



THE MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

Know Your Rights & Responsibilities

A POCKET GUIDE

The Muslim Council of Britain is an inclusive body that represents the interests of all Muslims in Britain and is pledged to work for the common good of society as a whole. It was founded in 1997 and its affiliates include national, regional and local organisations, mosques, charities and schools.

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WORKING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

As-salaamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullaah.

May peace and God's grace be with you.

The MCB is committed to work for the common good of society. A just, cohesive society is founded upon awareness of rights and a willingness to discharge responsibilities. We all – irrespective of colour or creed – have the right to be protected by the State and have the responsibility to live in peace, while working for the betterment of society as a whole.

As Muslims we have the civic duty to be honest in all our dealings. We have a responsibility to look after the young, the weak, the sick and the elderly. Our ethical framework also obliges us to care for the environment.

We are proud to be UK citizens where our rights have for the most part been respected. We have also, in so many ways, been able to make a vital contribution to our society's medical, technological and economic progress.

But recent tragedies and the ensuing erosion of civil liberties have raised justified concerns among many people and, in particular, amongst Britain's second largest faith community.

The unleashing of a virulent strain of Islamophobia, inflammatory media reporting and the misconceived wars against Afghanistan and Iraq have all contributed to the undoubted increase in prejudice we face on a day-to-day basis.

This Guide is designed to help Muslims become better acquainted with our responsibilities and rights so as to promote social cohesion and combat Islamophobia.

“ HELP ONE ANOTHER TO VIRTUE AND GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS AND DO NOT HELP ONE ANOTHER TO SIN AND TRANSGRESSION. ” (QUR'AN, 5:2)

May God Almighty accept our humble effort and through so doing lead us to peace and prosperity for all.

Iqbal AKM Sacranie OBE
Secretary-General
The Muslim Council of Britain

MEDIA PORTRAYAL OF ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

We have a responsibility to help ensure a true portrayal of Islam and Muslims. Get in touch with the relevant newspaper or broadcaster immediately by letter, phone or email if you have positive feedback or a complaint. Keep your comments concise. Include your address and contact details.

Contact details of the UK's main national media:

- **Daily Express** 020 7928 8000
expressletters@express.co.uk
- **Daily Mail** 020 7938 6000
letters@dailymail.co.uk
- **Daily Mirror** 020 7293 3000
mailbox@mirror.co.uk
- **Daily Telegraph** 020 7538 5000
dtletters@telegraph.co.uk
- **Metro** mail@ukmetro.co.uk
- **The Guardian** 020 7278 2332
letters@guardian.co.uk
- **The Independent** 020 7005 2000
letters@independent.co.uk
- **The Times** 020 7782 5000
letters@thetimes.co.uk

- **The Sun** 020 7782 5000
letters@the-sun.co.uk
- **The Scotsman** 0131 620 8620
letters@scotsman.com
- **The Herald** 0141 302 7000
letters@theherald.co.uk
- **BBC** 0870 010 0222
www.bbc.co.uk/complaints
- **ITV** 0870 600 6766
dutyoffice@itv.com
- **Channel 4** 020 7306 8333
viewerenquiries@channel4.co.uk
- **SKY** viewer@bskyb.com

If you are not satisfied with the response, raise your complaint with the following adjudication bodies:

- **Press Complaints Commission**
020 7353 3732
complaints@pcc.org.uk
- **OFCOM** 0845 456 3000
www.ofcom.org.uk

For maximum effectiveness refer to the adjudicators' respective Code of Practice when formulating your complaint. Please send the MCB a copy of all correspondence.

CHALLENGING ISLAMOPHOBIA AND DISCRIMINATION

Islamophobia is the fear of Islam. Challenge it just as you would challenge racism or anti-Semitism.

If you or a fellow Muslim is attacked, threatened, harassed or intimidated because of your faith, report the matter to the police immediately. If such violence, harassment or intimidation is caused at the work place, report it at once to your managers.

Delays may prevent effective investigation.

Take particular care to make a detailed note of supporting evidence.

Remain calm. Never respond in a violent or aggressive manner.

“ THE GOOD DEED AND THE EVIL DEED ARE NOT ALIKE. REPEL THE EVIL DEED WITH ONE WHICH IS BETTER, THEN LO! HE, BETWEEN WHOM AND YOU THERE WAS ENMITY (WILL BECOME) AS THOUGH HE WAS A BOSOM FRIEND. ” (QUR’AN 41:34)

FACT

- ⊙ The 2001 Census found that there are over 1.6 million Muslims in the UK. That is more than the numbers of British Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists combined.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

By joining political parties and becoming active therein we will be better placed to shape the future direction of society, safeguard our interests and promote the common good. This method is the agreed consensus of leading UK Islamic scholars.

To find out more about the UK political parties check out the following websites:

www.conservatives.com

www.labour.org.uk

www.libdems.org.uk

www.plaidcymru.org

www.respectcoalition.org

www.snp.org

Find out from your MP what his/her views are on issues that concern you.

FACT

- ⊙ British Muslims are by far the most disadvantaged faith group in the UK labour market. They are three times more likely to be unemployed than the majority white group.
- ⊙ Between 1999 and 2009, British Muslims will account for well over a quarter of the growth in the working-age population.

EDUCATION

Figures published by the Department for Education and Skills show that Muslim children are under-achieving. Parents have the responsibility to be actively involved in their child's education at home and at school. We can make a difference by attending school open evenings, getting involved in Parents and Teachers Associations, becoming school governors and encouraging Muslims into teaching. Parents may find it useful to be aware that:

- children have the right to participate in a daily act of Islamic collective worship
- parents have the right to withdraw children from Collective Worship, Religious Education and Sex Education lessons, if they deem their content to be inappropriate
- schools are expected to ensure that their uniform policy is sensitive to the Islamic dress code. This should allow children to dress modestly e.g. wearing Hijab
- if there is no provision for halal food, Salah, or Jumu'ah, discuss this with the school authorities

RIGHTS AS WORKER / EMPLOYEE

Since December 2003, as the result of a European Union directive, discrimination in employment and training on the grounds of religion has been made unlawful.

