



Message from the Chief Executive Althea Loderick

First of all, I want to say thank you. The current situation is incredibly difficult for people in terms of their physical and emotional wellbeing and I know all staff are working above and beyond the call of duty to support residents, particularly the most vulnerable, often while trying to care for friends and family.

This webpage has been created specifically for staff who don't have access to council IT systems so that we can keep you up-to-date on general matters concerning and those specific to your service. We will be publishing general information for all staff along with specific information relating to your services so please check here regularly.

Thank you!

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Coronavirus (Covid-19)

LBN Staff update 23/03/2020

- This is the third slide-based briefing which should be cascaded to all staff through line management chains and shared / discussed with all those who are not on email at weekly or daily briefings. It will be issued at least 2x per week on Mon and Thurs, or more frequently as required.
- More detailed information and guidance is on the intranet and managers should ensure all staff are able to access this even if they do not normally use email or ICT equipment.
- A new accessible intranet will be available from later this week, available to all staff including those without Newham email addresses.

It will cover:

- Latest national / regional / local figures re cases
- Latest national guidance and advice
- Key local situation updates
- Key messages for staff and public in Newham

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National and Local Status 23/3/20

- The number of infections is growing rapidly, as of 2pm on 23 March 2020:
 - 6,650 cases of coronavirus have been confirmed.
 - There have been 281 deaths in the UK.
 - Newham has 70 confirmed cases and 6 deaths (as of Friday)
- All schools, nurseries are closed to most children, but still providing support for vulnerable children and children of keyworkers
- Colleges, leisure centres and a range of other face to face services have closed, and more will close in the coming days
- Newham has received a grant of £10.5m from the government to support our emergency activity
- Social distancing must be followed and more rigorously applied

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Key messages for staff 23/3/2020

- Our goal is to preserve the critical priority services to our residents as far as we can, so staff must be kept as safe and healthy as possible
- All staff must now work from home wherever possible
- Key workers can have a letter from their Corporate Director to prove their status
- We have stress tested ICT through a WFH exercise and are confident it is sufficient
- Thanks to all colleagues for their flexibility and creativity so far – this will help us continue to support the most vulnerable
- What the new restrictions announced by government mean for council priority services will be worked through and further advice provided
- Many colleagues may have to change their roles to support critical services or help voluntary efforts
- By working together, and looking after each other, we can come through this difficult time
- Social distancing, both in and outside work, is vital

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Mental Health Matters 1 – please emphasise in your staff briefing

Your health and wellbeing is important to the Council and this guide will help and support you through these unprecedented times.

1. Seek accurate information from legitimate sources

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-employees-employers-and-businesses

2. Set twice daily limits on news on COVID-19

Try to avoid excessive exposure to media coverage. Consider turning off automatic notification and taking a break from the news.

3. Look after yourself

Self-care in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak includes focusing on things you can control (like having good hygiene) instead of those you cannot (stopping the virus). Where possible, maintain your daily routine and prioritise your wellbeing and positive mental health.

4. Reach out to others and support people around you

Keeping in touch with your friends and family may ease the stress caused by COVID-19. Assisting other people in their time of need and reaching out to someone who may be feeling alone or concerned can benefit both the person receiving support as well as the helper. Please bear in mind social distancing recommendations and keep at least two metres from others during this time.

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Mental Health Matters 2 – please emphasise in your staff briefing

5. **Maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking**

Try and focus on things that are positive in your life. Find the positive stories and images of local people who have experienced COVID-19 and have recovered or who have supported a loved one through recovery and are willing to share their experience.

6. **Acknowledge your feelings**

It's normal to feel overwhelmed, stressed, anxious or upset, among a wide range of other emotional reactions, in the current situation. Allow yourself time to notice and express what you're feeling.

7. **Ask for help**

The Council provide staff with access to an Employee Assistance Programme, this includes freephone access 24 hours-a-day, 365 days-a-year to access counsellors and advisors who can provide both practical and emotional support on a variety of issues. Call 0800 328 1437 (via minicom: 01482 661 814). For further information and additional sources of specialist information staff may access the website:

www.employeeassistance.org.uk (online access code: Newham).

Contact hr@newham.gov.uk to request a chat with a **Mental Health First Aider**. Don't hesitate to get in touch with them if you need to. They can use their skills to support anyone struggling with their mental health by signposting them to the appropriate support, both in and outside of the workplace.

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