

RAMADAN 2021

#SafeRamadan 2021 Guide

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Introduction

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This year, Ramadan will be from 12/13 April to 12/13 May 2021 (depending on moon sightings). It is one of the holiest month of the Islamic lunar calendar.

With COVID19 lockdown easing still ongoing, 2021 Ramadan will be a very different experience for British Muslims. Whilst restrictions will be more relaxed compared to 2020, many of the usual practices normally observed such as going to the mosque for iftar and visiting friends and family indoors will sadly still not be possible this year.

This pack contains guidelines, advice and signposting resources to help Muslims in Britain make the most of the blessed month, as well as friends, neighbours and colleagues of Muslims, whilst staying safe and supporting the fight against the virus.

Information is accurate as of 9 April 2021. For latest, visit www.mcb.org.uk/ramadan and for latest COVID19 guidance, visit www.mcb.org.uk/coronavirus



1. What is Ramadan?

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"O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it has been prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain Taqwa (God-conscious)" [Quran 2:183]

Muslims around the world fast during daylight hours, meaning they abstain from eating, drinking or engaging in sexual relations for the duration of their fast. Young children, pregnant women, the old, the sick and travellers are examples of those who are exempt from fasting.



Aside from fasting, Muslims observing Ramadan also increase in spiritual devotional acts such as prayer, giving charity and strengthening family ties. Muslims are also encouraged to share their food with friends, family and neighbours and to reach out to those who may be fasting alone, to share their Ramadan experiences.

2. Why Fasting

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Fasting plays an important role in many major world religions and is a central feature in all the Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In Islam, Muslims, who are able to, are required to fast during the month of Ramadan and are recommended to fast at other times of the year too. Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam.



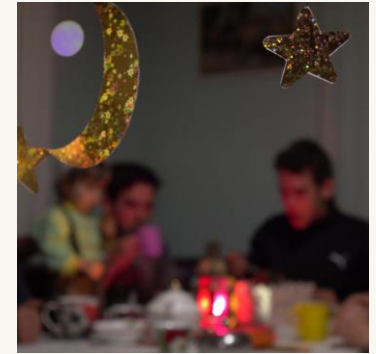
A key objective of fasting increase in *taqwa* (closeness to / consciousness of God), and to engender a sense of gratitude, self-discipline and self-improvement, at both an individual and community level, which Muslims are encouraged to continue throughout the year.

At an individual level, fasting encourages us to feel an affinity with the poor across the world who have little or no food to eat, whilst for our own bodies, scientific studies have shown that fasting provides several health benefits and forms of intermittent fasting have been incorporated into several diet regimes. At a community level, the breaking of fast meal (*iftar*) at sunset encourages families and local communities to share their meal together, whilst charity work in local communities typically increases during Ramadan.

3. #SafeRamadan At Home Top Tips

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While restrictions are more relaxed for Ramadan 2021 with some activities allowed in the mosque compared to 2020, for many of us we will still largely be observing Ramadan from home. Therefore, it is very important to carefully plan our Ramadan activities from home to ensure we and our families gain maximum benefit from the month. Consider:



Online - Stream Islamic sermons, *taraweeh* or other services to your home, either pre-recorded or live.

Prayers - Organise prayers including *taraweeh* at home as a family and pray as a congregation in the home.

Virtual Iftars - Arrange virtual *iftars* with extended family and the community through the many online video calling facilities available, listen to the maghrib adhan and break your fasts together.

Plan food - Plan your iftar menus in advance so that you can limit multiple shopping trips to minimise your need to leave home and help minimise the spread of the virus.

Drink well - Hydrate well for the long work days. Dehydration can lead to tiredness, headaches, lack of focus/concentration.

Energy foods - Eat high energy, slow burn foods for *suhoor* (starting your fast) that can give you energy gradually throughout the day

Breaks - Take regular breaks to reflect and take time for yourself.

Mental Health - Our lives can sometimes already be full and we try to fill it with more worship during Ramadan. Sometimes it is quality over quantity.


