



ANNUAL REPORT

April 2021- March 2022

Our vision is of a harmonious and diverse society within which Northern Ireland Muslims make an important contribution



Contents

1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 BIC Vision, Mission, and Values	4
2.1 VISION	4
2.2 MISSION	4
2.3 VALUES	4
3.0 BIC Strategic Aims	4
4.0 BIC Management	4
5.0 Annual General Meeting (AGM)	5
6.0 Belfast Islamic Centre Activities & Services (2020-2021)	6
6.1 BIC-The Mosque	6
6.2 Women’s Group Activities	7
6.3 Ramadan 2021 Report	7
6.4 Eid-ul-Fitr 2021 Celebration	7
6.5 Eid-ul-Adha 2021 Celebration	8
6.6 Other Activities and Services provided by BIC	8
6.6.1 Ministerial and politician visits	8
6.6.2 Cultural Visits & Awareness Programs	8
6.6.3 BIC Interpretation and Translation Services	9
6.6.4 BIC Support and Guidance to New Arrivals	9
6.6.5 BIC Chaplaincy for Prison service and Health & Social Care Trust.	9
6.6.6 BIC Students Support and Advice including Chaplaincy Services	9
6.6.7 BIC Housing Advice and Help	10
6.6.8 BIC Immigration Advice and Legal Support	10
6.6.9 BIC English for Beginners	10
6.6.10 BIC Advising Social Workers and other Professionals	10
6.6.11 BIC Consultation to other Organisations	11
6.6.12 BIC Dialogues, Workshops and Engagements	11
6.6.13 Zakat & Zakat-ul-Fitr	11
6.6.14 Social and Youth Activities	11
7.0 Financial Report	12

1.0 Introduction

Belfast Islamic Centre (BIC) is not only a place of worship, but it is also a community Centre and hub for the Muslim community in Northern Ireland with hundreds of worshippers frequent BIC weekly. This status has enabled BIC to provide a number of activities to educate and encourage Muslims integrate into the wider society while preserving their Muslim identity. The mission of BIC lies in serving the society; Muslims and non-Muslims and aims to promote an open and positive image of Islam and promote greater awareness and understanding of Islam. BIC also aspires to be the Centre of faith, culture and tradition of Muslims in Northern Ireland. We believe that knowledge will promote better understanding and open doors for dialogue and friendship.

We estimate around 11000+ Muslims now call NI especially with the recent increase of the Muslim community due to the number of the newcomers during the last 10 years. We over over 500 members on our database, but many others also use the Centre facilities on a regular basis. BIC aims to promote understanding, tolerance and good relations between Muslims and the society.

BIC provides for the spiritual, social, and practical needs of the Muslims in NI, regardless of their ethnic background, gender, country of origin or age. We provide various classes, youth clubs and a mother and toddler group. Our social activities and classes are of particular benefit to refugees, asylum seekers and non-working women who often have less social interaction and opportunity to learn if not in employment. Due to the relatively small numbers of Muslims in Northern Ireland (0.2- 0.4%) many people have had little or no interaction with Muslims. As a vital part of our work, BIC has an active online presence and endorsing an open-door policy for the wider community in NI. We receive regular cultural visits by organisations and individuals as well as organising an annual 'Open Mosque Day' to give an opportunity for everyone to share our culture so that we can challenge misconceptions and stereotypes.

BIC members come from over 42 different countries of origin. BIC works through various subgroups and as an umbrella organisation to: Women's group, Muslim Youth Northern Ireland (MYNI), Muslim Student's Society (QUB ISOC), Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association (NIMFA), Islamic Centre of Newtownards, Portadown Muslim association and other Islamic centres across Northern Ireland. Many minorities ethnic and cultural groups use the centre as a meeting point and for social activities. We also coordinate with other local and national organisations, faith groups and charities to:

- Provide the Muslim community in NI to practice their religion by providing them with pastoral and social care.
- Enable members of the Muslim community to integrate within the wider society and to participate fully in public and economic life within the province.

