

## UPDATE ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

**20% of Covid-19 deaths happen in the community; we've lost a local GP and teacher; but we must be hopeful as trials for a vaccine start this Thursday**

**FROM MAYOR ROKHSANA FIAZ  
21 APRIL 2020**

Dear Newham Resident,

The total number deaths attributed to Covid-19 in hospitals in the last 24 hours has leapt to 823, bringing the total of those who have died to 17,337 people. In terms of infection rates in London today's figure stands at 22,072 and 878 are residents from Newham.

Today we also became clearer about the true human cost of coronavirus and its deadly impact as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published its latest data – showing that tragically, the number of people who have lost their lives to Covid-19 is much higher than the daily hospital death figures published by the Government.

Specifically, the ONS data shows that 20 per cent of deaths from Covid-19 in the week ending 10<sup>th</sup> April occurred outside hospitals and in the community (for example, in care homes, hospices and in people's own homes). That's 13,121 people who have died. This number is *41 per cent higher* than those who died in hospitals (9,288 people) in the same period. The ONS figures also reveal that deaths in care homes that week was *double* what it was just four weeks before.

My deepest sorrow to all those families who are grieving the loss of their loved ones, including Dr Yusuf Patel; an exceptional and dedicated GP committed to improving health outcomes in Newham. Having founded the Woodgrange NHS Medical Practice in Forest Gate, he is the fifth GP to have died in the UK from Covid-19 and will be remembered as a pioneering health practitioner serving our community. Reflecting his dedication to Newham for more than 30 years, over recent weeks he was on the frontline in helping our residents during this Newham Covid-19 crisis. There's also the death of Dr Louisa Rajakumari, an inspirational English teacher for over 30 years from Kingsford Community School in Beckton who'll be sorely missed by fellow teachers, pupils and parents.

It's why I am really hoping that the trials for a coronavirus vaccine which will be starting this Thursday by Oxford University are successful. There's also the Imperial College trial which is entering its second phase; and today the Government announced an additional £42 million so that this vital work can be accelerated. You can read more here: <https://www.covid19vaccinetrial.co.uk/home>.

Today, Trust for London, an independent charitable foundation that aims to tackle poverty and inequality in the capital, published its London Poverty Profile report. The report provides a stark reminder, especially at this time, of the poverty and social and economic inequality that affects the lives of Newham residents. As Trust for London says: "pandemics disproportionately affect those most disadvantaged and the economic consequences of Covid-19 will hit the poorest hardest".

That it is why this Council is taking action to support Newham businesses and workers. We have increased our support for businesses to help them access advice and funding – 1,899 local businesses have already been helped to access over £28.5 million of grants, helping to protect local jobs. We have also put an additional £2.7

million into the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, providing more help for residents who are experiencing difficulties during this difficult time.

Tackling poverty and inequality are at the centre of what this Council does, through our Community Wealth Building strategy: tackling injustices, building prosperity, wellbeing and fairness for all, and unleashing the potential of Newham's residents.

The abject failure of this Government to tackle poverty and inequality is laid bare in this report, which tells us that in London:

- 19,961 families in London were affected by the benefits cap in November 2019 – a 76% increase over the last five years
- 56,000 London households are in temporary accommodation, an increase of 30% compared with five years ago
- 76% of children in poverty in London (555,000) are in working families

The Government has to end the tyranny of the benefits cap which is pushing many families, including those in work, into poverty and the very real risk of homelessness. They need to help us tackle the housing crisis by prioritising the delivery of homes at social rent levels – to free our residents from the fear of being forced into poverty to simply put a roof over their heads.

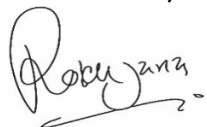
And I demand that at this time when we are told “we're all in it together”, they match the rhetoric with decisive action.

We will continue to put residents at the heart of everything we do – such as #HelpNewham which has already provided 4,306 food packages for our most vulnerable residents – and through a Community Wealth Building approach we will ensure that our response to Covid-19 continues to tackle the poverty and injustices that too many of our residents face.

As the London Trust report says: “We hope that, following COVID-19, civil society, businesses and government will continue to work together to create a new social settlement that ensures that no one has to live a life of poverty, and that social and economic prosperity is shared more equitably.”

Stay safe, keep well, and support one another.

**Best wishes,**



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

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