

Ramadan 2023 in the Workplace



For Employers

- ✓ Management and HR must have an open dialogue to understand Muslim staff's needs throughout Ramadan. With long fasting hours, approaching with empathy as a starting point and consider broader flexibility, especially around prayer times.
- ✓ Consider the energy levels of staff, and where possible, schedule meetings earlier in the day, owing to fatigue by the afternoons, and equally, avoid evening meetings or work events where possible.
- ✓ For staff that work unusual hours, management should consider what meal options are accessible for Muslim staff whilst meeting their dietary needs. For example, they make meal options more accessible on-site during working hours and when it comes time to break their fast.
- ✓ Guidance from ACAS and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) provides employers with various best practices during the holy month of Ramadan. For example, one way to accommodate the religious needs of Muslim staff on Fridays for Jummah prayers was to begin work earlier that day. In addition, ACAS provides an example of a Muslim teaching staff able to work elsewhere or work through their lunch hours and leave work earlier if needed. Management should continue due consideration in events outside of work, especially during daylight hours, as staff will want to observe their fasts. By encouraging dialogue, you might consider having a work-inclusive iftar event, providing information about fasting and ways to check in on fasting staff during the month. Some workplaces or individuals partake in fasting, encouraging dialogue and learning about the religious and cultural significance. If some staff wish to fast in solidarity or support, encourage a healthy means to ensure people feel included.
- ✓ Requests for annual leave may vary, with staff understandably looking for days off to celebrate the end of Ramadan and Eid. So, we ask that due consideration alongside existing annual leave policies. We urge further understanding that due to the lunar calendar, it has no fixed date. It is equally vital that management and colleagues check on Muslim colleagues if staff need to leave work early to maintain flexibility.
- ✓ Some may not want to be around food in person or virtually during the month. But, again, keep those lines of communication open between management, HR and Muslim staff beyond fixed meeting times. It can be as simple as double-checking whether they want to be around food to avoid excluding Muslim staff from feeling part of the team during Ramadan or beyond. Equally, in communal spaces, ask for consideration about the kinds of foods people prepare, or as suggested earlier, allow staff to work in other areas without disturbance.
- ✓ Tell MAMA runs in-person and virtual training sessions for public and private sector employers about understanding better anti-Muslim hatred and improving workplace inclusivity. Some of the feedback from beneficiaries has been great: "I'm so thankful for organisations like Tell MAMA, educating me and the world and contributing to a safer and more tolerant society."
- ✓ Finally, see the month of Ramadan as an opportunity to learn about their Islamic faith. Consider creating space for staff to explain their faith to them to help cultivate empathy and understanding. Invite other faith groups to discuss important events in the same calendar month. For example, Jewish communities will celebrate Passover, and Jains will celebrate Mahavir Jayanti – the founder of their faith. Christians will celebrate Easter, and for Sikhs and Hindus, Vaisakhi ushers in the Solar New Year and spring harvest. If not already, we encourage employees to update or create interfaith and multicultural calendars for staff to feed into and feel able to be their authentic selves when in the workplace.



REMEMBER

Taking a positive and keen interest is a great way to build rapport and ensure everyone feels included

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For Employees

- ✓ As mentioned above, asking and making reasonable requests at a good time and being flexible with your work patterns, especially around prayer times, never hurts. Familiarise yourself with the company's annual leave policies when requesting time off for Eid. Be sure to request additional breaks and chances to be flexible in the hours worked.
- ✓ What is discrimination? The EHRC defines **direct discrimination** as unfavourable treatment due to a protected characteristic (your ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, transgender identity, or disability) which "must be similar enough to the circumstances of the person being treated better for a valid comparison to be made".
- ✓ Whereas **indirect discrimination** concerns a broad policy for everyone but, in actuality, disadvantages those who share a protected characteristic, and, therefore, a person or employer must demonstrate a 'good reason' for it (known as objective justification).
- ✓ Mutuality and respect are critical in any workplace and working relationship. To ensure discrimination, in indirect and indirect forms, we encourage you to download our anti-discrimination tool kit for the workplace – [which you can find here.](#)



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Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks