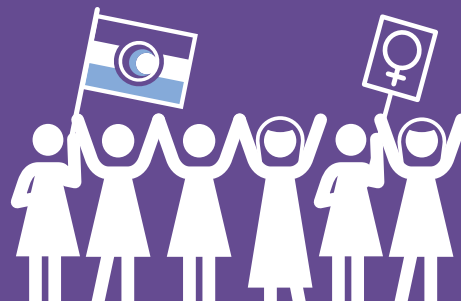


The Muslim Women's
MANIFESTO

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WHO WE ARE

Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK) is a national charity working to advance equality and social justice for Muslim women and girls through its helpline service, research, advocacy, campaigning, resources and training. In 2023, we celebrated our 20-year anniversary and this manifesto has been launched to mark this special milestone.

Began as an informal group and had the first formal meeting in May 2003.

Registered as a community interest company in May 2008.

Registered as a charity in 2013.

Celebrated the 20-year anniversary in 2023.

OUR VISION

A society where Muslim women and girls fully utilise their rights, choices and voices

OUR MISSION

To achieve equality and justice for Muslim women and girls through support, research, education and advocacy

APPG ON MUSLIM WOMEN

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Muslim Women has been established to increase awareness and understanding amongst parliamentarians about the inequalities experienced by Muslim women and girls. Muslim Women's Network UK is the Secretariat for the APPG.



MANIFESTO ASKS



SAFETY



INCLUSION



SOLIDARITY

MUSLIM WOMEN WANT

Muslim Women's Network UK want to see actions in every area of life and in every sector so that Muslim women and girls are able to enjoy their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

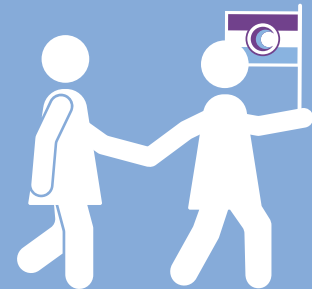
This guidance provides information about:

- Why the manifesto asks are essential
- What actions are necessary
- Facts and statistics about inequalities
- How to hold power holders accountable.
- How organisations can support the manifesto asks

Muslim Women's Network UK cannot do this alone, for systemic change we need you to help us.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT AND CAMPAIGN FOR REAL CHANGE

Let's count how many actions we can take by 2030!





SAFETY

MANIFESTO ASK

Create environments where Muslim women and girls are safe and feel safe when accessing services, in the workplace, on public transport, in public spaces and online.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

- Amplify the experiences of discrimination to create more awareness about the impact of hate.
- Improve cultural intelligence and establish anti-Islamophobic, anti-racist, and anti-xenophobic practices.
- Promote complaints and reporting mechanisms, make them accessible and act upon concerns.

INCLUSION

MANIFESTO ASK

Provide environments where Muslim women and girls are valued, respected, able to be their authentic selves and experience equal rights and opportunities.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

- Embed values of inclusion, respect, dignity and fairness into organisational structures.
- Have enabling policies and practices that ensure: equitable access to services, opportunities and human rights; involvement in decision making; and representation in leadership roles.
- Collect equality monitoring data, make it accessible and act upon it.

SOLIDARITY

MANIFESTO ASK

Demonstrate an informed, empathetic and visible allyship towards Muslim women and girls.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

- Recognise and celebrate the contributions and achievements of Muslim women and girls.
- Challenge biases and stereotypes of Muslim women and girls and condemn racism and Islamophobia.
- Create an enabling environment by supporting their wellbeing and investing in them through training, mentoring, partnerships, in kind support and funding.

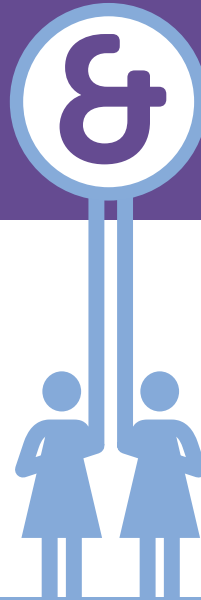
WHY NOW?

