



Public Health  
England

**KIK** IT  
Pathways to Recovery

**Birmingham**  
City Council

# Guide to Healthy Living: Mosques



# About Public Health England

Public Health England (PHE) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health, and are a distinct delivery organisation with operational autonomy to advise and support government, local authorities and the NHS in a professionally independent manner.

# About Birmingham City Council

The core responsibility of public health within Birmingham City Council is to actively promote good health within the population and to enable all Birmingham citizens to make healthier choices. In particular, to champion the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable in our City.

# About KIKIT

KIKIT Pathways To Recovery is a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) specialist social enterprise providing recovery support to vulnerable people in Birmingham. Their specialist and integrated services focus on improving lives and communities across substance misuse, health & wellbeing and community safety [www.kikitproject.org](http://www.kikitproject.org)

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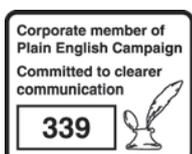
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The Muath Trust and Amanah Mosque

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KIKIT - Pathways to Recovery

Birmingham City Council – Equalities, Community Safety and Cohesion Service

Birmingham City Council – Public Health

FaithAction

This guide is part of a pilot project to explore how faith institutions (such as mosques) can support health improvement in their community. The guide includes both faith-based (based on Islam) and faith-placed (based in and around the mosque) health initiatives. Although this guide is tailored to the Muslim community in Birmingham, it is a template to be adapted by other communities in other areas.

PHE, together with our partners will be evaluating the usage and impact of the guide to share learning. Birmingham has joined the APPG on Faith and Society Faith Covenant, to support faith groups and organisations in working together to promote open and practical work which improves the health and wellbeing of the community as a whole.

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# Foreword

Islam considers health to be one of the greatest blessings provided by God. The Prophet ﷺ said *“There are two blessings which many people do not appreciate: health and leisure”*. Preservation of health is essential in making the most of our lives and this requires us to make healthy choices and decisions.

Historically places of worship were at the heart of the community; they were a centre for prayer, a meeting place, an educational institute, a place of social activities and a place of rest. Therefore, mosques are important as they bring people together and can provide a great way to share important health information with the community that can help people live healthier and prevent disease.

Many of the health issues we are seeing can be prevented by changing behaviours, such as eating in moderation, doing physical activity and stopping smoking. Looking after our health by changing our behaviour can reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, dementia and stroke. Mosques can help lead the way in their community by linking faith with health, so that maintaining health is at the heart of how people view life.

The aim of this guide is to support mosques and provide practical steps to improve the health of the community, reduce inequalities, and to provide a structure by which you can evaluate to improve the impact of your work.

Mosques in 21<sup>st</sup> century western societies are at a developmental stage in evolving to meet the needs of the communities they serve. To be at the centre of the community, mosques must be spaces for all sections of society including women, mothers with young children, elderly people, those with disabilities and young people; with specific activities and initiatives aimed to inform, educate and improve their environment, health, lives and wellbeing.



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# Introduction

Public Health England together with Birmingham City Council and KIKIT Pathways to Recovery have produced this guide to show what is possible when mosques harness their commitment, faith and resources to improve the health and wellbeing not only of their congregation but of the local community as a whole.

The report highlights evidence on preventing ill health across the life-course<sup>1</sup> in order to live longer healthier lives and gives examples of health and wellbeing activities already taking place within mosques in Birmingham.

Many of the health conditions affecting people in the UK are preventable, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, respiratory diseases, strokes and cancers which can be prevented if underlying risk factors are addressed. Communities can take action to encourage people to take control of their lives by stopping smoking, being a healthy weight and eating a healthy diet. These actions can reduce the likelihood of developing a chronic health condition.

Risk factors such as obesity, physical inactivity and smoking are greater in lower socio-economic groups, leading to higher levels of illness and death<sup>1</sup>. Muslims in the UK have some of the worst health outcomes compared to other groups especially in the over 50 age groups<sup>2</sup> and Muslim participation in some of the national screening programmes is low<sup>3</sup>. The mosque community and Imams have a shared responsibility in disseminating health messages to their networks and congregations and in promoting healthier lifestyles<sup>2</sup>.

Mosques and Imams hold important leadership and pastoral roles in the community. They are often trusted, well-respected figures who have great potential to influence health promotion and engagement within the community<sup>4</sup>. They can help lead the way to reduce health inequalities in communities; firstly as a place where health promotion activities and initiatives can take place and secondly where health promotion messages can be amplified by inclusion of Qur'anic and Prophetic guidance, making the message more likely to resonate within the community.

The resource also includes a self-assessment checklist for mosques to recognise their current level of health and wellbeing promotion with opportunities to develop further. By using this guide, mosques can help the congregation and community to live healthier lives, prevent illness or, when it does occur, promote early diagnosis to prevent conditions from getting worse.

“

**And let there be arising from you a community inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is unfair. And those, they are the ones who prosper**

”

[Qur'an, 3:104]

# Health Inequalities

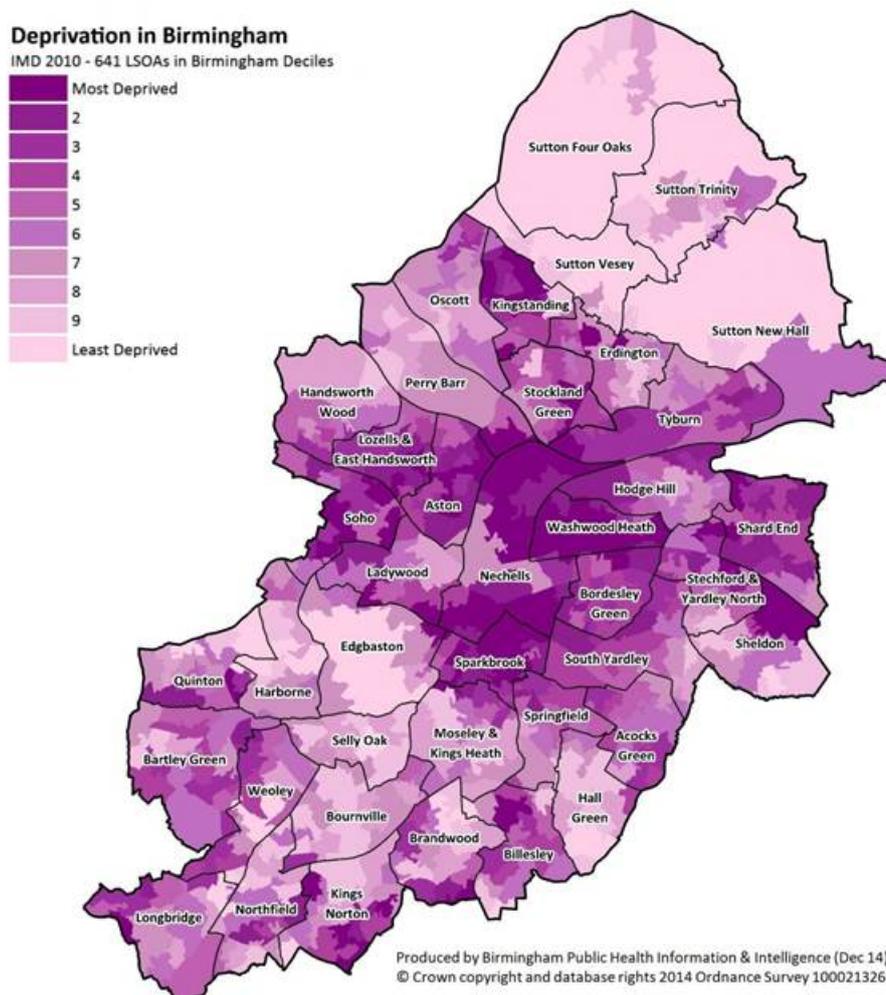
Forty-six percent of the Muslim population lives in the 10% most deprived local authority districts in England<sup>2</sup>. The 2011 census illustrates the ethnic diversity among Muslims with the largest ethnic group being 'Asian'<sup>2</sup>.

