'rapid' coronavirus tests that it has bought soon, but today it was revealed that they haven't been approved by the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency yet, nor has any peer reviewed research been published about the tests effectiveness on patients. How are we to have confidence in the national test and

trace programme when key elements haven't been subject to rigorous scientific and expert scrutiny?

Over the coming two weeks, our young people will be finding out what grades they'll be getting for A Levels, BTECs and GCSEs, though this year because of Covid-19 they've not been able to sit any exams. Instead, this year exam results are being determined using a combination of limited teachers' assessments and reports; alongside comparisons with individual school results and national averages of results in England from the previous three years.

There have been concerns about this approach, because exam results are largely being set by a computer algorithm based on their school's prior attainment. Already there has been uproar in Scotland, following analysis of Scottish Higher results which showed that the standardisation model used by the Scottish Qualifications Authority led to children from disadvantaged backgrounds having their results reduced at more than double the level of their more affluent peers.

According to new clarification from the exam watchdog Ofqual, schools in England will be able to lodge appeals if they can show that grades are lower than expected because previous years classes are not 'representative' of this year's students, with fears that teacher assessments of A-level results could be downgraded by some 40 percent. Even the Royal Statistical Society has called for an urgent review of statistical approaches adopted in Scotland and England to provide much needed transparency for pupils and parents.

Ofqual has now said that individual schools will be able to appeal if there is a very different pattern of grade results compared to previous years, though won't allow individual students to appeal against their grades on academic grounds as they can in Scotland. This will no doubt add to the pressure of our young people who have been impacted hugely by Covid-19.

They, like all of us, are contending with this new reality of Covid-19 living which has impacted all our lives; but be assured we will be watching the situation very closely and supporting pupils and our schools who feel they have been disadvantaged by this year's grading system. Already our education and youth empowerment services teams are putting in place advice and guidance, if any pupil feel things have not gone the way they had hoped. We recognise that they've had to negotiate a tremendously difficult and stressful time over these past five months.

As you know, Covid-19 has required all Councils to improve streets for walking and cycling at a safe social distance, plus reduce pressure on road and public transport. This week we announced how Newham and Waltham Forest Councils are working together to create people-friendly streets and an experimental **Low Traffic Neighbourhood** covering parts of Forest Gate, the Maryland area of Stratford, and South Leytonstone. It is the first time two London boroughs have come together in this way. You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y442xvbs>.

With less traffic, noise and pollution, local streets will be safe and more pleasant to use, especially for children to cross the road and walk and cycle to school, where the

government has asked us to reduce use of public transport by young people by some 60 percent when the new academic year starts in September.

The hot weather is predicted to remain above 30 degrees over the weekend - so if you are planning to be out and about please make sure to keep hydrated, making sure you are carrying water with you, stay in the shade and wear sunscreen. However hot it gets please don't attempt to swim in unauthorised open water in our borough – it may look tempting but it is potentially lethal.

If you are venturing out in the sunshine this weekend, pop over to Three Mills Green in Stratford to see the new magnificent 9ft bronze sculpture by Thomas J Price called Reaching Out. It's only the third public sculpture in the United Kingdom that depicts a black woman, and was unveiled by our Deputy Mayor for Communities, Councillor Charlene McLean. You can read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2mb7qdv>.

Please also look out for others, including neighbours, family or friends, who may be unable to care for themselves. If someone you know is self-isolating with suspected Covid-19 symptoms, keep in contact with them to make sure they're safe. There is some advice on our website about coping with hot weather here: <https://tinyurl.com/y3t8m963>.

Finally, do keep Covid-19 safe. Wear masks on public transport and indoor areas where social distancing is difficult, wash your hands regularly and remain two metres away from people you don't know. We are not done with this virus yet, which is why it's absolutely essential we don't get complacent, especially in a borough like ours, which we know from bitter experience is particularly vulnerable.

Stay well and stay safe.

Best wishes,

**Rokhsana Fiaz
Mayor of Newham**

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