



# RAMADAN FACTSHEET 2009

## Staff guidance

These notes are intended for managers and staff who work with individuals that are Muslim. It is intended to increase understanding about the month of Ramadan and offers advice on how to be supportive of colleagues among you that are fasting. The month of Ramadan is a month for spiritual enhancement.

The start of Ramadan is dependent upon sighting of the moon (which in most places) will be **Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August** and will last for 29 or 30 days. Ramadan is expected to end on the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> September (Subject to sighting of New Moon). During the 29/30 days of Ramadan all adult Muslims must give up the following things during the hours of daylight:

- Food or drink of any sort;
- Smoking;

During Ramadan Muslims will awake before dawn for a meal called "suhur". When daylight is over, most Muslims will 'break' the fast with either dates or water. This will be followed by an evening meal called "iftar". During Ramadan iftar is an occasion for family, friends and community get together.

The fasting combined with disturbances in normal sleep pattern can leave individuals feeling a little more tired than normal particularly towards the end of the day.

An agreement to requests for slight adjustments to the working day during Ramadan will be appreciated by Muslim staff members, who may prefer to start earlier and/or have a shorter lunch break. Many Muslims like to finish early so that they can get home in time to end the fast.

It is very considerate to avoid holding events, such as staff meals, away days and get togethers, during Ramadan in the daylight hours if you have Muslim staff. If it is unavoidable please do not be offended if Muslim staff members are unable to participate in such events. If an away day or staff conference is unavoidable any special arrangements for Muslim staff that are fasting will be greatly appreciated.

It is not necessary for individuals that are not fasting to abstain from eating or drinking in the presence of Muslims that are fasting. If you make a point of asking to be excused for eating whilst your colleague is fasting this will be appreciated. Please refrain from smoking in the same room as someone who is fasting.

Muslim staff enjoy sitting down together and sharing their food when they end the fast (iftar). They welcome non-Muslim staff participating in this. This is totally appropriate and will please the individuals concerned rather than cause offence. To fast along with Muslim colleagues, even for part of the day, is a good way of enhancing understanding.

When daylight is over, most Muslims will break the fast with either dates or water, following the example of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), before having a proper meal later.

Many Muslims may become more spiritual during Ramadan than they might be for the remainder of the year. As a consequence of this Muslim staff might wish to offer prayers during the day. This will normally be 2/3 times a day for a few minutes each for which the staff member (s) will require a private area.

### **A few points to remember in terms of service provision:**

- Try to avoid carrying out visits to Muslim clients around the time that they will be preparing to end the fast (iftar) and will be earlier each day (1<sup>st</sup> iftar will be 8.19pm and last iftar will be 7.12pm). See Calendar of Timings that was produced alongside the Factsheet.
- Try to avoid visits very early in the morning as many Muslims stay up late engaged in acts of worship during Ramadan and therefore might prefer a lie in.
- Please avoid any major events in which you are trying to engage with Muslim clients such as consultation forums.

The end of Ramadan is marked by the festival of **Eid** for which Muslim staff members will wish to take a day's leave from work. The actual day that Eid falls on will depend on when the new moon is sighted. For this reason it might not be possible for the staff member to be very specific about the day he/she would like to be away from work and therefore some flexibility is necessary.

The appropriate way to express best wishes to a Muslim for Eid is to say:

**“Eid Mubarak”.**

For further information please contact:

**Mahroof Hussain, Diversity Manager**

Tel: 01302 862622 or Email: [mahroof.hussain@stlegerhomes.co.uk](mailto:mahroof.hussain@stlegerhomes.co.uk)