MUSLIM WOMEN ARE MORE VISIBLE

In the last 20 years Muslim women have become **more visible in many sectors** such as in politics, policing, law, health, technology, finance and in the charity sector.

During this period **anti-Muslim attitudes have intensified** and Muslim women are likely to be disproportionately impacted and also suffer multiple discrimination because of their gender, ethnicity and faith.

There is now increased awareness of their lived experiences of the criminal justice system, of the health service, in employment, in education, while using public transport, of using social media and in public spaces.



PROGRESS ON EQUALITY IS TOO SLOW

The prevalence and pervasiveness of **structural and institutional discrimination** that perpetuates inequalities requires us to be more vocal about the ways in which major organisations operate.

Accelerated action and **greater accountability is essential** for transformative change to the lives of Muslim women and girls because of the levels of discrimination they face.

To achieve this, we must be more vocal about the ways in which major organisations operate.

We must raise our voices **collectively** and **individually**.

“Muslims around the world often face prejudice for no other reason than their faith. Let us counter the forces of division by reaffirming our common humanity and stamp out the poison of Islamophobia.”

António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres (Secretary-general of the United Nations)

On 15th March 2023, the United Nations commemorated the first ever
INTERNATIONAL DAY TO COMBAT ISLAMOPHOBIA

STRUCTURAL RACISM

refers to wider political and social disadvantages experienced by certain groups within society thus trapping them in a cycle of poverty and in turn impacting their wellbeing and life chances.

For example: Pakistanis and Bangladeshis (who are mainly Muslim) are more likely to have higher rates of in-work poverty and child poverty, in part due to being self-employed and working in low-paying sectors. These labour market inequalities in turn contribute to poorer health, education levels and housing e.g. one in three Pakistanis and Bangladeshis live in the most deprived neighbourhoods.



INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

relates to policies, procedures and practices that exist in the workplace and in institutions of education, health, criminal justice system and finance etc., which result in the unequal treatment of certain groups.

For example: When health data of Black, Asian and Other groups is not disaggregated, it further masks how outcomes may vary by sub ethnic groups, which means underlying causes are overlooked and not addressed. Other examples include: Black and Asian women given harsher punishments for the same offences when compared to white women; ethnic minorities not being short listed for interview because of their Asian, Muslim or non-English sounding name; or ethnic minorities having less access to finance, loans and investments.

FACTS AND DATA

2,000,000

There are almost 2 million Muslim women and girls in the UK



1 in 3 minority ethnic women will be Muslim



England and Wales Census 2021 Data
3.9 million Muslims
6.5% of the population

1 in 3

of the 18% minority ethnic population are Muslim

8



Northern Ireland Census 2021 Data
12,000 Muslims
0.6% of the population



Scotland Census 2011 Data*
77,000 Muslims
1.4 % of the population

*2022 Census data not available at time of this publication.

PAGES 9-13 ILLUSTRATE DATA SHOWING LIFE OUTCOMES FOR MUSLIMS

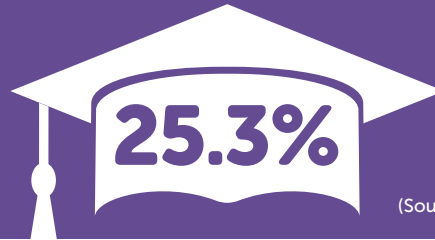
Some life outcomes are shown by race and ethnicity. However, the data still provides a good indicator of the disparity in outcomes for Muslims given the population make up of minority ethnic communities.

Also, outcomes will vary amongst the Muslim population according to race and ethnicity. This diversity therefore needs to be considered within decision-making processes.

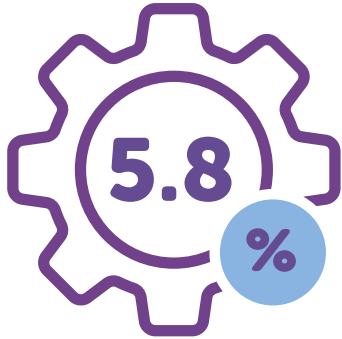


EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Muslims have the highest percentages for no qualifications **25.3%**



(Source 2021 Census, England and Wales).



Asians have the lowest participation rates in apprenticeships

5.8% of apprentices but make up **9.6%** of the overall population

Source: Participation in apprenticeships, Gov.uk



The number of Muslim women in full-time education has **increased** due to improved aspirations.

However, these educational gains are not translating into employment gains due to discrimination, caring responsibilities and lack of accessible and affordable local childcare. There are also barriers associated with returning to work after a long period of caring e.g. skills gap, lack of confidence and lack of returner opportunities. Economic inactivity still remains higher than the rest of the population.



HOUSING

X4

Muslims are nearly **four times** more likely to live in overcrowded homes than the overall population

40%

of the Muslim population live in the most deprived areas of England and Wales

Muslims are more likely to live in social rented homes, such as from a council or housing associations: **26.6%** compared with **16.6%** of the overall population

Source: 2021 Census, England and Wales

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HATE CRIME

The most commonly targeted faith group is Muslims

Two in five (**42%**) of religious hate crime offences are targeted against Muslims

Source: Hate crime, England and Wales, 2021 to 2022, Home Office



Muslim women are at **increased risk** of hate crime because their Muslim identity is more visible



CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

For similar offences minority ethnic women are more likely to be given **harsher punishments** compared to white women



45% of Asian women receiving convictions had no previous convictions compared with **12%** of white women.



28.6% of first time female Asian offenders received custodial or suspended sentences in comparison with **17.5%** of white women

25%

If convicted, black women are **25% more likely** than white women to receive **a custodial sentence**



Source: Prison Reform Trust 2017

11

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Minority ethnic women are over-represented in domestic homicide cases



260 female domestic homicide victims during period ending March 2019 to March 2021 Source: ONS

Minority victims during same period at least **22%** but make up **18%** of the population Sources: Say Her Name, MWNUK

HEALTH

Muslims are one of the two groups who had the **highest percentage of unpaid carers** (the other group was Buddhist)



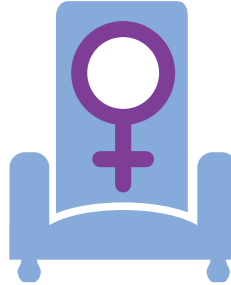
Source: 2021 Census, England and Wales

12



For the age group of **50 years and above**, **24.1%** Muslims self-declared as having '**bad or very bad health**', which is double the percentage for the population as a whole (**12.1%**)

Source: 2021 Census, England and Wales



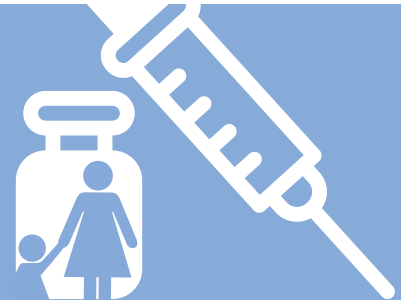
In England, Muslim women are more likely to be inactive (**doing less than 30 minutes of moderate activity per week**) than other women

Source: Sport England (2019) Active Lives November 2017/18 Data

DIABETES



Black and South Asian people are at a **higher risk** of developing **type 2 diabetes** from a younger age



CANCER

Low uptake of screening for cervical cancer among Muslim women **(12% lower)**

Cervical Screening Programme, England 2020-21, NHS



MENTAL HEALTH

Higher rate of **self-harm** among South Asian women

Source: Bhui, Mckenzie and Rasul, 2007



Black and South Asian women are **more likely to be diagnosed** with late-stage breast, uterine, colon and ovarian cancers (when treatment is less likely to be successful)