Annual Report 2021-2022

- Increase understanding of Islam and Muslim culture to breakdown stereotypes and misconceptions.
- Achieve mutual respect and awareness between people of different ethnic backgrounds in NI.

2.0 BIC Vision, Mission, and Values

2.1 VISION

Our vision is of a harmonious and diverse society within which Northern Ireland Muslims make an important contribution.

2.2 MISSION

To serve as well as represent and support Northern Ireland Muslims to achieve their true and full potential as individuals and as part of the wider community.

2.3 VALUES

Belfast Islamic Centre will strive to achieve:

- **Respect:** for each other and the wider community
- **Co-operation:** working together and in harmony with others
- **Understanding:** accommodating diverse opinions
- **Acceptance:** equality, fairness, justice
- **Integrity:** leading by example

3.0 BIC Strategic Aims

- 1- To serve the Muslim community: to meet their needs and to enhance their feeling of belonging.
- 2- To build networks and develop relationships with other organisations and to raise awareness of Islam and the Muslim culture.
- 3- To enhance community relations and serve the community at large to improve the understanding of Islam and the Muslim culture.
- 4- To develop Belfast Islamic Centre to meet the needs of its members, the wider Muslim society and its stakeholders.

4.0 BIC Management

Board of Trustees 2021-2022

- Dr Muhammad Saleem Khan Tareen
- Dr Raja Harun
- Dr Shahid Tariq
- Mr. Louay Majeed

Annual Report 2021-2022

- Dr Yousef Hannore (passed away)

The Executive Committee

- Chairman: Mr. Mohammad Arshad
- Vice Chairman: Dr Wasif Naeem
- Treasurer: Mr. Hassan Farooq
- Secretary: Mr. Ameer Ibrahim
- Member: Mr. Shoaib Tareen
- Member: Mr. Imran Yousuf
- Member: Mr. Nabir Othman
- Member: Dr Sadaf Gul

Staff and Administration

Name	Position	Full/Part Time	Volunteer	Start-End	Funded by
Anwar Mady	Project Coordinator	Part time		01/04/2014 To Present	EXECUTIVE OFFICE
Pashmina Kashif	Office admin	Part time		01/02/2014 To 06/05/2022.	EXECUTIVE OFFICE
Ilona Choudhary	Office Admin	Part Time		01/02/2022 To July 2022	EXECUTIVE OFFICE
Naomi Green	Office Admin	Part Time		01/04/2018 To 30/11/2021	EXECUTIVE OFFICE
Waleed Abdel Fattah	Imam	Part Time		14/10/2020 To 31/03/2022	BIC
Muhammad Zulhas Miah	Cleaning	Part time		02/01/2008 To Present	BIC

5.0 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

According to Article 62 of the constitution, “The Centre must hold its first annual general meeting within fifteen months after the date of its incorporation. An annual general meeting must be held in each subsequent year and not more than fifteen months may elapse between successive annual general meetings”.

Annual Report 2021-2022

Belfast Islamic Centre held its annual general meeting (AGM) for the year ending 31st of March 2021 on Sunday 12th of June 2022. Mr. Mohammad Arshed chaired the meeting. After having an open and transparent discussion, the meeting was concluded by approving of the following:

- Voting on approval of Minutes of SGM 2020 - 14 for and 5 against and 4 abstaining, total 23 members voted.
- Voting on approval of Minutes of SGM 2021 - 12 for and 4 against and 7 abstaining.
- Approval of Minutes of AGM 2021, 14 for and none against and 9 abstaining.
- Voting for Annual Report 2021 - 19 for, none against and 4 abstaining.
- Voting on Finance report approved by 22 and none against and one abstaining.

- Appointment of Minshull & Co as an auditor for BIC

For – 22, Against – none, Abstain – 1

6.0 Belfast Islamic Centre Activities & Services (2020-2021)

6.1 BIC-The Mosque

The Mosque is the center of BIC activities. It plays an integral part for Muslims in Northern Ireland and as a source of information as well. The Mosque provides the avenue for the community to gather and strengthen its cohesion, solidarity, unity, brotherhood, and a place to practice their faith. The Mosque provides services to both Muslims and non-Muslims in Northern Ireland. The following are the activities and services of the Mosque: -

- Five daily prayers
- Two Friday congregations attended by around 500 people.
- Soliciting and advising on religious, social, and ritual matters, and providing pastoral support and guidance including administering Fatwas. We receive around 23 queries every week either in person or through telecommunications.
- Provide assistance to non-Muslims with inquiries about Islam around 18 inquiries per month.
- Provide support for the new Muslims and help them in their journey to Islam.
- Offer family and marriage consultation including conducting marriage services in accordance with the regulations approved by the Management of Belfast Islamic Centre we conducted 57 marriages last year.
- Organise two Eid prayers attended by more than 3,000 people
- Provide funeral service for the Muslim community, including – washing, supplying white shroud, burial, and funeral prayers. We facilitated around 15 funerals this year. We also provide pastoral care at the time of bereavement, visiting homes and hospitals as needed. In addition, we also subsidise funeral costs for a number of vulnerable community members. Subsidised 2 vulnerable families during that year.

6.2 Women's Group Activities

- Twice Weekly Mums and Tots.
- Weekly Quran lessons
- Weekly Halaqah – learning circle for Muslim women
- Weekly classes for Younger Girls.
- Information sessions on women's health, child protection, domestic abuse and hate crime. We run one workshop on each topic on an annual basis.

6.3 Ramadan 2021 Report

Ramadan started on 12th of April 2021. BIC resumed its Ramadan full program as normal for the Muslim community in the aftermath of the pandemic, which was concluded with Eid Day Celebration. BIC provided Iftar for the Muslim congregation at the Mosque everyday by encouraging our community members to sponsor the daily cost of Iftar meal. People from all occupations; students, children, women, and families attended Iftar dinners every day throughout Ramadan. On average an estimated 200 people turned out every night.

BIC staff, the executive committee and a large number of volunteers endeavor their best to provide the Muslim community with a truly welcoming atmosphere. BIC organised for praying 20 Rakats of Taraweeh prayers through inviting 2 Huffaz from abroad to lead Taraweeh and complete the recitation of the whole Quran during the blessed Month alhamdulillah. Friday khutbah is conducted mostly by volunteers and BIC is grateful for their contribution. Volunteers Tahajud prayer was also organised during the last ten days and provision of Suhoor (predawn meal) was maintained for people who made i'tiqaf in the Mosque. Furthermore, we also received cultural visits during the month of Ramadan as part of our educational programme. Meals were provided to the visiting groups.

6.4 Eid-ul-Fitr 2021 Celebration

The Muslim community celebrated the end of Ramadan, which is Eid-ul-Fitr on the 12th of May 2021. Two Eid prayers were performed and attended by around 1000 Muslims at St Bride's Hall, 38 Derryvolgie Avenue, Belfast. Special activities were arranged in the afternoon where celebration continued at the Dundonald International Ice Bowl for children and families. Fun activities like tenpin bowling, ice skating and Indiana Land playground were organised where were highly praised by the participants from the feedback received. It is estimated around 300 people attended those activities.

6.5 Eid-ul-Adha 2021 Celebration

Eid-ul-Adha prayer was held at the Physical Education Centre (PEC), QUB Centre on 20th July 2021. Due to the increase in the size of the NI Muslim community we had to offer two sessions of Eid prayers which were attended by around 2000 individuals including women and children. Celebrations continued in the afternoon at the Dundonald International Ice Bowl with fun activities such as Bowling, Ice skating and Indiana Land. More than 300 people benefited from the Eid activity programme.

