



## Developing Community Resilience Measures During Coronavirus Outbreak

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO). In the UK, there are 1391 confirmed cases and 35 deaths at the time of writing (13/03/20). The virus is more deadly for the elderly and those with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, immune suppression, and chronic lung disease.

Although social distancing policies have not yet been enforced by the Government, they are likely to be introduced soon. This will have a significant impact upon mosques, madrassas, community centres and places where there mass gatherings.

To build resilience within our communities, we need to act now and develop mechanisms to take care of the vulnerable and support one another during these difficult times.

### ***Helping the vulnerable and socially isolated***

In order to protect those at high risk from Coronavirus, they should be encouraged to stay at home as much as possible. We recommend the following for:

#### **1. Establish a network of healthy volunteers**

- a. Mosques should use their communication channels (social media, WhatsApp etc.) to recruit healthy volunteers to shop for the vulnerable and socially isolated. It is especially important that the vulnerable do not leave their homes.
- b. Keep shopping trips to a minimum by coordinating with others. Rather than there being a large number of shopping trips, make a small number of trips by compiling multiple shopping requests into a single trip.
- c. Wipe down shopping items where possible before delivering them.
- d. Take care when delivering them; ensure that contact with the vulnerable or socially isolated is kept to a minimum. You may wish to leave the shopping at their doorstep.
- e. Consider using a fundraising platform if necessary.
- f. Volunteers should complete the [WHO Coronavirus online training](#).

#### **2. Check up on your neighbours**

- a. **Everybody** should check on their neighbours to see if there are vulnerable people or those socially isolating. Support them by carrying out shopping trips for them or notify the volunteer network if you are unable to do so.
- b. If everyone does this, the community and volunteer network will be well aware of those who need assistance. Do not assume that they already have support in place.
- c. If you are even mildly unwell, or are socially isolating, then do not check on your neighbours in person. This risks spreading the virus.



## Maintaining community services through technology

1. Create multiple communication channels
  - a. If your mosque, madrassa or community centre does not have a digital communication medium (such as WhatsApp announcements, Telegram group, social media, mailing list), this needs to be instituted immediately.
  - b. Maintain several communication channels for different attendees. For example, there should be a channel for the generic congregation, another for madrassa students, another for any regular classes, and so on.
2. Use technology to maintain service delivery
  - a. Consider investing in streaming platforms to continue teaching services, lectures etc. Websites such as Vimeo are ideal for streaming classes. Although social distancing policy has yet to come into effect, we should be prepared ahead of time.
  - b. Similarly, use services such as Dropbox or Microsoft Onedrive to distribute documents, whether that be homework, official guidance, forms etc.
  - c. The specific apps mentioned are suggestions. The main message here is to use technology to maintain as many communal services as possible. This is an opportune moment to integrate a better use of technology into our communities.
  - d. Not everybody will have access to technology. Utilise your local network of volunteers to disseminate information by checking on friends and neighbours through phone calls.

### ***Stay Informed***

1. Only share information from official and reliable sources. This will prevent the sharing of fake news.
  - a. Access the [World Health Organisation](#) (WHO) website for the latest updates, advice on protecting yourself.
  - b. Community leaders and civil society organisations should undergo the online [training available on the WHO website](#).
  - c. Access the [UK Government website](#) for official guides, advice, and statistics
  - d. Further advice is available on the [NHS website](#), more specifically regarding symptoms and responses.
  - e. Consult members of the community who are healthcare professionals when considering significant decisions.



## Not forgetting your spiritual self

Take all the precautions that have been advised by the health bodies; but more importantly this is a time to contemplate on one's life and turn to one's Creator.

- Continuously engage in Dua for yourselves and for all those affected throughout the world; never underestimate the power of Dua; Allah Almighty states:

*“Or, who listens to the distressed (soul) when he calls on Him, and who relieves his suffering?”.(An-Naml:62)*

Some of the Duas prescribed in the Sunnah to be read as much as possible are:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ، لَمْ يَضُرَّهُ شَيْءٌ.

*(In the Name of Allah with Whose Name there is protection against every kind of harm in the earth or in the heaven, and He is the All-Hearing and All- Knowing)*

أَعُوذُ بِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ التَّامَّاتِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ .

*(I seek refuge in the Perfect Words of Allah from the evil of what He has created)*

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْجُنُونِ وَالْجُدَامِ وَالْبَرَصِ وَسَائِرِ الْأَسْقَامِ

*(Oh Allah, I seek refuge in you from vitiligo, madness, leprosy and all major illnesses)*

- Whatever condition befalls you, strive to be patient and content with what Allah Almighty has written; remember the narration of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ:

*“Amazing is the condition of a believer! For there is **good in every affair** of his and this is not the case with anyone else except for the believer! If he experiences occasions of happiness and contentment, **he is grateful to Allah**, and there is good in it for him, and if he is inflicted by suffering and trouble and **endures it patiently**, there is a good in it for him.” (Muslim)*