



Ministry  
of Defence

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Ref: FOI2021/02165



24 March 2021

Dear 

Thank you for your email of 24 February 2021 requesting the following information:

*“Please advise if the Ministry of Defence seeks any advice, or has any arrangement to consult, the Muslim Council of Britain in the appointment of imams to the armed services.*

*If so please give details of the arrangements.”*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). A search for the information requested has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held.

I can confirm that the MOD does have an arrangement to consult with the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) in the appointment of Imams to the Armed Services. A copy of the Terms of Reference is shown in Annex A to this document.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that the MCB is one of many endorsing authorities used by the MOD and the terms of reference are the same for each of them.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact us in the first instance at the address above. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further

details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence People Secretariat

## ENDORISING AUTHORITIES FOR MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Endorsing Authority<sup>1</sup> – a definition. Endorsing Authority (EA) is the term applied to a United Kingdom Faith Community which acknowledges and accepts specific responsibilities when any of its members or clergy are selected for military chaplaincy service in the Armed Forces.
2. The relationship between the Armed Forces, Chaplains and their EAs. Chaplains are licensed to officiate or authorised to function by their EAs. The EAs retain religious responsibility for chaplains; it therefore follows that chaplains retain religious accountability to their EAs. Chaplains are under military authority<sup>2</sup> during their service; this includes the exercise of chaplaincy control by the respective Head of Chaplaincy<sup>3</sup>. The Armed Forces, for their part, recognise that they have a duty to care for chaplains whilst in military service and to promote their professional and personal development. The Armed Forces also agree to respect the religious integrity of chaplains and their unique status as representatives of their respective Faith Communities.
3. Aim. The aim of this document is to state the Terms of Reference for EAs and those nominated to be their representatives.
4. Status of this document. This document is a formal statement of MOD policy. Faith Communities which wish to be recognised as EAs are required to acknowledge, and accept, the responsibilities described in this document.
5. Role and detailed tasks of EAs. During the selection process, EAs are required to identify appropriate candidates and endorse them as suitable for consideration for selection. They must be able to reassure the Armed Forces that individuals are safe to receive and are subject to enforceable standards of professional conduct and behaviour. In this regard, EAs retain religious oversight of their chaplains throughout their service. Detailed tasks include:
  - Nominate an official EA representative to be a point of contact for the MOD and its associated bodies. (This representative will be required to be a member of a number of committees and interface groups.)

<sup>1</sup> The term Endorsing Authority (EA) includes the Christian grouping known as the "Sending Churches".

<sup>2</sup> This includes appropriate conduct, annual performance appraisals, postings and promotion procedures and military discipline.

<sup>3</sup> The Chaplain of the Fleet, the Chaplain-General and the Chaplain-in-Chief (RAF).

- Complete a faith specific selection procedure to verify an individual's suitability and vocational calling to military chaplaincy.
- Formally recommend and endorse potential chaplains to the relevant Armed Forces' Chaplaincy Service for consideration for selection. (Candidates will be required to undertake the appropriate single service chaplaincy and military selection procedures; successful candidates will then be given appropriate training on entry to the Armed Forces.)
- Religious oversight of their chaplains during their service.
- Be prepared to offer faith specific advice to MOD and its associated bodies.

6. Travel and subsistence. Travel and subsistence costs will fall to the Service, Chaplaincy Branch or Department requesting attendance or participation.

7. Maintenance of Document. The MOD body responsible for the maintenance of this document is the Armed Forces' Chaplaincy Policy Board.