



NHS  
**MUSLIM**  
N E T W O R K

# HAJJ & EID AL-ADHA

Each year, Muslims celebrate two major festivals known as Eid. The first occurs after the month of Ramadan, known as Eid Al-Fitr (Festival of Breaking the Fast). The second during the time of Hajj, or the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. This is known as **Eid al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice)**.



## HAJJ

Hajj consists of several steps and rites that take place over approximately a week in the Islamic month of Dhul Hijjah. As Hajj is one of the five pillars of Islam, every Muslim (with the financial, physical and mental capability to) must complete this pilgrimage in Mecca at least once in their lives.

Hajj is a process which encourages God-consciousness, sacrifice, and a sense of spiritual upliftment. Pilgrims enter a state of sacred purity (Ihram) before beginning the journey, and throughout wear plain, modest clothing which removes all societal representations of wealth and social difference. The Ihram is symbolic of equality among people and unity before Allah (God).

Many of the pilgrimage steps represent the struggles and tests faced by Prophet Abraham and his family. During Hajj pilgrims are tested physically and spiritually as they walk between the holy sites, renounce the luxuries of the modern world, seek forgiveness and supplicate to Allah. Ultimately, Hajj brings together Muslims from around the world in one place, dressed similarly, following the same steps all in the spirit of worshiping Allah.

## EID AL-ADHA

Eid Al-Adha is the celebration that takes place on the 10th day of Dhul Hijjah. It is celebrated by all Muslims, whether they have engaged in the pilgrimage that year or not. Muslims may take a few days to spend time with family, attend the Eid prayer, and celebrate the occasion. This year, Eid Al-Adha is expected to take place from **Tuesday 20th July to Friday 23rd July 2021**. This may vary slightly as the Islamic calendar is calculated according to the lunar cycles, so the month of Dhul Hijjah will begin when the new moon is sighted.



## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR NHS STAFF?

- Due to COVID-19, it is unlikely that many staff will be attending Hajj in person. However, if you have team members who are, they **may request a few weeks of annual leave** to travel and fulfil the Hajj pilgrimage.
- Though some staff may not be physically partaking in Hajj, they may still wish to take time off to honour the holy pilgrimage. In particular, some may choose to fast and spend time in worship over the first **9 days of Dhul Hijjah during the Hajj pilgrimage**.
- Many Muslim staff will wish to take a day or more off from work as annual leave to celebrate Eid Al-Adha.

We encourage managers and teams to be supportive of leave requests where possible. You may also want to wish your Muslim colleagues a blessed Eid by saying 'Eid Mubarak' once the Hajj pilgrimage has been completed.