

Supporting Your Employees During Ramadan

28th Feb - 30th Mar 2025 (expected dates)

Ramadan holds significant religious importance for Muslims worldwide. It is a time of fasting (between dawn and sunset), prayer, spiritual reflection, and community, and last for a for a lunar month.

- **Open Conversation:** Encouraging open communication and fostering an environment of understanding and empathy is crucial. Individual needs may differ, so create a workplace culture where employees feel comfortable discussing their own circumstances. Most Muslims will fast, however, you are exempt if you are pregnant, have a longterm illness, are breastfeeding or have your period. Children and the elderly are also exempt
- **Be Flexible:** Consider temporary adjustments to working patterns to allow employees to balance work commitments with religious observances. The effects of fasting can be physically challenging, so it is important to be mindful of the impact this may have on individuals. Examples of adjustments could include:
 - Different starting or finishing times
 - Changes to their daily routine/workplace tasks
 - A break at sunset to enable the person to break their fast
 - Scheduling meetings earlier in the day
 - Consider allowing the employee to work from home or hybridly if feasible
- **Annual Leave Requests:** Where possible, accommodate annual leave requests, and be sensitive to the needs of employees observing religious events. There may be an increase in requests (particularly to celebrate the end of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr) Requests may be short notice, or need to be kept flexible as the dates of Ramadan may vary.

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11th March - 8th April 2024 (expected dates)

- **Educate:** Embrace inclusion and celebrate diversity by raising awareness of key religious events to enable and encourage people to support their colleagues. Perhaps consider contacting a local community group to arrange a presentation during a team meeting. Educating everyone will help make Muslim employees feel valued.
- **Other things to consider during this time:**
 - Avoid scheduling meetings that may involve food/drink for example working lunches, or breakfast meetings
 - Show consideration by not offering food or drink
 - Avoid setting meetings late in the day when concentration levels may be low
 - If possible, provide a space for prayer. Ideally this would be a permanent feature of the workplace, which could also be used as a quiet space for all to use

More Facts About Ramadan

- Ramadan is the 9th month of the Islamic calendar. Its start date is based on the sighting of the moon, so can vary depending on where you are located
- Fasting is one of the 5 pillars of the religion, so it is particularly important. If you are exempt from fasting, you can donate money to charity instead
- Muslims may break fast at sunset with a date and glass of water. This is called *Iftar*
- The last 10 days of Ramadan are the holiest in the calendar
- *Eid-ul-Fitr* is the festival which marks the end of Ramadan and is a time of joy, gratitude and community gatherings
- Wish someone well during Ramadan by saying "*Ramadan Mubarak*"