Cervical Screening Programme, England 2020-21, NHS



Minority Ethnic communities at **higher risk** of developing a **mental health problem** in adulthood



Minority ethnic people **more likely to be detained** under the Mental Health Act **(x4 for black people)**

Source: NHS Digital, Mental Health Statistics, Annual Figures 2020-21

MATERNITY

Maternal Mortality (compared to white women)

x4

higher for
Black women

x2

higher for
South Asian women

Infant mortality rates higher

Babies of Black and South Asian women have increased risk of stillbirth and neonatal mortality

Source: MBRRACE-UK 2020

- Higher rates of **preterm birth** before 32 weeks of gestation
- Higher rates of **emergency caesarean**
- Higher rates of **excessive blood loss**
- **Neonatal admission** (at term) is higher for babies to South Asian and Black women

Source: Ethnic and socio- economic inequalities in NHS maternity and perinatal care for women and their babies, RCOG, 2021

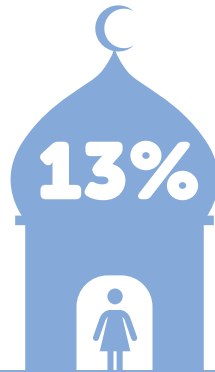
EMPLOYMENT

Muslims had the lowest percentage of people aged **16 to 64 years** in employment - **51.4%** compared with **70.9%** of the overall population

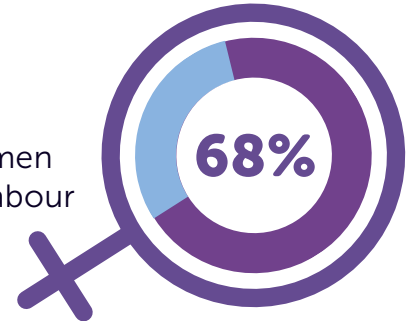


Source 2021: Census, England and Wales.

Among people aged **20 to 24 years** the highest unemployment was among people who identified as **"Muslim" 13%**, compared with the overall population of **9%**



68% of Muslim women are inactive in the labour market



Source: British Muslim Women and the Labour market, Young Foundation.



Muslim households have a greater chance of being in **poverty** than those of any other religious group in the country



Ethnic disproportionality in disciplinary proceedings:

Black, Asian and minority ethnic solicitors, doctors and police officers reported at higher rates to their professional bodies

Sources: Solicitors Regulation Authority, June 2023; General Medical Council, May 2021; and National Chiefs' Police Council 2019

CARING

Muslims have a higher percentage of lone parent households with dependent children **10.4% (77,000)** compared to the general population (**7.2%**)

Source: 2011 Census, England and Wales

10.4%



The lone parents are **most likely to be women**

16 Of Muslim women in the 16-74 age band, **18%** are 'Looking after home or family', compared to **6%** in the overall population

Source: Social Mobility Commission, Gov.UK



'Looking after home or family'

Unequal treatment and poverty will intensify unless clear steps are taken to remove barriers to dignity and equality

FAITH

One in five women at some point had been **denied entry** to a mosque



Few mosques in the UK have women on their trustee or management boards

Source: Muslim Census



FINANCE

Muslim individuals and organisations are **most likely to be unbanked** (closure of bank accounts / withdrawal of banking services) **(10%)**

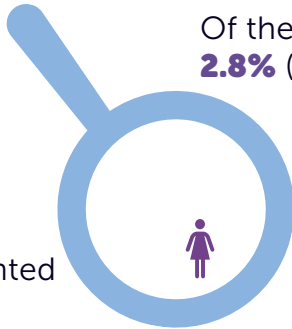
10%

Source: Financial Conduct Authority

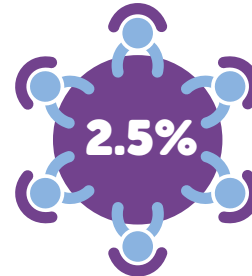
POLITICS



Muslims are underrepresented in politics



Of the 650 MPs, **2.8% (18)** are Muslim



Of the 20,000 councillors **2.5% (500 approx)** are Muslim

Muslim women are underrepresented

Source: various sources for councillor data



1%

of TV industry professionals describe themselves as Muslim

Media discourse and film / TV often represent Muslims as terrorists / extremists and Muslim women as oppressed. This contributes to negative stereotypes of Muslims thus making it difficult to be fully accepted by non-Muslim peers.

