

mend

Easy Read Guide for Mosque Leaders

KEEPING YOUR MOSQUE SAFE





Sadly, since late 2023 there has been an increase in attacks against mosques and Islamic community centres by far-right individuals and groups. This guide aims to provide you with simple steps to help keep your mosque, staff, congregation and wider community safe.

mend



1. Build Strong Links

Know your neighbours

Talk to local residents, shops and schools to make sure you are familiar with those who are living around your mosque.

Work with police

Introduce yourself to your local police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) or Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT). Ensure that you exchange key contact information with them, providing them with the telephone numbers of members of the mosque leadership, while getting the number(s) of your SNT or NPT leadership.

Link up with other mosques

Make sure you share information and advice with other mosques in your area. You might consider organising regular meetings to discuss community safety and security.

mend

2. Make Your Mosque Secure

Check doors and windows

Make sure that all doors and windows in your mosque are strongly secured with strong and working locks.

Install a reliable alarm system

Make sure that you have a reliable alarm system set up. If you do not, then you must install one as soon as possible.

Use lighting to your advantage

At night, which is when most attacks against mosques seem to take place, make sure that entrances and fire exits, as well as car parks, are well lit up with your mosque's outdoor lighting. If you do not have lighting then make sure you buy and install as soon as possible.



mend

Install visible cameras

Having a reliable and visible CCTV system may serve to deter potential offenders. Any footage captured can also be supplied to the police as evidence. Therefore, having working cameras installed is absolutely essential for your mosque's safety.

Emergency Exits

Make sure that you have easy-to-use emergency exits that are kept clear at all times, in case members of your congregation need to escape the mosque quickly. At the same time, make sure these exits are properly secured from the inside in order to prevent offenders using them to gain entry to the mosque.



3. Government Support: Funding for Security

The UK Government has a special fund to help mosques and other places of worship improve security measures. In 2024 the government allocated **£117 million over four years** to help mosques with protective measures. This programme is called the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme and it is part of the Places of Worship Protective Security Fund. The scheme says that you should apply if:

- **You have experienced hate crime at your mosque or community centre**
- **You feel that your mosque or community centre is vulnerable to hate crime**
- **There has been hate crime in your local area towards other places of worship or people who attend them**

You can apply for money to pay for things like:

- **CCTV cameras**
- **Stronger locks and doors**
- **Security alarms**
- **Fencing or gates**

For more information, visit:

www.gov.uk/guidance/protective-security-for-mosques-scheme

mend

The background image shows the interior of a mosque. In the foreground, the back of a man's head and shoulders is visible on the left. In the center, another man is walking away from the camera. The floor is covered with red and gold patterned prayer mats. In the background, there are wooden pillars and a fire exit sign on the ceiling. The sign is black with white text and a white arrow pointing left, with the words 'Fire Exit' and a small icon of a person walking.

3.1. How to Apply for Mosque Security Funding (Step by Step)

1. Go to the link below:
www.gov.uk/guidance/protective-security-for-mosques-scheme
2. Read the guidance to make sure your mosque is eligible
3. Fill in the form online, which includes giving details about your mosque and what security measures you need
4. Submit your application before the deadline
5. Wait for a decision from the government to tell you if your mosque has been approved for funding
6. Once your mosque has been granted the funding, use it to put in place the cameras, locks and alarms you need.

Finally, encourage other mosques to apply for the funding every year. **REMEMBER: the funding is free and is there to help keep you, your mosque and community safe from violence.**

mend

4. Keep People Safe Inside

Welcome team

If you can, have trusted volunteers as your 'eyes and ears' at the doors during busy times.

Have a plan

Have an emergency plan in place in the event of your mosque coming under attack. Plans may differ slightly according to the mosque leadership and its layout, but at the very least you should be prepared to immediately lock all doors and windows, entrances and exits, and phone the police as soon as possible.

Do not attempt to engage with the offenders. If you have congregants in the mosque, then explain to them the danger of going outside and that they need to remain in the locked mosque for their own safety until the police arrive. You can carry out practice emergency response drills with your staff and volunteers so that they are prepared in case of an emergency.

First aid

Have a first aid kit on site and make sure that you and your volunteers are properly trained to use it.



mend

5. Reporting and Recording

Report all hate incidents

Make sure you report all hate incidents you encounter - even if you think they are small. If your mosque, you or someone you know, is in immediate danger due to a hate crime, then you must call 999 to report it to the police as an emergency.