Poor health is caused by a wide range of factors (**biology**: age, sex, hereditary factors; **social**: education, income, local environment). Most minority ethnic groups have poorer health, even when considering the above wider determinants of health<sup>5</sup>.

In Birmingham, in the areas of B10/B11 (Sparkbrook and surrounding areas)<sup>6</sup>:

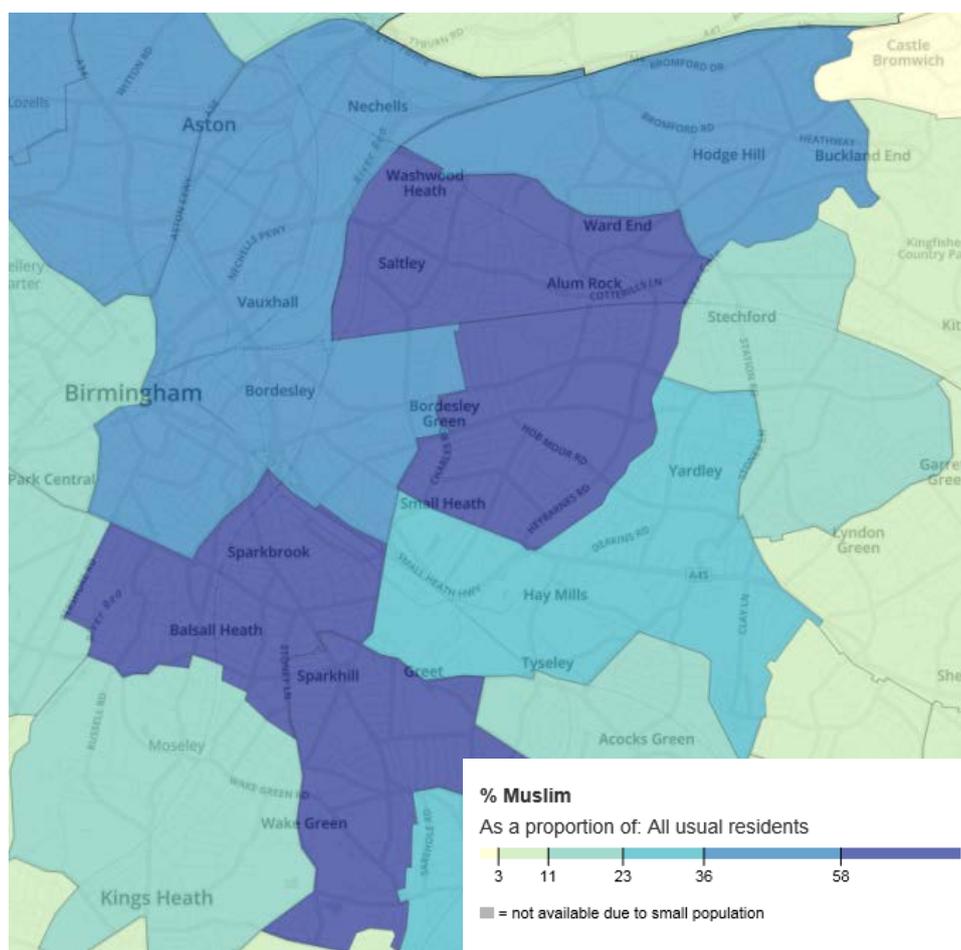
- 87% of people are from BME backgrounds
- nearly 40% show income deprivation
- 40% of children are in poverty
- 63% of older people are in deprivation (IMD)

Premature mortality, in all causes of death is significantly higher in this area than England, and the life expectancy is significantly lower for both males and females compared to England<sup>6</sup>. This suggests there are significant health inequalities in this area.



Sparkbrook is a mostly Muslim area, as shown in the map below; the health inequalities described within Sparkbrook are not dissimilar to other Muslim majority areas in Birmingham.

The map<sup>7</sup> below shows areas where the majority of the population identifies as being Muslim, based on Census 2011 data<sup>7</sup> (over about 60% in the dark blue).



There is evidence that shows that linking faith with health has potential for positive outcomes<sup>8,4</sup>. Birmingham City Council was the first local authority to join the All-Parliamentary Party Group (APPG) on Faith and Society Faith Covenant ([www.faihandociety.org](http://www.faihandociety.org)), which aims to support faith groups and organisations and local authorities in joining together to promote open and practical work. This guide aims to promote the benefits of using community approaches and engagement, and linking faith with health to reduce health inequalities by healthier living.

# Healthy eating and preventing obesity

Over half of adults in Birmingham are either overweight or obese<sup>9</sup>. Obesity and being overweight are major risk factors for type 2 diabetes and other serious health conditions including high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease and cancer and can increase the likelihood of premature death<sup>10</sup>.

People from minority ethnic groups are at a greater risk; for example Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian men are almost 3 times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes compared to the general population<sup>11</sup>. Pakistani women are over 5 times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes than the general population<sup>11</sup>. Obesity is also closely associated with deprivation.

## Recommendations

- Maintain a healthy weight<sup>12,13</sup>
- Eat a healthy, balanced and varied diet<sup>12,13</sup>
- Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables per day<sup>14</sup>
- Generally, adults should aim for about 2000kcal per day to maintain their current weight. But if you are overweight, you should reduce this calorie intake with advice from health professionals<sup>13</sup>
- People with type 2 diabetes should consider reducing their carbohydrate intake ([diabetes.co.uk](http://diabetes.co.uk))

In the Qur'an and Prophetic advice, eating and drinking in moderation but not in excess is strongly encouraged.

“ So let man reflect on the food he eats ”

[Qur'an, 80:24]



“ Then eat of all fruits... ”

[Qur'an, 16:69]

“ ...eat and drink, but be not excessive. Indeed, He likes not those who commit excess ”

[Qur'an, 7:31]

## What can you do?

- Encourage individuals to eat healthier by incorporating healthy eating messages in Friday sermons and during Ramadhan (fasting month)
- Lead the way by having healthier food options in meals provided by the mosque (see [PHE toolkit Healthier and more sustainable catering](#)<sup>15</sup>)
- Work with congregants to find ways in which favourite traditional meals can be made healthier.

