



EQUALITIES

19 April 2020

WORKING DURING RAMADAN 2020

During the month of Ramadan from 24th April to 23rd May 2020 (depending on Lunar calendar / sighting of moon), some staff will observe the obligatory fast during daylight hours. Fasting involves abstinence from food, drink, chewing and smoking (Nil by mouth) from dawn till dusk.

Most of the Muslim staff that observe the fast may want to request a change to their working hours during Ramadan. This means that the staff member may want to start and finish their working day early to cope with the tiredness associated with fasting.

It is not necessary for individuals who are not fasting to abstain from eating or drinking in the presence of Muslim colleagues who are fasting. If you make a point of asking to be excused for eating whilst your colleague is fasting this will be appreciated. During the month of Ramadan it is not appropriate to require a staff member who is fasting to join you for a working lunch.

Clinical guidance

Ramadan is one of the holy months in the Muslim calendar. Muslims fast for 30 days, which involves taking on no food, medication or liquids during daylight hours.

During this month, Muslims who suffer from chronic illnesses, who are pregnant, or are on medication, may face irregularities in their health such as dehydration, dizziness or other medical complications, which can all be made worse by warmer weather.

Some may face difficulty in administering their medication, for example abandoning daytime medication or taking multiple doses of medication together. As a result, we may be seeing these patients using NHS services more often during Ramadan.

Islamic rulings consider health to be of the highest importance during Ramadan and consider it acceptable to break a fast on medical grounds, in particular with regards to the following:

Information

London Ambulance Service UNISON Branch

- If patients suffer from any chronic illness they must consult with their GP prior to fasting and find out if they can fast safely during Ramadan given their health.
- If fasting is not recommended by the doctor/GP, the Islamic ruling is that they should not fast during Ramadan and that they pay a concession (fidyah – the amount of money equivalent to feeding one person one meal for each lost fast).
- If a patient has an acute condition and will recover in due time, then the Islamic ruling is that they make up the fast when they are better at a later date.
- If a patient's health is at risk due to the fast, either through dehydration, pregnancy or injury, they must break their fast (including taking on liquids and medication) as their health is more important. The Islamic ruling is clear on this matter and the fast will need to be made up when they are able to or when their health is better at a later date.

Specific COVID19 Related Guidance

These are very difficult times we are facing as front line staff, particularly operational staff on patient facing duties. Wearing face masks and other PPE will make you feel warmer and probably thirsty during your fasts.

Therefore I urge all of you who are considering to fast during working days in Ramadan to read the following advice from NHS Employers and Muslim Scholars on the links given below.

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/news/2020/04/ramadan-2020>

<https://islamicportal.co.uk/fasting-in-ramadan-for-covid-19-doctors-and-nurses/>

For additional clinical advice when treating patients, staff should contact the clinical support desk.

Samad Billoo
Equality & Inclusion Officer

Expiry Date: 24 May 2020