If the crime is not an emergency, then you can telephone 101 to be connected to your local police force, where you can report the incident. It is your right to receive a crime reference number and the name of the officer(s) looking into the incident within five working days .

If you do not, then contact the local police force again to request these. You can also report hate crimes to True Vision (www.report-it.org.uk), which is a police-funded website designed to provide you with information about hate crime. Additionally, you can reach out to community groups such as the Islamophobia Response Unit (IRU), which tracks incidents of Islamophobia and provides legal advice to those who have experienced Islamophobic hate crimes along with Islamophobic discrimination more generally.

Keep records

Make sure you document all instances - even if they may seem small - of Islamophobic incidents around your mosque. This must include what happened, the time and who was involved in the incident. It is very important you keep a paper trail in this way as it may prove very useful if the police ask you for evidence of events. Use the printable template on the next page to keep your log of incidents.

Key Reminders:

- **Always report: even if it feels minor, every record helps build evidence.**
- **Be clear and factual: write down what happened, not just how people felt.**
- **Protect privacy: keep personal details safe.**
- **Review regularly: check the log each month to see if there are patterns.**

Mosque Incident Log: Islamophobia & Hate Incidents

Instructions: Fill in this form every time an incident happens, even if it seems small
 Keep the log in a safe place | Share with police (101 or 999 if urgent)

Date	Time	Location (inside / outside mosque)	What Happened? (describe incident)	People Involved (victim, witnesses, suspected offender)	Was it Reported? (Police / Islamophobia Response Unit)	Action Taken	Follow-up Needed?



mend

6. Support Your Community

Talk openly and offer support

Some congregants may be afraid to attend due to the rise of far-right attacks against mosques. Encourage them to come, and reassure your congregation about the safety steps your mosque is taking. Ask them to inform you and/or mosque staff/volunteers if they notice suspicious activity around the mosque. Also inform them of how to report a hate crime if they or someone close to them thinks they have experienced one (see section 5 above, which also applies to individuals reporting hate crimes).

Look after mental health

Hate crimes - and even the possibility of them happening - can cause stress and anxiety. Make sure you signpost your congregants to support services, such as the above-mentioned Islamophobia Response Unit.

If they are struggling with mental health difficulties due to the fear of hate crime or a hate crime that they experienced, you can also direct them to Victim Support, who can be contacted on: **0808 168 9111**.

7. Plan Ahead

Emergency contacts

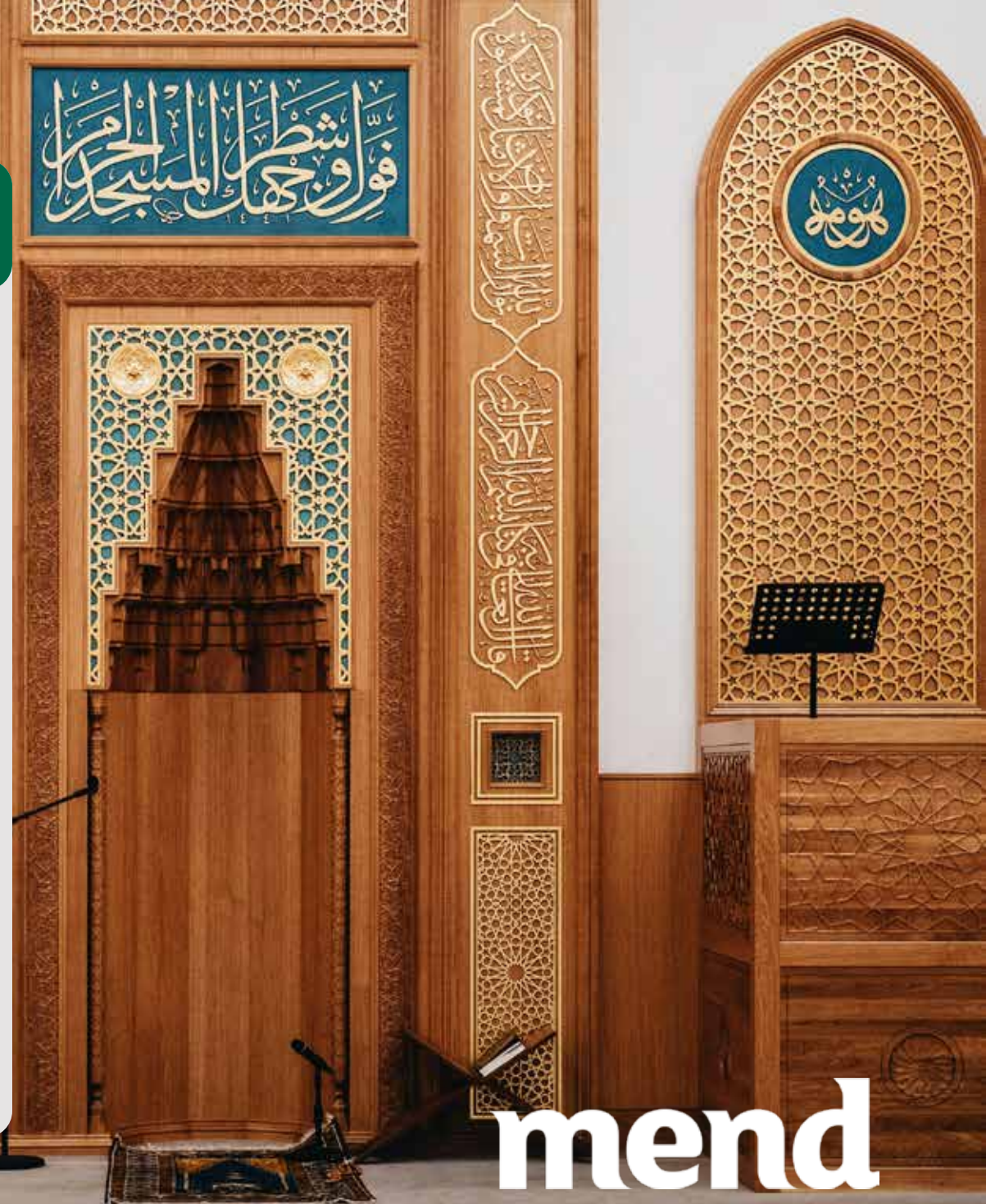
Keep a list of key phone numbers (police, council and fellow mosque leaders) who can be contacted in the event of a hate crime incident against your mosque or congregants.