**KSIMC Birmingham Mosque**  
*Community Salad for 'Iftar' (fast opening)*

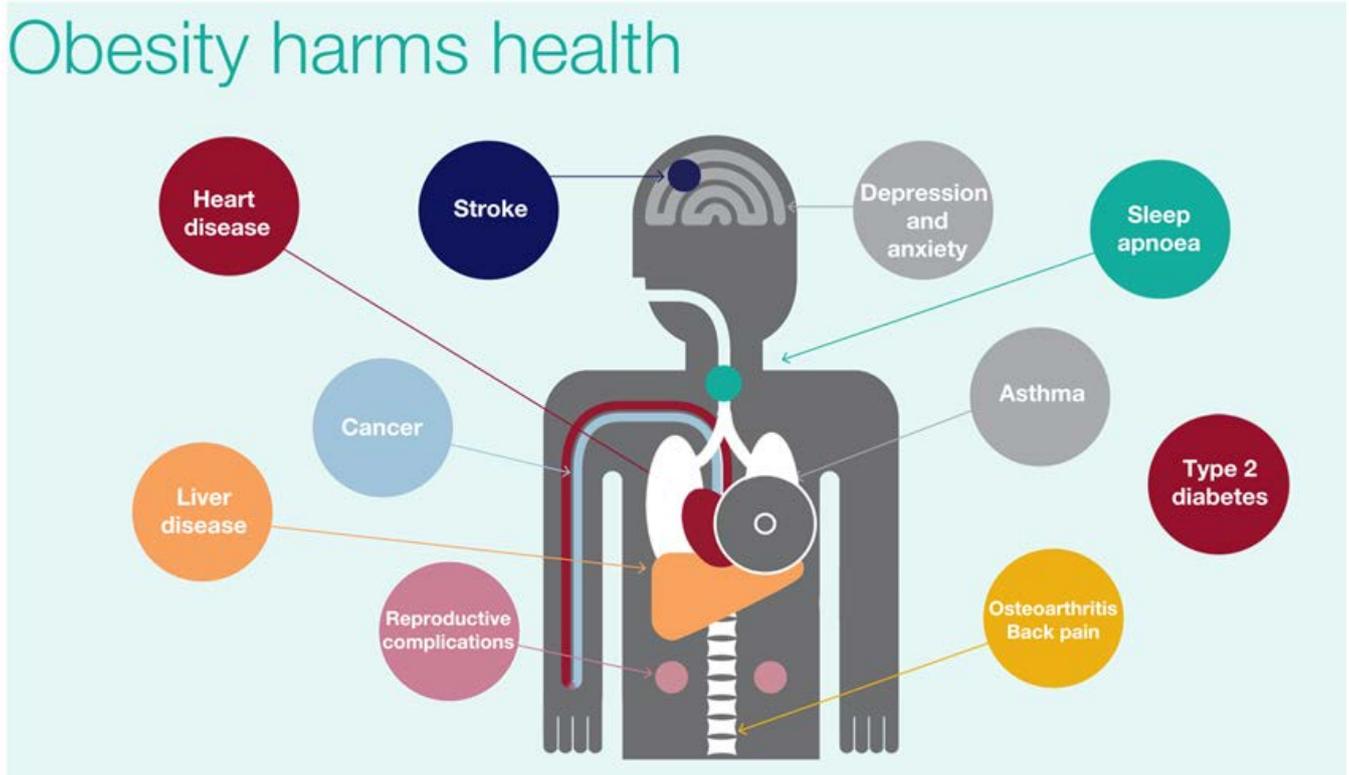
KSIMC has introduced a good example of how healthy eating can be promoted within the community. During Ramadhan, they encouraged congregants to bring in salads from home to be shared communally when opening the fast. This initiative proved so popular that it led to an informal competition for the best salad of the month. This encouraged everyone to participate through swapping recipes and promoted an ethos of sharing and engaging the community about what they are eating and making healthier food choices.

**Ghamkol Sharif Central Jamia Mosque**  
*Children's Healthy Eating and Sports*

At Ghamkol Sharif, children in the madrassa (supplementary Islamic classes) joined a healthy eating and sports initiative which was run by youth volunteers within the mosque. This initiative showcases an opportunity to combine messages on healthy lifestyles within Islamic study classes for children.

“ Eat of the wholesome things we have provided for your nourishment. ”

[Qur'an, 20:81]



# Promoting physical activity

Many people in Birmingham are not physically active enough to protect their health<sup>16</sup>. National data shows that minority ethnic groups have worse levels of physical activity, for example, only 11% of Bangladeshi and 14% of Pakistani women undertake the recommended amounts of physical activity compared to 25% in the general population<sup>17</sup>.

Increasing physical activity can significantly improve physical health and mental wellbeing, prevent and manage illnesses such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and reduce the risk of premature death<sup>17</sup>. In addition, group physical activity can help reduce social isolation<sup>17</sup>.

## Recommendations

The UK Chief Medical Officers state:

- Adults should aim to take part in at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of moderate intensity physical activity each week, in 10 minutes time periods or more<sup>18</sup>.

Various reports indicate that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ participated and or encouraged the following sports related activities:

- swimming
- archery
- horse riding
- walking
- racing
- playing with one's family<sup>19</sup>

## What can you do?

- Encourage individuals to increase levels of physical activity in everyday life through 'normalising' physical activity by linking to the Prophetic lifestyle
- Encourage people who live nearby to walk to the mosque rather than use a car. Seeing friends and peers walking and cycling encourages others to do the same

**How much physical activity should you do?**

Adults (19 to 64) should aim for at least **150 minutes** of moderate intensity activity, in bouts of 10 minutes or more, each week

This can also be achieved by 75 minutes of vigorous activity across the week or a mixture of moderate and vigorous.

All adults should undertake muscle strengthening activity, such as

- exercising with weights
- yoga
- or carrying heavy shopping

at least 2 days a week

Minimise the amount of time spent sedentary (sitting) for extended periods

- Signpost to local wellbeing hubs and leisure centres
- Host physical activity sessions at the mosque

**KSIMC Birmingham Mosque**  
*Health and wellbeing champion*

KSIMC has an identified health and wellbeing champion on the mosque executive committee. This ensures health and wellbeing is taken as a key priority for the mosque and allows health promotion awareness initiatives to be planned and carried out in the community.

The champion is a practising GP which allows the mosque to benefit from his wider knowledge of the health in planning activities.

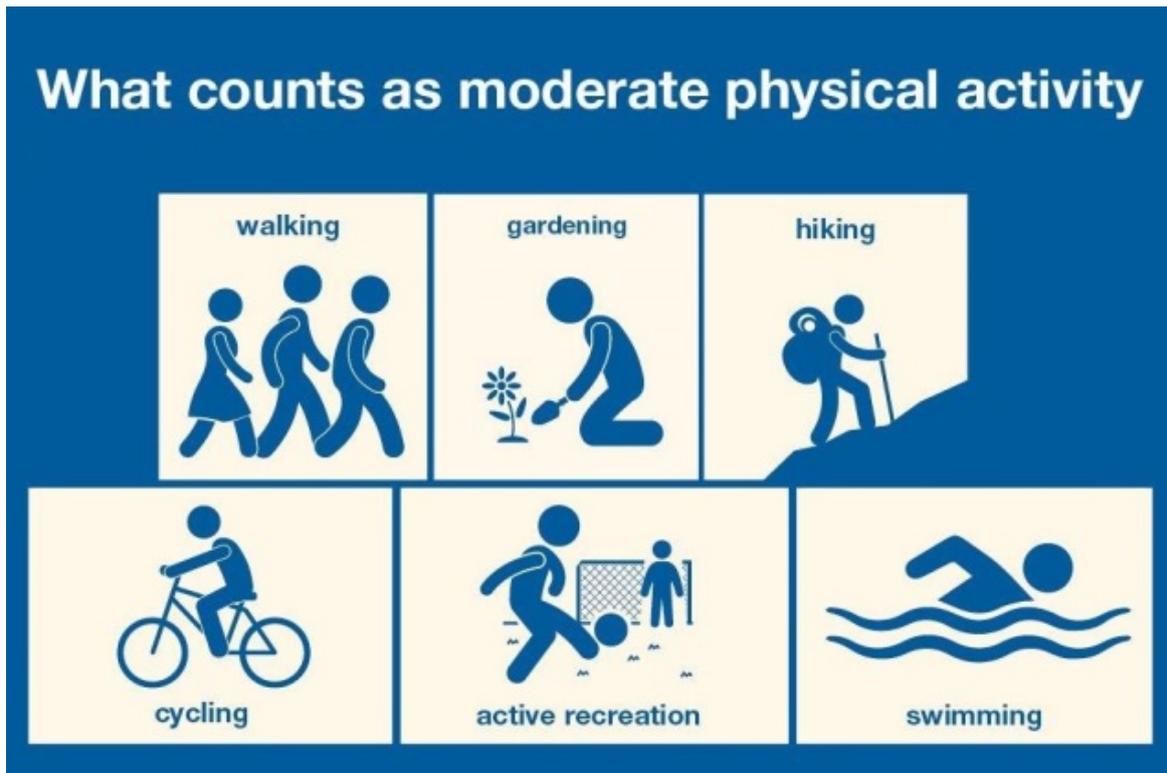
One such planned initiative was encouraging the community to take up walking via the ‘Al-Hijrah Movement Challenge’. This involved encouraging people to walk 10,000 steps a day and registering this collectively through a website.

KSIMC have also established a volunteer women’s sports committee.

The committee plays a pivotal role in encouraging and normalising being active for women of all ages. This year, a growing number of women across all age groups participated in physical activities such as a playing badminton and swimming in a weekly club.