4. Fasting & COVID19 Vaccinations

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As vaccines are being rolled out in phases, many British Muslims will be invited to receive a vaccination jab whilst they are fasting during the Month of Ramadan this year.

The British Islamic Medical Association (BIMA) have consulted a wide range of Islamic scholars and **the opinion of the vast majority is that receiving a vaccine does not invalidate your fast.**

Please consult your local Imam or scholar for further details, or visit: www.britishima.org



Can Muslims take Covid vaccines in Ramadan?

It is likely that Muslims will be invited to take the Covid vaccine (either 1st or 2nd dose) during Ramadan. BIMA has reviewed fiqh opinions from different schools of thoughts below.



Taking the Covid-19 vaccines currently licensed in UK does not invalidate the fast during Ramadan as per the opinion of the majority of Islamic scholars.

This is generic information only. Please refer to your local Islamic Scholars & healthcare professionals. For detailed information, please go to our website below.

[W] [Bit.ly/bimavaxxhub](https://bit.ly/bimavaxxhub) [E] covid@britishima.org

BRITISH ISLAMIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

28/01/21

5. For Mosques: #SafeRamadan

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Unlike in 2020 where mosques and community centres were completely unable to hold congregational activities, in 2021 some congregational activities in places of worship are permitted.

Guidance for #SafeRamadan was issued in March 2021 to help mosque leaders and organisers of *taraweeh*, *i'tikaf* and other Ramadan activities plan ahead and keep our communities as safe as possible. Read more at mcb.org.uk/resources/coronavirus/#mosques or view slide overleaf.

The infographic titled 'RAMADAN SAFETY GUIDANCE' explains the risk of catching COVID-19 as 'EXPOSURE X DISTANCE X TIME'. It provides ways to minimize risk by addressing each factor: Exposure (wearing a mask, avoiding crowded areas, and ensuring ventilation), Distance (maintaining 2m distancing throughout), and Time (reducing duration of the venue). It also lists specific safety measures for Taraweeh, Iftaar, Itikaf, and Eid, such as avoiding large gatherings, using hand sanitizer, and maintaining social distancing. Logos for MCB, RFP, and other organizations are at the bottom.

The thumbnail shows a document titled 'Template Friday Sermon (Khutbah): #SafeRamadan 2021 under COVID'. It includes an Arabic introduction and a table of contents with sections like 'Introduction', 'The COVID-19 pandemic', and 'The role of the mosque'. Logos for MCB, RFP, and other organizations are visible at the bottom.

Also check out this template Friday sermon (khutbah) on #SafeRamadan 2021 and share with the Imam at your local mosque(s).

Click here to download [Template Sermon - #SafeRamadan 2021 \(PDF\)](#)

5. For Mosques: #SafeRamadan

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[Click here to download #SafeRamadan 2021 Guide for Mosque Leaders as PDF.](#)

