

HOT TOPICS

WORLD HIJAB DAY

FEBRUARY 2024

The first annual World Hijab Day (WHD) was marked on February 1st, 2013. This day is used to recognise the millions of Muslim women who choose to wear the hijab and live a life of modesty.

"It's estimated that people in over 150 countries take part in World Hijab Day every year. WHD has many volunteers and ambassadors worldwide to conduct WHD events in order to bring awareness about hijab. These ambassadors come from all walks of life. In addition, WHD has been endorsed by many world renowned individuals including scholars, politicians, and celebrities worldwide ... there were many milestones since the inception of World Hijab Day. One of them has been the recognition of the day by New York State since 2017. The same year, the House of Commons of the U.K. hosted an event marking the day, where [then] Prime Minister [Theresa May](#) also attended. The event was organized by Tasmina Ahmed-Sheikh, SNP MP for Ochil and South Perthshire. SNP MP Tasmina wrote in THE TIMES: "Given the current climate, World Hijab Day is even greater importance. We must stand up and clearly say that women have a right to choose what they want to wear-whenver, wherever, and however. World Hijab Day is an event that we should be proud of celebrating, not just for religious tolerance but for women's rights around the world" [Source: [Our story - World Hijab Day](#)]

"There are lots of different types of coverings worn by Muslim women all over the world. Some wear a headscarf to cover their head and hair, while others wear a burka or niqab, which also covers up their face. But do you know the difference between them? Although this Hot Topic is about the hijab, it is helpful to understand how the hijab differs from other types of coverings.

Hijab



The word **hijab** describes the act of covering up generally but is often used to describe the headscarves worn by Muslim women. These scarves come in many styles and colours. The type most commonly worn in the West covers the head and neck but leaves the face clear

Two other important coverings to be aware of are the **niqab**, which is a veil for the face that leaves the area around the eyes clear. However, it may be worn with a separate eye veil. It is worn with an accompanying headscarf.

Niqab



Burka



The **burka** is the most concealing of all Islamic veils. It is a one-piece veil that covers the face and body, often leaving just a mesh screen to see through.

[Source: [What's the difference between a hijab, niqab and burka? - BBC Newsround](#)]



This quote is from the National Association of Muslim Police (NAMP), founded in 2007, which was "established

to create a stronger network of Muslim officers and staff within the police service and support their religious and wellbeing needs". Learn more about the Association [here](#).



Prepare for a discussion with your PDC regarding World Hijab Day, and reflect on how you can be a positive role model by challenging some of the stereotypes regarding the hijab. Furthermore, consider how you can support colleagues that wear a hijab. Ponder this extract from an article in the Evening Standard on 27 May 2022: "it's important to feel welcome and included wherever people work, but some jobs suffer from stereotypes that might prevent people applying if they feel the organisation isn't the right fit for them. The Metropolitan Police Service ... has been working to ensure it's a modern, inclusive employer – a force that will truly reflect a city as diverse as London". MET PC Amna Hanif explains how she built her career without compromising her faith, "When I first joined policing, I did think 'am I going to be able to practise my faith?'. But daily prayers are well accommodated – there are prayer rooms at stations, and I feel completely comfortable to wear the hijab ... Being on shift during Ramadan was challenging, but the support of my team made it easier". Read the full Evening Standard article from May 2022 [here](#).

You should have an understanding of, and be able to refer to, the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 and the British Values [Democracy, Rule of Law, Respect & Tolerance, Individual Liberty] – to support the points that you make in your discussions.

If you have been affected or concerned by anything that you have read in this Hot Topic, please discuss this with your PDC, HEI staff or your line manager in the first instance.