

It further, I realised successful books had been published this way. It could take years to get published through an agent, so I gave it a go. I hired the editor of my writing group and a professional cover designer, and, by January 2020, my novel was ready to be published on Amazon.

By this time I was heavily pregnant with my second child but I decided to go ahead and publish my book. 'The time is now,' I told myself and set a published date of 14 February. I arranged an online book launch with a Facebook group called Muslim Mamas and presented it on a Facebook Live call to 100,000 mums. It was terrifying, but I received such a positive response. When the first copies of my book turned up, I felt like I was 12 again, my

I drove to see my mum, who had me and said she was proud. No book is available to order through such as Waterstones and Foyles in September. I won an internet book award called the Page Turner.

The experience has spurred me to write a second book, *The Secret Of A Bengali Bridezilla* (out in June). Being able to fulfil my childhood dream has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. Writing books, so to have people pay to read stories, enjoy the characters and they relate to the experience is what I finally made it and I couldn't be more grateful.

• *The Secret Diary Of An Arranged Marriage* by Halima Khatun is available to buy now through Amazon

**PRIDE AND JOY**  
Then, in 2018, I read an article on Candice Cartwright-Williams, whose book, *Queenie*, is about a young black girl dating in London and the race and identity issues she faces. I was intrigued that this type of story hadn't been written about before and felt there hadn't been anything similar for British Muslims. If people were interested in this, perhaps they'd like a modern book about a British Bengali girl dating. I began writing, vowing that this time I'd finish it. When I had a spare moment, I'd type a bit of my story into my iPhone notes. It took a year to complete, between moving to Manchester to be near family and falling pregnant with my son, Ishaq, now 10 months, but I was determined to get it done. I joined a writing group to help tidy it up and learned there was a growing trend for self-publishing. I was sceptical, as I didn't think anyone really read

**I wanted to write a book based on my experience**



## 'I gave birth in the midst of a pandemic'

For Halima, lockdown living brought an added challenge to labour...

**HALIMA KHATUN, 35, A PR CONSULTANT AND BLOGGER (HALIMABOBS.COM), LIVES IN STOCKPORT WITH HUSBAND MUFIQUR AND CHILDREN ISHAQ, SIX WEEKS, AND HANNAH, TWO**

Launching at the antebellum gel, social-distancing lines, and protective desk barriers, I began to feel unnerved. I was mostly at my due date and visiting my local GP surgery for a routine antenatal appointment. We were days into a national lockdown due to coronavirus, and suddenly everything felt very real.

Like most people, I'd been glued to the nightly ten o'clock news. I watched with growing concern as it was announced that pregnant women were now included in the 'at risk' category. I'd been self-isolating for weeks, with my husband Mufiqur the only household member ripping out for essentials. Now I was out of my little cocoon at home, my mind began to race. Would I be safe at hospital when I went into labour? Would others keep a safe distance? And should I push for a longer birth? As I'd had complications with my first labour, in reality it wouldn't have been right for me, so I put it out of my mind.

At the midlife at that appointment went to examine my bump it was as if the read my mind. 'The hospital's doing all it can to keep clean,' she reassured me.

This time, I was hoping for a straightforward natural birth. With my eldest, Hannah, I'd progressed quickly, needed an epidural, and had haemorrhaged. If I could sail through this time with as little intervention as possible – and, of course, avoid infection – I'd be happy.

But I'd be lying if I said those extra niggles didn't keep me awake some nights. However, with the help of my hypnobirthing audiobook I managed to stay calm. I watched the soothing vocals on while cooking, and at night, dropping off to sleep. The positive affirmations and visualisations helped to relax me and take the edge off my anxiety.

On my official due date I began to notice low-level contractions in my bump. At first, I wasn't sure if I was imagining them, but

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# Halima Khatun

## BLOGGER, WRITER AND COLUMNIST

HalimaBobs.com is a lifestyle blog aimed at the modern British-Asian woman. Its niche targeting has created a dedicated following and the site reaches highs of 25k+ views per month.

The blog succeeds where many other fail – in providing real, relatable features, unfiltered photos and honest, tried and tested reviews. This means one thing for the readers and brands I collaborate with – trust and authenticity. In a world where consumers are becoming increasingly cynical of bloggers and influencers, HalimaBobs provides a refreshing, entertaining and approachable alternative.

As a former broadcast journalist (ITV and BBC) my blog stands out due to the extensive media coverage I have garnered, bridging the gap between blogging and mainstream media. I have been featured in the press numerous times, including a full page spread in Good Housekeeping, Express, HuffPost and more. For media coverage examples, see: <https://www.halimabobs.com/in-the-press>

## COLUMN AND STATS

I have a monthly column with one of the UK's largest BAME publications, Asian Image, which has a readership of 350k+ per month. Blog content and articles are regularly featured/linked from my column.

**The HalimaBobs Pinterest page has 250k+ unique visitors per month.**

Facebook: 6k+ fans  
Instagram: 2.5k followers  
YouTube: 2k followers

## KEY VERTICALS & DEMOGRAPHIC

Beauty  
Food (recipes and restaurants)  
Parenting  
Travel  
Lifestyle

**Core audience:**  
Female 25-40, British-Asian Muslim



# Halima Khatun

BLOGGER, WRITER  
AND COLUMNIST

## BRAND TESTIMONIALS

"Balmonds have worked with Halima both before and after our rebranding, and have always been really pleased with her professionalism and support for the brand! She had a fantastic response to a giveaway collaboration with us, and we were delighted by the engagement she achieved. We've also very much appreciated her thoughtful and enthusiastic in-depth reviews of our products, as well as the sponsored blog posts she has provided. It's been a delight to work with her!"

Lucy Gulland, PR Manager, Balmonds Skincare

"From working with Halima, we can say that she was very professional and delivered all agreed content within the allocated time-frame. She took into consideration our brand values and the message we wanted to convey, and presented them well through her content. As a result of our collaboration, HalimaBobs' audience learned more about Fantastic Services and how we make people's lives easier."

Radostina Hristova, PR Team, Fantastic Services

## WAYS OF WORKING

### Giveaways

Collaborating on a giveaway with HalimaBobs offers exponential ROI. Whether a giveaway is hosted on the blog, my instagram page, or both, entries reach the thousands, offering invaluable brand exposure.

### Sponsored posts

HalimaBobs invites sponsored posts from brands that sit within the verticals covered. Sponsored posts are always detailed, with a minimum of 350+ words.

### Product/service reviews

HalimaBobs has provided hundreds of product/services reviews for it's readers. All reviews are honest, detailed, and fair to both the brand, while helping the reader make an informed choice.

### Guest blogging

HalimaBobs can lend its writing prowess and authenticity to your brand. Whether it's a blog post for your page, or an opinion piece for your website, HalimaBobs can add credibility authority and a real voice to your brand.