#SafeRamadan	#SafeRamadan	#SafeRamadan						
<h3>RAMADAN SAFETY GUIDANCE</h3> <p>RISK OF CATCHING COVID = EXPOSURE X DISTANCE X TIME</p> <p>How can we minimise risk?</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th>EXPOSURE</th> <th>DISTANCE</th> <th>TIME</th> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entry policy Mask Ventilation </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2m distancing throughout </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing duration at the venue </td> </tr> </table>	EXPOSURE	DISTANCE	TIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entry policy Mask Ventilation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2m distancing throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing duration at the venue 	<h3>TARAWEEH TOP TIPS</h3> <p>Adjusting time, ventilation and exposure in taraweeh is key to safety.</p> <p>All previous restrictions still apply (16+ 60 years, 40 years, COVID symptoms, high risk or living with those who are high risk).</p> <p>Keep Taraweeh short. Some studies say the risk is up to 4x more at 1 hour than it is at 20 minutes.</p> <p>Exception to the above are those who are 2 weeks past the 2nd vaccine dose, although be aware you can still transmit to others.</p> <p>Consider organising Taraweeh in outdoor location to reduce risk.</p> <p>Ideally rooms to meet properly fitted double doors to protect congregants - clean footprints between. Gels to protect each other.</p> <p>Include live streams for those who cannot attend Taraweeh in person.</p>	<h3>IFTAAR TOP TIPS</h3> <p>Keep from safe by meeting many households.</p> <p>Rear in a mosque should be avoided.</p> <p>Consider having healthy Iftar as tables and clearly are COVID risk factors.</p> <p>Avoid open foods i.e. get cut fruit or tray of dates.</p> <p>Pre packaged food if delivering Iftar for others. Ideally individual portions should be packed separately.</p> <p>Rear for those coming to Maghrib prayer should be dates & water only.</p> <p>Have easily visible waste bins to allow easy disposal of items.</p> <p>Have a virtual Iftar with those who may be alone, for eg. refugees, international students or newns.</p>
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<h3>TARAWEEH</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce length Increase distance Increase ventilation 	<h3>IFTAAR</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid large gatherings Avoid shared food Use individual food 	<h3>ITIKAAF</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not recommended in mosques this year Not recommended in any public space 	<h3>EID</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not recommended in mosques this year Not recommended in any public space 					
<h3>ITIKAAF TOP TIPS</h3> <p>We do not recommend itikaaf in mosques this year.</p> <p>We advise itikaaf at home this year to minimise risk.</p> <p>Take bookings early to allow for health screening and prior planning. Consider request negative COVID test before approving.</p> <p>If itikaaf is legally allowed and the mosque would like to accommodate, then limit numbers to reduce risk.</p> <p>Have clear contact number of COVID safety officer to contact in case of emergency.</p> <p>Bring your own Quran, tashbeeh, and prayer mats to reduce cross contamination.</p> <p>Manage communal areas (eg. kitchen and toilet) to reduce risk.</p> <p>Itikaaf participants should not mix with each other or public during prayer times.</p> <p>Ensure good ventilation of the itikaaf area regularly to reduce risk.</p> <p>Those performing itikaaf should not be high risk groups or living with anyone who is high risk.</p> <p>Management to engage regularly to ensure compliance and ensure welfare.</p> <p>Increase the cleaning schedule throughout itikaaf.</p>	<h3>MOSQUE TOP TIPS</h3> <p>Ramadan is a busy period, so prepare for it accordingly.</p> <p>Lectures or talks before or after prayer should be online to reduce risk.</p> <p>There is evidence that the virus is airborne, so good ventilation regardless of weather is a key part of reducing risk.</p> <p>Follow the 9 step guidance previously published by the MCB for Jumu'ah/Salaah Opening.</p> <p>Recruit large number of volunteers early and train them as they will be needed for 1 month and we want to avoid burnout.</p> <p>Check masks are properly worn at the door and encourage double masking as this has been shown to reduce risk.</p> <p>Report the risk assessment & speak to your local public health team. Be prepared to report if surge in cases in your area.</p> <p>Please implement strict 2m distancing if currently less than that as this is much safer with new variants.</p> <p>Do not allow people to sit in the mosque between prayers as increased time in a location correlates with increased risk.</p> <p>Multiple Eid congregations and well spaced out to prevent overcrowding and congestion.</p> <p>If staff present, have queue management to prevent overcrowding.</p> <p>Make sure you give your Zakat at 15 online and well before Eid.</p>	<h3>EID TOP TIPS</h3> <p>Eid in the park should be arranged in advance.</p> <p>Do not hug, but instead use other form of greeting.</p> <p>Advise importance of pre-registering or booking to aid crowd control.</p> <p>Request for parking restrictions to reduce public transport over-crowding.</p> <p>Avoid large Eid parties and keep to smaller events in your bubbles.</p>						
<p>*These guide to your local authority public health officials & community to help the advice for your context.</p> <p>Working in Partnership</p>	<p>*These guide to your local authority public health officials & community to help the advice for your context.</p> <p>Working in Partnership</p>	<p>*These guide to your local authority public health officials & community to help the advice for your context.</p> <p>Working in Partnership</p>						

6. Working From Home

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Many Muslims are likely to be working from home during this time. While this may have benefits and provide ease in some ways to those fasting, it can also provide some new challenges. Consider:

Breaks - Ensure you are taking regular breaks from work, for rest and reflection - perhaps around salaah (prayer) times.

