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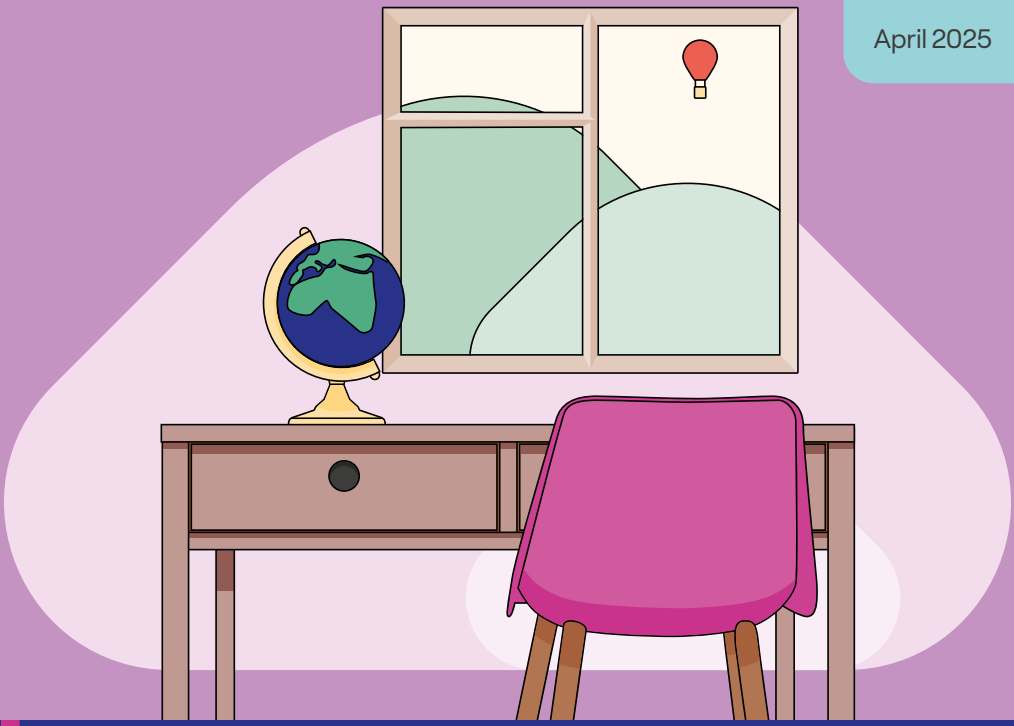

The redundancy handbook

Steps to help you cope with redundancy

- Know your rights
- Make the most of your money
- Move forward

Money Helper

HM Government

Making your money and pension choices clearer

Whatever your circumstances, MoneyHelper is on your side. Online and over the phone, we offer clear guidance that's quick to find, easy to use and backed by government. We can also point you to trusted services if you need more support.

We can help you:

- deal with debt
- understand your pension options
- reduce your spending and build up savings
- navigate life events such as redundancy, relationship breakdown, retirement or bereavement
- budget for bills or major purchases
- learn about mortgages and renting
- find out about extra benefits and entitlements.

Just search for MoneyHelper: **moneyhelper.org.uk**

Free impartial guidance
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From

Money & Pensions Service

Here to help you

This guide is for you if your job is under threat or you have been made redundant. It will explain your rights and show what steps you can take to protect your finances.

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First things to do

Your action plan

1. Find out about alternatives to redundancy
If you think your job might be at risk, be aware of alternatives to redundancy and your rights if your employer suggests short-time working, lay-offs or changes to your contract – see pages 4 to 7.

Visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/reduced-hours**

2. Know your redundancy rights
If you are facing redundancy, check your redundancy is fair, whether you are entitled to redundancy pay and know what other rights you have – see pages 8 to 15.

Visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/redundancy-rights**

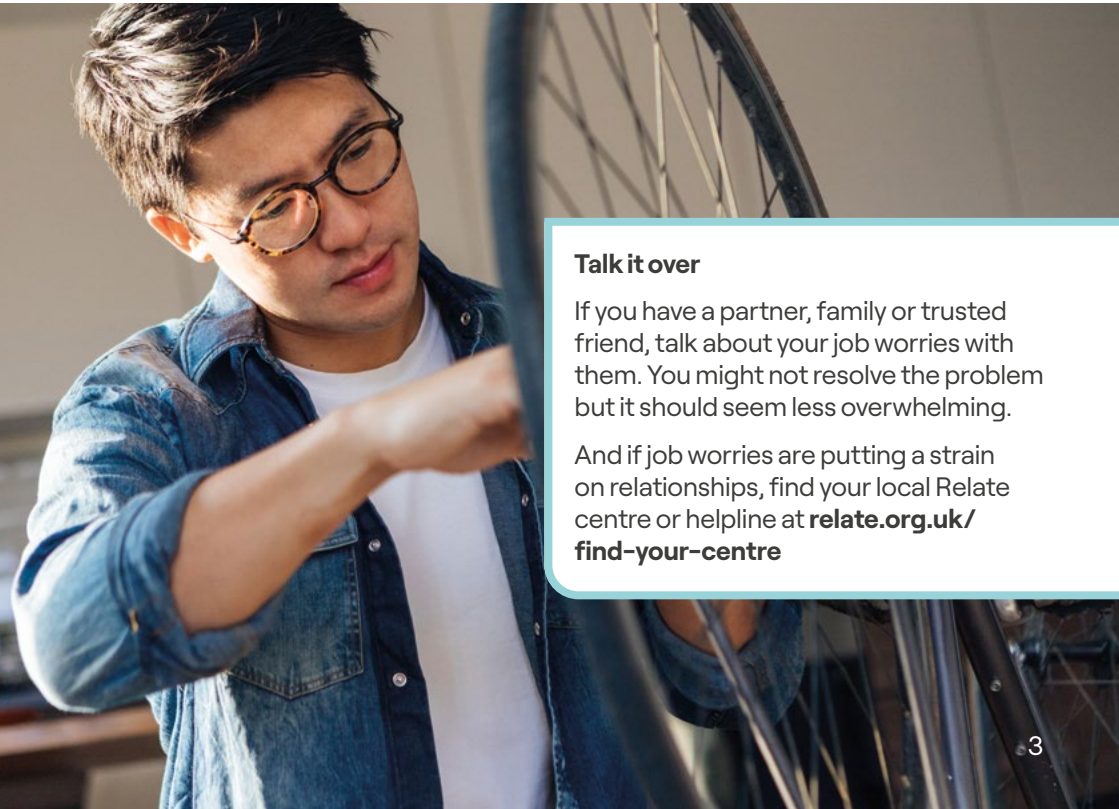
3. Make the most of your money
Make the most of your redundancy pay, review your budget, check what insurance and benefits you may be able to claim and organise your household money – see pages 16 to 34.

Visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/review-your-budget**

4. Get help with borrowing and debts
Get free, impartial advice if you are struggling with your debts and wondering which bills to prioritise and how to safeguard your home – see pages 35 to 39.

Visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/debt-if-you-lose-your-job**

5. Work on your job search
Brush up your CV and interview technique.
Consider updating your skills and learning new ones, or even starting your own business – see pages 40 to 45.



Talk it over

If you have a partner, family or trusted friend, talk about your job worries with them. You might not resolve the problem but it should seem less overwhelming.

And if job worries are putting a strain on relationships, find your local Relate centre or helpline at **relate.org.uk/find-your-centre**

Alternatives to redundancy

It's unsettling to continue working as usual when rumours of redundancy are going round. You may decide that you want to start looking for another job and leave before any redundancies are announced.

Before you do, make sure you don't miss out on valuable redundancy rights – see page 8.

If the business you work for is going through a temporary downturn, your employer may offer alternatives to redundancy.

For example, they may ask you to:

- reduce the number of days or hours you work each week (called short-time working)
- take whole days off (called a lay-off)
- do a different job altogether
- change your contract.

Whatever the offer, it's worth considering and taking advice from your trade union or employee representative, if you have one, before making up your mind.

If you don't belong to a trade union or a staff association, you could talk through your options with an adviser at your local Citizens Advice, or Labour Relations Agency (LRA) in Northern Ireland.

What to do about a drop in income

Get other work. As long as your contract allows it and your employer agrees, you may be able to take on another job while you're on a lay-off or short-time working. But if you do, you can't also get statutory guarantee pay – see page 5.

