

PREPARED FOR MOSQUES

Hosting an Open Day

A helpful guide to hosting a successful #VisitMyMosque Open Day.

MCB MUSLIM COUNCIL
OF BRITAIN



#visitmymosque

Getting Ready

Hosting an open day is a highly rewarding opportunity that helps to build bridges between communities.

A well thought out, planned open day can help ensure visitors feel welcomed, to what is otherwise out of their normal comfort zone.

To help make your day a success, we have outlined in simple steps things to consider, a useful checklist and great ways to join the national campaign VisitMyMosque.

Start by organising your task list:

Pre VMM

Things to consider:

- Appoint an organising team
- Recruit volunteers for the day
- Prepare event poster / marketing
- Media training for mosques spokesperson
- Inform your congregation of the event
- Plan a tour route for visitors
- Prepare exhibitions, displays & signage
- Invite your local police, councillors, MP & schools
- Invite local ethnic media/press
- Have an assigned photographer for the day

VMM Day

Things to consider:

- Carry out a risk assessment
- Have visible signage in and around the mosque
- Have dedicated volunteers welcoming visitors
- Consider refreshments / henna / calligraphy stalls
- Have supply of scarves / shoe bags
- Assign public toilets for the day
- Share the photos online using #visitmymosque
- Share feedback form with guests & stay in touch

Post VMM

Things to consider:

- Share a write-up of the event on social media
- Write letters of appreciation to your special guests
- Have a team de-brief and review your event

Da'wah Vs

Dialogue

Knowing the difference can greatly enhance your outreach efforts

By intercultural or interfaith dialogue we mean a conversation between different individuals or groups whose purpose is simply honest engagement and increased mutual understanding.

This kind of dialogue can be distinguished from Da'wah, where we seek to convey or persuade the other and is a very one-way communication. Dialogue on the other hand is more about talking to each other to understand each other as people.

In dialogue we engage with each other and involves listening to others for the sake of engagement; we are looking simply for meaningful human interaction through which we may grow in understanding of the other, of ourselves and of the relationship between us.

tolerance, truthfulness, sincerity, love, respect and good will.

This approach takes away the pressure of conforming to another's world-view and simply invites the other to explore your community.

Invite (all) to the Way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching;
[Qur'an 16:125]

Have an objective to create friendships with your visitors who leave with a positive memory.

In cross-cultural / interfaith dialogue we try to approach our partners in a spirit of



Resources

Tours & Exhibition

There are many resources available today to making a very memorable visit for your guests. Looking at various aspects in your planning can lead to a very informative, and enriching experience for first time visitors to your mosque.

Discover Islam UK

► www.discoverislamuk.co.uk

Exhibition Islam

► www.exhibitionislam.com

1001 Muslim Inventions

► www.1001inventions.com



Practical Tips

It is important to think about your visitors on the day and presenting your mosque in the best possible light. Naturally people will be inquisitive about mosques and the muslim community, try to be open, fair and transparent in your conversations.

If you do not know the answer to a question, direct the question to someone who may know, or simply say that you do not know the answer.



► Talk about your mosque's history & architecture

► Talk about your community activities and projects

► Speak in a positive tone using clear English

► Please ensure your Mosque has a female tour guide and female volunteers too.

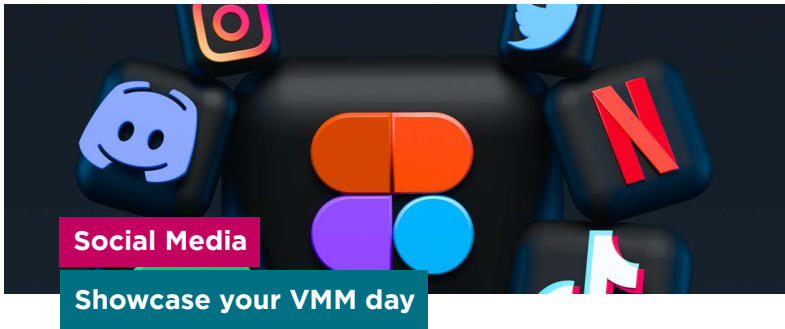
► Take visitors on a journey so plan your route ahead!

► Avoid using single-use plastic and have recycling points

► Talk about your stewardship green waste management

► Consider inclusive access women and children

► Consider activities for young children and families



Social Media

Showcase your VMM day

Top tips on showcasing the impact of your visit my mosque day.

Utilise your Social Media:



YouTube is a video-sharing platform that gives the power to a wider user group to share content for wider viewing.

Running an effective YouTube channel means you can use it to launch pre-event trailers, showcase a short video of your event and gauge interest from wider audiences.



Instagram's simple to use filters and photo editing tools make it possible for anyone to be a photographer. Instagram is a platform where users can post photographs documenting their experiences and lifestyle.



The key to Twitter is to keep it brief and sweet. Since the majority of users use Twitter for news and updates, always be "matter of fact" and "to the point." Because Twitter users want short, digestible content, try to keep your tweets between 120 and 130 characters. Twitter users enjoy humour, but be sure to include your marketing message as well.

Don't forget to make use of the VMM hashtag and other popular hashtags to join the wider conversations.



Facebook is a fantastic network for exchanging ideas and emotions. On Facebook, you are free to use greater detail and lengthier sentences as users are more willing to read and process content, so you don't need to worry as much about the length of your postings.

Utilise your Website

Create a pre-event page and embed your VMM event day poster / marketing materials. Ensure the page has key information about the day, access points, opening hours etc.

After the event, you should do a post event write up and share photos so people can find and read about your event.

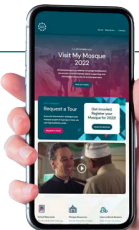
Top tip: embedding your YouTube channel and other social media feeds can vastly increase the number of visits your post receives and will work in synergy to one another.



Hashtag Strategy

On social media platforms that allow the use of hashtags, remember to include these at the bottom of your post.

#visitmymosque
#welcomeback
#welcomein
#openday
#islam



Inviting the Press

Pre-event



STEP ONE: THE INVITATION

Create a diary notice to send to your local newspaper or regional media detailing the date, time venue and voices available for interview.

You can also highlight any prominent guests that have confirmed attendance.

Reach out to local radio stations to talk about the importance of visit my mosque day and the benefit to communities.

STEP TWO: PREPARATION

Consider attending a media training with the MCB for all media reps. The training can provide a way to coordinate your engagement with the press and how to get the best results.

Event day

STEP THREE

Draft a press release with details about the event including quotes from key guests and visitors including a quote from the mosque's media rep.

Send a copy of the press release to local newspapers with relevant photos.

Post event-day

STEP FOUR

Create a write-up of your event and post on your website as a media release and link to social media.

Remember to use hashtags

The Guardian

Visit My Mosque day: British Muslims offer tours and tea to public

Dozens of mosques to open their doors this weekend in effort to explain religion 'beyond the hostile headlines'



49 visitors to the Bait-ul-Fitri mosque in Leeds during the Visit My Mosque day last year. Photograph: Christopher Thomond/The Guardian

Dozens of mosques around the country are to open their doors to non-Muslims this weekend in an effort to counter negative perceptions of Islam and educate people about the religion.

More than 80 mosques are taking part in the second Visit My Mosque day, organised by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB). A similar event last year, involving 20 mosques, attracted hundreds of visitors for tours, talks and tea.



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www.visitmymosque.org

[#visitmymosque](https://twitter.com/visitmymosque)