Timings - If you are able, start your day earlier so that you can finish earlier and have some down time prior to iftar.

Let others know - Give your employer and colleagues advance notice that you will be fasting.

Share - Share Ramadan with colleagues by having a conversation or sharing what you're doing for it e.g. volunteering, cooking different meals etc.

Duties - Honour your workplace duties with patience and good grace to those around you.



7. Studying From Home

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Much like working from home, studying from home without the benefit of your classmates, and direct face-to-face time with your lecturers can have its own challenges. Much like with working from home, consider:



Let others know - Give your university, student advisor or professors advance notice that you will be fasting.

Breaks - Ensure you are taking regular breaks from studying, for rest and reflection - perhaps around prayer times.

Timetable - Set yourself a study timetable. Lectures always help structure your day even when scheduled online, but make sure you take into account prayer times and iftar when planning your day.

Timings - If you are able, start your day earlier so that you can finish earlier and have some down time prior to iftar.

Share - Share Ramadan with classmates and friends by having a conversation about Ramadan, your struggles or sharing what special activities you're doing or foods you may be cooking/etc.

Duties - Honour your studies and commitments with patience and good grace to those around you.

8. Home & Virtual Iftars

RAMADAN 2021

While we are all longing for the opportunity to get together as families for iftar and share in the blessings together, it is vital that we follow UK Government guidance such as avoiding indoor gatherings with people outside our household or support bubble. We must remember that as Muslims everything is a test from Allah, and it is up to us how we choose to respond to such tests. For current rules regarding outdoor gatherings in the UK, see next slide.



Virtual Iftars – We can still connect with friends and loved ones via hosting a ‘virtual iftars’ in which individuals or families can join via video conferencing facilities like Zoom / FaceTime. This can be a vital way for individuals to stay connected during these times, and can be especially helpful for those who are living alone, for example elderly community members living alone, international students, refugees and others.

Many campaigns are creating spaces for supporting virtual iftars, for example Ramadan Tent Project’s My Open Iftar pack which includes a range of activities, recipes, guidance and decorations, allowing us to keep the Ramadan spirit alive.



Ramadan Tent Project will also be running daily Virtual Open Iftar events via Zoom featuring conversations with guests and speakers amongst other initiatives. Find out more at www.ramadantentproject.com

We might be physically apart from each other in order to stay safe, but that won’t stop us from connecting together emotionally and spiritually *insha’Allah* (God willing)!

8. Home & Virtual Iftars

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Are small outdoor in-person gatherings for iftar permitted?

Below is a summary of the current (as of 9th April) rules for socially-distanced outdoor gatherings in the UK. We must remember that the threat of the virus is still with us and it is extremely important we **exercise caution** and **do not be complacent** if planning to meet others for iftar in small outdoor gatherings, especially for elderly or vulnerable family members who are most at risk of serious illness or death. **In all cases below, indoor gatherings with people outside our household or support bubble are not yet permitted.**

- **England** – Step 2 of the Roadmap is expected to start from 12 April. Up to 6 people (including children of all ages), or two households of any size, can gather outdoors including in private gardens. Restaurants will be able to serve meals outdoors only from 12 April.
- **Wales** – Currently, 6 people from a maximum of two households can meet outdoors, including gardens. Carers, or children under 11, are not included in the count. Restaurants are expected to be able to re-open to serve meals outdoors only from 26 April.
- **Scotland** – Currently, 4 people from a maximum of two households can meet outdoors, including gardens. These numbers may increase from 26 April. Children under 12 are not included in the count. Restaurants are expected to be able to re-open to serve meals outdoors only from 26 April.
- **Northern Ireland** – From 12 April, up to 10 people (including children) from no more than two households can meet up outdoors including in a private garden.

Whilst such small outdoor gatherings can provide welcome respite, we must always **exercise caution** and **take extra care**. For more information, see [BBC article summary here](#).

