

UPDATE ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19):

**330 CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19 IN NEWHAM
AND HIGHEST RISE OF DEATHS IN A SINGLE DAY IN THE UK. WHICH IS WHY
#StayAtHome IS VITAL**

FROM MAYOR ROKHSANA FIAZ

April 1 2020

Dear Newham Resident,

As we settled in for the evening by ourselves or with immediate loved ones, we won't find solace in the fact that today the UK recorded its highest number of deaths caused by coronavirus - rising by 563 people to 2,353.

The Government reports that 152,979 people in the UK have been tested so far, with 29,474 recorded as positive. But figures from the Office for National Statistics also reveal that dozens more people have been dying as a result of the pandemic in care homes and other settings, meaning the true total is likely to be considerably higher.

In London, 8,341 people have been tested positive and here in Newham, 330 of our friends, colleagues and neighbours have now tested positive. Up 43 from yesterday.

Tragically, it was confirmed overnight that one of those to have died in London, was Ismail Mohamed Abdulwahab from South London. He was 13-years-old with no underlying health conditions.

Also on the day it emerged that only 2,000 frontline NHS England staff have been tested for coronavirus, out of about half-a-million staff members, we found out that a retired doctor who answered the call to help has also lost his life - the fourth frontline medic to do so.

My heartfelt condolences to those who have lost loved ones in such devastating circumstances, and I pray for a full recovery to all those suffering the effects of the virus.

It is clear we have still to reach the height of the virus' impact in London and in our borough. That's why it's more important than ever to continue to follow the rules, and follow all the official trusted advice, be it from the NHS, Public Health England, or from ourselves at the Council. With more time on our hands, the internet is a tempting distraction, but it can also be a source of misleading, irresponsible and dangerous information.

People may want to believe fake information stories as an excuse not to follow the guidelines and carry on with our normal behaviours, but we all must really follow rules to protect each other. That includes thinking that driving in a car is an easy way around the restrictions. As Professor Yvonne Doyle, Public Health England's director for health protection and medical director, has said, it shows a worrying complacency

on the back of evidence that shows that too many people are out and about in their cars more.

Stories about phony cures and conspiracy theories only detract from the crucial message about #StayAtHome. We must also continue to practice social distancing, avoid congregating in groups, keep up rigorous personal hygiene standards, as well as cutting out unnecessary travel – by cars or any other form of transport.

All of this advice is grounded in scientific fact, not wild speculation, and will keep you and your loved ones safer and at less risk of infection. While the vast majority of Newham residents are following the rules, there are sadly a minority in our borough who seem to think that the rules don't apply to them.

Under emergency laws introduced on March 21, the Council now has powers to take enforcement action against those who flout the law. Parks are being patrolled, officers are giving people in group's advice to disperse, and where necessary have the power to make arrests.

In our high streets, Trading Standards, supported by law enforcement officers have been visiting shops deemed non-essential and advising them to close down immediately. Since patrols began, 50 have complied and four shops have been issued with notices for closure.

We have also had complaints about shops "hiking" prices for some essentials, and while there are lengthy and complicated legal means to tackle this, the best advice is to refuse to shop there. People power is a forceful tool, by all means call-out the profiteers, but if you don't hand over your cash they will soon get the message. But we continue to monitor the situation and continue to tackle the few who are acting irresponsibly, to protect the many.

We must keep on top of this virus and delay its spread. If you are unsure about anything, you read or hear visit us at www.newham.gov.uk/Coronavirus for latest about the virus, council services, health advice and help if you need it.

As always, stay safe and let's #HelpNewham together.

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