**Ghamkol Sharif Central Jamia Mosque**  
*Park walks in-between prayers*

During the winter months with shortened time periods between prayer services, congregants at Ghamkol Sharif have established a group walking club at the local park. The club gives congregants opportunities to combine spiritual devotions through Dhikr (remembrance of God) whilst walking and also encourages social interaction.



# Promoting child health

The early years of life are a crucial stage to start children on a path of healthy eating and physical activity, which can influence them later in life. Creating a safe and nurturing environment for children are the key ingredients for a good start in life<sup>19,20</sup>.

Together parents, families, and the community all influence the development of our children. The home environment where children grow up has the potential to give a great start to life, so that children can prosper physically, socially and emotionally. The mother's health is fundamental for healthy child development, one in five mothers will experience mental ill health during pregnancy or in the first year, so being aware and seeking help is important<sup>21</sup>.

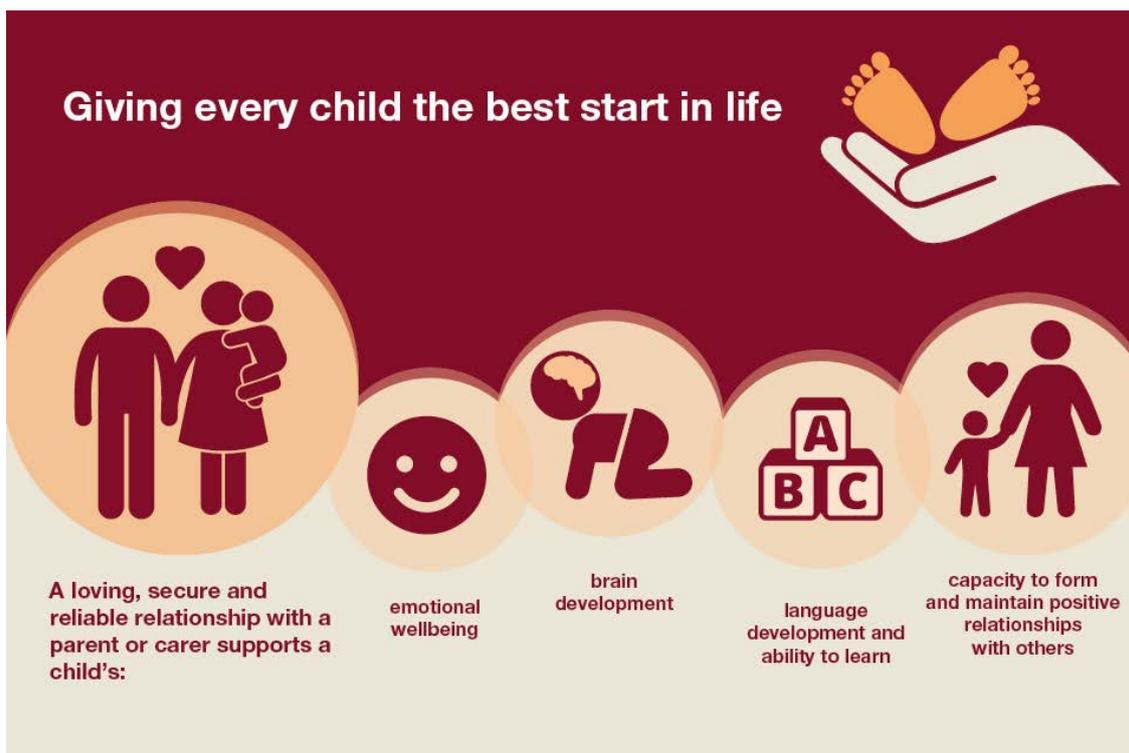
In Birmingham, we have more children who are obese compared to the England average and the West Midlands region<sup>22</sup>.

We also have lower percentages of children achieving a good level of development at the end of reception year<sup>23</sup>.

## Recommendations

Together with health care and antenatal professionals, the ways to ensure a good start for all are<sup>19</sup>:

- Staying healthy in pregnancy (antenatal care)
- Giving up smoking
- Screening and immunisations
- Attending new birth reviews
- Breastfeeding
- Getting help with maternal mental health
- Encouraging early development in babies through language to help children learn and be ready for school
- Introduce healthy lifestyles to reduce the risks of childhood obesity and tooth decay.



Only having breast milk is recommended for about the first 6 months. After that, giving breast milk and introducing family foods is recommended. Breastfeeding has many health benefits for both mother and child<sup>24</sup>.

In Islam the recommended time for breastfeeding is approximately two years as mentioned in the Qur'an:

“ **Mothers may breastfeed their children two complete years for whoever wishes to complete the nursing [period]...** ”

[Qur'an, 2:233]

### What can you do?

- Promote giving children a good start in life in Friday sermons
- Highlight the positive influences that families and community have on children's wellbeing.
- Encourage children and families to eat healthier and be more active during evening supplementary classes
- Raise awareness of the harms of childhood obesity
- Host family healthy eating sessions at the mosque

- Signpost to national resources such as Change4Life or local wellbeing hubs and leisure centres

### **The Muath Trust and Amanah Mosque** *Muath Children's Centre*

Muath Children's Centre working in partnership with healthcare professionals provides support and information to local families. There are a range of support activities from breastfeeding, nutrition and safety for children to new birth and home visits.

The Children's Centre hosts 'Stay & Play' sessions in which children can learn and develop their language skills. For babies, there are sessions which aim to support parental confidence and skills in early parenting such as supporting baby's speech and language development, food and nutrition, and how to keep babies safe in and around the home and encourages parents to share knowledge and experiences.

A 'Parents Matter' session is also held at the centre, which aim to provide practical advice to parents such as cooking and tasting sessions and healthy lunchbox sessions.

# Promoting mental wellbeing

One in four of us as adults will experience a mental health problem at some point in our life<sup>25</sup>. Common mental health disorders include depression, anxiety and panic disorder. These can affect up to 15% of the population at any one time<sup>27</sup>. People from BME communities are at increased risk of developing mental health problems and can find access to help difficult.

This can mean that mental health issues go unreported and untreated with some people reluctant to engage with mainstream mental health services<sup>26</sup>.

Stigma associated with mental ill health is a barrier in seeking advice and care. Within Muslim communities mental health can be a taboo subject and is misunderstood which hinders access to help and support.

Sometimes people with mental health issues are referred to as "pagal", which means "crazy" or "mad". It may also be assumed that the person is possessed.

“ And speak to people kindly... ”

[Qur'an, 2:83]

On average, men with mental health problems die 20 years earlier, and women die 15 years earlier, than the general population<sup>28</sup>.

## What can you do?

- Reduce stigma by talking about mental health in Friday sermons to help change attitudes and build support for those affected
- Promote people talking about problems in safe spaces without judgement
- Promote getting early support from mental health services and healthcare professionals
- The Lateef Project – Birmingham-based Islamic telephone counselling service to promote mental health and wellbeing: [www.lateefproject.com](http://www.lateefproject.com)
- Talking From The Heart – a website that has short films in Somali, Urdu and Bengali/Sylheti, featuring Muslim faith leaders, health professionals and people who have experienced mental health difficulties talking about the subject, as a way of reducing stigma: [www.talkingfromtheheart.org](http://www.talkingfromtheheart.org)
- Friendly Places – FaithAction's resource for faith groups on making places of worship 'mental health friendly', with tips and links to other resources: [www.faithaction.net/friendlyplaces](http://www.faithaction.net/friendlyplaces)
- Train staff and volunteers in *mental health first aid*
- Signpost to mental health services
- To help improve the mental wellbeing of everyone, mosques can promote the '5 ways'

## Green Lane Masjid

*Mental health first aid training for volunteers*

Green Lane masjid has been training its staff and volunteers in Mental Health First Aid, in order to identify, understand and help a person who may be developing a mental health issue. Mental Health First Aid is a way of learning to recognise crucial warning signs of mental ill health. Green Lane masjid has also trained their volunteers in signposting to mental health services where appropriate. They have also developed a professional in-mosque counselling service for congregants.

