

7th July 2012

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ.

I am honoured to have been elected as Chair of MCA, I hope and pray that I will be able to take this wonderful organisation to the next level during my term.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank my predecessors and their committee for their hard work during their period in office. I am grateful for all that they have done and pray Allah swa rewards them for their efforts and strengthens me to continue in their footsteps.

Some 12 years ago I felt that there had to be a mechanism for Imams in a new working environment namely the prison service, an organisation that could offer counselling and support the work of Imams by sharing good practice. Some of us got together and formed an organisation called MCA (Muslim Chaplains Association) and agreed the aims of the organisations.

The work of MCA has been praised by prominent religious bodies around the UK, in particular by the former HMPS Director General Phil Wheatley as follows:-

"I welcome the networking and support opportunities this association will create and hope this will further enable best practice to be shared across our many prison establishments".

I feel honoured with your support to be able to lead MCA to a level we can all be proud of and welcome the new executive members of MCA. Today is another landmark in our journey of 12 years.

I would like you all to reflect on our aims above and my personal vision of MCA as follows

- Be a pillar for our Muslim Chaplains and community
- Offer support at times of need as we are the only faith that has no hierarchy
- To mentor new Imams and guide some of the old
- To invite Imams to other establishments to share best practise and avoid duplication
- To present ourselves as a united strong group of Muslim chaplains
- To put aside our religious differences for our common goal as the prison service.

I believe working efficiently in learning to understand and appreciate each other's views and building behaviour upon that knowledge is vital for the success of the organisation. I understand that in an organisation, goals have to be met as a team, yet each member must contribute with their individual efforts.

My own message today is very simple. If there is one thing that I want us to achieve over the next term it is to allow all of you, wherever you are, to feel that you have had your say. So please tell us your experience and your views for improvements. We need you to communicate with us if you have something to say – both in response to our approach and (when you think it necessary) pro-actively. We need to know what the new Imams feel, what the Muslim chaplains in the north-east or the south-west or wherever are thinking and doing.

So - please speak to us and encourage others to join our wonderful organisation.. May Allah swa strengthen us with our new roles of responsibility, ameen

Tanvir Ahmed
MCA Chair