

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 15th May to 14th June. How can employers support their employees during this period?

- Communication is key; if an employee informs you that they are taking part in Ramadan, you should meet with them to discuss the observance and whether measures are needed to support them;
- Fasting may result in fatigue and a lack of productivity. You can discuss flexible working patterns with the employee to ensure they are working when most productive. This could mean altering shift patterns or holding meetings in the morning;
- Holidays should have already been booked under the normal procedure but, where you receive a short-notice holiday request in connection with Ramadan, you may wish to consider an adjustment to normal procedures and allow it;
- Discrimination may increase during this period of religious observance. All employees should be warned religious 'banter' is not appropriate and a reminder about acceptable conduct will be useful;
- A workplace policy on religious observance is an easy method of setting out your stance on supporting employees, and what workplace rules are in place during Ramadan and other religious events.

Mental Health Awareness Week

From 14th – 20th May, this year's Mental Health Awareness Week will focus on tackling stress, and reducing the risk of other mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression arising.

Did you know?

Employers have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all employees at work. Employers will be expected to have measures in place to prevent 'work-related stress' occurring, including: full training; monitoring workloads; avoiding excessive duties; providing proper rest periods; having workplace support in place.

Barclays boss fined £60,000 for whistleblowing rule breach

Barclay's Chief Executive has been handed a significant fine for breaching whistleblowing rules when attempting to find out the identity of an anonymous whistleblower.

Did you know?

A whistleblowing policy can set out the rules on confidentiality during this process. In most cases, employers should avoid promising full confidentiality, however, identity disclosures should only be made to necessary individuals where it is appropriate to do so, for example, the investigating officer who needs to interview the employee.

200,000 workers received back pay from HMRC in 2017

National Minimum/Living Wage enforcement measures saw £15.6 million paid in back pay to more than 200,000 workers. The 2018 online awareness campaign has now been launched by HMRC.

Did you know?

In January 2017, HMRC launched an online complaint service which allows individual workers to make underpayment complaints. This led to a 132% increase in the number of complaints received. The more complaints made, the higher the potential of an HMRC investigation.

Dealing with religion in the workplace can be tricky for employers, particularly when individual employees observe Ramadan in different ways. Discussing observance with employees and then calling our 24 Hour Advice Service for guidance on where changes to normal operations can be made will help you stay on the right side of the law and also keep your workplace at its most effective.

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