

# RAMADAN 2021

## TOP TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

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# WHAT IS RAMADAN?

- **Ramadan starts on 12th or 13th April and lasts for 29 or 30 days (i.e. a lunar month)**

Every year Muslims all around the world observe fasting for 29 or 30 days. Ramadan is on the ninth month of the Islamic calendar which means the exact dates of Ramadan change every year. In 2021, it is expected that Ramadan will begin on 12th or 13th April 2021 and will end on 11th or 12th May 2021. Muslims can follow different Muslim countries so there can be variation by a day.

- **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**

Eid-ul-Fitr is known as the 'Festival of Breaking the Fast' which marks the end of Ramadan. In 2021, this will be celebrated on either Wednesday 12th May or Thursday 13th May depending on the moon sighting.

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

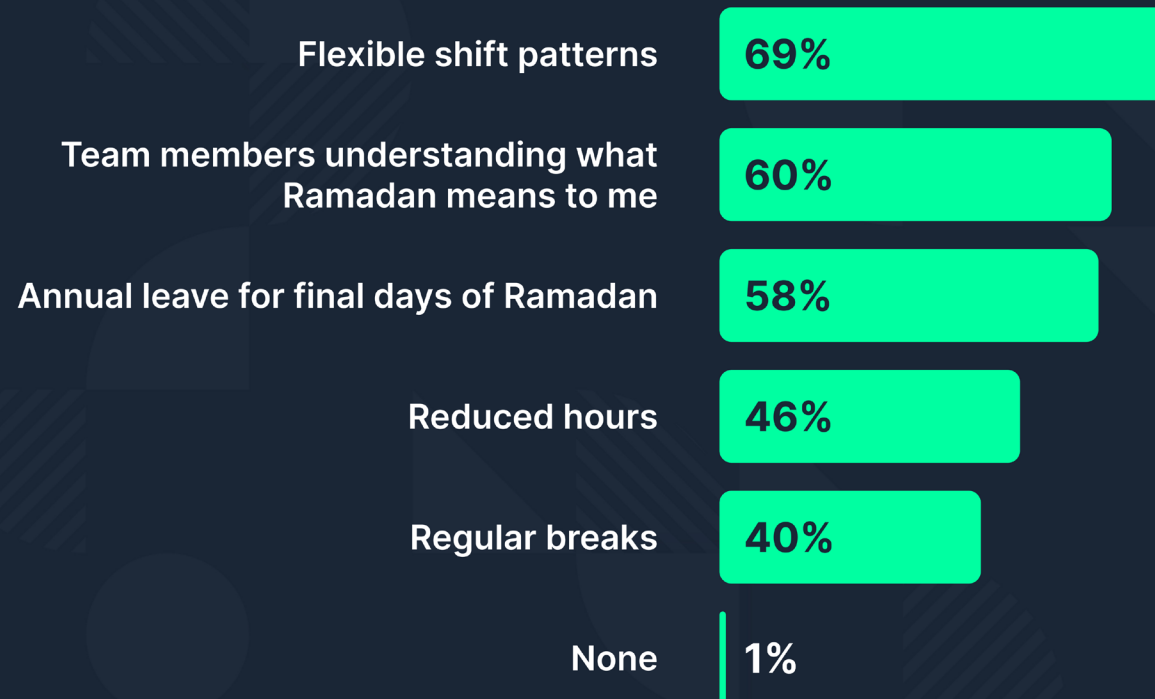
## 1. Be flexible with working hours

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
- or they may prefer to start earlier and finish earlier
- talk to your employee about their preferences

(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



## **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 minutes 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, more people have been working from home and this has led to increased positive outcomes; 59% of workers claimed to be more productive and collaborative while working from home.

## 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.

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# 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

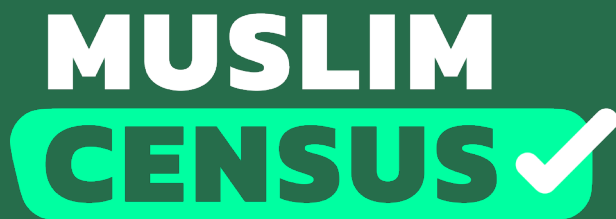
If you require further information, please contact [info@mend.org.uk](mailto:info@mend.org.uk)

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



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