



RAMADAN

TOP TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

mend



WHAT IS RAMADAN?

Ramadan is an integral part of the Islamic faith and every Muslims around the world observe fasting for 29 or 30 days. The beginning and end of Ramadan are determined by the sighting of the moon since Muslims follow the Islamic lunar calendar. Ramadan occurs on the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, which means the exact dates change every year. By the Gregorian solar calendar, the beginning of Ramadan moves between 10 and 12 days earlier each year¹. Muslims rely on Muslim-majority countries or local moon sighters to declare the beginning of Ramadan so there can be a variation by a day.

¹ "Some Interesting Facts About The Holy Month Of Ramadan - Islamic Articles". 2022. Quran Reading. Accessed February 14. <http://www.quranreading.com/blog/some-interesting-facts-about-the-holy-month-of-ramadan/>.

- **During Ramadan Muslims fast from dawn to sunset - this means no food or water**

In the month of Ramadan, Muslims abstain from eating and drinking from dawn to sunset. They begin their fast with a pre-dawn meal (Suhoor) and end it with another meal (Iftaar), directly after sunset.

- **This is a time for increased spirituality, personal reflection and religious observance**

Besides abstaining from food and water, Muslims also utilise this month to purify their mind and body. It is a time for increased spirituality as fasting allows each individual to work on personal growth.

- **It ends with the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr**

The end of Ramadan is marked by the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, known as the 'Festival of Breaking the Fast'. Similar to the beginning of Ramadan, the end of the month is determined by moon sighting.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY MUSLIM EMPLOYEES DURING RAMADAN?

1. Be flexible with working hours

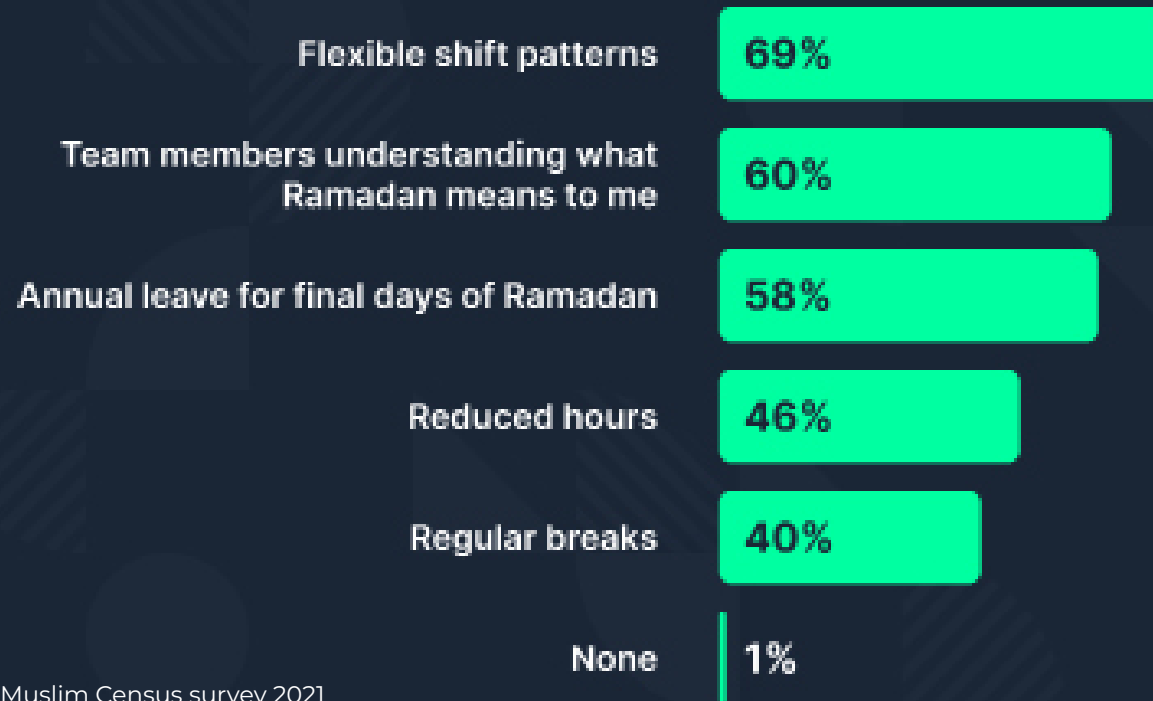
The Employment Rights Act 1996 states that every employee has the statutory right to ask to work flexibly after 26 week's employment service. It is preferable that pre-agreed arrangements are made between the employer and Muslim employee with regards to flexible shift patterns in the month of Ramadan:

