



Ministry of
JUSTICE

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Lord Brooke of Sutton Mandeville
House of Lords
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26 July 2010

Dear Peter,

In response to your Question in the House on 12 July, I undertook to write to let you know what proportion of prisoners is Muslim by conversion.

I have made enquiries and understand that information on the number of prisoners who change religion whilst in prison is not currently available centrally. Officials are assessing the scope for accessing and collating this information through the new prison IT system. A change to recorded religious registration is not necessarily the same as a conversion, as prisoners may change their religious registration for a range of reasons, including conversion.

Information on population in prison establishments by religion is published annually in Offender Management Caseload Statistics (most recently for 2008), copies of which can be found in the Libraries of the House, and also on the Ministry of Justice website at:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/prisonandprobation.htm>

The Prison Service Order on Religion (4550) sets out the process for change of religious registration by prisoners, which is managed locally by establishments. A copy of the Prison Service Order is also in the Libraries of the House.

Can I clarify another matter raised by your question? When I said that "staff and wider Prison Service keep a close eye on imams in prisons" this should be seen, as with other staff, in the context of our vetting, recruitment and other disciplinary processes. I should make it clear that we do not distinguish our imams from other employed (or, indeed, sessional) staff in terms of the standards of behaviour expected. I am copying this letter to all those who spoke on this issue, and a copy will also be laid in the library of both Houses.

Yours Sincerely

TOM McNALLY