

## **Lancashire Public Health leads' advice for religious festivals**

With Holi, Passover, Easter, Ramadan, Eid and other religious festival coming up, the three Directors of Public Health in Lancashire are issuing safety advice for faith communities.

The festivals will take place as coronavirus restrictions begin to be relaxed, in line with the government's four-step road map.

These dates in the religious calendar may be more significant for people of faith this year, since they fell early in the first lockdown last year.

Our faith communities have worked tirelessly since the beginning of the pandemic to keep people safe, and we applaud all their efforts.

We appreciate that the coming weeks and months will be significant for many faith communities across Lancashire, especially as they may not have been able to celebrate these important festivals last year.

Celebrations have potential for significant social mixing and therefore an increased risk of Covid-19 transmission – and we therefore need to urge communities to continue to follow the government guidance closely.

This is often a period of reflection, reconciliation, renewal and restraint but ultimately celebration within households, or with limited outdoor social mixing, in line with the relaxed restrictions. Therefore, we must ask people to follow government guidance and protect themselves, their families and friends.

Locally, the vaccination programme is going very well, with more than 773,000 people now vaccinated across Lancashire and South Cumbria. The vaccine is key to reducing deaths from Covid-19 and helping us get back to normal – please come and have your vaccination when it is offered to you.

However, even after being vaccinated, we must all continue to follow the basic safety guidance to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus.

Everyone in Lancashire is reminded to follow the public health safety guidance:

- follow the social distancing rules
- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- wash your hands as soon as you get home
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- let fresh air into your home by opening windows, doors and air vents as much as possible

- wear face coverings (unless exempt) where required by law, such as shops, public transport, places of worship

If you have symptoms of Covid-19, or you would like to test yourself regularly because you live with a child of school age or you have to leave home to go to work, here's what is available to you:

- If you have symptoms: [Book a free NHS test or receive a test in the post.](#)
- If you do not have symptoms: Get tested regularly via your workplace, child's school or at a community testing site. [More information here.](#)

We wish you all happy and safe religious festivals.

Dr Sakthi Karunanithi, Director of Public Health for Lancashire  
Professor Dominic Harrison, Director of Public Health for Blackburn with Darwen  
Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health for Blackpool

### **Further information**

You can find more information about [celebrating religious festivals safely during the pandemic](#) on the gov.uk website.

Please follow the guidance below as we move through each step of the roadmap out of lockdown:

#### **Step 1 phase 1 – from 8 March**

- You can meet outdoors with one other person from outside your household
- No indoor mixing with anyone you don't live with (or in your support bubble)
- Stay at home

#### **Step 1 phase 2 – no earlier than 29 March**

- Rule of 6 or two households can meet outdoors
- No indoor mixing with anyone you don't live with (or in your support bubble)
- Stay local advice in place – avoid unnecessary travel

#### **Step 2 – no earlier than 12 April**

- Rule of 6 or two households can meet outdoors
- No indoor mixing with anyone you don't live with (or in your support bubble)
- Stay local advice in place – avoid unnecessary travel

You can find the [full details of the government's roadmap out of lockdown on the gov.uk website.](#)