



NHS
MUSLIM
N E T W O R K

YEAR IN REVIEW

H I G H L I G H T S 2 0 / 2 1



Share your stories or find the
latest news and updates on our
social sites

FOREWORD FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

This year has been like no other in recent history and has tested us all in more ways than one. Muslim communities around the world have suffered tremendously, from the pandemic, Islamophobia, politics and more; and to add, many of us have sadly lost family, friends and loved ones. However, despite this, our communities have rallied together, stayed strong and made an incredible impact. From the invaluable contribution of frontline clinicians to those advocating for a fairer and equal society – Muslims have gone above and beyond to save lives, offer support and protect others. This incredible feat often goes unnoticed – but we remind ourselves, first and foremost as Muslims, that our duty and drive is for Allah (God) alone.

Just like the world around us, over the last year, the NHS Muslim Network has taken the opportunity to self-reflect on our approach and impact and take actions to adapt and be as effective as possible. Firstly, we expanded our membership and outlook, so that any Muslim working in the NHS has a community to be a part of. Secondly, we reshaped our governance and established our Executive Committee and set clear priorities and tasks for the year. Thirdly, we devised and began implementing our strategy to support the NHS with the COVID-19 response. This included establishing a faith-based mental health counselling pilot for NHS Muslim staff, sharing good practice around personal protective equipment for Muslim staff, and running a dedicated campaign to educate and increase uptake of Muslim staff getting vaccinated. Finally, we worked hard in starting to raise awareness of the experiences of Muslim staff in the NHS, what matters to them, what Islamophobia in the NHS looks like and how we might tackle it, and how teams and managers can better support Muslim staff in the workplace.

This Year in Review is a summary of our key activities and achievements over the year, as well as a look at our priorities for the coming year. We thank Allah for the blessings and opportunities provided for us to establish this network, and hope that we can continue our work for 2021/22. We would also like to thank all our allies, friends and volunteers for their incredible support. And last, but certainly not least, our members for being the drivers and advocates for our Muslim communities in the NHS.

Ihtishaam Malik & Zainab Garba-Sani
Co-Chairs of the NHS Muslim Network

**30⁺**
EVENTS HELD
THROUGHOUT 2020/21**9**
HEADS APPOINTED
TO THE COMMITTEE**1000⁺**
MEMBERS ACROSS THE NHS**3 NEW**
PUBLICATIONS FOR NHS
STAFF AND MANAGERS**70000⁺**
ENGAGEMENTS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA**£750**
RAISED FOR CHARITY

INTRODUCTION

The NHS Muslim Network is a staff network hosted by NHS England and NHS Improvement and run by volunteers, and has the following aims:

REPRESENTATION – To represent Muslim staff in the NHS and provide a collective voice for Muslim colleagues (for example by raising awareness of the Islamic faith and highlighting issues with senior management) in order to allow Muslim staff in the NHS to work in an inclusive environment where they can bring their whole selves to work.

NETWORKING AND PROGRESSION – To provide a forum for Muslim staff in the NHS to network, build contacts and engage with local communities, gain access to career development opportunities, and progress to more senior positions.

HEALTH INEQUALITIES – To support the NHS and other key stakeholders in tackling health inequalities that exist within NHS Muslim communities, through health promotion activities and co-developing health programmes and policy.

Our priorities for the year 2020/21 were to focus on:

1

REFRESHING
OUR
GOVERNANCE

3

NETWORKING
AND
MEMBERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT

2

REPRESENTING
MUSLIM
STAFF

4

TACKLING
HEALTH
INEQUALITIES

This Year in Review reflects on the Network's key activities for each of the above priorities for 2020/21 and outlines the priorities for 2021/22.

REFRESHING OUR GOVERNANCE

NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

In August 2020, the Network appointed a new Co-Chair - Zainab Garba-Sani, an alumni of the NHS Graduate Management Training Scheme who is currently working in NHS England and NHS Improvement's Innovation, Research and Life Science's Group.

Following a strategy and governance refresh (including the identification of aims and priorities for the Network), we went out to recruit more members and volunteers to get involved in the Network's operations and activities. To lead the day-to-day delivery of the Network, an Executive Committee was established:



We also have regional representatives across England and hope to establish their roles further this upcoming year, as well as introduce more Exec roles and increase our number of active volunteers.

NETWORK EXPANSION

As part of the refresh, we expanded the scope of our activities and membership, from a network for just NHS England and NHS Improvement staff to the whole NHS. We took this decision following feedback that the challenges faced by Muslims are similar across the NHS and not just limited to one organisation.

By doing this, we helped widen the Network's impact and sphere of influence. We are now able to support more staff in different health and care settings and in the last year, we have expanded our membership by 400 people. This has helped us increase our diversity in terms of both the professional and personal backgrounds of our members, thus enabling us to be more inclusive and representative of the communities we serve.

REPRESENTING MUSLIM STAFF

HAJJ, RAMADAN, EID AND PRAYER GUIDANCE

Throughout the year, we published guidance around Hajj, Ramadan, Eid and prayer to help NHS teams and managers better support colleagues observing these holy occasions and wanting to pray during working hours.

RAMADAN

To celebrate and raise awareness about Ramadan, we held an event introducing the holy month, highlighting its importance and meaning, and educating NHS teams and managers on how they can support staff who are fasting during the working day. We also held our annual Fastathon - a challenge to colleagues and allies to join Muslim staff in experiencing a fast and donating to charity. We managed to raise over £750 this year.



CELEBRATING MUSLIM WOMEN AND INTERNATIONAL MUSLIM WOMENS DAY

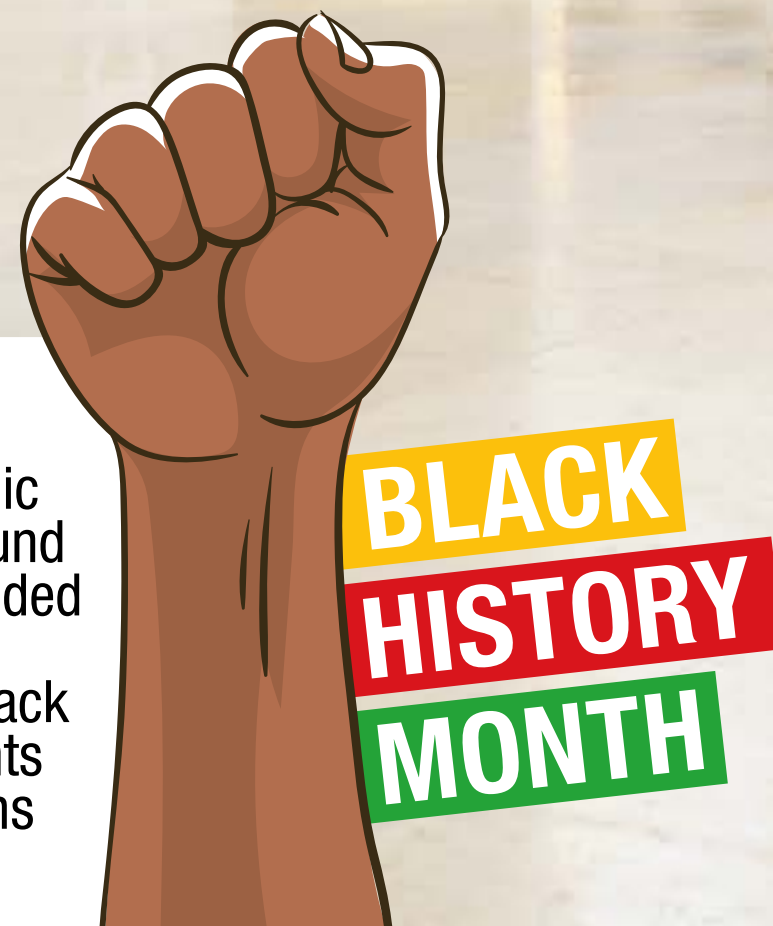
For the first time in our history, we proudly celebrated International Women's Day and Muslim Women's Day with members, colleagues and allies. We showcased the contribution of Muslim women to the NHS and highlighted the daily challenges faced by many.

We also heard from senior Muslimahs working across the NHS regarding their varied career journeys and career advice for others.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

In Black History Month, we celebrated Black Islamic heritage and launched an inclusion campaign around tackling racism within our communities. This included member discussions about recognising our own biases, an event by Dr Kayla Wheeler about the Black Islam Syllabus, and the sharing of resources, events and stories about the experiences of Black Muslims (including NHS staff) and Black Islamic History.



In our aim to represent Muslim staff from all different backgrounds across the NHS and help them feel a strong sense of belonging and inclusion, we have prioritised listening to our Muslim colleagues, highlighting their experiences, wants and needs, and celebrating their successes. During the year, the Network has presented to a range of stakeholders from NHS Exec Board and NHS England and NHS Improvement all-staff briefings to directorate/team meetings and specific professional groups.



ISLAMOPHOBIA AWARENESS MONTH

In November 2020, we held our first event discussing Islamophobia in the NHS, as part of Islamophobia Awareness Month. We discussed the lived experiences of Muslims across the NHS, and examples of direct and indirect Islamophobia. During the month, we also shared a series of "Hello my name is" blogs of NHS Muslim staff. We will now be taking forward a programme dedicated to tackling Islamophobia in the NHS, led by our Head of Faith Literacy.

NETWORKING AND MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

This year, we ran several workshops focused on career development skills and upskilling the capabilities of our members, including:

- Communication skills
- The importance of coaching and mentoring

We also began scoping the existing training and development opportunities available to NHS staff, as well as signposting internal and external vacancies via our newsletter.

In 2021/22, we hope to continue to run a series of workshops on key soft skills, and increase our signposting to opportunities such as mentoring and coaching offers and volunteering. We also aim to introduce a buddying scheme which will be complimented by action learning sets where members from across the NHS can network and discuss key problems they are facing in a safe environment.