6.6 Other Activities and Services provided by BIC

6.6.1 Ministerial and politician visits

The Centre offers a medium for ministers and politicians to interact with the Muslim community in Northern Ireland. BIC also works with local councillors and ministers to highlight the plight of the Muslim community. During 2022, Communities Minister, Deirdre Hargey inaugurated the refurbishment of the new BIC in October. Representatives of the EC and Trustees were also invited to welcome the Monarchs in NI. EC representatives were also invited to an Eid reception held at 10 Downing Street. Over the last few years, BIC participated in regular events which include welcoming the Belfast Lord Mayor in BIC as well as attending the Belfast Lord Mayor installation dinner. BIC also invited Chief Constable, the head of the police service NI to discuss issues related to the Muslim community such as tackling hate crimes and domestic abuse. We invited the immigration service NI for a workshop on the Muslim community.

We also regularly contribute to the NI Interfaith Forum, NICRE, and APG on Racial Equality.

6.6.2 Cultural Visits & Awareness Programs

The Centre acts as an information hub about Islam, conveying messages on Islamic faith, cultures, and traditions to the wider society in Northern Ireland. For the past year, BIC has received visits from various groups and establishments including government offices, non-governmental organisations, universities, colleges, schools, youth groups, scouts' groups, and many others. BIC provided outreach awareness programs where a BIC representative delivered talks at schools, universities, youth groups, and women's groups. Around 88 cultural visits and awareness programs occurred throughout the year with a total number of around 400 individuals attending. Meals were provided on some of those occasions upon request. A few of the organisations that participated in this program included:

PSNI (Police Service of NI), PPSNI, NHS staff, Belfast City Council, Queen's University Belfast (Medical School), Stranmillis College, Belfast Bible College, Union Theological College, Arts a Wonder Collective, Belfast City Council, Ards and North Down group as well as many primary & secondary schools from across Northern Ireland.

6.6.3 BIC Interpretation and Translation Services

We provided several families and individuals with approved translations of their official documents including birth and marriage certificates. The number of documents translated last year was 40.

We also provided a free interpretation service for people in need especially when they are unable to find an official interpreter.

BIC provides countersignatures for settlement, naturalization, and passport applications. We have signed more than 100 applications in the last year

6.6.4 BIC Support and Guidance to New Arrivals

BIC continued to provide support and guidance to new arrivals in Northern Ireland, particularly in Belfast. This includes guidance and support for students, professionals, families, refugees, and other individuals. Recently BIC has witnessed several new Muslim families and individuals moving to Northern Ireland and assistance was needed for them to start their new life and integrate with the local community. As before, BIC provided information, advice and necessary assistance whenever required. BIC helped the newcomers emotionally and logistically over the past years.

BIC also developed an information booklet that includes information about Muslim organisations, halal provision and other relevant services.

6.6.5 BIC Chaplaincy for Prison service and Health & Social Care Trust.

BIC provided Chaplaincy visits to Maghaberry, Hydebank and Magilligan prisons to meet Muslim inmates and attend to their needs. We also provided the HM prison services with Islamic materials including copies of the Quran, prayer mats and Islamic books for those inmates who are interested in Islam.

BIC through its designated staff members visited Muslim patients in RVH, City Hospital, Musgrave Park Hospital, and Craigavon Area Hospital.

6.6.6 BIC Students Support and Advice including Chaplaincy Services

Advice was provided to students regarding accommodation and facilities available to them in Belfast. BIC is working with the International Office at Queen's University Belfast to develop a model to guide and make it more appealing to students from abroad, which include Muslims. This provides useful information to potential students and new arrivals that it is not only safe to live in Northern Ireland but also that their beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles are respected. Newcomers to Belfast contact BIC via social media on a regular basis with queries about life

in Belfast and Northern Ireland. This approach has directly benefitted the local economy and the University. Additionally, BIC has been providing official Muslim Chaplaincy services for QUB Muslim students.

6.6.7 BIC Housing Advice and Help

BIC is a member of BME Housing Forum and the Steering Group of the Consultative Forum and as a member, we were able to work closely with the community. BIC played a key role as a member highlighting specific needs for Muslims. Furthermore, BIC participated in discussions to improve future policies of the Housing Executive. BIC helped the newcomers with the language barrier to communicate with the Housing Executive either attending with the clients in person or making the required phone calls on their behalf with their consent and presence.