Source: Diversity and equal opportunities in television, Ofcom, 2019

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Muslim women / girls and their supporters

STEP 1

Decide which manifesto ask (safety, inclusion or solidarity) you want to focus on and why



STEP 2

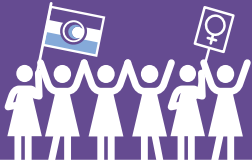
Decide which individuals or institutions you want to influence



STEP 3

Decide what actions you want them to do





STEP 4

Decide method of engagement and the message you want to communicate



STEP 5

Assess what response you received and impact you made



STEP 6

Inform Muslim Women's Network UK about what worked and did not work



NOTE: When assessing, use data if available, which can also include indirect outcomes such as people being more aware of the problem, partnerships and media coverage. Send any successes and failures with learning to contact@mwunuk.co.uk and label email as **manifesto**.

“Your voice matters, use it to influence.”

USEFUL CAMPAIGN TOOLS

- Use freedom of information requests
- Use subject access requests
- Use available data online e.g. data, annual reports, websites
- Use data and case studies
- Send emails
- Write letters
- Keep your messages clear and powerful, setting out the problem, who it is impacting and what changes you want to see and by who

- Use influencers to amplify message
- Contact politicians who may be supportive / interested in your concerns
- Use relevant annual awareness days as a hook for engagement
- Have stalls / exhibitions
- Produce printed information to disseminate
- Organise a protest (see permission of relevant authorities)
- Use the Equality Act 2010

- Contact media including writing press releases
- Use social media including hashtags
- Amplify your message through WhatsApp groups
- Collaborate with others
- Organise a petition
- When contacting faith-based institutions include Islamic texts on justice for women

Freedom of information and subject access requests are crucial yet under used tools for accountability and transparency. These should be used to gather the information needed to find out about trends, unfair treatment, poor outcomes and inequalities when contacting institutions.

WHO YOU COULD TARGET

- Charities / voluntary sector
- Criminal justice system (police, crown prosecution service, probation, prisons)
- Educational institutions (schools, colleges and universities)
- Employers
- Government departments
- Local councils
- National Health Service
- Ombudsmans
- Private sector
- Professional bodies
- Unions

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI)

The Freedom of Information Act allows members of the public and the media to submit freedom of information requests which require public bodies to release information they hold. Some requests may be refused such as those regarded as sensitive information or if they are too complex. When making request, it is important to be as specific by stating the nature of the data you want and over what period.

Template can be found here:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/official-information/how-to-write-an-effective-request-for-information>



Example:

You may want to know the number of complainants broken down by ethnic and faith groups to a particular service from 2019 to 2023. The response could reveal that the information collected is too top level e.g. Asian, Black, White and other and therefore does not reveal if particular groups are more affected such as Bangladeshi women. Alternatively, the information may be detailed revealing trends such as a particular group having a disproportionately low rate of complaints which may indicate lack of awareness of how to complain or a disproportionately high rate of complaints for a particular group could indicate that they are receiving a poorer service. Action would be needed to improve data collection or to request service adaptations.



SUBJECT ACCESS REQUEST (SAR)

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, you have the right to find out what information public bodies and other organisations hold about you, which can include how this data is being used. You will need to be able to verify your identity.



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Templates can be found here:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/your-right-to-get-copies-of-your-data/preparing-and-submitting-your-subject-access-request>

Example:

You may want to know about information your employer holds about you. You may have been denied promotion and want to know how this decision was reached, who made the decision and the reasons for it or you may have put in a discrimination complaint and feel it has not been handled fairly in which case you may want to know about all the information that was considered and by who.

