

# UK Elections 2017: Muslim Voters to Play Decisive Role in 38 Constituencies

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*An estimated three million Muslims live in Britain, and in many constituencies who they vote for can help shape the country's future.*

A research by Geo.tv establishes that in around 38 constituencies, across the length and breadth of United Kingdom, Muslim voters can play a vital role in the outcome of the general election — to be held on June 8.

Nearly 60% — possibly more — Muslims in Britain originate from Pakistan/Azad Kashmir; followed by Muslims from India, Bangladesh, Middle East, North Africa, European origin and converts.

Interestingly, in all these constituencies where at least 1,000 Muslim voters are registered, Labour party is defending 27 seats and the Tory party is defending 12 as other major political parties have failed to attract Muslim voters.

## **Bradford**

Bradford, which is known as 'little Pakistan', has a large number of Kashmiris, who trace their roots back to Azad Jammu and Kashmir, hailing mainly from Mirpur and Kotli districts.

Naz Shah's Bradford West constituency has more Muslim voters than any other constituency in Britain. The number of registered voters in Bradford stands at 40,290, out of which 20,669 are eligible Muslim voters which is nearly 51% Muslim votes.

Shah won from this constituency in 2015 with a margin of 11,420 votes. This seat was previously held by George Galloway for one term until Labour's Shah defeated him.

Neighbouring Bradford East constituency has the second most Muslim votes. In total, there are 41,406 voters, 15,299 eligible registered voters are Muslims which means 37% Muslim votes.

Labour candidate **Imran Hussain** will be defending his seat here. In the 2015 election, he won this constituency with a margin of 7,084 votes.

## **Luton**

With 25% of Muslim votes, Luton South is the third constituency with the highest number of most Muslim voters. Luton South has a total of 42,216 electorates with 10,680 Muslim votes. **Gavin Shuker** of Labour grabbed Luton South in 2015 with a margin of 5,711.

Luton North is another constituency where Muslim votes can play a deciding role with 22% of voters being Muslim.

The total number of votes registered is 42,571 of which 9,526 are Muslim votes. Kelvin Hopkins of Labour, who won in 2015 with a majority of 9,504, will be hoping for the Muslims' vote to be in his favour this time around.

## **Slough**

On the other hand, Slough is on number four. It has a total number of 48,275 eligible votes with 11,503 votes being those of Muslims, which is about 24% of the total votes.

In the 2015 General Elections, these votes did play a major role in **Fiona Mctaggart's** victory with a majority of 7,336. She announced to stand down earlier this year and so the Labour's ticket has gone to **Tanmanjeet (Tan) Dhesi**.

A group of locals is campaigning against him and claim that the Labour Party has not made the decision on merit and ignored the deserving Pakistani-origin candidates. Campaigners also cite that Tan Dhesi endorsed a manifesto which bashes Muslims and disrupted community relations.

## **Westminster**

In Westminster North, **Karen Buck** of Labour won in 2015 with a majority of 1,977. Total number of votes in this constituency is 39,514 and eligible Muslim voters are 8,944, which is nearly 23% of the total number of votes.

Muslim votes in this constituency will be very vital for any candidate.

## **Birmingham Yardley**

Birmingham Yardley is another constituency with a decisive Muslim vote bank. The Conservative Party has fielded **Mohammed Afzal** to attract Muslim voters from this constituency but the Labour Party remains a favourite in this area.

**Jess Phillips** defeated **Lib Dems** with a 6,556-vote majority in 2015 and will be hoping to repeat the same. The total number of votes in this constituency stands at 41,151, with nearly 8,500 Muslim voters.

## **Bately, Spen**

Bately and Spen constituency with 19% Muslim votes will be another tough battle between Labour and Tory.

Around 9,500 Muslims are eligible voters in this constituency, while the total number of votes stands at 50,479. **Tracy Brabin** of Labour won from this constituency in 2015 with a majority of 6,057.

