



# #VisitMyMosque 2017

## Summary Report



**#VisitMyMosque** day took place on Sunday 5 February 2017 for the third consecutive year.

The day is facilitated by the Muslim Council of Britain and saw over 150 mosques across the UK hold an open day, welcoming in their neighbours of all faiths and none to share tea and refreshments, along with an opportunity to meet and talk with their local Muslims neighbours.

### 1. VISION AND AIMS

**#VisitMyMosque's** vision is for 'Every mosque in Britain to hold an open day at least once a year.'

Many mosques routinely host open days for their local communities throughout the year. We hope that choosing one day in the year to celebrate British mosque's openness will **increase positive publicity** in the national media and **increase the number of mosques** holding open days.

### 2. SUMMARY OF 2017

This year saw the number of mosques taking part almost double from 80 mosques in 2016 to over 150 mosques in 2017. This included large mosques such as Finsbury Park Mosque in London to small ones such as Craven Arms Islamic Centre in Shropshire.

The 2017 theme focused on "How British Mosques Help Their Local Communities" to highlight the invaluable contribution that Mosques and British Muslims make in their local communities.

Also new for this year was the hosting of five "How to Organise an Open Day" training workshops in London (2), Manchester, Leicester and Glasgow. The workshops were free of charge for the volunteers of participating mosques and covered different ways to make their **#VisitMyMosque** day a success including having stalls, how best to invite their local community and recruiting volunteers. Mosques were also provided with sample invite letters and flyers to save them time.

Four videos were created by the MCB to promote and celebrate **#VisitMyMosque 2017**. The first one was to encourage mosques to sign up and was broadcast on several Islamic-focussed TV channels with large UK audiences. The second video featured two female friends in a café with one friend inviting the other to visit her local mosque.

The third video showcased the impact that mosques have on their local communities and included examples such as mosques organising aerobic classes, food banks and cleaning up streets. The fourth video was a 'Thank you' video released on the evening of 5 February which contained photos and visitor feedback from the day.



1: Promo for mosque



2: Promo for visitors



3: 'What do mosques do?'



4: 'Thank you' video



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The new **#VisitMyMosque** website was also launched in 2017: [www.visitmymosque.org](http://www.visitmymosque.org). The website features a participating mosque map and listings feature where visitors can search their postcode or city name to find their nearest mosque. The website received 100,000 visitors with a bounce rate of 70% between 27 January and 5 February.

On 5 February, two launch events were held: One in Khizra Mosque, Manchester whilst the second was in Finsbury Park Mosque, London. At the launch events many different speakers addressed the audience including:

- Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP
- John Arnold, Bishop of Salford
- Harun Khan- Secretary General of MCB,
- Dr Omer El-Hamdoon- Deputy Secretary General of MCB

Thousands of visitors and volunteers shared their experiences using the hashtag **#visitmymosque**: <https://twitter.com/hashtag/visitmymosque>

More MPs than ever before also attended a **#VisitMyMosque** day event in their local constituency. These included the following: Shadow Foreign Secretary, Emily Thornberry, David Lammy, Gareth Thomas, Patrick Grady, Kirsty Blackman, Mike Gapes, Chi Onuwarah, Neil Coyle, Maggie Throup, Wes Streeting, Ian Lucas, Kelvin Hopkins, Stephen Timms, Jeff Smith and Stephen McPartland.

### 3. TESTIMONIALS

Leader of the Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn MP spoke at the London launch event, saying, “Drinking tea together is far more effective than pouring concrete to build walls to keep each other apart.”

Further feedback received from the MCB office has been very positive:

*‘I would just like to say thank you so much for a wonderful visit - really interesting, and what a lovely, warm, hospitable welcome!’*

*‘I can say on behalf of myself and my granddaughter we have never and I mean never, apart from family been made to feel so welcome into someone’s life.’*

*‘Now and again a person is lucky enough to have an experience that imprints on their soul. I can say this was one of those times and we both thank you.’*



Full photos and videos from 2017 online at [www.visitmymosque.org](http://www.visitmymosque.org)