EXAMPLE ONE (SAFETY)

- Step 1.** You are concerned about the safety of Muslim women and girls and have heard about hate crime incidents but victims are not reporting it.
- Step 2.** The local police and local council could help to address hate crime but are taking little or no action.
- Step 3.** You want them to raise awareness of how to report hate crime incidents, implement mechanisms to make it easier to report incidents and have a campaign to challenge attitudes which also encourage bystanders to speak up.
- Step 4.** You contact the Council Equality Lead, Chief Police Constable and the Police Crime Commissioner via a letter and email (which could have co-signatories) and request a meeting to discuss concerns, solutions and timelines for action. You may also make a FOI request and ask for hate crime data broken down by ethnicity, faith and gender for the previous five years.
- Step 5.** You consider actions taken and whether they lead to more women becoming aware of how to report hate crime and whether reporting goes up.
- Step 6.** You share outcomes with Muslim Women's Network UK

EXAMPLE TWO (INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY)

Step 1. You are concerned about the lack of awareness, empathy and solidarity in the workplace resulting in practices that are not inclusive which affect Muslims.

Step 2. You contact your employer (i.e. line manager, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead and someone in the human resources department).

Step 3. You want to improve understanding of Muslim practices amongst colleagues.

24 Step 4. You ask your employer to promote a Ramadan challenge where colleagues can take part and fund raise. You ask permission to have a temporary information stall / exhibition during Ramadan or during Islamophobia awareness week or day.

Step 5. You consider whether the employer sent an email to staff, how many colleagues took up the Ramadan challenge and how many colleagues visited the information stalls and engaged in conversation.

Step 6. You share the outcomes with Muslim Women's Network UK.

EXAMPLE THREE (SOLIDARITY)

Step 1. You want solidarity shown to Muslim women because you are concerned they are often overlooked.

Step 2. You want local public figures such as councillors or MPs to show support or perhaps your employers

Step 3. You want to challenge stereotypes associated with Muslim women and cultivate greater empathy for them.

Step 4. You arrange a Muslim women role model event and invite prominent individuals to address the audience or collaborate with your employer to highlight Muslim women in the workplace.

Step 5. You could assess feedback and attendance.

Step 6. You share the outcomes with Muslim Women's Network UK.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Power holders (institutions and individuals)



Every sector in society can and must contribute whether it is local community structures such as mosques, the public sector, the private sector or the charity sector.

Consider all the ways in which **you** can support manifesto asks and **take actions**.

If your institution takes actions to support our manifesto or would like advice on how to do this, please contact us on contact@mw nuk.co.uk. We can also add your actions to our website as supporters.

Although it is not an exhaustive list, the following **pages 26-29** suggest ideas on how you can improve equality and social justice for Muslim women and girls. The ideas in each section can help to support more than one manifesto ask.



INCLUSION

We are calling on power holders to ensure they:

- Promote messages of fairness.
- Consider diversity in recruitment which includes making effort in promoting roles.
- Provide cultural competency training to ensure employees and volunteers understand the unique challenges Muslim women face. Ensure this training is led or co-led by a Muslim Woman,
- Consider how different identities of sex, race and faith, (including clothing) may result in negative treatment.
- Create an environment which allows Muslim women to be their authentic selves e.g. adapting uniforms.
- Use inclusive language.
- Create inclusive marketing.
- Co-develop inclusive programmes with Muslim women that foster positive representation and help Muslim women to feel included and valued.
- Consider whether Muslim women have equal access to your services and what may be preventing that e.g. how can services be adapted?

