

Dear Newham resident,

It is with deep regret that this evening I am writing to inform you that the confirmed number of deaths in Newham from Coronavirus is now six - that's an increase of two since Thursday. In addition we have 42 confirmed cases of people suffering from the virus, as of today.

It's a solemn reminder of the steps that we all need to take to stop the virus spreading - we all have a responsibility to adapt to the changes required in our daily lives, and in our personal behaviour.

Tomorrow is Mother's Day and I know that it is going to be hard to stay away from our precious mums and grandmothers, aunties and carers - especially if they are in the vulnerable group of people at more risk. But the gift of life is more important than the momentary enjoyment we are more accustomed to during this annual celebration.

A phone call, a text or a video message this year, might ensure you are able to celebrate properly next year.

I cannot emphasise enough how important it is for all of us to practise the life-saving advice on health, travel and work. Today I've been told of busy high streets, queues in and outside shops and on-going panic buying. This really needs to stop!

It is directly harming the most vulnerable in our community. When you reach for that fifth pack of toilet roll, hand sanitiser, pasta, bread or meat – know that you are taking it directly out of the hands or mouths of the elderly, infirm or sick, or key workers who may only be allowed to shop as their shift patterns allow. Please think twice.

We have to work together to make a difference in Newham and get this pandemic under control.

Today, I've also been updated by council officers on the increasing number of complaints we are receiving regarding price hikes put in place by a number of local businesses during this Coronavirus pandemic.

The practice of price hiking may amount to profiteering and could be to a criminal offence under The Competition and Marketing Authority's (CMA) legislation on abuse of a dominant market position. However the Council's powers are extremely limited.

That's why, I have written to the Government to demand that we, at local level, be given the appropriate powers to police this immoral practice at a time of national crisis. I also encourage Newham residents to report any anti-competitive activity via:

<mailto:general.enquiries@cma.gov.uk>.

In the meantime please keep up the personal hygiene routines, listen to the advice from the public health experts, and above all be kind to one another during what is a challenging time for us all.

For all the latest and best advice please visit our website at <http://www.newham.gov.uk>. It will be kept up to date - so keep checking back for any changes.

On behalf of myself, the council and all residents – happy Mother's Day to all the wonderful and nurturing woman out there. As always, stay safe and well.