



# HR Guidance for Staff & Managers Relating to Ramadan - 2024

## 1. Introduction

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is one of the holiest months of the year for Muslims. Ramadan is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection and community.

## 2. When does Ramadan 2024 start?

The start and end of Ramadan (and every Islamic month) is dependent on the sighting of the new crescent moon. Therefore, there are different scenarios for the start and end dates of Ramadan and when Eid Al-Fitr (festival marking end of Ramadan) will be celebrated, as shown below:

Start of Ramadan*	First day of fasting	Last day of fasting (and date of Eid Al-Fitr)
Evening of Sunday, 10 March 2024	Monday, 11 March 2024	29 days: Monday, 8 April 2024 (Eid Al-Fitr: 9 April 2024) 30 days: Tuesday, 9 April 2024 (Eid Al-Fitr: 10 April 2024)
Evening of Monday, 11 March 2024	Tuesday, 12 March 2024	29 days: Tuesday, 9 April 2024 (Eid Al-Fitr: 10 April 2024) 30 days: Wednesday, 10 April 2024 (Eid Al-Fitr: 11 April 2024)

**Please note:** Islamic months are either 29 or 30 days - dependent on sighting the new moon (different scenarios illustrated above). Some Muslim organisations/Mosques follow local sightings or the closest Muslim country for the new moon. However, others follow the sightings from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it is normal for Muslims in the same team to start and end Ramadan on different days (depending on their local Mosque). This also means Muslims may celebrate Eid Al-Fitr on different days too.

## 3. What times do Muslims fast each day during Ramadan?

Muslims fast from the break of dawn to sunset. At the start of Ramadan in 2024, this will mean fasting between approximately 04:30 – 18:00 (12+ hours). However, as the month progresses, the time span increases for the fast due to the increase in daylight hours. By the end of the month, fasting will be between 04:45 – 20:00 (15+ hours).

**Please note:** timings will vary slightly from town to town.

## 4. Do all Muslims need to fast?

All Muslims, post-puberty are obligated to fast. However, fasting is only prescribed for those able to do so. Many Muslims who are unable to fast will engage in the other forms of worship. Those listed below, amongst others, are exempt from fasting:

Young children (pre-puberty)	Elderly	Sickness or those with serious or long-term illnesses	Pregnant or breast-feeding Women if they're unable to	Menstruating Women or those experiencing lochia	Travellers
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## 5. What do Muslims do in Ramadan?

The main activity that Muslim engage with in Ramadan, is fasting. During fasting hours, Muslims abstain from all food and all drink (including water), smoking/vaping, chewing gum. In addition, this is also a month in which

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Muslims tend to pray more (five times a day), recite the Qur'an more regularly, give charity and engage in introspection and self-reflection.

## 6. What support is available for NWAS staff who are observing Ramadan?

At NWAS, we have a diverse workforce in the trust, which includes significant numbers of Muslim staff members both in operational service lines, and in corporate roles. Each staff member may have their own individual circumstances need to be understood, and this guidance is designed to help both staff and managers to facilitate the support required.

The most important thing in enabling support is communication. Colleagues observing Ramadan are advised to have conversations as early as possible with their line manager to discuss any adjustments which may be required during the month. It is also advisable for colleagues to speak to their peers so that those who they work with, have an understanding of the Ramadan experience and what it entails.

### Listed below are some things to consider if you are observing Ramadan:

- a. Plan ahead - speak to your line manager about workplace arrangements you will need.
- b. When considering flexible working arrangements, think about times and environments at/in which you work best.
- c. Take personal responsibility for ensuring that neither business needs, nor your own needs, are unnecessarily impacted,
- d. If you are intending to request annual leave in Ramadan or for Eid, it is advisable to do so as early as possible, so your line manager can plan accordingly.
- e. If you are working on the road (PTS/PES), you may want to ensure that you have water/snacks in your vehicle to break your fast on time.
- f. For staff in all operational roles, it is advisable that when starting your shift, you inform control/crew partner/line manager/team leader (whichever applies) of times when you need to eat to start/end your fast.

### Things to consider if you are line managing staff who are observing Ramadan:

- a. Pro-actively engage with your team members who you know will be fasting to find out if they require any support.
- b. Be as flexible as possible, and as practical as can be – i.e. within your team, can you accommodate early or late start times / early finish times / longer breaks if needed?
- c. Ensure staff have access to an appropriate place on site for prayer.
- d. Some staff who are fasting may show signs of fatigue and low energy – encourage them to reach out to management if they are finding work challenging and help with solutions.

## 7. A note about requests for adjustments and leave

Managers should try their best to accommodate requests for support such as adjustments, annual leave and shift swaps for staff observing Ramadan. However, it is important for staff to note that due to the nature of our organisation being an emergency service and the scale of operational pressures, there may be instances where it is not possible to facilitate requests as a result of service demands.

The Inclusion & Engagement Team can help provide advice in this regard to managers or staff if required.

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## 8. Information about daily prayers

Muslims are obligated to pray five times a day, every day of the year. While some Muslims observe their daily prayers regularly, others will make a special effort to do so in Ramadan due to the holiness of the month.

Each prayer has a time window during which the prayer can be offered. Each prayer cycle shouldn't take longer than 10-15 minutes to complete and it is unlikely that all five prayer times will come in during a single shift.

Prayer	Time starts (approx.)	Time end (approx..)	Notes
Morning prayer (Fajr)	04:30	Sunrise, around 06:30	Coincides with start of the fast, and those fasting will have their pre-dawn meal before the prayer time starts.
Afternoon prayer (Zuhr)	12:15	16:00	
Late afternoon prayer (Asr)	16:15	18:00	
Sunset prayer (Maghrib)	18:00		The sunset prayer coincides with the end of the fast, and this is when eating/drinking resumes. <b>Ending the fast and offering the prayer should not be delayed unless exceptional circumstances.</b>
Night prayer (Isha)	20:00	04:30 (next day)	

**Please note:** the timings above represent the approximate prayer time at the start of Ramadan. Each day as the month progresses, prayer times shift forward by a 1 – 2 minutes. When clocks go forward on 31 March, then prayer times will also go forward by one hour.

Those observing fasting and prayers will usually follow a time table from the local Mosque. An example of prayer times for Manchester can be seen by [clicking on this link](#).

For staff members who are on shift during the pre-dawn or sunset meal times, it may make sense for them to be able to take their 30 minute break during those periods, so they can eat and offer their prayers.

## 9. Information about Eid ul Fitr/end of Ramadan.

Eid ul Fitr marks the end of Ramadan and is a major festival for Muslims. This is a day of celebration, feasting and family (similar scale of festival to Christmas).

Those who have observed fasting and prayer in Ramadan (as well those who have not) may want to take annual leave around this period to enjoy the occasion. Where possible, please exercise flexibility while being fair and cognisant of operational pressures, to help facilitate requests for leave.

## 10. More information

For more information about any aspect of this guidance, please email [inclusion.workforce@nwas.nhs.uk](mailto:inclusion.workforce@nwas.nhs.uk).

This guidance has been adapted from the [NHS England Muslim Network Ramadan And Eid Guidance 2024](#).

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