26





- Ask Muslim women for feedback and input about services.
- Conduct regular staff surveys and act on feedback.
- Include Muslim women in leadership positions at all levels of the organisation.
- Provide Muslim women with training opportunities.
- Provide Muslim women with mentoring opportunities.
- Provide equality, diversity and training to staff and volunteers.
- Collect and assess equality monitoring data disaggregated by sub-ethnic groups and faith on recruitment, service users / beneficiaries, leadership, outcomes, disciplinaries etc.
- Share equality data and making it publicly available so the organisation can be held accountable and to track progress.

- Promote faith and cultural literacy amongst employees and volunteers.
- Consider faith needs e.g. dietary requirements, providing prayer space and accommodating prayer times.
- Invite them to share their cultural / faith heritage and experiences.





SAFETY

We are calling on power holders to ensure they:



- Promote messages of respect and dignity.
- Create online and face to face spaces where they can share their concerns, seek advice and share experiences.
- Acknowledge that anti-Muslim hate crime and attitudes, Islamophobia and racism exist and are getting worse.
- Consider what microaggressions look like for Muslim women.
- Promote messages that racism and anti-Muslim attitudes / Islamophobia will not be tolerated.
- Are not bystanders and call out and condemn racism and anti-Muslim attitudes / Islamophobia.
- Provide bystander intervention training to all employees as they may witness discriminatory attitudes.
- Improve cultural intelligence and establish anti-racist, anti-xenophobic /anti-Islamophobic practices.
- Amplify the experiences of discrimination to create more awareness about the impact of hate.
- Give Muslim Women and other minority groups the confidence to report discrimination, unfair treatment and abuse.
- Promote complaints and reporting services and make them accessible.
- Act on concerns of hate, bullying and discrimination.





SOLIDARITY

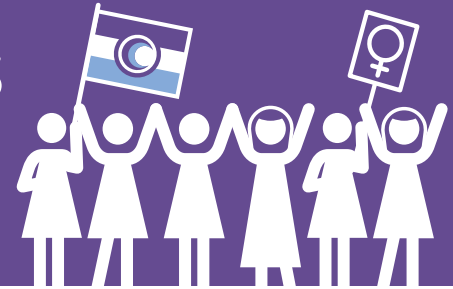
We are calling on power holders to ensure they:



- Attend their events to show support and invite Muslim women to your events.
- Invest funds in supporting Muslim women.
- Support initiatives that empower Muslim women.
- Collaborate with Muslim women on joint initiatives.
- Advocate on Muslim women's behalf.
- Learn about Muslim women's experiences and concerns.
- Challenge biases and stereotypes that people have of Muslim women.
- Provide in kind support such as time, staff, skills, ideas, resources, knowledge and physical space to support Muslim women's groups.
- Amplify and celebrate Muslim women's contribution and achievements.
- Acknowledge religious festivals and mark Muslim women in an appropriate way.
- Adapt work and services to accommodate religious beliefs e.g. prayer space.



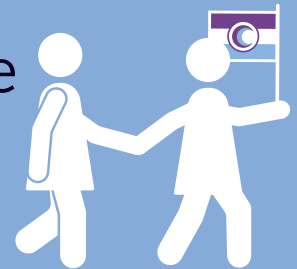
TELL US ABOUT YOUR ACTIONS



FIGHT for a future where Muslim women are safe, included and are consistently shown solidarity

30

EVERY ACTION will make a difference because at the very least it will bring attention to an issue or concern





 Muslim Women's Network UK

 MuslimWomenUK

 MuslimWomensNetworkUK

Become a Muslim Women's Network member, register here: www.mwnhub.com/register



LET'S COUNT how many actions and differences Muslim women can make by **2030**



We want Muslim women and girls, their supporters, institutions and other individuals who have responded to our manifesto asks of safety, inclusion and solidarity, to tell us what you did and when. We would like to keep track of **your actions** and with your permission, even add them to our website.

Get in touch on contact@mwnuk.co.uk



Check the manifesto page on our website for updates: www.mwnuk.co.uk/the-muslim-womens-manifesto



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Charity Number: 1155092

Company Limited by Guarantee Number: 06597997



Funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
and Rosa - the UK fund for women and girls