



Parliamentary Briefing

Survey of mosques in England and Wales

The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, and our remit includes mosques, which have charitable status. In order to better understand this important sector, we commissioned BMG Research to conduct a survey of mosques throughout England and Wales. This survey is the first of its kind and gives a fascinating insight into their role at the heart of communities, showing how important it is to ensure they are well governed and properly supported and regulated by the Charity Commission.

What do mosques do?

The results of the survey show that alongside offering worship, mosques are an important community resource. Responding mosques provide a range of services and activities such as education for children and young people (provided by 94% of those questioned), legal advice services (20%), accommodation or housing services (20%), welfare (27%), health/healthy living (31%), activities for senior citizens (31%) and imam training (31%). 82% of mosques surveyed said they were involved in fundraising for the relief of poverty and hardship, and 64% were involved in interfaith or multi-faith activities.

Are most mosques new?

No. The majority of mosques surveyed (83%) have been established for over ten years. A further 14% have been established for between three and ten years, with just 3% reporting being established in the last two years.

Are women involved in mosques?

The research shows a mixed picture. Overall, 51% of mosques questioned said that women attended their regular Friday prayer meetings. The survey shows marked regional variation, with women attending prayers in 60% of organisations surveyed in the South Government Office region, 48% in the Midlands and only 44% in the North. In terms of involvement in governance, 15% of the mosques questioned said they had women with management responsibilities, although it is not clear how formal those responsibilities are. Again there is regional variation, with 23% of mosques in the North region reporting women with management responsibilities, 28% in the Midlands and 40% in the South.

Are mosques registered as charities?

Mosques are charitable and those with an income over £5000 by law need to register with the Charity Commission. Furthermore, there are a number of benefits to mosques in being registered charities; these include the support of the Charity Commission as a regulator as well as tax and reputational advantages.

Data collected by the Charity Commission to date suggests that many mosques are unaware of this requirement, which is one of the reasons why we've embarked on a programme of work, through our Faith and Social Cohesion Unit, to make contact with mosques and let them know about the need to register.

How do mosques deal with risk?

Over nine in ten (92%) of all organisations surveyed report having buildings insurance, 87% a health and safety policy, and 84% public liability insurance. Somewhat fewer report having a child protection policy (71%) and CRB checks (70%) in place.

What difference can the Charity Commission make?

The Charity Commission can offer advice and support to mosques. When asked who they would approach from outside their organisation, close to half the mosques surveyed (49%) reported that they would go to Charity Commission staff, and 44% that they would go to the Charity Commission website. Around two thirds (67%) of the organisations surveyed report having contact with the Charity Commission at all, with close to half (46%) reporting annual contact, and 15% more frequent contact.

For those mosques which have contacted the Commission the rating of this contact is generally positive, with very few reporting any aspect of it as poor.

Furthermore, those mosques who have had contact with us are more likely to have appropriate policies and procedures; of those who have had contact with us, 77% have a child protection policy compared to 58% of those who have not had contact with us; 75% have CRB checks compared to 60%; and 94% have buildings insurance compared to 85% of those who have not had contact with us.

What do the survey results mean for the Charity Commission?

The results show that mosques are at the heart of communities across England and Wales. It is therefore all the more important that they are well governed, and that the Charity Commission can properly regulate and support them.

The Commission's Faith and Social Cohesion Unit, led by Ghulam Rasool and part-funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, is focusing on two strands of work. The first strand is to encourage more mosques to fulfil their legal obligation to register as charities. The second strand is to support better governance in existing mosques. We have already made contact with a large number of mosques, and the survey gives us an excellent evidence base to continue this work. You can find out more about our Faith and Social Cohesion Unit [here](#), or by contacting us (see below for contact details).

How can I help the mosques in my constituency?

We know that MPs are often in close touch with their local mosques. We would be delighted to talk to you about identifying whether or not mosques are registered charities and how best to encourage them to register. We would also be very pleased for MPs to refer local mosques to the Commission for advice and support.

How can I find out more about the research?

The full research report, which includes details of methodology, is available on the Charity Commission's website.

This briefing document is available in the Public Affairs area of the Charity Commission's website, under Publications and Briefings. If you have any queries please contact our Public Affairs Manager, Andrew Rudd, on 020 7674 2322 or by email at andrew.rudd@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk.