

Nadhim Zahawi MP
Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU

11th June 2021

via email

Dear Nadhim,

Newham is not getting its rightful share of COVID Vaccines

I am writing to you with deep concern on behalf of the residents of Newham, a borough where 78 percent of our population is from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities. Frankly put, the people of Newham are not getting their rightful share of Covid vaccines as supplied by the government via the NHS.

You will be acutely aware that Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on minority ethnic communities here in the UK, evidenced with devastating effect since the outbreak of the pandemic last year. You are also aware that Covid-19 has compounded long-standing health inequalities that exist for minority ethnic communities, and for residents living in areas of high deprivation.

It is why Newham has been amongst the hardest hit from Covid-19, and this discriminatory practice against our community here in Newham, in the supply of vaccines has yet again made us vulnerable to a major outbreak of the Delta variant, causing both the government and a number of experts great concern.

Presently, only 44 percent of eligible Newham residents have received a first dose of the vaccines on offer; and only 25 percent have received their second dose, significantly below the London and UK average. Local health partners have informed me that they have had to 'beg and borrow vaccines from areas' in order to generate the right levels of supply for Newham. It is unacceptable to have inequity in the vaccine supply regime here.

In effect, we have been left at the back of the vaccine queue, and the failure of vaccine supplies for Newham residents has left our community significantly exposed and vulnerable, posing real risks to their health and lives. This is especially concerning, as the government is considering lifting remaining lockdown restrictions on the 21st June.

Moreover, I am extremely concerned because we know that the transmission of the Delta variant is rising among young people. This compounds Newham's vulnerability and risk, because 38 percent of our

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population is under the age of 24-years, and we have among the highest rates of intergenerational housing in London (as well as overcrowding). Limitations of vaccine supply will limit our ability to break the cycle of community transmission in our borough.

I am asking that you personally intervene, as a matter of urgency, to ensure we are provided at speed the vaccines we need to protect our adult population here in Newham and to prevent a surge in infections; and would welcome an urgent meeting with you to discuss this concerning matter in detail.

Finally, you will be aware that our response to Covid-19 since last March has been nationally recognised by the government, NHS and Public Health England and we stand ready to work with you to roll out the life-saving mass vaccination program to all our eligible residents here in Newham.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rokhsana Fiaz".

**Rokhsana Fiaz OBE
Mayor of Newham**

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