Claim benefits. You may be able to claim Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit – and other benefits – if you are on a lay-off or short-time working. Use our Benefits calculator to find out if you qualify or contact Jobcentre Plus (Jobs and Benefits Office in Northern Ireland). For more information see page 21, or *Useful contacts* on page 46.

Short-time working

This refers to when your hours are cut, so you're working fewer hours each day or fewer days each week. You are entitled to full pay for your hours worked, unless your contract says you can be asked to take unpaid leave. Check whether your employment contract already allows for this.

If not, the staff association or your trade union, if you have one, will usually have to agree to the arrangement.

If you don't have a staff association or a trade union it will be up to you whether you accept this, unless your contract says you have to.

You may also be entitled to a guarantee payment as long as you don't agree to a permanent change to your working hours. You should discuss this with your employer.

Lay-offs

This refers to when you're off work for at least a day. This is expected to be temporary and means you're asked not to go into work. You should get your full pay unless your contract allows unpaid or reduced pay lay-offs.

However, you are still employed. Your employer can only ask you to do this if your contract of employment allows it, or you agree to change your contract.

Guarantee pay

The legal minimum you're entitled to if you're laid off or put on short-time working is called 'statutory guarantee pay'. This is capped at £39 a day up to a maximum of £195 for five days in any three-month period. The amount is reduced pro rata if you work part-time.

How long can this last?

There is no limit to how long you can be on a lay-off or put on short-time working. How long this can last depends on what has been agreed in your employment contract.

However, if this has lasted for four weeks in a row – or six non-consecutive weeks in a 13-week period – you may be entitled to claim redundancy and redundancy pay (see p13).

Changes in your contract

Your employer might want to change the terms of your contract – for example, to cut your pay or switch you to part-time employment. They can't do this without your consent unless your contract says they can. Consent can be given in writing or verbally.

Discuss your options with your trade union or staff representative, your local Citizens Advice or Acas (Labour Relations Agency if you live in Northern Ireland).

Alternative work

Before making redundancies, your employer should try to offer you a suitable alternative job, or allow you to apply for other jobs, even if these roles aren't suitable.

If you're offered suitable alternative employment, you can try out the job for a four-week trial period, potentially longer if you need training. This will depend on whether there are differences between your old job and the new job. If the trial period is successful your employment will continue and you will not be entitled to statutory redundancy pay.

If you decide the job is unsuitable, your rights to statutory redundancy pay will not be affected as long as you give notice within the trial period. If you unreasonably turn down suitable alternative employment, you could lose your right to redundancy pay.

For more information, contact Acas. They are a government-funded organisation and provide impartial information and advice about employee rights. They also help to resolve disputes between employees and their employers. If you live in Northern Ireland, contact the Labour Relations Agency instead. See *Useful contacts* on page 46.

Early retirement as an alternative to redundancy

Taking early retirement is very different from being made redundant, you have no redundancy rights and don't receive any redundancy pay.

If you are offered early retirement and you decide to take it, you are likely to receive a smaller pension than if you had worked until your normal retirement age.

How much your pension will be affected depends on the terms of your early retirement package and the type of pension scheme you are in.

Early retirement packages often include incentives that enhance the pension you get, such as:

- a lump-sum payment into your pension pot to boost its value if you're in a defined contribution scheme, or
- pension benefits that are worked out as if you had worked to normal retirement age if you're in a defined benefit scheme.

Find out more about the pros and cons of retiring early at **moneyhelper.org.uk/early-retirement**

You can also order our free booklet 'Your pension: your choices' on **moneyhelper.org.uk/free-printed-guides**

You can get free and impartial guidance about pension options at retirement. If you're 50 or over, visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/pensionwise** or call 0800 138 3944.

If you're under 50, visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/pensions** or call 0800 011 3797

Know your redundancy rights

Although redundancy is a form of dismissal, when you are made redundant you have done nothing wrong and nobody is questioning your ability to do your job.

The most common reasons why your employer could make you redundant are:

- they need to cut their costs
- they need to close down
- they are relocating
- the work you do is no longer needed.