- people may prefer to start later in the morning and finish later
- they may prefer to start earlier and finish earlier

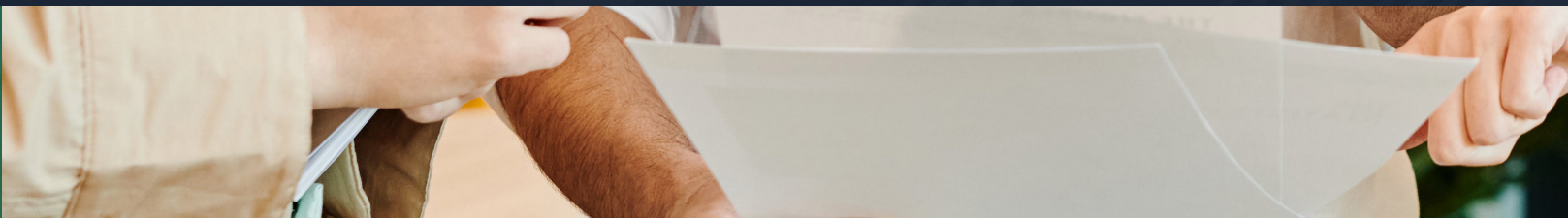
It will be helpful to talk to your employee about what their personal preferences are.

(Source: Muslim Census survey 2021 <https://muslimcensus.co.uk/ramadan-at-work/>)
More information can be found on ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)

Muslims rank flexible shift patterns as the most desired support during Ramadan



(Source: Muslim Census survey 2021
<https://muslimcensus.co.uk/ramadan-at-work/>)



2. Consider requests to substitute lunch breaks for prayer breaks

Muslims pray five times a day, and two of these prayers will fall in the normal working day. Given that Muslims will not be having their lunches, they may request for alternative arrangements to ensure that they can perform all of their prayers. Employers may expect Muslim employees to spread their break entitlements throughout the day to smaller 5 to 10 minute breaks. Employers may consider dedicating a prayer room in the premises to reduce the amount of time employees need to be away from work.

3. Anticipate different levels of productivity at different times of the day

Muslims will be fasting up to 16 hours a day. As an employer you may thus find that employees have different levels of productivity throughout the day, and this needs to be managed appropriately.

4. Allow more working from home, where possible

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, working patterns have changed to allow more working from home (WFH). Studies have shown that employees have worked longer hours whilst WFH and, according to both employers and employees, this has resulted in increased productivity.

Source: Deole, S. S., Deter, M., & Huang, Y. (2023). Home sweet home: Working from home and employee performance during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK. *Labour Economics*, 80, 102295.

5. Avoid holding training days that finish late or social events in the evening

Muslim employees will be expecting to break their fast at sunset. The above may prevent them from preparing their evening meal or breaking their fast on time.

6. Expect annual leave requests, especially in the last 10 days of Ramadan to include Eid

The last 10 days of Ramadan are considered most sacred. In Ramadan, Muslims generally perform night prayers but during the last 10 days, they may worship more at night and use the day to rest.

Since there are no public holidays in the UK for non-Christian days, employers should be prepared for their Muslim employees to request annual leave. It is important that employers act reasonably and ensure that employees, of faith or no faith, are not at a disadvantage.



7. Talk to your Muslim female employees specifically about working arrangements



Muslim women
are 40% less
comfortable than
men at asking for
support during
Ramadan

(Source: Muslim Census survey 2021 <https://muslimcensus.co.uk/ramadan-at-work/>)



65%

of Muslims find
that their place of
work is supportive
during Ramadan.

(Source: Muslim Census survey 2021
<https://muslimcensus.co.uk/ramadan-at-work/>)



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR US AS AN EMPLOYER?

- Greater awareness and work adjustments are likely to lead to an improved well-being and improved sense of being valued by you as their employer
- If Muslims feel their workplace is supportive in Ramadan, they are twice as likely to stay at their current place of employment

If you require further information, please contact
info@mend.org.uk

If Muslims feel their employers are supportive during Ramadan, they are **twice** as likely to stay for 5 years or more.



(Source: Muslim Census survey 2021
<https://muslimcensus.co.uk/ramadan-at-work/>)

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