

## *This Week in Employment Law*

### Supporting Employees During Ramadan

**Ramadan is the holy month of the Islamic Calendar during which Muslims partake in religious observance, including ritual fasting from sunrise to sunset. This year, Ramadan is expected to run from 5th May to 4th June and we have outlined some key ways to support staff during this period:**

- Be understanding of your employees' needs; if an employee informs you that they are taking part in Ramadan you should hold an open conversation with them and explore whether any additional measures can be introduced.
- Consider flexible working opportunities with staff, such as altering shift patterns, in order to manage any fatigue or drop in productivity that may occur as a result of daytime fasting.
- Although you can expect staff to book holidays using the normal procedure, it may be wise to take a more favourable approach to short-notice requests related to Ramadan and overlook procedure where necessary.
- Discrimination may increase during this period of religious observance and all employees should be warned that offensive 'banter' is unacceptable and could potentially lead to disciplinary action.
- Having a workplace policy on religious observance is a great way of setting out your stance on supporting employees and detailing which workplace rules are in place during Ramadan and other religious events.

#### Disney CEO's annual salary labelled as 'insane'

The annual salary of £50.5m paid to Disney CEO Robert Iger has been labelled as 'insane' by the granddaughter of the company's co-founder. Iger's annual salary has increased by 80% since 2017 and is said to be over a thousand times more than the company average.

##### **Did you know?**

There is no legislation which caps CEO salaries or states how this should compare to the company average, however there is growing interest around this topic. The law will soon require listed companies with at least 250 employees to make this information public by including a CEO pay ratio in their remuneration reports.

#### New EU protections for whistle-blowers

Member States of the European Union (EU) have recently agreed to strengthen the current protections afforded to whistle-blowers. The new law will prevent individuals from suffering reprisals for disclosing information and provide free advice during any legal proceedings.

##### **Did you know?**

The UK already offers comprehensive legal protections for whistle-blowers when compared with the rest of the EU. Therefore, it is important that employers understand the current protections afforded to staff who make a protected disclosure to avoid unfair dismissal claims.

#### Employers make errors with gender pay gap reports

Up to 15% of employers may have made mistakes in their gender pay gap calculations, according to the Royal Statistical Society (RSS). The RSS have also suggested that these errors could be avoided with improved government guidance.

##### **Did you know?**

It has not been confirmed if there will be any penalties or enforcement action for employers who submit erroneous reports. However, employers need to ensure their reports are published on time in order to avoid existing enforcement action from HM Revenue and Customs.

Dealing with religion in the workplace can be tricky, particularly when individual employees choose to observe Ramadan in different ways. Discussing observance with employees and then calling our 24 Hour Advisory Service for guidance on making changes to normal procedures will help you stay on the right side of the law and keep your workplace running effectively.

Please contact the 24 Hour Advice Service for advice on your specific situation before acting on the information in this publication.