

REDUNDANCY

In today's economic climate, many employees across the UK have either been made redundant or find themselves at risk from redundancy. Redundancy occurs when your employer needs to reduce its workforce, and deems that your job is no longer required by the organisation. Alternatively, the business may be closing down completely or the department you work in moving to another location.

1. YOUR RIGHTS

- Before making their decision on whether to make you redundant, your employer should always consult with you so that you are involved in the process. This includes informing you directly about why you have been selected for potential redundancy, and looking at any alternatives available such as redeploying you into a different role, or moving you to another location.
- Your employer has to use a fair and objective method for deciding which employees to make redundant so they have to provide evidence on the selection criteria. This may include an examination of skills, experience, education levels, length of service, disciplinary record, and sickness record.
- Whilst at risk of redundancy, you have the right to time off for job hunting such as attending interviews with alternative employers.
- During your redundancy period, you should be told about available job vacancies within the company.
- If you take up an offer of alternative employment with your employer, you have the right to a 4-week trial period to assess whether the role is suitable for you.
- If your employer does not offer their own redundancy package you will be entitled to statutory redundancy pay if you have been continuously employed for more than 2 years with your current employer. Full details can be found at www.direct.gov.uk.

If your employer does not follow the basic steps above, your redundancy could be considered 'unfair' giving you grounds to make a claim at an employment tribunal.

2. TOP TIPS

- When your employer first notifies you that your role is at risk of redundancy, you should listen carefully for the following information:
- Length of the consultation process (often this is 90 days but can be shorter for smaller employers).
- Criteria upon which you (and other employees) will be assessed.
- Whether they offer a redundancy package in addition to the basic statutory entitlement and what this includes.
- What support they provide to redundant employees including the use of agencies that provide CV and interview advice.
- Take the time to thoroughly review your CV, skills and achievements. This will assist you when you are being assessed against the selection criteria – and also get you started on your job hunt should you be selected for redundancy.
- Take up any help and support offered by your employer for example CV workshops and any other training courses to aid in your search for new employment.
- Redundancy can be scary, and life-changing so make sure you communicate with your family and friends and let them know your situation so that they can support you.
- If you are made redundant, it can also offer new opportunities you might not have considered before, so try to be open minded when considering your next career move.
- Try to remain professional and continue with your job as best you can. If you are made redundant you may come to rely on your employer to provide a good reference. If you end up staying in your role it will be easier to maintain the relationship you have with your managers and colleagues if you have remained professional and courteous during the process.
- If you feel you are being denied your rights, you could talk to ACAS – which offers free, impartial advice on all employment rights issues. They can be reached on 08457 47 47 47 or at www.acas.org.uk