These are known as potentially fair reasons for dismissal. Your employer can dismiss you, provided they also follow a fair process for selection.

If your employer doesn't follow a fair process for dismissal or there is not a genuine reason for the redundancy, you could make a claim for unfair dismissal to an employment tribunal if you've worked for your employer for two years or more (see p10).

You can make a claim, regardless of how long you've worked for your employer, if you think you've been dismissed because of:

- discrimination
- raising concerns about employment rights
- any other unfair reasons (see p11).

If you think you're being made redundant for any of these reasons, you should get advice as soon as possible (see p9).

Your employer must talk to everyone involved about what is going to happen. They should tell you why redundancies are proposed and how people are affected. For more details, see **gov.uk/redundant-your-rights/consultation**

Appealing against a redundancy decision

Step 1 – Appeal in writing to your employer.

If you think your redundancy is unfair, explain why you think you have been chosen unfairly and what you want your employer to do to put the situation right. If this doesn't solve the problem, you can make a claim to an employment tribunal.

Step 2 – Early conciliation.

Before you can make a tribunal claim, you must notify Acas at **acas.org.uk/earlyconciliation**, or Labour Relations Agency (LRA) in Northern Ireland at **lra.org.uk**. Acas will offer to approach your employer and try to settle the case. Neither you nor your employer has to agree to this.

Step 3 – Take your employer to an employment tribunal.

Once you have an early conciliation certificate from Acas, or LRA in Northern Ireland, you can make a claim to an employment tribunal.

You must have been employed for at least two years - unless you are making a claim for discrimination and/or automatic unfair dismissal.

Currently, there are no fees for making an application to an employment tribunal.

Key point

If you think you have been dismissed unfairly, get advice as soon as you can from

- your trade union or employee rep
- Citizens Advice
- Acas
- (in Northern Ireland) the Labour Relations Agency.

See *Useful contacts* on page 46. There is a strict time limit for making a claim.

In England, Scotland and Wales, you must notify Acas before you can make a claim to an employment tribunal.

Is your redundancy fair?

Your employer must make you redundant for a fair reason, not because of who you are or something you've done, such as raising concerns about the workplace. They must follow a fair process when they choose who to make redundant.

Is the redundancy process fair?

There are different processes for making a fair redundancy. The one your employer follows will depend on:

- how many people work for your employer
- the number of redundancies they plan to make
- whether there is a company redundancy policy
- any agreement in place with a trade union.

Your employer should always:

- consult with you to see if there are ways of avoiding redundancy
- allow a colleague or trade union rep to accompany you to any meetings
- write to you about your entitlement to statutory redundancy pay (see p13)
- give you the opportunity to appeal against the decision
- consider whether there is any suitable alternative employment (see p6).

Redundancy and discrimination

If you think the real reason you are being made redundant is for any of the following reasons, you could make a claim for discrimination to an employment tribunal regardless of how long you have been employed:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

You may also be able to make a claim for unfair dismissal if you have worked for your employer for two years or more.

Automatic unfair dismissal

By law, your employer must not make you redundant for certain reasons.

These include:

- pregnancy or maternity
- family reasons, including taking parental leave or caring for dependants
- belonging to a trade union or acting as a staff representative
- whistleblowing on bad practice or health and safety issues
- working part-time or on a fixed-term contract
- because you asked for flexible working
- because you raised concerns about statutory employment rights, including problems with pay, working hours or annual leave.

If you think this may be the real reason for your redundancy, you may be able to claim that your dismissal is automatically unfair. You can make a claim regardless of how long you've worked for your employer.

Staff in, staff out

Your employer is legally entitled to employ new staff, even if they are making people redundant. They may employ someone to do a different job where you work, or to do your job at a different location.

If you think you should have been offered a job in the new structure or you think you are being replaced unfairly, check your employment contract. If you're not sure, get advice from a union representative, Acas (The Labour Relations Agency in Northern Ireland) or your local Citizens Advice.

