

UPDATE ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

GRIEVING IN LOCKDOWN, SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PUBLISHES ITS COVID-19 PLAN HOPEFUL SIGNS PLUS #CLAPFORCARERS & #CLAPFORKEYWORKERS AT 8PM

FROM MAYOR ROKHSANA FIAZ
23 APRIL 2020

Dear Newham Resident,

As we #ClapForCarers and #ClapforKeyWorkers at 8pm tonight, we'll be marking a milestone; because today marks exactly one month since we became Lockdown Britain which started on March 23.

In that time the death toll has continued to mount and in the last 24 hours a further 616 people have died in hospital, leading to a total of 18,738 across the UK. In terms of infection, London has recorded 22,767 cases of the disease and 898 of those were in Newham.

The loss of a loved one at any time is heart breaking, but during this period of social distancing, when our normal rites of mourning are severely curtailed, the strain of dealing with bereavement is multiplied.

Andy Langford, clinical director of Cruse Bereavement Care (CBC), said the tragic death toll in tandem with the nationwide lockdown has meant that hundreds of thousands of people are left grieving in isolation.

They estimate that for every person who dies, at least 6 people suffer intense grief for. So on the basis of today's hospital figures; at least 112,428 people will be trying to cope with grief because of the death of a loved one from Covid-19.

When we look for light in the darkness, there are always hopeful signs. The government has today announced that essential workers will be able to book (via their employer) their own free tests from this Friday, and for their relatives, with the results sent back via text message. They also announced the launch of the long anticipated contact tracing app, plus a recruitment drive for 18,000 people to work on manual contact tracing. They will include 3,000 clinicians alongside 48 mobile laboratories which will be set up to help the testing effort by the end of this month.

Also today, the Scottish government published a 'Covid-19 framework' that will inform it's approach to easing restrictions - but made it very clear that it doesn't mean life will return to normal. Crucial behaviours including physical distancing and hand-washing will remain essential; those most at risk will continue to be shielded; workplaces and education settings would need to be redesigned to enable proper physical distancing; restrictions could be lifted and then re-imposed at short notice; and restrictions would likely be lifted in stages. The priority, it says, is minimising overall harm. You can read the full report here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybb53cyz>.

So, with no early end to lockdown in sight, the Council has been doing everything it can to support our most vulnerable residents, extraordinary efforts have been made to find accommodation for rough sleepers, and residents in property deemed unsuitable for self-isolation.

Newham's rough sleeping team has found 256 Rough Sleepers accommodation in over 40 locations. Of these 160 are new rough sleepers and 41 people have been moved from properties that no longer met clinical guidance.

Our #HelpNewham hubs have delivered 5,500 emergency parcels of food and essentials, and made telephone contact with 11,697 residents identified as most in need of support.

Our business support team has processed 2,286 grant applications from small businesses, and those in the leisure, retail and hospitality sectors – feeding £33,680,000 of vital grants into our local economy, to protect jobs and livelihoods.

Our Youth Services has transformed itself in just three weeks from a physical youth hub operation to an online offer, incorporating social, personal and emotional education for our young people that mirrors the programme that they experience in the physical youth zones.

This all at a time when we are maintaining our core services, like refuse collection, social work, parks service, and emergency repairs to keep residents safe.

So, at 8pm tonight, for the fifth time since the pandemic began, I will be joining you on your doorsteps, at your windows, and on your balconies for #ThankYouThursday where I'm sure once again you will show your love and gratitude to our amazing #ClapForCarers and #ClapForKeyWorkers.

This week we are adding to our salute by lighting up East Ham and Stratford Town Halls with the blue lights, which have come to symbolise our support for all those risking their own lives to save ours.

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