

Supporting employees during Ramadan

12 April 2021 signifies the beginning of Ramadan, but how can employers support their employees during this period with COVID-19 in mind? We explore what employers should know below:

- Ramadan is the holy month in the Islamic calendar where Muslims observe a period of fasting and prayer during the day.
- It is important to remember that this religious practice can continue despite COVID-19.
- Employers should be understanding of employees' needs; if an employee is taking part in Ramadan, employers can hold an open conversation with them and explore whether any additional measures can be introduced.
- Whether employees are working remotely or on-site whilst celebrating Ramadan, it may be helpful to authorise additional breaks during the day to help employees manage fatigue or a drop in productivity.
- Adjusting employee working hours may also be helpful.
- Consider that some individuals may wish to use their annual leave entitlement during this period to allow them sufficient opportunity to rest during times of fasting and for prayer.
- Discrimination may increase during this period 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 to set out the organisation's stance on supporting employees.

England on track for stage two of its roadmap

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has confirmed that England's roadmap is on track for stage two to go ahead as planned from 12 April 2021. This means that nonessential retail and personal care premises, such as hairdressers, beauty and nail salons, will be able to reopen. Indoor leisure facilities such as gyms and spas, self-contained accommodation, public buildings, and hospitality venues (outdoors) can also reopen.

Did you know?

Despite the fact that its roadmap is on track for stage two, employers are reminded that homeworking advice remains the same in England – staff should be working from home if they can.

Rapid testing reach further extended in England

The Government has confirmed that from 9 April 2021, everyone in England will be able to access free rapid lateral flow tests for use twice a week. The test can be delivered directly to people's homes, to employers for workplace testing, to local authorities, or for collection at a local PCR test site. A new 'Pharmacy Collect' service is also launching as an additional route to regular testing for those aged over 18.

Did you know?

Employers are already able to register their interest for on-site rapid test kits, or at home kits, for free until the end of June 2021. Now, employees will continue to have access to free rapid test kits after June 2021 to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Victimisation claim dismissed by EAT

The Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) has dismissed a victimisation claim, ruling that the wording used by the claimant in a grievance against her manager was not sufficient to amount to a 'protected act'. As the claimant was an experienced HR professional, it was held that the wording in her grievance called into question whether she believed she was discriminated against at the time.

Did you know?

When bringing a victimisation claim, the employee must do so in good faith. They must reasonably believe that they have been subjected to a detriment on the grounds of a protected act brought under the Equality Act 2010.

Dealing with religion in the workplace can be tricky – particularly when individual employees choose to observe Ramadan in different ways – and it may be necessary to seek tailored advice. Contact our 24-hour Advisory Service for up-to-date guidance on this and more.

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