

UPDATE ABOUT CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19):

YOUNG PEOPLE IN NEWHAM TALK ABOUT GEORGE FLOYD AND COVID-19 AS THE UK RECORDS THE LOWEST NUMBER OF DEATHS SINCE THE PANDEMIC BEGAN

**Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz
Monday 8th June 2020**

Dear Newham Resident,

For the seventh night running, Council buildings in Newham are shining purple this evening, as we mark two weeks to the day that George Floyd was apprehended by four police officers in Minneapolis and killed. Over an agonising 8 minutes and 47 seconds, former police officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee heavily into George Floyd's neck until he could no longer breathe.

The former police officer is now facing second-degree murder charges and at court today, a judge set unconditional bail at \$1million dollars. Mourners also gathered for a final public memorial for George Floyd in his hometown of Houston, where tomorrow he will be laid to rest by his family in a private funeral. But the unprecedented global movement for racial justice and an end to police brutality, that his death unleashed, will live on.

The wave of emotion and solidarity in the demand for justice for George Floyd and #BlackLivesMatter has also been expressed across the UK. This weekend saw protests across the country, in the capital, and in Newham as many people have been motivated to make a stand.

In Bristol, the statue of slave trader Edward Colston was torn down, ending years of controversy surrounding the former Deputy Governor of the Royal African Company, who bequeathed his fortune to the charities in the City when he died in 1721. The Company was responsible for transporting 212,000 men, women and children between 1662 and 1731 from Africa to the Americas. As in Bristol, the stain of the slave trade appears on many Britain's streets, memorials and buildings named after leading figures of this inglorious past, and in Newham we'll be launching a project soon to identify those in the borough that are associated with the slave trade and what we can do about renaming them. More details soon.

This evening, I joined a group of young people in Newham on a zoom call, organised by our Youth Empowerment division, to talk about George Floyd, #BlackLivesMatter and what we are doing at the Council to tackle racism and racial inequality. It is vital at this critical point in history that the voices and experiences of our younger generation, who will take the fight for equality forward with them, are listened to.

I heard first hand from our young people how enduring inequality and everyday racism are impacting their lives. They talked about how the death of George Floyd was so wrong, but also their hopes for a better world. They also talked about how they want the police to be there to

protect them, but they need to feel safe with them around. They also talked about life under lockdown and whether it is really safe to go out.

Today saw apparent good news in the battle against the Covid-19 crisis, as the Health Secretary claimed Covid-19 was in 'retreat' because the number of deaths recorded in the UK was 55, the lowest daily figure in the UK since March 22. However, I remain cautious because there is normally a lag in reporting over a weekend and these figures will not yet reflect the impact of the government's decision to loosen lockdown. It was also good news to hear that in London, no new deaths were recorded, though 27,139 have been tested with Covid-19 so far. Of these, 1003 are Newham residents. While the trends appear to be cause for optimism, I urge everyone to maintain the efforts to keep the virus down to prevent a second wave,

Keep practising social distance if you are out and about, and as we progress with measures to make more space for safe walking and cycling because of the restrictions on public transport, we want you to help us by suggesting areas where you think measures need to be implemented to help with social distancing. You can make your suggestions by visiting the Council website here: <https://tinyurl.com/yakshbdt>.

If you are a parent or carer, you can also still have your say in our survey on what you think about schools in Newham opening up to more pupils. It just takes 5 minutes to complete and runs until this Thursday 11 June: <https://tinyurl.com/y7aagd9f>.

We want everyone in this borough to have a say in how we stay safe because Covid-19 hasn't gone away, and the threat of a second wave are real.

Best wishes,



Rokhsana Fiaz
Mayor of Newham
People at the Heart
of Everything We Do