6.6.8 BIC Immigration Advice and Legal Support

This service is provided upon request but mainly gives directions and information about the procedures and organisations that are specialised in this issue. BIC as one of the founding members of the Refugee Action Group attended several meetings and activities related to Asylum seekers over the last few years. We are now a member of Migrant Forum who provide support for refugees and asylum seekers. We coordinated in the last year with the Red Cross to enable reunion of family members.

6.6.9 BIC English for Beginners

BIC provided two separate English classes for males and females twice a week. These accredited English classes were run by 2 English teachers under the auspices of ESOL in collaboration with South East Regional College. 20 individuals were able to pass level one exam at the end of the course and they become able to peruse with English learning.

6.6.10 BIC Advising Social Workers and other Professionals

There were a few cases where advice and help were given to social sector in dealing with issues involving Muslim families and children. Social workers were provided with general information about Islam and how to deal with such cases. They were also provided with Islamic materials to help individuals under social care practice their religion. Advice was also provided to doctors and other professionals in cases involving Muslims. Islam for service provider is one of the platforms to discuss issues and provide advice. BIC and Housing Executive have developed a charter which is a piece of information to help employees to meet the needs and requirements of Muslim tenants.

6.6.11 BIC Consultation to other Organisations

The Executive Committee of BIC have continued to provide consultation to the government departments and private organisations as well as the voluntary and community sector on a wide range of issues concerning religion and ethnic minorities. Documents were produced and discussed, and representatives of the Centre attended many of the consultation meetings, seminars, and workshops.

6.6.12 BIC Dialogues, Workshops and Engagements

Members of the Executive Committee, staff as well as volunteers took part in formal and informal dialogues on various topics involving religious and social issues. Major issues discussed were about Islam and other religions, Islam and the West, Islam and Terrorism, Human Rights in Islam. BIC representatives took part in a panel discussion organised by NI Interfaith Forum on the concept of diversity where Judaism, Christianity and Islam were represented.

Members of the Executive Committee and staff attended meetings, workshops as well as conferences organised by: political parties, city councils, NICRAS (Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers), NICRE (Northern Ireland Council for Racial Equality), CRC (Community Relations Council), NICVA (Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action), PSNI, various denominations of churches and meetings with politicians from political parties: DUP, Sinn Fein, SDLP, UUP, Green Party, Alliance, People Before Profit and PUP.

6.6.13 Zakat & Zakat-ul-Fitr

BIC accepts and collects Zakat and Zakat-ul-Fitr, and they are distributed throughout the year to eligible people. Part of the Muslim community is under privileged, and some are going through difficulties in life. Zakat and Zakat-ul-Fitr are means of assisting them in such cases.

We received more than 50 Zakat application forms per week, which are all dealt with in due course. We have distributed some of the Zakat-ul-Fitr during Eid day before the prayer and also send some of it to International Charity Organisations working in the UK such as Human appeal, Interpal and Action for Humanity.

BIC was part of the international fundraising appeal for the victims of the Pakistan floods and the Turkey & Syria earthquake.

6.6.14 Social and Youth Activities

BIC has organised several activities in the past to support Muslim families in Northern Ireland. BIC resumed its summer scheme this year by organising trips and activities to visit places in NI such as Belfast Zoo, Lagan Leisure plex, Vertigo and Let's Go Hydro. These activities were fully booked by our community attended by a total of 200 people.

Annual Report 2021-2022

Moreover, a mother and toddler group has also been established on BIC premises on a twice-weekly basis. On a Monday, this also includes food/breakfast. BIC has a long record of accomplishment of helping newcomers orientate to life in NI and access public services. As a community, we also run a weekly food bank, which is distributed among those most in need.

7.0 Financial Report

See attached Financial Report (1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022)

Prepared by Accountant: Minshull & Co. Chartered Accountants