9. Physical Health During Ramadan

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Individuals with an illness or health condition where fasting could be detrimental to their health are exempt from fasting. The **British Islamic Medical Association (BIMA)** **have created this peer reviewed document (click here)** that brings together a range of literature reviews around how medical professionals can advise patients whether to keep or terminate their fast.

In addition, for patients and staff, click here for **Ramadan Health Factsheet 2021 (PDF)** or the image on the right.

Please note however clinicians must exercise discretion based on each individual patient's circumstances.

BIMA has also produced a wealth of resources for Muslims and the medical community on issues pertaining to health during Ramadan. For more information, visit **britishima.org/ramadan** or email ramadan@britishima.org.



10. Mental Health During Ramadan

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COVID-19 is having a significant impact on global mental health, with the lack of social contact, the economic downturn and general uncertainty posing a problem for all communities. And mental health within Muslim communities is still often not discussed openly.



Ramadan is a special time of the year but the lack of being able to observe practices due to COVID19 restrictions may lead to increased anxiety.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020, several Muslim mental health organisations in the UK have come together to collaborate and provide a range of initiatives for communities nationwide. [**Click here to find out more.**](#)

Inspired Minds

MindworksUK

MWNUK

MCAPN

SAKOON
PEACE OF MIND
WWW.ISLAMIC.CO.UK

myh
muslim YOUTH
helpline

BRITISH ISLAMIC
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

YCA
in Bradford

Approachable
Parenting

11. Charity: Donating and Volunteering

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Ramadan is also a month of giving, be that **financially to charity** or **physically in service to others**. Whether its to local causes such as a food bank run by your local mosque or community centre, to supporting causes alleviating poverty abroad, giving charity does not diminish our wealth, rather it multiples it. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said in a hadith, *“Charity does not decrease wealth, no one forgives another except that Allah increases his honour, and no one humbles himself for the sake of Allah except that Allah raises his status.”* (Muslim)



Donating Safely – it is important to ensure your chosen charity is reputable and genuine. In addition, with the COVID19 pandemic, giving online is more common and it is important to be vigilant of unsecure websites, scams or spam emails seeking donations. Check out the The Muslim Charities Forum’s **“How to Give Smart and Give Safe this Ramadan”** pack for further guidance.



Volunteering Safely – From telephone befriending services to collecting shopping for elderly or vulnerable neighbours, there are so many ways to help the most needy around us during the COVID19 pandemic. Check out the The Muslim Charities Forum’s **“Practical Guide on how to Keep Safe when Volunteering During the COVID-19 Crisis”** for top tips on staying safe.

12. Taraweeh at Home 2021

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National Huffadh Association UK has produced an online toolkit for praying *Taraweeh* prayers at Home which has been updated for 2021. View online or download at:

www.taraweehathome.com

The toolkit includes:

- Guidance on *Taraweeh* prayers at home from scholars and medical professionals
- Qur'an memorisation tips, fun and interactive Quran games
- Character building and superhero competitions for kids
- Kids' colouring and fun books on *Salah*/Qur'an



POWERED BY THE NATIONAL HUFFADH ASSOCIATION UK

13. Iftar Under the Stars 2021

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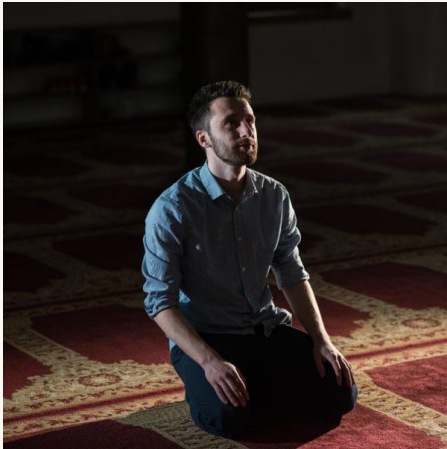
[Click here to view “Iftar Under the Stars” ideas](#) for holding an outdoor iftar with cooking, colouring and other fun activities for children courtesy of the Scouts UK

The Muslim Scouts Fellowship also run a range of events over Ramadan for families to join. For more information visit www.ukmsf.org



14. Sharing Ramadan in Society

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Use this opportunity to share your faith and your fast with Muslims as well as people of all faiths and none.

