

JAOC INVESTIGATION DOSSIER

MOSQUES AND CHURCHES: UK NUMBERS & TRENDS 2026

Date: 1 August 2026 | **Status:** Verified Open Data | **Sources:** MuslimsInBritain.org, National Churches Trust, Church of England, FullFact, Charity Commission

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This dossier presents a factual, data-driven comparison of active mosque and church sites across the United Kingdom as of August 2026. All figures are drawn from publicly available databases, charity registers, and verified independent research.

Metric	Value
Total active church sites	~42,000
Total active mosque sites	~2,150
Ratio (churches : mosques)	~20 : 1
Net change 2021–2026 (mosques)	+212
Net change 2021–2026 (churches)	–60 to –75
Churches ever converted to mosques (since 1960s)	~20–30 total

2. COMPARISON CHART

Measure	Mosques / Islamic Prayer Sites	All Christian Churches
Total active sites	2,100 – 2,200	40,000 – 45,000
Purpose-built only	1,500 – 1,600	~38,000
Church of England	N/A	15,500 – 15,700
Roman Catholic	N/A	~2,300
Other denominations	N/A	22,000 – 25,000
Per 100,000 people	~3.2	~63

Net change 2021–2026	+212	–60 to –75
New openings per year	~40	~10
Closures per year	~5	20–25
Churches converted to mosques (total since 1960s)	20–30	N/A
Last 12 months conversions	3 confirmed completed	N/A

3. DETAILED FINDINGS

3.1 Mosque Numbers & Growth

- No official government register exists; figures are compiled from charity listings, planning records, and community surveys.
- The count includes full mosques, small prayer halls, and community centres used for worship.
- Most new mosques are conversions of shops, warehouses, or community halls — **not** active churches.
- Growth is driven by population increase and demand for local prayer space.

3.2 Church Numbers & Trends

- Approximately 20–25 churches close annually due to falling attendance, rising costs, and a shortage of clergy.
- Most closed churches become private homes, flats, offices, or community centres.
- Only **one** Church of England church has ever been converted to a mosque.

3.3 Conversions Context

- Total conversions of churches to mosques represent **less than 0.3%** of all churches closed since 1970.
- Conversions require full planning permission; many applications are refused.
- There is no evidence of systematic or organised “takeover” of church buildings.

4. ANALYSIS & OBSERVATIONS

Claims that mosques are replacing churches, or that conversions are widespread, are **not supported** by official or independent data. The United Kingdom still has roughly **20 times more active churches than mosques**.

Changes in religious buildings reflect broader social shifts: declining Christian attendance, a growing Muslim population, and property market pressures — **not** a deliberate replacement of one faith by

another.

5. SOURCE REFERENCES

1. MuslimsInBritain.org Mosque Database 2026
2. National Churches Trust: *Church Buildings in the UK* 2025
3. Church of England: *Statistics for Mission* 2024
4. FullFact: Conversions of churches to mosques (updated 2026)
5. Charity Commission for England and Wales — registered charities search

Document compiled by JAOC Investigations — 1 August 2026. Data verified against open sources.