



Message from the Ethnic Minorities Staff Network:

Dear colleagues,

[Muslims](#) have settled in Ireland for centuries and in NI since its formation and have contributed to the diverse workforce of BHSCT and the wider NHS.

The Islamic calendar is calculated according to the lunar cycles, so the month of Ramadan begins when the new moon is sighted. As a result, the start and finish times change from year to year, usually advancing 10 days earlier every year. Ramadan lasts for 29-30 days and ends with the celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr. This year Ramadan is due to start on 13th April 2021, depending on the sighting of the new moon; Eid-ul-Fitr is likely to be on the 12th of May 2020.

Fasting plays an important role in many major religions and is a central feature in all the Abrahamic faiths. In Islam, adult Muslims, who are able to, are required to fast during the month of Ramadan. Fasting has been ordained to improve mindfulness of Allah (God) in Muslims' day-to-day lives. For this reason, Ramadan is a time of prayer and self-reflection, where Muslims are encouraged to read the Qur'an, increase in their charitable giving and in worship. These acts engender a sense of gratitude, self-discipline and restraint, which should continue throughout the year.

Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr this year will again occur during the COVID-19 outbreak. Despite the additional pressure on the healthcare service, it is essential that managers consider these guidelines for the health and well-being of Muslim staff in a way that does not negatively impact patient welfare and care. Likewise, it is advised that staff observing Ramadan have early conversations with managers to mitigate any risks to the service and to patient care. [NHS Muslim Network and the British Islamic Medical Association \(BIMA\)](#) have shared some top tips with for supporting staff and colleagues throughout the month of Ramadan.

To find out more or for any further guidance, please contact either the NHS Muslim Network at NHSI.MuslimNetwork@NHS.Net or BIMA at COVID@Britishima.org.

For Muslim staff who would like further guidance on COVID-19 and its impact on Muslim communities and Mosques, please see the [Muslim Council of Britain website](#) for more details. [Public Health England have also produced guidance](#)

[NHS England and NHS Improvement](#) has developed useful guidance to help staff during Ramadan.

Should you have any questions about Ramadan or supporting [religion in the workplace](#) please email AskEMNetwork@belfasttrust.hscni.net and/or diversityandinclusion@nhsemployers.org.

For local news, advice and shared knowledge please follow [Belfast Islamic Centre](#) on Facebook