## KSIMC Birmingham Mosque

*Mindfulness through Hadith Study*

KSMIC mosque has held self-awareness and mindfulness sessions, where participants reflect upon the practices and teaching of the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم and his family. These sessions allow participants to reflect on their life with reference to the Prophetic example, and can enable people to positively change the way they think and feel about their experiences, especially in challenging situations.

### '5 ways' to mental wellbeing<sup>29</sup>



“ Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest. ”

[Qur'an, 13:28]

# Retirement and later life

As work pressures ease and individuals have free time to take up activities, such as socialising, meeting friends, sports, learning and volunteering, retirement can offer opportunities to increase wellbeing. However, some retired and older people are at risk of social isolation.

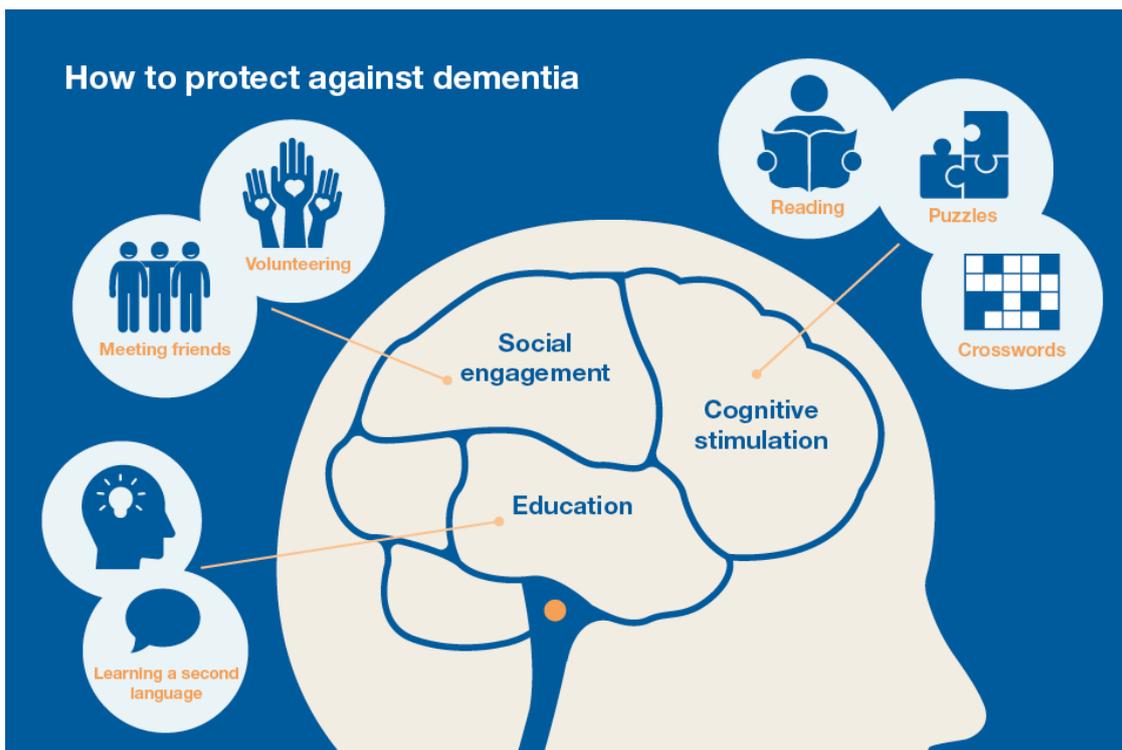
Maintenance of health in middle and older age is important in preventing the risk of dementia, disability and isolation.

Health outcomes for Muslims in the UK in the over 50 age groups are poorer compared to other groups<sup>2</sup>. Among South Asians and black ethnic groups, there is higher prevalence of dementia. This is due to the reason that South Asians are more likely to have risk factors that lead to dementia such as cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and diabetes<sup>30</sup>.

Dementia is an umbrella term that describes the symptoms that occur when the brain is

affected by certain diseases or conditions – for example Alzheimer’s disease or having several strokes<sup>30</sup>. Symptoms may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language. Dementia can impose huge emotional effects on individuals and families. Dementia is not an inevitable part of ageing, adopting healthier lifestyles, keeping the brain mentally active through learning a second language and socialising can reduce the risk<sup>30</sup>.

For Muslims, Arabic would be an ideal choice when choosing a language to learn or improve upon, the Prophet ﷺ encouraged learning and teaching the Qur’an to others, as mentioned in the Hadith *“The best among you are those who learn the Qur’an and teach it”*. Learning Arabic would not only lead to a closer connection for Muslims to their faith but also reduce the risk of developing dementia.



## What can you do?

- Promote reducing the risks of dementia, disability and frailty by encouraging healthy lifestyles<sup>30</sup>
- Host seniors club/activities
- Raise awareness of signs of dementia through incorporating in Friday sermons to help change attitudes that may exist and build support for those affected
- Use FaithAction's resource Building Dementia-Friendly Faith Communities, includes a large collection of resources: [www.faithaction.net/dementia](http://www.faithaction.net/dementia)
- Create a dementia-friendly mosque (see [dementia friendly Gurudwara's toolkit](#))<sup>31</sup>
- Signpost to Alzheimer's Society information programme for South Asian families<sup>32,33</sup> or other local services
- Encourage attendance of NHS health checks where individuals will be told of the signs and symptoms of dementia to look out for
- Encourage learning a second language such as Arabic by having group Quranic learning sessions, which can also encourage social interactions<sup>30</sup> at the mosque

“ My Lord, increase me in knowledge. ”

[Qur'an, 20:114]

## Ghamkol Sharif Central Jamia Mosque

*Weekly Dhikr classes and Community Care*

Ghamkol Sharif hosts a number of weekly Dhikr (remembrance of God) sessions both for men and women. These sessions are a good example of gathering in the remembrance of God, to reflect, learn and socially interact through faith.

A community care day service is located within Ghamkol Sharif, which aims to provide community based support to adults of South Asian origin who are experiencing mental health issues. The service enables people to develop life skills, take part in social activities and increase physical activity through yoga, swimming and gardening

Youth from the mosque have been encouraged to visit local care homes to develop intergenerational social interaction and reduce loneliness. Children from the mosque have also been involved in writing good will cards for people who are homeless. These were part of Ghamkol Sharif's weekly food bank initiative which supports people who are homeless in Birmingham.

## The Muath Trust and Amanah Mosque – Centre for Education and Training

*Arabic language lessons*

The Muath trust holds courses in Arabic for all ages aimed at raising the necessary skills within the community to create a better understanding and practice of Islam and the Quran. These courses give opportunities to engage the mind in learning new skills and a language to keep the mind challenged and active.

“ And We have certainly made the Qur'an easy for remembrance, so is there any who will remember? ”

[Qur'an, 54:17]

# Preventing violence and abuse

Violence is a major cause of poor physical health and mental wellbeing. Living without the fear of violence is a fundamental requirement for health and wellbeing<sup>34</sup>.

Birmingham has higher rates of emergency hospital admissions for violence than the England and West Midlands averages<sup>35</sup>.

Domestic violence and abuse can include physical abuse, threats, emotional and psychological abuse, and sexual assault<sup>36</sup>. Both men and women may perpetrate domestic violence and abuse, but it is more commonly inflicted on women by men.

“ **Whoever does good, whether male or female... We shall certainly give them reward according to the best of their actions** ”

[Qur'an, 16:27]

Experience of abuse or growing up in a house with domestic violence has serious impacts on children's mental, physical, emotional and psychological health, as well as affecting their educational and social development<sup>37</sup>. Children raised in environments where violence, assault and abuse are common are more likely to develop health risks in later life, such as heart disease and depression<sup>37</sup>.

## Recommendations

- Agencies and communities need to work together to understand which groups are experiencing violence
- Raise awareness (eg domestic violence, gang culture)
- Spread good practice in prevention, and support people to access services to prevent violence<sup>37</sup>.
- FaithAction has a resource (Faith and Domestic Abuse: Recommendations for Faith Leaders), including Islam: [www.faithaction.net/domestic-abuse](http://www.faithaction.net/domestic-abuse)

## What can you do?

- Raise awareness through Friday sermons
- Reduce stigma for those affected by domestic violence
- Encourage reporting
- Provide appropriate signposting to specialist services who can support people who are experiencing abuse or violence.

