



Masjid Al Tawhid



Al-Nogashi Mosque & Centre



ELM



MAYFAIR ISLAMIC CENTRE

The Coordination Committee for Mosques and Islamic Centres, London

Reopening of Mosques - Update

The Coordination Committee for Mosques and Islamic Centres, London met to review the current situation on whether it would now be safe to reopen our mosques. Medical evidence on the current risks was presented at the meeting alongside feedback on the experience of other mosques who have reopened.

Dr Muhammed Umar Ebrahimsa, specialist in Infectious Diseases and General Medicine advised:

“Data released prior to July 4 2020 by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), suggests that we remain on the cusp of an increase in the number of infections in the London region; with an R of 0.8-1.1 or a growth rate of infections of between -4 and +2%. On 4 July itself, the government put in place a further reduction of social distancing and allowed the reopening of most of businesses and venues. The impact of these changes in activity on the number of infections is likely to become apparent 2-3 weeks {i.e. by July 25th}. following their introduction.”

“In view of the vulnerabilities of the community and the possibility of increasing infection in the London region and uncertainty of the impact of recent changes on the community; I would recommend re-evaluating the recommencement of congregational prayers in mosques from July 25th. Simultaneously a trial gradual recommencement of limited congregational prayers in a select number of mosques, could enable us to assess what the impact of further reopening might be.”

The value and importance of the preservation of life has been a fundamental consideration for the Committee, with importance given to the heightened risk to our BAME communities. The decision to reopen cannot exclude the medical evidence, the moral obligation and the trust given to us by our congregations.

Therefore, the Committee’s view is that our Mosques will consider reopening for congregational prayers from July 25th with a phased re-opening of some mosques from July 13th for limited prayers. This trial will provide valuable experience to help ensure that our communities will be kept safe.

The Committee also agreed to keep this decision under review, to ensure that the safety of the community is always foremost.

The above collective decisions are based on the very important role mosques have in our lives, the sentiments of the communities, and the latest medical advice. We ask everyone to continue to cooperate and support our mosques to ensure maximum safety for all.

May Allah keep us all safe

[END

The Coordination Committee for Mosques and Islamic Centres, London

- The Islamic Cultural Centre & The London Central Mosque Trust
- UKIM West London Islamic Centre
- East London Mosque & London Muslim Centre
- Finsbury Park Mosque
- Al Manaar – Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre
- Al Muntada Al Islami & WLICC
- Muslim Welfare House
- Mayfair Islamic Centre
- Masjid Al Tawhid
- Al-Nagashi Mosque & Centre

9July 2020 / 18 Dhu'l Qa'da' 1441 AH



[Appendix]

Briefing for The Coordination Committee for Mosques and Islamic Centres, London.

7/7/2020

To date more than 60,000 persons are likely to have died as a result of COVID 19 in the UK alone, more than one tenth of global coronavirus deaths. The daily death rate from COVID 19 continues to remain around 150 deaths a day since the middle of June 2020, in excess of the death rate at the time that the lockdown commenced in the UK on 23 March 2020.

The virus responsible for causing COVID 19, SARS coronavirus 2, can cause an infection in affected individuals up to 2 weeks after their exposure to the virus. Most persons, who develop a severe infection, seek medical care 4-5 days after their symptoms start. So the deaths that we witness today are the result of infections occurring during the lockdown period, in the context of enforced significant social distancing.

Data released prior to July 4 2020 by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), suggests that we remain on the cusp of an increase in the number of infections in the London region; with an R of 0.8-1.1 or a growth rate of infections of between -4 and +2%. On 4 July itself, the government put in place a further reduction of social distancing and allowed the reopening of the majority of businesses and venues. The impact of these changes in activity on the number of infections is likely to become apparent 2-3 weeks following their introduction.

One of the greatest challenges posed by this virus has been the range of illness that it causes, from a complete absence of symptoms to severe multiple organ failure. A recent survey of over 20,000 households by the Office for National Statistics, suggests that 80% of individuals who tested positive for the presence of SARS coronavirus 2 did not have symptoms at the time they were tested. This would mean that temperature or symptom screening would not identify them. COVID 19 continues to be mainly spread by close contact with individuals with the infection (symptomatic or asymptomatic); and with the environment that they are in. So the most effective route of reducing the risk of transmission occurring within mosques is to avoid individuals (symptomatic or asymptomatic) with COVID 19 coming into the mosque. If they unknowingly enter the mosque, the risk of transmission can be reduced through mask wearing, social distancing, hand sanitisation, avoiding crowding and ensuring spaces are well ventilated.

As a result the risk of transmission occurring within mosques is linked to both the preparedness of mosques and the levels of circulating infection in the community. This is of concern to the Muslim community given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on the community and the high representation of the community in jobs associated with a high mortality from COVID19. Any potential change in the rates of infection after 4 July may, also, disproportionately affect the Muslim community.

In view of the vulnerabilities of the community and the possibility of increasing infection in the London region and uncertainty of the impact of recent changes on the community; I would recommend re-evaluating the recommencement of congregational prayers in mosques from July 25th . Simultaneously a trial gradual recommencement of limited congregational prayers in a select number of mosques, could enable us to assess what the impact of further reopening might be.

Muhammed Umar Ebrahimsa

Specialist Registrar Infectious Diseases and General Medicine.