



CENTRAL OXFORD MOSQUE SOCIETY

**2025**

# **CAMPAIGNS AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY POLICY**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Charity Commission requires all charities to have a policy on campaigns and political activity. The Commission uses the term 'political activity' to describe activities or campaigning to change or influence policies or decisions taken by: National, local or overseas government. Public bodies including international organisations such as the UN and World Bank, and national or local organisations such as regulators or NHS Trusts

Charities can take part in political activity that supports their purpose and is in their best interests.

Political activity, however, must not become the reason for the charity's existence. Charities must remain independent and must not give their support to a political party. Charities can support a policy that is supported by a political party or candidate and can work with political parties or candidates to influence their decisions, provided this supports the charity's purpose and the charity remains independent.

## **2. SCOPE**

This policy outlines the principles and procedures that govern the Central Oxford Mosque Society's (COMS) involvement in campaigns and political activity. It ensures compliance with UK charity law and protects the charity's independence, reputation, and charitable status.

## **3. DEFINITIONS**

- **Campaigning:** Activities intended to promote or oppose changes in law, policy, or decisions at local or national level.
- **Political Activity:** Any activity aimed at securing or opposing changes in the law or the policies or decisions of a governmental body.

## **4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- COMS is a charitable organization and must remain independent and non-partisan.
- COMS must not support or oppose any political party or candidate.
- All political and campaign activities must further COMS's charitable purposes, such as promoting understanding of Islam, community welfare, and interfaith dialogue.

**COMS may support specific policies relevant to its purposes, even if political parties endorse such policies, provided COMS retains its independence.**

- Activities must be lawful, responsible, and protect the charity's reputation and public trust.
- Raising awareness of issues affecting the Muslim and wider community.
- Advocating for legislative or policy changes related to religious freedom, equality, or community welfare.
- Responding to government consultations on relevant issues.

- Collaborating with civil society on non-partisan advocacy efforts.

## **5. POLICY ON HOW THE CENTRAL OXFORD MOSQUE SOCIETY (COMS) MANAGES ITS POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE**

The COMS will operate in line with its Statement of Freedom of Speech and will not prevent access to any democratic process. Where appropriate, and within the COMS charitable purpose, COMS may choose to engage in political dialogue. It will not endorse or renounce political parties and will not align itself (or otherwise) with the opinions held by visiting speakers. It will not promote a particular candidate or political party, and it will not provide money or other resources to anyone who is standing as a candidate.

## **6. PERMITTED ACTIVITIES**

COMS may engage in the following, provided they support its charitable aims:

- Raising awareness of issues affecting the Muslim and wider community.
- Advocating for legislative or policy changes related to religious freedom, equality, or community welfare.
- Responding to government consultations on relevant issues.
- Collaborating with civil society on non-partisan advocacy efforts.

## **7. PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES**

COMS must not:

- Endorse, support, or donate to political parties or candidates.
- Use charity funds for political campaigning not related to its charitable purposes.
- Permit party-political activities on its premises during election periods.

## **8. PROCEDURE FOR ENGAGING IN CAMPAIGNS OR POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

### **Step 1: Assessment**

- Trustees must assess whether the activity is in line with COMS's charitable objectives.
- Activities must comply with Charity Commission guidelines (CC9).

### **Step 2: Approval**

- The Board of Trustees must approve all campaign or political activity.
- A risk assessment should be conducted to consider reputational and legal risks.

### **Step 3: Documentation**

- Document the purpose, strategy, and expected outcome of the campaign.
- Maintain records of all decisions and communications.

#### Step 4: Messaging

- All public statements must be factually accurate and respectful.
- Spokespersons must avoid partisan language.

### **9. USE OF PREMISES**

- COMS facilities must remain neutral spaces.
- Requests for political use of premises (e.g., town hall-style meetings) will be considered only if all major parties are given equal opportunity, and the event is clearly non-partisan.

### **10. TRAINING AND AWARENESS**

- Trustees, staff, and volunteers will receive guidance on distinguishing charitable, campaigning, and political activities.
- This policy will be reviewed annually and disseminated among key personnel.

### **11. BREACHES OF POLICY**

Breaches of this policy will be investigated and may result in:

- Disciplinary action (for staff/volunteers).
- Termination of partnerships or speaking privileges.
- Reporting to relevant regulatory bodies if legal obligations are violated.

### **12. REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

The Board of Trustees or more frequently if required by law or organizational need shall review this policy annually.