## Amirah Foundation

*Engaging mosques in violence prevention*

Amirah Foundation is a charity which works with vulnerable women to break the cycle of abuse, violence and isolation through support. They are working with a number of mosques in Birmingham to raise awareness around preventing violence through workshops, which engage faith leaders in their roles in pastoral and counselling support.

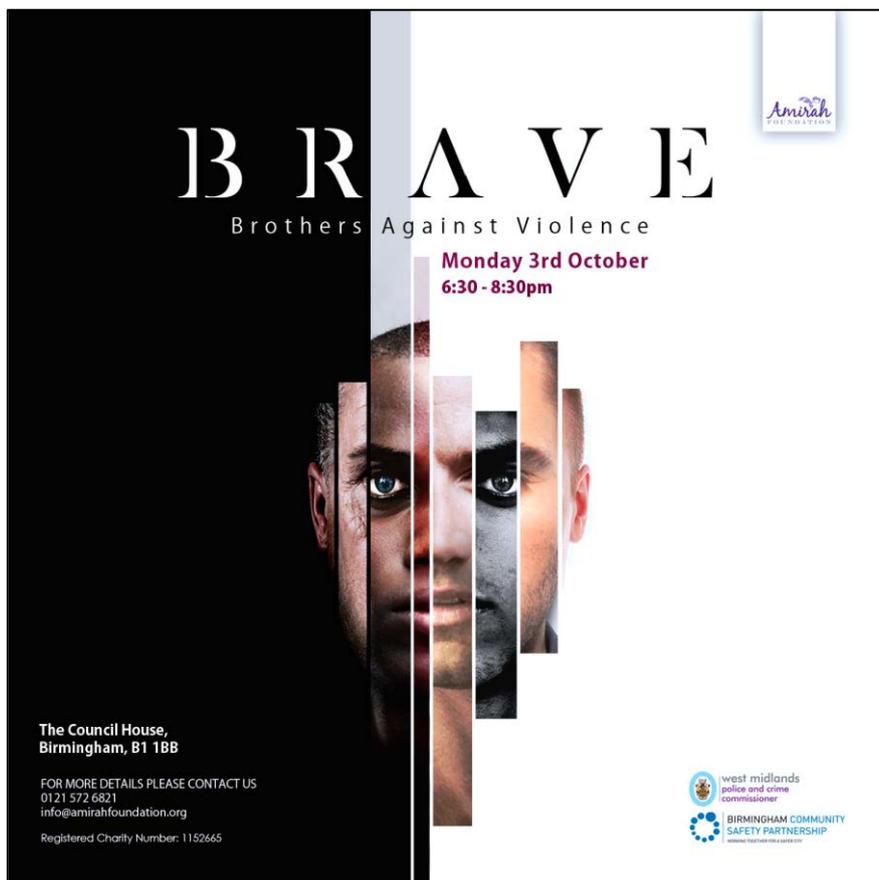
Recently there was a workshop held entitled 'Ethical Guidelines for Imams and Faith Leaders'. This workshop was led by a faith leader and safeguarding champion, and provided opportunities for mosques to learn and continue working with Amirah in preventing violence.

“...make peace...with justice, and equitably” ”

[Qur'an, 49:9]

### Amirah Foundation *BRAVE - Brothers Against Violence*

BRAVE is a project launched by Amirah Foundation to engage men in preventing violence. It recognises that engaging men and boys is an important step to reduce violence in the community. Through this project, Amirah are engaging schools, faith leaders and communities to raise awareness and change the way communities behave and think.



“ And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good. ”

[Qur'an, 2:195]

# Early identification and protecting against diseases

Birmingham has higher rates of deaths from preventable causes when compared to the England and region averages<sup>38</sup>. For example, new cases of lung and prostate cancer are higher in Birmingham compared to England<sup>39</sup>. People from South Asian backgrounds are at higher risk for developing certain blood borne viruses such as hepatitis C and B.

Hepatitis C can infect the liver and if left untreated can cause life-threatening damage to the liver including cancer over many years. However, with modern treatments it's often possible to cure the infection, and most people with it will have a normal life expectancy. Raising awareness and promoting testing is crucial so that people can be offered treatment<sup>40</sup>. Other infections such as hepatitis B are also higher in South Asians.

New cases of tuberculosis (TB) are also higher in Birmingham and there are higher rates of deaths (under 75) from liver disease compared to England and region averages<sup>41</sup>. TB affects minority ethnic people (Indian, Pakistani and black-African) and those born outside the UK more than the general population<sup>42,43</sup>.

Yet, the number of people being screened for health issues such as breast, bowel and cervical cancer or abdominal aortic aneurysms is lower in Birmingham than England and region averages<sup>9,44</sup>.



**85%**  
of TB patients  
complete a six-month  
course of treatment

**TB is curable – treat and complete**

**TB is curable with antibiotics**  
the sooner the illness is diagnosed and treated the better

**Patients should complete treatment**  
to reduce the risk of:

- drug resistant TB
- onward transmission
- relapse of disease
- dying

## Recommendations

- Promote uptake of recommended immunisations
- Promote uptake of NHS screening programmes such as breast, bowel, cervical, diabetic eye, abdominal aortic aneurysm and NHS Health Checks
- Screening programmes are important for early identification of diseases so they can be treated
- Know your blood pressure
- Raise awareness and promote treatment for hepatitis C and hepatitis B
- Raise awareness of symptoms of TB especially in ethnic minorities
- Promote access to appropriate treatment if needed as TB is curable with antibiotics<sup>42</sup>

### What can you do?

- Raise awareness of symptoms of illnesses such as TB and cancers through Fridays sermons, display associated leaflets, spread messages through mosque newsletters and social media use
- Raise awareness of viruses such as hepatitis C and hepatitis B and promote that it can be treated
- Reduce stigma and misinformation by encouraging people to seek help early from the GP if they are worried or symptoms occur
- Promote national health campaigns through social media and newsletters such as:
  - Act FAST – Stroke
  - Be Food Smart and Sugar Smart
  - Stoptober – smoking
  - Stay Well This Winter – flu
  - Be Clear On Cancer – raising symptom awareness

- Change4life 10 Minute Shake up - physical activity
  - NHS Health checks
- More information:  
[campaignresources.phe.gov.uk](http://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk)

### Ghamkol Sharif Central Jamia Mosque *Hepatitis C and B awareness raising events with Hepatitis C Trust*

Hepatitis C Trust with other local healthcare professionals undertook events to engage members of South Asian and Muslim communities on hepatitis awareness and testing. These events raised awareness and provided opportunistic testing for hepatitis viruses, blood pressure checks, BMI checks and general health promotion. The Imam at Ghamkol Sharif helped to engage the community by making announcements during the Friday sermons prior to the event.



## Birmingham Central Mosque Healthexchange signposting

Birmingham central mosque is working with Healthexchange, a service which works with people and communities to improve health and wellbeing. Through a health trainer programme, individuals are supported to make healthier lifestyles choices to improve their mental and physical health and self-esteem. Birmingham central mosque is working with Healthexchange on specific programmes around raising awareness of type 2 diabetes; this has been achieved through making announcements at Friday prayers.

