

# **Qatar World Cup: Bosses issued advice over staff wanting to watch games during work**

As the Football World Cup kicks off in Qatar, bosses are being encouraged to set out clear guidelines to staff who might want to watch matches during working hours.

Workplace advice organisation Acas has published its top tips for businesses to help prevent potential issues that could arise over the World Cup period. Many employees may want to book time off to watch the games, while others will want to follow the matches online to keep updated.

Acas is advising employers and small businesses to make sure they have agreements in place that cover requests for time off, sickness absence, website use during working hours and watching television during the day.

Acas South West area director Mike Fenn said: "The World Cup is an exciting event for many football fans, but staff should avoid getting a red card for unreasonable demands or behaviour in the workplace during this period.

"Many businesses need to maintain a certain staffing level in order to survive. Employers should have a set of simple workplace agreements in place before kick-off to help ensure their businesses remain productive whilst keeping staff on side too. Our top tips can help managers get the best from their team players, arrange appropriate substitutions if necessary and avoid unnecessary penalties or unplanned sending off."

# Top tips for employers during World Cup 2022



Workers watching World Cup football at work  
(Image: Stoke Sentinel)

Here are Acas' top tips for businesses during the World Cup period....

**Time off** – Employers may wish to look at being a little more flexible when allowing staff time off during the World Cup, while employees should remember that it may not always be possible to book a holiday. The key is for both parties to try and come to an agreement. All requests for leave should be considered fairly. A consistent approach should be applied for holiday requests for other major sporting events too as not everyone likes football.

**Sickness absence** – employers may want to remind staff that

sickness and attendance policies will still apply during the World Cup. Any unauthorised absence, patterns of absence or late attendance are likely be investigated and could result in formal proceedings.

**Flexibility** – one possible option is to have a more flexible working day. Employees could come in a little later or finish sooner, and then agree when this time can be made up. Allowing staff to listen to the radio or watch the TV may be another possible option. Employers could also allow staff to take a break during match times. Another option is to look at allowing staff to swap shifts with their manager's permission.

It is important to be fair and consistent with all staff if you allow additional benefits during the World Cup. Any change in hours or flexibility in working hours should be approved before the event.

**Use of social media and websites** – there may be an increase in the use of social media or websites covering the 2022 World Cup. Employers may wish to remind staff of any policies regarding the use of social networking and websites during working hours. The policies should be clear on what is and isn't acceptable web use.

The Fifa World Cup is taking place in Qatar between Sunday, November 20, and Sunday, December 18. Due to the time difference, football match kick-off times in the UK will vary between 10am and 7pm.

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