

# Workplace Inclusion: Ramadan

---

A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS  
AND ORGANISATIONS.



# For an overwhelming majority of Muslims, Ramadan is the best time of year.

Muslims all around the world will be fasting (abstaining from food and drink) from dawn to dusk for 30 days.

This year (2022), we expect that the first day of Ramadan will be Saturday 2nd April and that it will end on Monday 2nd May.



## What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is an important month in the Islamic calendar when most Muslims will place more emphasis on their faith. It was during the month of Ramadan that the first verses of the Qur'an (Islam's Holy Book) were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him).



## When is Ramadan?

Islam follows the lunar calendar, which means the beginning and end of the month of Ramadan depends on the sighting of the new moon rather than the Gregorian calendar, which is why its timing 'shifts' each year.



## How is Ramadan celebrated?

Muslims typically observe the month of Ramadan through:

- Fasting from sunrise to sunset.
- Prayer.
- Reciting from the Quran.
- Increasing acts of worship.
- Completing acts of charity.

# How will Ramadan affect my Muslim colleagues?

Although it can be challenging, Ramadan is a beloved time of year for the vast majority of Muslims. During Ramadan, we can feel more connected to our faith, family and community, so there is no need to express condolences or sadness at our apparent plight on our behalf.

**Really, we're fine!**



It should go without saying that everyone will approach Ramadan differently; physical or mental health problems, caring responsibilities, job requirements, and other factors can all affect how Muslims experience Ramadan.



This year in the UK, Muslims will fast for approximately 17 hours each day, not consuming any food or water during this time. Your Muslim colleagues may experience lower levels of concentration and energy during the month, particularly during the first few days of fasting.



Some Muslims are not able to fast during Ramadan for a variety of reasons that are personal to them. Unless they volunteer this information, please do not ask questions about why they are not fasting as this could feel intrusive and embarrassing.

# What can workplaces, HR teams and line managers do to support Muslim employees?

Muslims don't expect special treatment, however, supporting Muslim colleagues during Ramadan goes a long way in making us feel respected and included while at work. The inclusion of faith communities is essential in creating an inclusive workplace culture and a comprehensive equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) plan for your workplace.

We recommend consulting Muslim colleagues before finalising any plans for events or policies.

In addition, any applicable risk assessments should be carried out to best manage colleagues' requirements and ensure their safety and wellbeing.

# We see two steps to supporting Muslim staff at work:



**Increase understanding:** small gestures can help all employees bring their best self to work during Ramadan.

For Muslims, increased understanding of Ramadan in their workplace will help them feel more comfortable balancing their work and religious obligations. For non-Muslims, particularly those unfamiliar with Islam, it is important that they understand the significance of Ramadan for Muslim colleagues.

Some examples of actions to increase understanding of Ramadan:

- Acknowledging Ramadan during team meetings.
- Have an open door policy for any colleagues who would like to discuss Ramadan arrangements.
- Sharing information and resources about Ramadan.
- Inviting external speakers to talk about Ramadan.



**Take inclusive action:** create specific guidelines for your organisation around Ramadan.

Having specific guidelines around Ramadan within the workplace could help your employees to better understand what is expected of them. Where possible, these should be designed through consultation with Muslim staff or an EDI expert.

Some points you may want to consider in your guidelines:

- Accommodating annual leave requests during Ramadan particularly during the last 10 days and/or at the end of Ramadan for Eid celebrations. Due to the lunar Islamic calendar, the date of Eid can be difficult to predict, meaning leave requests may be last minute.
- Offering flexible working (and having guidelines around what this means for your workplace).
- Offering space for prayers (at least 2 of the 5 daily prayers in Islam will fall during the typical work day).

## Important points to consider:



When offering consultation or accommodations to Muslim staff, we recommend doing an open call out for any colleagues who will be fasting to get in touch. Not all Muslims are 'visibly Muslim' and by only targeting colleagues you know/assume are Muslim, you may exclude others.



Some individuals may choose to practice their faith differently during Ramadan than they might at other times of the year. This could mean that some members of staff may wish to pray during the working day, who would not ordinarily do so.



It is important that managers do not assume that every Muslim colleague will want to do exactly the same thing during Ramadan. Each person will express their faith differently.



Above all, the most important thing is to create a culture where it is encouraged to talk about our whole selves, and to listen well.

## How to wish your colleagues a happy Ramadan:

-  Ramadan Mubarak!
-  Ramadan Kareem!
-  Or simply... Happy Ramadan!



**mwc**

MUSLIM WOMEN CONNECT



WE ARE CHANGING WORKING LIFE FOR MUSLIM WOMEN.

# ABOUT MUSLIM WOMEN CONNECT

**By** Muslim women, **for** Muslim women.

Run entirely by volunteers, Muslim Women Connect (MWC) is a UK-wide organisation that supports Muslim women to overcome personal, institutional and societal barriers to career success and fulfilment.

Muslim Women Connect is available to deliver workshops and consultancy on Ramadan, Muslim inclusion and islamophobia. Please contact [info@muslimwomenconnect.com](mailto:info@muslimwomenconnect.com) for more information.