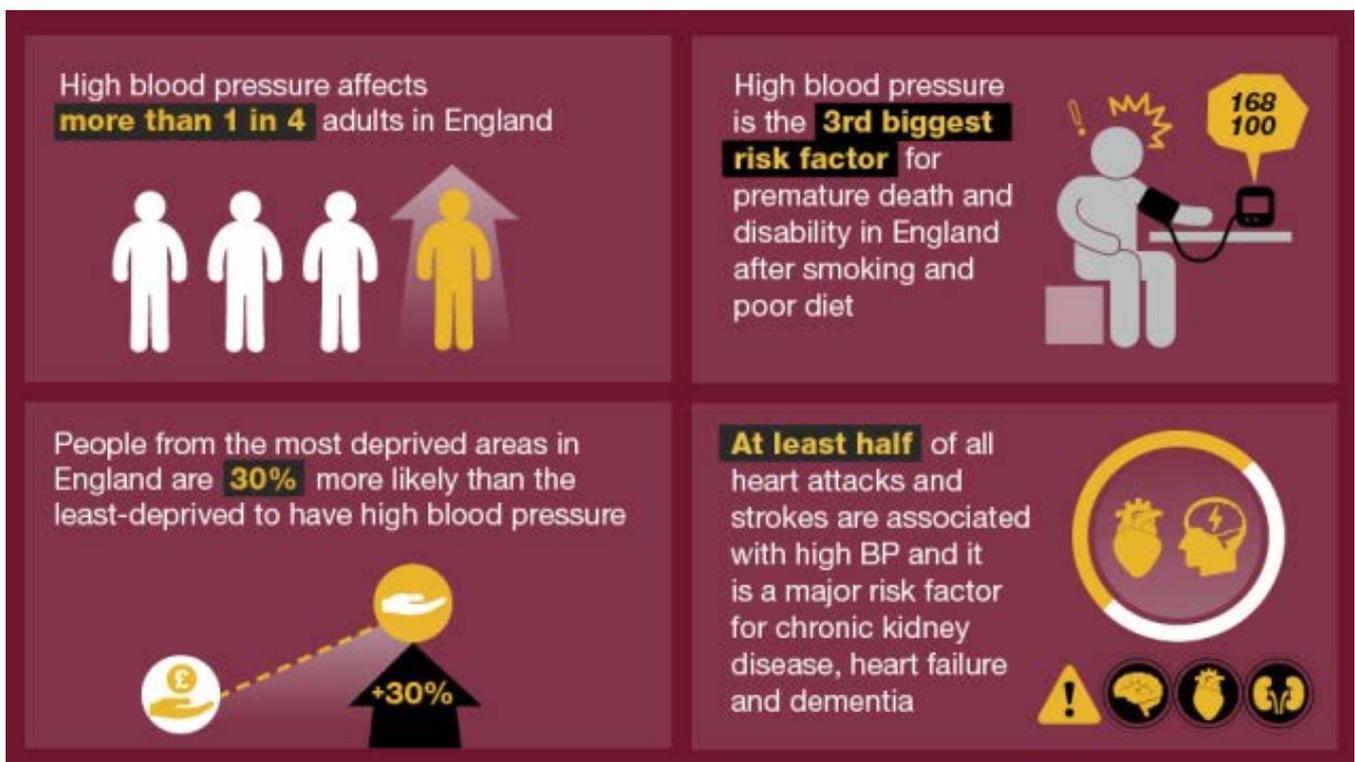
## The Muath Trust and Amanah Mosque Promoting flu vaccinations

The Muath Trust encourages its eligible congregants to get their flu jabs in groups. Through working with local GPs, they arrange for groups of people to go together to get their vaccinations.

“  
...Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...

[Qur'an, 13:11]

”



# Addressing smoking and substance use disorders

Smoking levels in minority ethnic groups are higher, for example in Bangladeshi and Pakistani men<sup>48</sup>. Men and women from the most deprived groups have more than double the death rate from lung cancer compared with those from the least deprived groups.

Another issue is the use of shisha (waterpipe smoking), especially among younger age groups<sup>49,50</sup>. Similar to smoking, shisha is associated with cancer, heart disease and lung disease, with added risks of catching infections from shisha equipment<sup>51</sup>.

In Birmingham, the estimated prevalence of people taking opiates or crack per thousand of the population is higher than England and West Midlands averages<sup>45</sup>.

Alcohol-specific deaths in Birmingham are higher than the England and regional averages<sup>46</sup>. The chief medical officer warns that drinking any level of alcohol increases the risk of a range of cancers including liver, bowel, stomach, mouth and breast

cancers<sup>47</sup>. Alcohol misuse can have a significant negative impact on mental health, employment, families and children<sup>47</sup>.

## What can you do?

- Raise awareness of the harms of smoking and shisha through sermons, displaying associated leaflets, mosque newsletters and social media
- Signpost to stop smoking services and substance misuse services or online support<sup>47, 52</sup>.
- Reduce stigma for those affected through sermons
- Work towards making mosque grounds a smoke free environment<sup>48</sup>
- Raise awareness of national health campaigns such as Stoptober
- Host mutual aid sessions to support recovery from substance use issues
- KIKIT hold 12 Step Islamic mutual aid groups which can be held at the mosque to increase awareness and participation

The role of campaigns



More than 250,000 signed up for Stoptober in 2014 –  
**62% were smokefree at 28 days**  
PHE's marketing initiatives triggered **778,000 attempts to quit in 2013-14**

## KIKIT Pathways to recovery

KIKIT is a BME specialist service providing recovery support to people with substance use disorders. KIKIT works with and receives referrals from mosques across Birmingham to provide culturally sensitive and tailored help, advice and support for anyone suffering from the effects of drugs and alcohol addiction.

KIKIT also hosts the Muslim Recovery Network, which is a 12 step Islamic mutual aid programme for individuals who experience problems associated with addiction. The steps and traditions are based upon Islamic principles and throughout the programme the Prophetic example is followed as a path to a productive, healthier and addiction-free life.

“ **Whoever intercedes for a good cause will have a reward there from...**

”

[Qur'an, 4:85]



# Wider economic, social and environmental determinants of health

Economic and social inequalities have effects in Birmingham. There are more children in low income families in Birmingham than the England and West Midlands average. The percentage of people (aged 16-64) who are employed is lower in Birmingham compared to England and region averages<sup>53</sup>.

Poverty, low income and unemployment greatly impact on health and wellbeing, triggering and sustaining health inequalities, unhealthy behaviours and can influence future generations and their life prospects.

There are environmental risks that negatively affect our health, such as air pollution, clean water and sanitation and the effects of global climate change<sup>54</sup>.

## What can you do?

- Encourage and support volunteering in the mosque and wider community to build skills and confidence so people can go on to find employment
- Raise awareness of the environment through sermons
- Promote active transport, encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport to the mosque and elsewhere (less use of personal cars)
- Reduce waste, re-use where possible and recycle – set up recycling in the mosque, hold litter picking initiatives
- Safe green spaces – community garden
- Highlight speed management and safe travel

## Green Lane Masjid

### *Job Centre Plus*

Job Centre Plus hold weekly outreach sessions at Green Lane masjid aiming to help people of working age find employment in the UK. This provides a good example of a mosque facilitating their community in finding employment.

## ArRahma Mosque

### *Community Allotment*

To encourage contact with the natural environment and to promote better physical and mental health, the ArRahma mosque procured an allotment site for the community. The community garden encourages self-sufficiency and sustainability through socialisation and cooperative working for all age groups.

“

**And do not do mischief on the earth, after it has been set in order...**

”

[Qur'an, 7:56]

## **Ghamkol Sharif Central Jamia Mosque** *Fatal Four Campaign*

Ghamkol Sharif has been working alongside West Midlands Fire Service, East Local Community Safety Partnership and West Midlands Police in a campaign called 'Fatal 4' to raise awareness about road safety including speeding, using mobile phones at the wheel, drink or drug use and not wearing a seatbelt. Speeding has been identified as a particular concern for the local area. The area is a 'hot spot' for road traffic collisions which can cause serious and fatal loss. Ghamkol Sharif has encouraged everyone to be aware of the dangers of speeding and to take time in planning journeys to ensure safe arrival to the mosque and elsewhere. The campaign was launched during Friday prayers and involved a series of banners displayed outside the mosque and on the Small Heath bypass. This is a good example of how to spread messages via the mosque to improve the safety of the whole community.

## **KSIMC Birmingham Mosque** *Bring your own mug*

KSIMC has an environmental champion in the mosque committee to encourage the mosque to think about the environment and the ways in which we all interact and look after it. They have encouraged a 'bring your own mug' campaign which asks people to use a mug for drinks instead of using disposable cups. This reduces the effects of waste and helps the environment.

