



UPDATE ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19):

**968 RESIDENTS IN NEWHAM INFECTED WITH COVID-19
ON THE DAY THAT THE ONS CONFIRMS ETHNIC MINORITIES ARE AT HIGHER RISK**

FROM MAYOR ROKHSANA FIAZ

7TH MAY 2020

Dear Newham Resident,

Today we have received further sad confirmation that the coronavirus is hitting our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community harder than any other, on the day that it has been confirmed that 968 residents in Newham have been infected by Covid-19.

It does not come as a surprise, it simply backs up data also released by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) released last Friday, which showed Newham, Brent, and Hackney had suffered the highest mortality rates from Covid-19 since the start of the pandemic.

Today's ONS figures, which you can read here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8utg3td>, break down the statistics on mortality by ethnic origin, and found that after taking into account age, measures of self-reported health and disability and other socio-demographic characteristics, black people were almost twice as likely as white people to die as a result of Covid-19.

Bangladeshi and Pakistani males were 1.8 times more likely to die from Covid-19 than white males, after other pre-existing factors had been accounted for, and females from those ethnic groups were 1.6 times more likely to die from the virus than their white counterparts.

For a hugely diverse borough like Newham, where 73 per cent of us are from the BAME community, I understand that this kind of news brings with it great anxiety, and great pain as we see our families, friends and neighbours succumb to this horrible disease. My thought and prayers are with those who have suffered loss.

The results of today's report show the difference between ethnic groups in Covid-19 mortality is partly a result of socio-economic disadvantage like health, wealth and housing inequality, but these alone do not fully explain the disproportionate impact on BAME people. Public Health England have launched an inquiry, to try to understand the why this may be, and I demand this work is given top priority that it deserves.

These appalling health inequalities, and the risk factors that we know we face as a borough, have to be taken into account in any future government plans to lift the lock down measures, even partially, if we are to avoid unnecessary loss of life. I will continue to warn against any premature easing of the measures, as we cannot risk our communities, who face increased risks, can be safe. I know that people in Newham will work together, as we have done already during this crisis, to make sure that this does not happen, whatever is announced on Sunday by the Prime Minister.

So until we hear what the Government plans are, please keep following the rules to stop the spread of the virus in our borough this bank holiday weekend. And as we mark the 75th Anniversary of Victory in Europe tomorrow, do your bit as part of the Newham effort to help stop the spread of the virus and save lives.

In the meantime, what we do know is that our borough and boroughs like us are shouldering a much greater burden than others during this crisis. That's why today I have written to the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, to demand the Government steps up assistance for the worst affected Local Authorities like Newham.

I told him, he must go; "Beyond the £3.2 billion financial allocation already provided to local government, I am asking that an additional 'Covid-19 deprivation' premium is provided. This premium will reflect the additional risks that deprivation is having on Covid-19 infection and death rates, as exposed by the ONS analysis. Furthermore substantial upfront needs-based funding must be made available, in particular public health funding must be restored to at least 2015/16 levels. In sum, the resources and costs required to preserve lives in Newham and elsewhere must continue to be the primary imperative."

You can read the full letter here: <https://tinyurl.com/yd5kehbg>. Put simply we are suffering the worst effects and deserve the most support as we battle to help our residents recover from this horrendous crisis – and that's why I am calling for a 'Covid-19 deprivation' premium of additional money, that we need to save lives.

From the outset, our approach to the global Covid-19 emergency here in Newham has been to preserve life. You can read a Cabinet report, and all the appendices, setting out what we've done in response to Covid-19 in Newham since the unprecedented public health emergency in the UK begun by going to this link here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc8qzgvh>. The report will be discussed at a Cabinet meeting next Wednesday, which will be broadcast via Facebook Live.

Significantly, this council was aware from the very beginning that we have a very large group of vulnerable residents who without our support would be left isolated, hungry and facing difficulty in accessing vital medicines and pharmacy products. That is why, in record time, we created the #HelpNewham hubs.

Starting from scratch six weeks ago, the council used its own data to identify those who would be most in peril and need as a result of lock down, including shielded older people, vulnerable families and youngsters, and people with disability.

There are eight hubs spaced across the borough to provide a range of support, from food parcels, to telephone befriending, special family boxes for those struggling with small children, to pharmacy deliveries.

The council has redeployed some of its own staff, and brought together an army of local volunteers to make the hubs work in a way that has become the envy of other local authorities.

The achievements are truly overwhelming:

- The hubs are now delivering over 5,000 parcels across Newham every week

- The operation has delivered 10,000 tins of soup, 4000 litres of milk, over 3 tonnes of potatoes, 3 tonnes carrots, 30,000 mushrooms, 3,000 heads of broccoli, 30,000 apples, 20,000 oranges, 20,000 bananas, 100,000 tea bags, around 2 tonnes of rice.
- In addition council staff have made phone contact with 20,083 vulnerable residents who we think may need support
- The hubs have also started to distribute tailored family boxes (including nappies and formula) to those young families most in need.
- Newham is working closely with 38 pharmacies and has delivered 4,215 prescriptions in the first 17 days of operation.

In these dark days when the news seems unremittingly tragic and sad, the hubs provide a beacon of light and hope. They show what we can do when we come together as a community to help the most vulnerable and deprived. I hope it's a message the Prime Minister and his cabinet reflect on deeply as they decide plans for easing the lockdown restrictions in place this weekend.

On Sunday at 7pm, the Prime Minister will be addressing the nation to let us know what's been decided, and in that decision – the lives of 73 percent of us in Newham are in their hands.

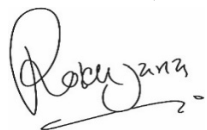
Next week there will be more important data from the ONS – this time looking at the impact of people's employment on their vulnerability to Covid-19. We know that over 100 health workers have lost their lives to the disease, like Dr Yusef Patel, who was a GP partner, who founded the Woodgrange NHS Medical Practice in Forest Gate.

However, there are many other key workers, from bus drivers to cleaners, shop workers to bin men, a historically under-valued labour force which many of our residents in Newham represent, who have rightly become our new heroes. They have joined NHS workers in our thoughts every Thursday as we #clapforkeyworkers. They have all put themselves in harm's way to serve the public throughout this crisis. We will find out on Monday what price they have paid for their dedication.

So tonight, for the 7th week running, when we saluted all those who continue to go out to work, so we can stay alive. For their sake, I hope the government do not make the great mistake of opening up the country to a second wave of Covid-19 by relaxing restrictions too soon.

Stay safe.

Best wishes,



Rokhsana Fiaz
Mayor of Newham

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