## **Walsall**

**Valerie Vaz** of the Labour Party, the sister of **Keith Vaz**, has always enjoyed the backing of the Muslim community residing in Walsall South. She won with a majority of 6,007 in the

2015 General Elections.

Walsall South Constituency has a 19% percent (7,800 voters) Muslim voter share with the number of registered voters at 41,838.

### **Dewsbury**

Dewsbury constituency has 18% Muslim voting share, with the total number of registered voters at 53,630. About 9,906 are Muslim voters and the margin of victory votes for **Paula Sherrif** of Labour was 1,451 in the 2015 elections.

### **Ilford North**

Ilford North in East London has an estimated registered Muslim votes numbered at 7,446 which is nearly 15% of the voting share.

The total number of registered voters in this constituency is 48,932. In 2015, Labour's **Wes Streeting** won it with a margin of just 589 votes.

Muslim votes in this constituency have always played a big part in the end result and it is expected that Labour will attract the most Muslim voters from this constituency as Conservatives have made no effort to win over Muslim voters.

### **Small but significant voting share**

Hendon constituency has an estimated 14% Muslim voting share. The total number of registered voters is 49,630, out of which about 6,904 are registered Muslim voters.

In five parliamentary seats across the UK, the share of Muslim votes stands at 13% In Ealing Central and Acton, where **Rupa Haq** won in 2015 with a margin of only 274 votes, it will be another tough challenge for Labour this time around. Total number of registered voters is 50,894 of which 6,801 are Muslims.

Halifax constituency has total voters of 43,753 of which 5,888 are Muslim.

In Enfield North, total registered voters are 46,137 of which 6,214 are Muslim. The total number of registered voters in Harrow West stands at 46,603 with 6,219 Muslim voters. **Gareth Thomas** won from this constituency in 2015 with a handsome margin of 2,208 votes.

Keighley has an estimated registered vote bank of 49,123. Amongst these, 6,428 are Muslim voters and the victory margin was 3,053 for Conservative Party's **Kris Hopkins** in 2015.

Oldham East and Saddle worth has 14% Muslim voting share with **Debbie Abraham** defending her seat, which she won in 2015 General Elections with a majority of 6,002 votes. The total number of votes in this constituency is 44,483 with 6,904 Muslim votes.

Brentford and Isleworth, and Bolton Northeast have 14% Muslim voting share. **Ruth Cadbury** of Labour won from Brentford in 2015 with a margin of just 465 votes. The total number of votes in this constituency is 57,355 and 7,150 are Muslim votes.

Constituencies of Hampstead and Kilburn, Tooting, Enfield Southgate and Hyndburn have 11% Muslim voting share. **Tulip Sadiq, Rosena Allen Khan, David Burrowes** and

**Graham Jones** will be defending their seats here.

Bristol West and Burnley stands at 10% Muslim voting share. Bristol has 64,218 registered voters with 6,221 votes being those of Muslims and the margin of victory for Labour's **Thangam Debonaire** was 5,673 in 2015.

Burnley, on the other hand, has only 39,746 total registered voters and 3,917 Muslim votes. Labour's **Julie Cooper** won from here in 2015 with a majority of 3,244 votes.

Bedford and Bury North constituencies have an eight percent Muslim voting share. **Richard fuller** of the Tories will be defending his seat which he won previously with a majority of 1,097. Bedford's registered eligible voters are 46,086 which includes 3,652 Muslims.

The Muslim votes' share in three constituencies of Coventry South, Birmingham Edgbaston and Wolverhampton Southwest is at seven percent with total number of registered voters 43,699, 41,293 and 40,209, and Muslim voters 3,221, 2,898, and 2,743 respectively.

Croydon Central has six percent of Muslim voting share with total registered voters at 52,941 while Muslim voters are 3,148. The margin of victory for Tory's **Gavin Barvel** was only 165 in 2015.

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