

## **UPDATE ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19):**

### **UK deaths rise to 12,868 as the care home scandal rages because of PPE and testing failures by the Government**

**FROM MAYOR ROKHSANA FIAZ**

**15th April 2020**

Dear Newham Resident,

As official figures confirm the number of deaths from Coronavirus continue to rise – today a further 761 hospital deaths were announced in the UK, bringing the total to 12,868 on the day when the number of cases confirmed globally went over 2 million. In Newham, 796 confirmed cases of people with the virus has been reported; an increase of 21.

Rightly concern is mounting about the number of people who are dying who are not included in these horrific daily hospital statistics, such as those in care homes across the country.

Britain's biggest care home operator, HC-One, revealed two-thirds of its homes have been affected and more than 300 people have died in them. Meanwhile, Care England said there have been thousands of cases and deaths in the homes it represents.

The Government today announced that everyone in a care home will be tested – including staff, alongside new proposals to allow people to be with relatives in care homes who are gravely ill with coronavirus before they die and revised guidance for the care home sector which you can read: <https://tinyurl.com/tsnhjy9>.

But this is too little and too late as more and more PPE is needed for this, alongside testing for our valued care staff. It is not good enough that they are on the frontline without the protection they and our elderly residents need. Those elderly residents who have been treated despicably because they are out of sight.

Today we learnt that Newham Council has been offered just one slot a week, where 20 staff at a time from across the care sector can be tested for the virus at a new facility at the O2 Arena. This is completely inadequate for such a large workforce of around 2,000 care workers in our borough who make the difference between life and death of our elderly.

That's why we've been calling on the Government to increase testing, testing and more testing for our front line workers, our vulnerable residents and the wider community; alongside contact tracing so we can stop the spread of this deadly virus. We need to challenge the Government for the mess of its own making, and they must be held up to scrutiny now as part of a heightened democratic processes during this crisis time. At the Council, we are already doing this with weekly Cabinet briefings,

and the same for all councillors; plus regular updates to members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In addition, I get daily updates directly from the Chief Executive following daily Covid-19 Gold group meetings that she chairs, and I chair a sub-committee of Cabinet every Wednesday, called the Covid-19 Executive Response Group, to ensure a rigorous and robust scrutiny of how the Council is responding to this crisis. We'll soon be publishing a report that provides an overview of everything that we have in place; and are working through when we can resume Full Council meetings too.

As this crisis continues, we are learning more and more about how each of us is affected by, and coping with, the new environment in which we must now live and work. Experts at Kings College, London, have teamed up with pollsters from Ipsos-Mori to take a snapshot of our behaviours, feelings and understanding of Life under Lock Down. You can read more about the study here: <https://tinyurl.com/wkshnqc>.

If the survey raises any particular concerns for you or your loved ones, we have plenty of advice available on our website, which is here: <https://tinyurl.com/vrijh85>.

I know that it is difficult to deal with the scale of lives lost, and it is understandable that many will be feeling anxious with this new lock-down existence, But there is positive, heart-warming and the inspirational that we can take comfort from.

There's the amazing 106-year-old, Connie Titchen, who after three weeks in intensive care because of coronavirus is back at home today with her family. She's a great-grandmother who is the oldest known person in the UK to survive Covid-19. There's also the WWII veteran Captain Tom Moore, who at 99-years old while recovering from a hip fracture has raised over £8 million for the NHS Together charity, by doing a sponsored walk at home. If you want to donate, visit: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tomswalkforthenhs>

Amidst the darkness – there is beauty, inspiration and hope. But please stay at home, for the safety of all of us and take care of your own well-being. If you need to reach out for help, or for a vulnerable resident that you know, please call us on 0208 430 2000. We are all in this together and need each other to get through this crisis which is impacting all of us.

Stay safe.

**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**