

# Islamophobia Awareness Month & Interfaith Week

(November for Employee Networks and HR Diversity & Inclusion Teams representing Muslim Employees)



**CUBE Network.**

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November is **Islamophobia Awareness Month (IAM)**, and it also includes **Inter Faith Week**.

CUBE Network encourages corporate Faith networks to aim to engage in both events on an annual, cyclical basis. If it isn't viable for 2019, then look to see what's possible in November 2020. We encourage you as a voice for Muslim employees, potential employees and clients to actively plan and present on such topics for with your firm's internal audiences.

These are matters of Diversity, Security, Health, Well-Being, Corporate Culture, Recruitment, Retention and Practical Support for employees.

### **Inter Faith Week**

Inter Faith week is an ideal time to collaborate with your colleagues in other faith networks and focus on the common values that unite us and help increase our understanding and appreciation of each other for those of faith and of none.

CUBE has some good examples of internal interfaith events at places such as HSBC and Lloyds Banking Group. We can introduce you to understand the lessons learnt to build on their successes. We'd love to hear more about your successes in this space too at any point of the year.

### **Islamophobia Awareness Month (IAM)**

CUBE strongly urges Faith networks to broach the important subject of Islamophobia and engage your HR Diversity & Inclusion stakeholders annually to formally mark the occasion of Islamophobia Awareness Month (IAM).

KPMG's HR are in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of reflection during the month. The feedback from non-Muslim colleagues has been very encouraging and progressive.

IAM is essentially a parallel to the way that Black History Month (BHM) is now marked by many firms in October. Not all stakeholders truly understand yet IAM's pertinence to embracing real matters of Diversity, Recruitment and Retention for Muslim employees.

The relevance from a corporate perspective of IAM to firms in the UK is:

- **Awareness by HR and Management of real issues** that can and occasionally do affect their Muslim employees, potential-employees and even those who are perceived to be Muslim.
- **Preparedness: Even where the work-environment itself is exemplary, employees can still face issues that impact their overall security, health and well-being.** All respected firms have a zero-tolerance policy for hatred at work, but incidents related to Islamophobia have been shown to increase after certain world-events including the Brexit Referendum and terrorist atrocities.
  - **Commuting and off-site:** Islamophobic attacks can impact staff on their commutes to and from work, on their lunch breaks if not on-site, and especially if attending a mosque at lunch-time at times of heightened-sensitivity.
  - **Unconscious & Conscious Bias:** Islamophobia and discrimination can be an issue within the workplace and in the recruitment process when cultural training and awareness of Muslims is sub-optimal.

So, for Islamophobia Awareness Month, we have **4 Practical Suggestions** for you, your network and employer.

1) **Employee Wellbeing Helplines & HR Management.**

Are your helplines & Heads of HR prepared and trained to recognise times of security sensitivity for their Muslim staff? (E.g. after the New Zealand Mosque Massacre, and after any milestone related to Brexit voting).

Are pro-active messages cascading to Muslim employees and networks to remind them of the helpline numbers available to call should they face an Islamophobic attack or incident that impacts their work or ability to work. Do the helplines in turn know the organisations that provide specialist counselling, advice and recording on such matters? If not they can discuss it with yourselves, CUBE and organisations like MEND.

2) **Free and Confidential Legal & Counselling Support for victims of Islamophobia.**

Are your network members and employers aware that MEND's **Islamophobia Response Unit** is entirely free, and can give free, professionally qualified legal support, psychological counselling and media engagement advice if needed for victims of Islamophobia?

3) **Education of and by Muslim Network Representatives.**

By virtue of the responsibility to help lead an employee network there are duties incumbent upon you to do your best for those whom you represent and may turn to you for assistance. Accordingly, educate yourself and other Muslims on hate crime, in particular Islamophobia, and encourage people to report every crime to the Police.

Without reporting there is no empirical data to support the allocation of appropriate funds to provide community services to help mitigate the impact of such offences.

4) **Communal prayer-service sermon on Islamophobia.**

For Muslim networks that organise on-site communal prayers and particularly Friday Prayers, we have attached / there is a link for a Khutbah on the topic.

<https://mend.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/MEND-Islamophobia-Khutbah.pdf>

Tangentially, for those in your networks looking to develop or improve their general Friday Sermon skills, there are a series of training workshops on four consecutive Wednesday evenings near Aldgate East in November and December.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/friday-sermon-training-workshop-tickets-79665031253>

We hope and pray that you reflect upon our suggestions and the examples of Employers and networks already engaging in InterFaith and Islamophobia Awareness activities and it inspires you to embark on journey for even better for your employers, colleagues, networks and communities in which all interact.

**Contact Details for further information:**

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- Islamophobia Response Unit: [iru@mend.org.uk](mailto:iru@mend.org.uk) (Tel: 0203 904 6555)
- Inter Faith Week: [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk)





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