The rights below apply to many aspects of employment including recruitment, terms and conditions, promotions, transfers, dismissals and training. It is unlawful to:

- treat you less favourably than others simply because of your religion
- apply a standard, provision or practice that disadvantages Muslims without a good reason. Exceptions may be made if there is a genuine occupational requirement
- subject you to unwarranted behaviour that violates your dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for you simply because you have made a complaint or given evidence against someone else in relation to a complaint of discrimination

If you believe that you have been discriminated against, seek help from a solicitor or Law Centre.

VIGILANCE AND THE TERROR THREAT

Terrorism has no religion and is indiscriminate in whom it injures and kills. Public vigilance and co-operation is essential to help ensure security for all.

Averting a terrorist attack is an Islamic imperative.

**“ DO NOT SPREAD DISORDER ON THE EARTH,
AFTER IT HAS BEEN SET IN ORDER, AND CALL ON
GOD WITH FEAR AND HOPE. ” (QUR’AN 7:56)**

If you become aware of suspected terror-related activity then bring this to the attention of the police immediately.

**The Anti-Terrorism Hotline number is:
0800 789321.**

Making deliberately false claims wastes security and emergency services time and is illegal.

In the event of a terrorist attack remain calm and follow the global safety rule: ‘Go in, stay in, tune in.’

Listen out for and follow the advice of the police and emergency services.

MAINTAINING SAFETY OF ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS

Develop good relations with neighbours. This is an Islamic responsibility and is likely to act as a major deterrent to crime and vandalism.

Installing CCTV cameras around mosques and Islamic schools/institutes will help secure them. You may be entitled to grants from your local authority for crime prevention.

Keep on the lookout for any suspicious looking packages or bags that may have been left outside, and also possibly inside mosques and Islamic centres.

Report any suspicious behaviour to the police. Let the police decide whether any action is warranted.

Find out who your local police liaison officers are and maintain contact with them. Meet on a regular basis to discuss local issues and concerns.

" O YOU WHO BELIEVE! TAKE YOUR PRECAUTIONS.

" (QUR'AN 4:71)

STOP & SEARCH POWERS OF THE POLICE

- You must be told the grounds for the search and what the officer is seeking.
- You may be stopped and searched to find items that it is illegal to possess e.g. drugs, weapons, stolen goods etc.
- You may also be searched under the Terrorism Act 2000. These searches *do not* require the officer to have reasonable grounds to justify the stop and search. You are entitled to a copy of the stop and search report.
- Not all stops will result in searches. For example, you may be able to explain your 'suspicious looking' behaviour to the satisfaction of the officer. From April 2005, all of these encounters will also be recorded and you will be entitled to a copy of the report.

FACT

- 🎯 Over 40% of British Muslims live in Greater London.

POLICE SEARCH OF YOUR HOME

The police are entitled, in limited circumstances, to search your home. You are entitled to and should ask to see a copy of the warrant. An exception to this is if the search is taking place after an arrest has been made in which case the police *do not* need a warrant.

You are entitled to be present when your home is being searched and you should call your solicitor immediately.

The police should give you a list of any items they take away. You too should make a list of your items seized by the police.

If your property is damaged, it is important to have photographs taken of any damage done as soon as possible.

FACT

© The average age of a British Muslim is 28 years. The national average is 41 years.

RIGHTS IF ARRESTED

If arrested, you have the right to consult your solicitor or the duty solicitor. This right can be delayed in certain circumstances by up to 36 hours.

- You have the right to call someone and inform him or her about your detention at a police station.
- If you have any injuries as a result of your arrest, tell your solicitor and have photos taken of the injuries.

“Terrorism Legislation” Arrests

- The police can initially detain you for 48 hours only and then they must apply to a Magistrates Court for further extensions up to a maximum of 14 days in total. After that, you must either be charged or released.
- Your right to consult a solicitor can be delayed in certain circumstances by up to 48 hours.

The Home Secretary can detain you indefinitely if you are a non-British national and are suspected of involvement in terrorism.

POLICE POWERS AT PORTS

(Airports/Ports/Border Area)

- The Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001 allows police and customs to stop, search and question individuals – for up to 9 hours – to determine whether they are involved in acts of terrorism. There does not have to be any reasonable grounds for suspicion.
- It is against the law to refuse to answer questions during those 9 hours. You may be imprisoned for up to 3 months if found guilty in court.
- You are entitled to telephone your solicitor, but cannot delay answering questions on the basis of waiting for your solicitor.
- When travelling abroad: get travel insurance; get to the airport early; if stopped by the police phone your solicitor straight away; if you miss your flight obtain a letter of explanation from the police to help secure refunds from the airline.

FACT

- There are 411,000 Muslim households in the UK.

CONCLUSION

We hope you have found this Pocket Guide useful, Insha' Allah. This Guide is by no means a comprehensive exposition of relevant law. It only encapsulates a brief summary of our rights and responsibilities.

Visit the MCB website regularly to keep up-to-date with the latest developments concerning British Muslims and view links to more detailed sources of information concerning the law.

Do notify the MCB about the outcome of any action you take. Your case may help protect others facing similar issues.

If you would like to know more about the MCB or want to get involved in one of our specialist committees including the *Friends of MCB* or *MCBDirect* you can contact us at:

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