

An introduction to RAMADHAN 2021

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Board Member**

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Ground to cover:

- Fasting within the context 5 pillars of the Islamic faith
- Practicalities of fasting and general routine during Ramadhan
- Explore some implications and appreciation towards our colleagues, residents who are fasting
- Welcome questions and comments to help develop greater appreciation and hopefully remove any misunderstanding. **There is no such thing as a silly question**

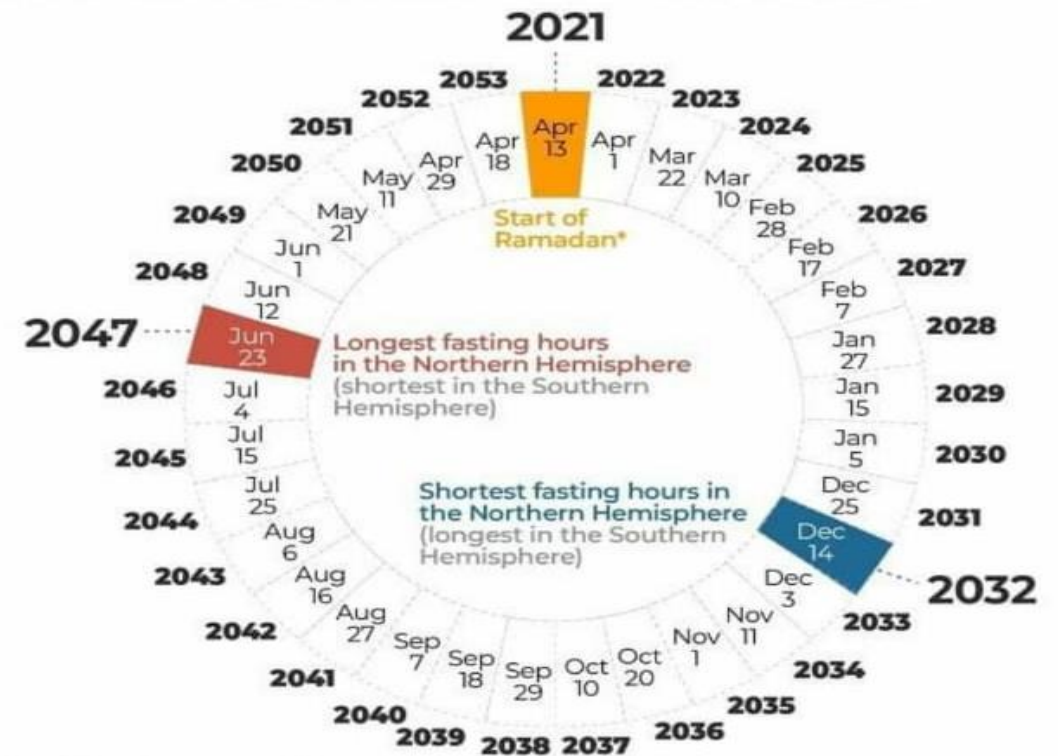
What is Ramadhan & fasting

- Islamic calendar is based on the lunar calendar, determined with the sighting of the New moon each month and is approx. 11 days shorter than the Gregorian calendar
- This year Ramadhan falls on the 12/13 April to 12/13 May (*depending on the moon sightings*)
- It takes 33 Gregorian years to complete a full circle:
 - at the peak of summer in the UK fasts are 21 hours long, and
 - at the depth of winter as short as 10 hours

RAMADAN 2021

33-year Ramadan cycle

The next time Ramadan will **start around April 13** will be approximately 33 years from now or **the year 2054**.



*Subject to moon sighting
Source: aladhan.com

What is Ramadhan & fasting

Its is important for employees, line managers and SMT across Housing Sector recognise:

- The importance of Ramadhan for our Muslim colleagues and residents is understood and respected, and
- That colleagues are supported during fasting
- *Ramadhan* 9th month of the Islamic calendar. The primary purpose for millions across the globe is to improve self-consciousness, or *Taqwa* as described in Arabic.

Why fasting?

- Fasting important in many of the major world religions and a central feature in the Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Islam
- Muslims are commanded to adhere to the 5 Pillars of the faith:
 - Declarations of faith; 5 daily prayers; giving 2.5% of their net wealth to charity; fasting and the pilgrimage
- The Arabic word for fasting is **Roza** translated as 'to abstain'. In reality this includes abstaining from drinking, eating, intimate relations, during the period from dawn to sunset

What happens during Ramadhan?

- This year fast will last for 16 hours on average – and vary from day to day
- This morning commenced fast (known as *Sheri*) at 3.40am and will finish at 8.10pm (known as *Iftari*)
- Ramadhan brings additional voluntary acts of worship, most notable the *Tarawih* – congressional prayers performed each night lasting 1/2 hours in cycles of 2 units of prayers.

Who is exempt from fasting?

- Fasting is only prescribed for those physically and mentally able to do so and include:
 - Young children; The elderly; Those with serious or long term illness; Pregnant women; Menstruating women; Travellers
- Those who can fast, but have to break their fast due to ill health, and those who are exempt from fasting are required to offer a specific type of charity, known as **Fidya** in Arabic, in lieu of their fast and is used specifically to feed the hungry
- In addition to **Zakat**, there is increased charitable donations during Ramadhan. According to the Charity Commission, British Muslim Charities raised £130m during Ramadhan 2019 alone

End of Ramadhan festivities and Eid ul Fitr

- Eid is a day of celebration for Muslims as Christmas is for Christians, Diwali for Hindus
- Eid is the first day of the 10th Islamic month called *Shawaal* and marks the official end of Ramadhan. You are not permitted to fast on Eid
- This year it will fall on Wednesday 12th or Thursday 13th May, *depending on the sighting of the moon*
- Day begins with a congregational Eid prayer accompanied with a special Eid *Zakat* charity distributed to the poor

General guidance for staff & managers at JJHT

For colleagues observing fasting:

- **Plan ahead** - speak to line managers about any special arrangements and requests for leave (*ideally in advance of Ramadhan*)
- **Take personal responsibility** - ensuring that neither housing providers needs, nor your own needs, are unduly impacted
- **Take precautions** – when attending workplace still in COVID-19 lockdown, follow safety instructions and guidance. When using ablution and prayer facilities use your own prayer mats
- **Share** – when in meetings and let colleagues know of your needs
- **Productivity** – flexible working, think about times and environments at/in which you work best

General guidance for staff & managers

For managers:

- Ramadhan is a special time for Muslims, with increased worship staff continue to carry on with normal work duties
- Fasting could affect people in different way, for example fatigue and tiredness from adapting to fasting and a change of routine
- Engaging colleagues and employees and showing understanding can be helpful to ensuring a productive working environment for all

Requests could be for:

- Flexible working arrangements to change hours of work from 9to5 to 11to6.30pm
- Greater flex during the day to complete up to 2 of the daily prayers including time to complete ablution (**Wudu**). Suggestion would be to continue with clear, consistent and pragmatic working solutions to maintain business needs
- Annual leave, in particular during the last 10 nights and/or to celebrate Eid and managed as per usual departmental policies but bear in mind the significance of Ramadhan

Useful Resources

- CSMN – (Civil Service Muslim Network) Ramadhan 2021 Guidance csmn@hmrc.gov.uk
- MCB (Muslim Council of Britain) – Ramadhan Health Guide <https://mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Ramadan-a-guide-to-healthy-fasting-NHS.pdf>
- Our NHS, our people, Ramadhan and Covid-19 - <https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/our-nhs-people-ramadan-and-covid-19/>
- BIMA (British Islamic Medical Association) Ramadhan Rapid Review <https://britishima.org/ramadan-rapid-review/>
- Ramadhan Timetable 2021, Islamic Relief - <https://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/ramadan/ramadan-timetable/>

Thank You

**Ramadan Kareem (Happy Ramadan) and hope
you have a fantastic Eid**