



# Ramadan guidance for managers and staff

## Guidance for managers

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. For Muslims this is a holy month, and they abstain from eating and drinking between dawn and sunset each day. At the end of Ramadan Muslims celebrate Eid, which marks the start of the next month, Shawwal.

The start of Ramadan and Eid is confirmed by sighting of the new moon. The [MOJ Muslim Network](#) and the [MOJ MN Events calendar](#) can help with approximate timing, but it can vary across staff members. Following are ways to support colleagues during Ramadan:

**One-to-one:** If you manage an employee who will be observing Ramadan, **ensure that you have some 1-1 time to discuss any workplace adjustments that can be considered.** Some fasting staff routines may be different to usual working patterns. Fasting can affect people in different ways. For example, some may understandably become a little quieter or slightly tired at times, whilst others may be more productive.

**Flexible/Remote working:** Typical requests are likely to be for flexible working, time to be able to complete prayers and some working from home if possible.

**Annual Leave:** You may get shorter notice for annual leave requests to celebrate Eid or to focus on worship due to not knowing when the new moon will be visible, but it's a good idea to discuss with staff about what the options are so you know which days are at risk.

**Ask them:** Try not to make assumptions about who in your team may be observing Ramadan or who is fasting. Islam is a faith practised by all races and backgrounds. Equally there are times when some Muslims who may not be required to fast, and this can be due to personal reasons that they may or may not feel comfortable sharing.

**Be supportive and seek alternatives:** Be aware that fasting colleagues will not be drinking any fluid (including water) and they may therefore feel less energetic and less

inclined to join in office conversations on occasions. Consider communication in other ways where possible as lengthy conversations can be challenging.

**Allocate space and time for prayer:** Please ensure employees have reasonable time during the day to complete prayers and an appropriate space is allocated for this purpose. Please refer to the [prayer guidance](#) for more information.

**It's fine to eat and drink in front of someone who's fasting:** Colleagues who are fasting understand that everyone else in their team need to eat and drink, so please don't feel anxious about eating and drinking in front of them.

**Have open discussions:** If members of the team observing Ramadan feel comfortable doing so, encourage them to give short presentations and encourage discussions about Ramadan and how the team can best support them.

#### **Useful resources for managers:**

**MoJ Muslim Network:** <https://intranet.justice.gov.uk/about-us/staff-networks/moj-muslim-network/>

**Peace & Blessings Team:** Search for "[Peace & Blessings](#)" in MS Teams.

**Chaplaincy HQ advisor:** [ibrahim.mehtar@justice.gov.uk](mailto:ibrahim.mehtar@justice.gov.uk)

**Chaplaincy support:** <https://intranet.noms.gsi.gov.uk/support/chaplaincy>

**Slack:** [#islam](#)

## Guidance for Muslim staff observing Ramadan

**Plan ahead:** Speak to your line manager about special arrangements or requests for leave in advance of Ramadan, as early as possible.

**Share:** If you are participating in meetings, let others know of your needs. Also, share your experience with colleagues, not forgetting Eid festivities!

**Productivity tip:** Balance your workday. Talk to your manager, so that you can organise your day so that rotas, meetings and conference calls happen, where possible, when you are at your most alert.

**Childcare:** If you're going to be fasting and working whilst undertaking childcare responsibilities due to the COVID-19 outbreak, have a read of the wellbeing advice on [working with children at home](#).

**Support for Muslim staff working in prisons:** Establishments have a great opportunity to gain further support from Muslim Chaplains who can guide them on how to get the most out of Ramadan in these exceptional circumstances. If you're not sure who your chaplaincy contact is, please email [Chaplaincy HQ Advisor, Ibrahim Mehtar](#). There's more information on [chaplaincy support](#) on the HMPPS intranet.

**Subscribe to the MoJ Muslim Network newsletter:** The Muslim Network issue a weekly newsletter with important messaging and updates on events. See the [MOJ Muslim network intranet page](#) to subscribe. Staff across all agencies are welcome to join the network.

**Useful resources for Muslim staff:**

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**Peace & Blessings Team:** Search for “[Peace & Blessings](#)” in MS Teams.

**Slack:** [#islam](#)

**Prayer room finder:** <https://tinyurl.com/MoJReflect> (Also available on *Peace & Blessings Team*)