ESR DEEP DIVE

In 2020/21, we wanted to examine what structural barriers Muslims face in the workplace. Therefore, we conducted a deep dive into ESR (electronic staff record) data for staff working in NHS England and NHS Improvement.

We analysed the data to understand the demographics of the Muslim community at NHS England and NHS Improvement, the existing inequalities in recruitment and progression, the gender and pay disparity, and the career metrics that were available to us.

We are currently finalising the report with new data for 2021/22, and will be working closely with the NHS People Directorate to put in clear actions on tackling these issues.

Look out for our report, due to be published soon.



We surely belong to Allah and to Him we shall return

NETWORKING

Over the year, we ran a number of informal networking events for colleagues to share their experiences, meet new people and provide advice and recommendations for the Network to action. We held socials during Ramadan and Hajj, which included games, quizzes and storytelling. Additionally, we also organised study circles for members to reflect on Islamic stories, lessons and principles and use it in their own personal development such as in building resilience.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE REFRESH

After refreshing our branding, we launched three social media channels (Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn), and revamped our website. We now have over **2,000 FOLLOWERS** on these platforms. This allowed us to reach Muslims across the NHS and raise awareness on issues that would not normally be discussed on these platforms. In Ramadan, we used our platforms to share daily information bites around how to have a healthy Ramadan – mind, body and soul.



94

1.3K

1K

70,000+
Hits on social media

TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

COVID-19 RESPONSE

We were actively involved in the COVID-19 response for Muslim communities, participating in key forums and being a voice for Muslims across the country. This involved:

REFLECTIONS: Feeding back reflections and issues being highlighted in Muslim communities relating to social distancing and the vaccination programmes (including vaccinations in Ramadan).

SIGNPOSTING: Sharing information from key partners such as the British Islamic Medical Association (BIMA) and the Muslim Doctors Association (MDA) to our membership and key national stakeholders.

GUIDANCE: Supporting the development of guidance for NHS organisations, including the NHS Bereavement guidance, Eid guidance and good practice case studies regarding personal, protective equipment for NHS Muslim staff.

EDUCATING: Organising a series of webinars on the COVID-19 vaccines looking at the vaccine from Islamic and clinical perspectives. Guest speakers included:

- Emily Lawson, SRO for the COVID-19 vaccines rollout
- Prerana Issar, NHS Chief People Officer
- Sheikh Yunus Dudhwala, Head Chaplain, Barts NHS Foundation Trust
- Sheikh Asim Khan, Imam, Redbridge Islamic Centre
- Dr Masood Ahmed, Chief Medical Officer, Black Country and West Birmingham CCG
- Dr Imran Kauser, Medical Director, Novartis. Also chaired an event on celebrating Eid safely, which included speakers such as Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer, Nadhim Zahawi MP, Minister for Vaccines, and Dr Nikki Kanani NHS Deputy Chief Medical Officer.



FAITH-BASED COUNSELLING SUPPORT FOR NHS STAFF

In partnership with the NHS Health and Wellbeing Team, we successfully set up the first ever faith-based counselling pilot scheme for NHS Muslim staff, provided by Inspired Minds and the Lateef Project. It provided free faith-sensitive and culturally appropriate counselling support to Muslim staff working across the NHS. The pilot has now ended and is currently being evaluated, with an aim of sharing the findings to health inequalities teams at NHS England and NHS Improvement. We hope to build on this work in 2021/22 and scale mental health support available for NHS Muslim staff.



We also supported a webinar in relation to social prescribing within Muslim communities.

1,000⁺
Attendees to the
Covid-19 vaccination
webinars



Share your stories or find the latest news and updates on our social sites

OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2021/22

Ahead of 2021/22, the Network has refreshed its key priorities to address the concerns of our members. These priorities are:

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT: Continue our approach to upskilling Muslim communities working in the NHS, including offering volunteering opportunities, signposting to coaching and mentoring offers, establishing the NHS Muslim Network Action Learning Sets and continuing our regular development workshops.

HEALTH INEQUALITIES: Continue to support the COVID-19 response and implement and evaluate a strategy that seeks to improve the mental, physical and spiritual health of NHS Muslim staff.

FAITH LITERACY: Continue efforts to tackle Islamophobia in the NHS, both direct and indirect, including obtaining tangible data on the scale of the issue and experiences of Muslims in the NHS, as well as refreshing our ESR report.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATION: Establish and solidify our regional representation across the country, in order to provide a more inclusive and supporting network for all.

COMMS AND ENGAGEMENT: Continue to issue regular updates and communications to our members and stakeholders, celebrate key events such as Black History Month, Islamophobia Awareness Month and Muslim Women's Day and widen our reach.

GOVERNANCE: Take the next steps in our governance processes, such as succession planning, updating our Terms of Reference and creating standard operating procedures for key Network's activities.

We hope, by the will and decree of Allah (God), that we will be successful and that there is Barakah (blessing) in our activities.

If you would like to get involved or feedback on the network activities, please contact us at: england.muslim1@nhs.net.