

UPDATE ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19):

148 PEOPLE CONFIRMED WITH CORONAVIRUS IN NEWHAM THAT'S WHY #StayAtHome THIS WEEKEND IS VITAL

**FROM MAYOR ROKHSANA FIAZ
27th March 2020**

As we end the week, the need for us to continue to do all we can to stop the spread of the virus and #StayAtHome remains the most important message.

News that the Prime Minister and the Health Secretary have contracted Coronavirus brings into stark focus the fact that this dreadful disease can affect any one of us and why we must apply social distancing. In Newham, 148 people are now confirmed as of today of being infected with the virus, a rise of 71 cases since Wednesday. I wish everyone affected a speedy recovery.

It has been a week of rapidly moving events. Since Monday's new restrictions placed by the Government, at the Council we immediately put in place a series of protective measures and the full details of changes to services can be found here: www.newham.gov.uk/servicesstatus. We've also had the announcement of the NHS Nightingale field hospital that will open in Newham soon, and the launch midweek of the #HelpNewham network of local hubs across the community neighbourhoods.

They will be the hubs through which we'll distribute food, prescriptions and other essential items so that our most vulnerable residents are supported; nor isolated as they include a borough-wide telephone chat service. We've had a fantastic response and my thanks to everyone stepping forward to support this crucial effort.

Yesterday, we heard further announcements by the Government to deal with the financial impact of the crisis that will cripple many workers; including some welcome measures to help the self-employed. Here at the Council, we'll continue to do all we can to help our residents who are struggling in line with our Community Wealth Building aspirations; that's why I am pleased to announce that next week we'll be implementing the Council Tax Reduction Scheme to cover 100 per cent of our 19,500 lowest income households.

If you are having difficulty paying your Council Tax please contact the Council's Tax and Benefits team on 020 8430 2000. We are here to help and want to support residents in these difficult times.

The week has closed with news that the Government has asked all councils in England to house rough sleepers off the streets by the weekend to 'protect their health and stop wider transmission, particularly in hot-spot areas'. Rough sleepers are a highly vulnerable group in our community and need our care during this outbreak. We have been working hard to implement an emergency action plan and provided self-

contained accommodation for rough sleepers, housing 65 people to date in Newham.

This is part of a wider London Plan that the GLA and the Government are leading, to ensure that all rough sleepers are offered accommodation to be able to self-isolate and to reduce the spread of the virus.

For all the latest and best advice please visit our website at www.newham.gov.uk/Coronavirus and please follow NHS guidance. Wash your hands for 20 seconds frequently; minimise social contact with others; work from home where possible; stop social gatherings with other people including in parks, recreational areas and places of worship. Only travel if it is essential travel. Keep up with the social distance measures, which are vital.

Stay safe and well.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rokhsana Fiaz', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Rokhsana Fiaz
Mayor of Newham

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