

# NEWS BRIEF

## Research Reveals Religious Discrimination Is Common in the Workplace

A recent survey by business psychology consultant company Pearn Kandola found that religious discrimination is still common in many workplaces. This survey incorporates data from over 6,300 U.K. and U.S. workers from various religious backgrounds, including Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh employees. The purpose of the survey was to understand and raise awareness of the employee experience when expressing religious identity at work.

---

**“Overall, it is fair to say that people of all faiths felt as if they were in the minority in the workplace.” - 2023 Religion at Work Report**

---

### Survey Findings

According to Pearn Kandola, nearly half (47%) of respondents said they don't feel comfortable discussing the religious festivals they celebrate at work. Nearly one-third (32%) said they have had negative experiences when expressing their religious identity in the workplace, and 38% said their organization could do more to be inclusive of people of different faiths.

Additionally, 64% of respondents who wore religious dress or symbols said they weren't comfortable wearing them in the workplace, and just 23% said they were prepared to wear religious clothing or symbols at work.

The survey also found that annual leave requests for religious holidays were disproportionately rejected for certain religious groups. While just 2% of Christians felt that their requests for holiday time off were rejected without good business reasons, this view was held by 31% of Muslims, 25% of Sikhs, 23% of Hindus, 20% of Jews and 14% of Buddhists.

U.S. employees were more likely to feel that their organization and line manager were happy for them to take annual leave for religious holidays than U.K. workers. Additionally, when asked what their organizations were doing well to support religious expressions, U.S. respondents were more likely to reference inclusive policies than U.K. employees, who more frequently reported their organizations making accommodations for religious observance.

The report proposed four recommendations to overcome barriers to religious expression at work:

1. Review existing policies and procedures.
2. Take an individualistic approach.
3. Develop skills and knowledge.
4. Develop an inclusive culture.

### Employer Takeaways

Employers can best avoid religious discrimination claims by treating all employees equally, regardless of their religion, and prioritizing diversity and inclusion within the workplace. Failure to make a concerted effort to fight religious discrimination can create a hostile work environment and potentially lead to expensive lawsuits and reputational damage.

Contact us today for more information.

[The content of this News Brief is of general interest and is not intended to apply to specific circumstances. It should not be regarded as legal advice and not be relied upon as such. In relation to any particular problem which they may have, readers are advised to seek specific advice. © 2024 Zywave, Inc. All rights reserved.]