### **Looking after our environments**

Several mosques promote recycling in the mosque from paper to water bottles and also have litter picking initiatives in which volunteers of congregants gather to pick up litter around the mosque area to encourage a safe and hygienic environment for all. Others have encouraged congregants to walk or use public transport to come to prayers and leave their cars behind to reduce traffic and encourage active travel.

“ **There is not a moving (living) creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. ”**

[Qur'an, 6:38]

# Harnessing the power of volunteering and joint working

Volunteers make a critical contribution and are a huge asset to promote health and wellbeing within communities<sup>55</sup>. Many volunteers within mosque communities contribute to community life through sharing their skills and knowledge and are the building blocks for communities to flourish.

There is a great amount of evidence on the health benefits of volunteering<sup>55</sup>. This means that the volunteers themselves can have positive outcomes such as better health, increased skills, chances of employment and increased self-confidence whilst helping others. Some of the ways volunteers can help include facilitating health promotion awareness, behaviour change, increasing social support and improving access to services. Volunteering can occur across a wide range of initiatives such as sport, nutrition and education.

Many mosques already recognise that investing in their volunteers can help build the community. Mosques can support this further by encouraging and recruiting

individuals with different skills and expertise (eg nurses, teachers, dieticians, pharmacists and many others) to help lead in initiatives around health and wellbeing.

Mosques should consider having systems in place for the training, management and development of their volunteers.

Focussing volunteers in health roles to reduce health inequalities can be achieved via activities such as **walking for health** (volunteer-led walk leaders to plan and lead local walks), **befriending** (social support and companionship to individuals at risk of social isolation), environmental (**community allotments**) and health volunteering projects (**donating blood**).

Mosques may experience challenges in recruiting volunteers to plan and run projects. Combining efforts with other community groups to share learning and good practice should be considered as a way forward.

“ To each is a goal to which God turns him; then strive together in a race towards all that is good. Wheresoever ye are, God will bring you Together. ”

[Qur'an, 2:148]

# Self-Assessment checklist

Public Health England has worked with partners to develop an approach for mosques to assess their current level of health promotion activities and to provide a method to develop their work.

The checklist is for internal use within the mosque and provides support:

- To review and reflect on health and wellbeing projects
- To identify gaps and recognise your achievement
- To help you develop a plan for new initiatives

## Planning

<b>What do you want to achieve?</b>
<b>Who is going to be involved?</b>
<b>What is your approximate timeline?</b>

Section 1: Leadership and Vision		How do you do this?	Actions
1.a	Does the mosque have a trustee or management committee level health and wellbeing champion?		
1.b	Do you have a vision for developing health and wellbeing projects?		
1.c	Are health and wellbeing projects discussed at mosque management committee meetings?		
Section 2: Planning			
2.a	Do you have a plan for improving the health of the congregation?		
2.b	<p>Does your plan cover the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Physical Activity</b> – <i>walk to the mosque , walking clubs, sports clubs, gyms, community garden, allotment</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Healthy Eating</b> – <i>review food options provided by mosque cookery clubs, youth education</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Mental Wellbeing/Dementia</b> – <i>dementia friendly environment, Quran/Arabic classes, reading circles, Mental Health First Aid, reducing stigma, signposting, raising awareness</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Social Isolation</b> – <i>dhikr sessions, befriending, bereavement support, seniors club and activities</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Protecting against disease</b> – <i>raise awareness of symptoms of diseases such as TB, Hep B and C, cancers, screening</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Environment</b> – <i>recycling, litter picking, save water, active transport</i></li> </ul>		

Section 2: Planning		How do you do this?	Actions
	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Substance Use Disorders</b> – raise awareness of smoking/shisha, Signposting to specialist services, hosting mutual aid groups  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Preventing violence and abuse</b> – signposting to specialist services, reducing stigma for those affected, raising awareness  <i>All areas require: Raising awareness, sermons, signposting</i>		
2.c	If so, does your plan cover participation for:  <input type="checkbox"/> Children <input type="checkbox"/> Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Adults <input type="checkbox"/> Learning difficulties <input type="checkbox"/> Older Adults <input type="checkbox"/> Women		
2.d	Are there selected health awareness topics for sermons over the next 12 months? <i>– Where appropriate are these messages linked to the Qur'an and Prophetic lifestyle</i> <i>– Are outside experts invited to speak?</i>		
2.e	Is there a connection between the mosque health plan and health issues identified at local ward forums? <i>– Does the mosque send a representative to the local neighbourhood ward forum?</i>		

Section 3: Partnerships		How do you do this?	Actions
3.a	Are appropriate people within the mosque aware of local health and wellbeing services available in the community? If so how is this information shared?		
3.b	Is the mosque linked in with local health services?		
3.c	Does the mosque encourage congregants to join GP Patient Participation Groups (PPG's)?  Does the mosque have representation at CCG People's Health Panel's (PHP)/Citizen Groups?  <i>– these are NHS forums where community voices are listened to and acted upon.</i>		
Section 4: Training			
4.a	Has the mosque considered ways for training and developing volunteers?		
4.b	Does the mosque seek appropriately skilled volunteers to lead on projects?  <i>eg advertising via: internal website, sermons, on-line volunteering websites</i>		
4.c	Are staff and volunteers trained to signpost to services?		

<b>Section 5: Communication</b>		<b>How do you do this?</b>	<b>Actions</b>
5.a	Are health messages included in mosque communications, including social media? <i>Sermons, Website, Newsletters, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Texting Feeds</i>		
5.b	How does the mosque keep up to date with the latest health information? <i>eg follow health groups on twitter, health and wellbeing champion to update the mosque on current health topics</i>		
<b>Section 6: Evaluation and Joint Working</b>			
6.a	Do you know if projects are making a difference?		
6.b	Have you used feedback to improve projects?		
6.c	Does the mosque connect with other local organisations to share learning and good practice?		
6.d	Does the mosque attend 'Faith and Health' seminars organised by the Birmingham Council of Faiths?		

# Abbreviations & Glossary

**APPG:** All-Parliamentary Party Group

**BME:** Black and Minority Ethnic

**BMI:** A scientific measure to determine whether an individual is a healthy weight. It is calculated by dividing weight in kilograms by the square of height in metres

$BMI = \text{weight (kg)} \div \text{height (m}^2\text{)}$

**Dhikr:** Engaging in the remembrance of Allah (God)

**Hadith:** Accounts of words, actions, or habits of the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم

**Health Inequalities:** Health inequalities are differences between people or groups due to social, geographical, biological or other factors. These differences have a huge impact, because they result in people who are worst off experiencing poorer health and shorter lives. Some differences, such as ethnicity, may be fixed. Others are caused by social or geographical factors (also known as 'health inequities') and can be avoided or mitigated.

**Hepatitis B:** Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver caused by a virus that's spread through blood and body fluids. It can eventually cause serious liver damage, especially if infection is acquired in childhood

**Hepatitis C:** Hepatitis C is a virus that can infect the liver. If left untreated, it can cause serious damage to the liver over many years. However, with modern treatments it's often possible to cure the infection, and most people with it will have a normal life expectancy

**Hijrah:** Journey, migration

**Iftar:** Fast opening time at the end of each fast day

**IMD:** Index of multiple deprivation. The official measure of deprivation used to compare geographical areas in England. It includes dimensions such as income, employment, education, health, education, crime, barriers to housing and services and living environment

**Premature mortality:** A term used to describe earlier death from preventable conditions such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, lung disease and liver disease

**Ramadhan:** Fasting month in the Islamic year

**Tuberculosis (TB):** TB is a bacterial infection spread through inhaling tiny droplets from the coughs or sneezes of an infected person. It mainly affects the lungs, but it can affect any part of the body

صلى الله عليه وسلم: This is the Arabic form of 'God's Blessings and Peace Be Upon Him', added after the Prophet Muhammad's name as a mark of respect in Islam

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