While this Ramadan we are unable to gather together and meet others in large gatherings like we would do in normal years, we can find other creative ways to share our traditions and practices with the wider community and local residents. Here are some suggestions:

1. Let people know about Ramadan by sharing this document.
2. Offer to help your neighbours with any shopping they need, especially those who are elderly and at greater risk of contracting COVID-19.
3. Publish Ramadan information in your neighbourhood newsletter/local paper.
4. Encourage your children to inform their friends what Ramadan is all about via group chats or social media.
5. Talk about what Ramadan means to you with colleagues and classmates while working/studying from home.

15. Advice for Line Managers

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- Be aware and open to discussing Ramadan and what support or adjustments your employee would like. Managers may experience requests for annual leave for those observing – be prepared for people to request to take holiday towards the end of Ramadan to celebrate Eid.
- Allow for flexible working and adjusting working hours (i.e. an early start, working through lunch and an early finish) during this period if requested.



- Be accommodating over annual leave requests particularly as the majority of Christian holidays are national holidays. The **Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced a useful decision-making tool** to help employers deal with requests for time off for religious reasons.
- Bear in mind that staff will be required to work from home during some or all of Ramadan as the COVID-19 situation develops, so try and apply flexibility to current working from home practices.
- Allow workers to have regular breaks for afternoon prayers as needed (*Dhuhr* and *Asr*) if requested – this is especially important for Muslims observing Ramadan to be able to pray their daily prayers on time.

16. Advice for Employees

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- Muslims observing Ramadan will be fasting during daylight hours, eating one meal just before dawn (*suhoor*) and one meal at sunset (*iftar*). Fasting Muslims can eat or drink as they please through the night as needed.
- Depending on the weather and the length of the fast, some people who fast during Ramadan will experience mild dehydration, which can cause headaches, tiredness and lack of concentration.
- For those who usually drink caffeine through tea or coffee, the lack of caffeine may bring on headaches and tiredness however, this will reduce as the body adapts to going without caffeine during the day.
- Due to the timings of meals before dawn and after sunset, adjustment to new sleeping and eating patterns may also lead to some people feeling more tired than normal.
- Don't assume that all employees want to be treated differently because they are fasting, but be open to having a discussion with your co-workers and colleagues.

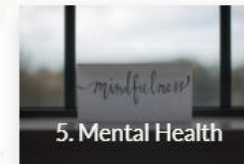


17. Overall COVID19 Guidance

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The MCB publishes regularly updated overall COVID19 guidance for British Muslim communities at:

www.mcb.org.uk/coronavirus



You can also receive COVID19 updates automatically via:

- **Whatsapp** - [click here to join announcement group](#)
- **Telegram** - [click here to join channel](#)
- **Email** - [click here to subscribe](#)

- For queries, please email covid@mcb.org.uk

Feedback

RAMADAN 2021

- This guidance has been compiled by the Muslim Council of Britain - information is accurate as of 9th April 2021.
- For feedback, queries or corrections, please email [**covid@mcb.org.uk**](mailto:covid@mcb.org.uk)
- Keep up to date with our work by joining the mailing list, visit: [**mcb.org.uk/get-involved**](https://mcb.org.uk/get-involved)
- Latest Ramadan guidance at [**www.mcb.org.uk/ramadan**](https://www.mcb.org.uk/ramadan)
- Latest overall COVID19 guidance for Muslim communities at [**www.mcb.org.uk/coronavirus**](https://www.mcb.org.uk/coronavirus)

About the Muslim Council of Britain

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is the UK's largest and most diverse national Muslim umbrella organisation with over 500 members including mosques, schools, charitable associations and professional networks.

Our mission is empowering Muslim communities towards achieving a just, cohesive and successful British society. We are an independent, democratic and cross-sectarian body,

For more information, visit [**www.mcb.org.uk**](https://www.mcb.org.uk) or follow us on social media



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mcb.org.uk/ramadan