

1 May 2020



Dear resident,

I'd like to start with a thank you to the vast majority of you who are following public health guidelines and staying at home and protecting the NHS. The action you are taking is potentially saving not only your own life but the lives of your family, your friends and many others.

What is becoming clearer through the coronavirus pandemic is while all communities are impacted by the virus, it is having a disproportionate impact on our Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities.

It is not the 'great leveller' spoken of by the media and those living in more privileged situations, the effects are not the same. This crisis has the potential to worsen longstanding inequalities faced by these communities.

Our BAME communities are more likely to find themselves in lower paid jobs, living in overcrowded homes or homeless. Diabetes is more prevalent among some BAME communities such as people from South Asian or African Caribbean heritage – sometimes up to six times more likely. Whilst I am pleased to hear the government will launch an inquiry into the disproportionality of BAME deaths due to COVID-19, I would urge the government to approach this as a matter of priority.

We recognise this disproportionality exists here in Lambeth too. We are collecting data in Lambeth and are committed to using this data, working with communities to shape the services that will be provided post COVID-19. Our registrars are monitoring and tracking equalities information held about deaths registered to make sure we have the fullest picture possible of how this virus is affecting Lambeth's BAME communities. We want to make sure this crisis is not hidden. We are also recording the relevant equalities data in all of the support services we are providing. For example, to make sure our BAME business community are accessing both the massive amount of support we have put in place, and accessing the government's scheme.

Although our BAME communities are strong and resilient, we all need to do more and play our part at this time. We must protect and support our elders, support them to stay indoors by helping with their shopping or getting their medical supplies. If you or someone in your household has an underlying condition that puts them at a higher risk, please follow the guidelines and stay at home.

The council has produced a [guide for residents during the COVID-19 crisis](#) and our [helpline for vulnerable people](#) is now fully operational enabling people who need help, or those caring or concerned for them, to contact the council. **The helpline number is 020 7926 2999. We have already dispatched over 7,000 food packages to our most vulnerable residents, so we are here to help and want to encourage you to please access the support we have available.**

Please stay safe, stay at home and contact the council's helpline if you are concerned.



Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Sonia Winifred', enclosed within a rectangular dotted-line border.

Cllr Sonia Winifred  
Cabinet Member for Equalities and Culture  
London Borough of Lambeth