

[Press release: Commission announces Class Inquiry into two connected charities](#)

Charity regulator investigates Idaara Maarif-E-Islam and The Voice of Truth

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The Charity Commission has today announced a class statutory inquiry into Idaara Maarif-E-Islam ([506755](#)) and The Voice of Truth ([1094754](#)).

Idaara Maarif-E-Islam's objects include the advancement, preservation and welfare of Islam. The Voice of Truth, which is no longer in operation, had objects to promote the benefit of the community in Birmingham and the West Midlands in particular, but not exclusively, the Shia Muslim faith.

The Commission has concerns about financial irregularities linked to Gift Aid claims involving both charities. Further concerns include inconsistencies between the income and expenditure reported in The Voice of Truth accounts for the year ending 31 March 2016, and the charity's bank records for the same time period.

The Commission's records show significant connections between the two charities, as substantial payments have been transferred between them, and that at least one trustee of Idaara Maarif-E-Islam has also served as a trustee of The Voice of Truth. The inquiry will therefore seek to establish if this close relationship has been in the best interest of the charities and if any resulting conflicts of interest have been adequately managed by the trustees.

The Commission is also concerned about payments made by The Voice of Truth to individuals and a company who may be connected to the charity, and will seek to establish if these payments have been made in the best interests of the charity and if any conflicts of interests have been adequately managed by the trustees.

As a result of its concerns, the Commission opened a class statutory inquiry on 26 October 2017. The inquiry is examining:

- The administration, governance and management of the charities with specific regard to the extent to which trustees have:
 - Responsibly managed the charities' resources and financial affairs, in particular the adequacy of the charities' financial controls.
 - Managed any conflicts of interest or loyalty arising between Idaara Maarif-E-Islam and The Voice of Truth and individuals connected to both charities, and ensured that any transactions between the two charities have served the charities' best interest.
 - Adequately managed risks to the charities, their property and reputation.
 - Maintained an accurate record of the identity of the trustees on the register of charities.
- The extent to which any weaknesses in the management and administration of the charities identified by the inquiry were a result of misconduct and/or mismanagement by the trustees.

With specific regard to trustees of The Voice of Truth, the inquiry will also examine the extent to which they have:

- Ensured that the submission of accounting and returns information comply with statutory requirements.
- Prudently managed Gift Aid claims.
- Adequately processed sensitive data such as the personal details of individuals collected directly by Idaara Maarif-E-Islam or received from third parties pursuant to the relevant legislation at the time.
- Properly authorised and monitored payments to connected persons and/or companies.

And, with regards to the trustees of Idaara Maarif-E-Islam, the extent to which they have:

- Adequately protected sensitive data such as personal details of donors pursuant to the relevant legislation at the time.

In January 2018, The Voice of Truth was removed from the register of charities after the inquiry found that it had ceased to operate.

The Commission's investigation continues. The inquiry intends to publish a report setting out its findings and conclusions on conclusion of the inquiry. Reports of previous inquiries are available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Notes to Editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work see the [about us](https://www.gov.uk/about-us) page on GOV.UK.
2. Search for charities on our [check charity tool](https://www.gov.uk/check-charity-tool).
3. Under section 34 of the Charities Act 2011, the Commission has a duty to remove charities from the register that no longer exist or cease to operate.

4. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
 5. The opening of an inquiry is not in itself a finding of wrongdoing.
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 - Maintained an accurate record of the identity of the trustees on the register of charities.
- The extent to which any weaknesses in the management and administration of the charities identified by the inquiry were a result of misconduct and/or mismanagement by the trustees.

With specific regard to trustees of The Voice of Truth, the inquiry will also examine the extent to which they have:

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- Prudently managed Gift Aid claims.
- Adequately processed sensitive data such as the personal details of individuals collected directly by Idaara Maarif-E-Islam or received from third parties pursuant to the relevant legislation at the time.
- Properly authorised and monitored payments to connected persons and/or companies.

And, with regards to the trustees of Idaara Maarif-E-Islam, the extent to which they have:

- Adequately protected sensitive data such as personal details of donors pursuant to the relevant legislation at the time.

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access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.

5. The opening of an inquiry is not in itself a finding of wrongdoing.

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[News story: Information content in data: How a Dstl project could find the 'needle in the haystack' using AI for image search](#)

Academics are 'breaking new frontiers' in the latest UK-US collaboration on fundamental research into man and machine.

Dstl has invested £6million over 5 years in projects which bring together world-leading scientists from top universities such as Oxford and Stanford to look at ground-breaking research for defence – very early innovations which could one day change how we interact with machines and artificial intelligence.

The collaboration with the US Department of Defense and the Engineering and Physical Research Council is worth a total of £24 million for 4 projects – sharing the burden of funding, facilities and capabilities across the three organisations.

The latest study, under the Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative, or (MURI), addresses the problem of large data sets being expensive to collect, process and store. Having an understanding of how useful a set of data is before deciding to collect or process it could save time and money for counter-terrorist or military operations.

Experts have described the technology as being able to help security services find 'a needle in a haystack.' At a meeting of academics at Imperial College, London, Rene Vidal, from John Hopkins University in Maryland, said:

We are teaching the machine to answer the questions, and to interpret the answers. Take the London subway bombing. Who did it? Think about the videos of all London stations, who entered, who didn't. Forensics specialists looked at that data for weeks, but a computer could pick out the important pieces of data.

The computer could identify which video footage is important, and find the perpetrator. Hours and hours of video, data or text could be assessed in minutes, rather than weeks.

Paul Thomas, technical expert in Data Fusion, and the technical partner for the project from Dstl, said:

This research is fundamental, as it gives us the understanding of the real value of data for a decision. All too often the desire is to Hoover up all data we can get without understanding how it helps. This creates processing, communication and storage bottlenecks. This project will enable us to, for the first time, make choices about what data is important. A bit like a spam filter for our sensors.

Other MURI projects include a plan to develop machines which can understand human needs and values, can interact with humans effectively, and can 'see' using cognitive reasoning. Another is looking at how humans can communicate with computers which could aid decision-making in stressful environments, like the battlefield.

Dstl's Emerging Technology for Defence programme manager, Rob Baldock added:

Any emerging areas, we need to know and understand, so we can be an intelligent customer. Sometimes it's not about exploitation, it's about knowledge. MURIs are an excellent example of burden-sharing between the UK, the US and research councils. They offer value for money for Dstl. The return on investment is huge. If you don't look after the day after tomorrow, you'll never be ahead of the curve.

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and The Engineering and Physical Research Council EPSRC are jointly funding collaborative research projects with the US DOD under their Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative (MURI).

Press release: We're urging ex-forces personnel to join our ranks

We're calling on ex-military personnel to consider a career in roads – after being rewarded for our work supporting people coming out of the armed forces.