

**24 MARCH 2020**

**MESSAGE FROM MAYOR ROKHSANA FIAZ – CORONAVIRUS LATEST:  
MAYOR WELCOMES NIGHTINGALE HOSPITAL TO ROYAL DOCKS EXCEL CENTRE**

Dear Newham Resident.

The sheer scale and speed of the spread of the coronavirus has been breathtaking and has led to hospitals being forced to declare “critical incidents” which means the pressure on beds and staff has reached breaking point.

So I am pleased that NHS England has managed to come to an agreement with our neighbours at the ExCeL exhibition centre in the Royal Docks to use their building to create an emergency field hospital, appropriately called Nightingale Hospital.

Our colleagues in the National Health Service are working flat out to keep us all safe and this latest development at ExCeL is a sad step to have to take, but a totally necessary and exceptional one to support how they respond to the changing nature of the pandemic.

Initially it will welcome 500 patients, but eventually may have to offer several thousand beds. The Nightingale Hospital will draw courageous nurses, doctors and other staff from across the health service, as well as a number of military medics who will also tend to patients. The majority though will be NHS staff, including many former retired staff who are stepping in to help.

The NHS is already well equipped to meet the coronavirus challenge and is working hard to treat and prioritise patients, while also ensuring the safety of staff and visitors at all hospitals. I am totally assured that this will also be the case at Nightingale Hospital and there will be no risk posed to residents and businesses in the surrounding area from having this facility on our doorstep, though there may be some changes around the footprint of the ExCeL building that we have to observe.

Don't be alarmed if you see uniformed military personnel in the area. They are there for a reason, doing a great job in the build and construction of this potentially life-saving project. As a Council we too stand ready to support this new hospital and will look to do everything we can to ensure it can become operational as soon as possible.

In the meantime we can also continue to do our bit to support our wonderful doctors and nurses and health staff. This is the single biggest health challenge

this country has faced and we all need to follow the guidance set out by Government about how to stay safe and practise good hygiene.

If you have to visit any hospital for whatever reason, only go if you really have to. If you are going just because you feel unwell, look online first at all the effective health advice. And if you do have to go, observe the advice about social distancing.

Let's help our brave NHS by helping ourselves. Follow the NHS advice at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> on how to protect yourselves. NHS 111 also has an online coronavirus service at <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> that can tell you if you need medical help and offers advice on what to do.

**Best wishes,**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rokhsana Fiaz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

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

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