



A Local Girls' Group Visit Lewisham Islamic Centre and Imam Shakeel Begg

An open dialogue is always the best solution

On Wednesday 13th of March 2018, some very confident young ladies visited the Lewisham Islamic Centre ("LIC") and spoke to Imam Shakeel Begg about Islam and the Muslim Community.

Some very interesting discussions took place around the five pillars of Islam, racism, how Muslims pray, dress code, dietary requirements, the role of an Imam, Islamophobia, etc.

Imam Begg stated: "These young ladies were very interesting. They had Muslim friends and were very open-minded about Islam and Muslims and did not have any negative attitude towards the faith or its adherents". He further stated; "I asked them in which area they grew up and if I am not mistaken, all of them grew up in the London Borough of Lewisham and one even went to the same Primary School in Lewisham as me".

Reflecting on the meeting and dialogue, it was very reassuring to meet individuals who have little to no negative perceptions about Islam and Muslims in view of the rising tide of Islamophobia. This only reiterated our firm belief which is that the vast majority of the British public are not only very open minded but also fair and not intolerant despite the great efforts from some quarters to foment the contrary. In addition, the fact that these young women all grew up in Lewisham also gives testimony to what a great Borough it is that we live in, one which is unique, diverse and has a known track record in standing up against racism, discrimination and bigotry.

We would also hope that the work that the Lewisham Islamic Centre and the Muslim community have been involved in over the years and the great efforts we have made in engaging with different communities and groups within the Borough has also contributed to individuals within Lewisham and beyond to have a positive view on Islam and Muslims.

LIC would like to extend its thanks and gratitude to the young women for their candour and their willingness to have a better understanding of Islam.



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