Practice safety drills

At least twice per year you and your team should practice what to do in case of an emergency. This should at the very least include the points mentioned in section 4 of this guide.

Review regularly

Make sure you review your security measures every month to ensure that they are fully functioning. This should include making sure the locks on your doors and windows are working properly while ensuring that your CCTV cameras are fully operational.



8. Be Proactive; Not Just Reactive

It is important that you take proactive steps to protecting your mosque, congregants and wider community. This should include:

1

Keeping up to date with both social and political developments by reading both local and national news. This can help alert you to possible incoming dangers when the political climate becomes tense.

2

MEND and its partner organisations are establishing regional Islamophobia Action Groups. You should consider joining these to both gain important knowledge on the practical steps needed to tackle Islamophobic hate crime, while also making your own contributions to this effort.

3

MEND has built a suite of training on how to report hate crime, the Causes of Islamophobia and how to tackle it and Muslim political and media literacy. You should invite MEND to deliver this training to your mosque staff and congregants.

4

Consider establishing a regional mosque safety committee, where the leaderships of mosques in your city and/or county can gather to discuss the danger posed by the rise of the far-right, and the proactive steps needed to keep communities safe. Reach out to MEND who can provide you with the expertise on setting up this initiative.

5

Reach out to your local councillors to establish a working relationship with them. Arrange meetings once every month where you can discuss concerns around the far-right and what your council is doing to protect vulnerable communities. Try to become familiar enough that you can gain direct access to influential councillors who can help address any concerns that you or your congregants might have. Find out if your council has an independent advisory group on hate crimes and the protection of places of worship. If no such scheme exists, then talk to your local council and other local mosque leaders about establishing one.

6

Establish a security volunteer scheme where members from the local community can volunteer to guard the mosque from vandalism and potential break ins. Reach out to MEND who can provide you with the expertise on setting up this initiative.

mend

9. Useful Contacts

- Emergency telephone number: **999**
- Non-emergency police telephone number: **101**
- Protective Security for Mosques Scheme: www.gov.uk/guidance/protective-security-for-mosques-scheme
- The Islamophobia Response Unit: **020 3904 6555 AND/OR**
info@theiru.org.uk



mend

REMEMBER: your mosque is more than just a building - it is the beating heart of your Muslim community. Use the safety guidance presented in this guide, work with local partners, and apply for government support to make your mosque secure for everyone.

Finally, be sure to contact MEND for guidance around implementing security around your mosque, setting up local initiatives around community protection and combatting hate crime. No matter how big or small an issue may be, we are here for you. You can reach out to us through: info@mend.org.uk

MEND.ORG.UK



@MENDCOMMUNITY