Redundancy consultation

Redundancy process and timetable

The process your employer has to follow depends on the number of redundancies planned and covers a 90-day period. See the table below:

Number of employees to be made redundant	Type of consultation needed	Timing of consultation
Fewer than 20 employees	Your employer needs to consult with you **individually only**.	Within a reasonable time.
20–99 employees	Your employer must carry out collective consultation. This means consulting with your union representative if there is one or, if you don't have one, with your elected employee representative(s). It's good practice for them to consult with you all individually too. If the employees decide not to elect a representative, then consultation will be with individuals only.	A minimum of 30 days before first dismissal.
100+ employees	Your employer must carry out collective consultation. This means consulting with your union representative if there is one or, if you don't have one, with your elected employee representative(s). It's good practice for them to consult with you all individually too. If the employees decide not to elect a representative, then consultation will be with individuals only.	A minimum of 45 days before first dismissal.

Once the consultation process is over, you must be given at least the statutory notice period if you are going to be made redundant. This is one to 12 weeks depending on how long you have been employed. However, your notice period may be longer depending on what your employment contract says. After this point, your job will end.

Redundancy pay

You may be entitled to statutory redundancy pay – a lump sum to compensate you for the loss of your job. This is the legal minimum your employer has to pay. Some employers might offer more generous packages as part of your employment contract. This is called contractual redundancy pay.

Who gets statutory redundancy pay?

You may be entitled to statutory redundancy pay if you have worked continuously for your employer for at least two years. If you work on a casual basis, or you are an agency or temporary worker, you probably won't qualify for redundancy pay.

If you are on a zero-hours contract ie if you are 'on call' with no set minimum hours or defined schedule, you might get redundancy pay if you're classed as an employee. Get advice from Acas (or the Labour Relations Agency in Northern Ireland) or your local Citizens Advice – see *Useful contacts* on page 46.

Key point

You may be entitled to statutory redundancy pay if you have worked continuously for your employer for at least two years.

How much will you get?

The amount of statutory redundancy pay you get depends on how long you have worked for your employer, how old you are, and how much you are paid.

By law you are entitled to:

- half a week's pay for each full year of service while you were under the age of 22
- one week's pay for each full year of service while you were between the ages of 22 and 41, and
- one and a half weeks' pay for each full year of service after your 41st birthday.

The maximum statutory redundancy pay you can get is capped at £21,570 (or £22,470 in Northern Ireland).

Your redundancy pay is based on a maximum of 20 years' service, with a maximum weekly pay of up to £719 (or £749 in Northern Ireland). This is the case even if your actual earnings are higher, or your length of service is longer than this.

What if your employer has ceased trading?

If your employer has gone out of business or cannot pay you, the government's Redundancy Payments Service will pay you the statutory amount instead. You can also make a claim for any unpaid wages, holiday pay, or overtime paid during your notice period. The insolvency firm dealing with your employer should give you form RP1 to make a claim.

Start your claim for redundancy payments at **gov.uk/claim-redundancy**

Contact the Insolvency Service if your employer cannot pay your statutory redundancy payment because it's insolvent on 0330 331 0020.

Contact Acas for help and advice on redundancy at **acas.org.uk** or on 0300 123 1100.

In Northern Ireland, contact the Labour Relations Agency (LRA) at **lra.org.uk**, or on 03300 552 220.

To find out if you are entitled to statutory redundancy pay and how much, use the Redundancy pay calculator **moneyhelper.org.uk/redundancy-pay-calculator**

Example

Michelle is 48. She has worked for her employer for 22 years and earns £750 a week. She is entitled to statutory redundancy pay based on the maximum of £719 per week for 20 years of service. Michelle will receive £16,896.50 worked out as follows:

Step 1

1.5 weeks x 7 years' service when she was aged 41 and over

= 10.5 weeks

Step 2

1 week x 13 years' service when she was aged between 22 and 41

= 13 weeks

Step 3

10.5 weeks + 13 weeks

= 23.5 weeks x £719

Total

£16,896.50 of redundancy pay

Tax and redundancy pay

Redundancy pay is the money that your employer offers you when removing your role from the organisation. You don't pay tax on any redundancy pay up to £30,000. This £30,000 only applies to your redundancy pay and not any of your earnings.

If you receive more than £30,000, you will have to pay tax at your highest rate on the amount over £30,000.

If you receive any non-cash benefits as part of your redundancy package, such as a company car or computer, this will be worked out as a cash value and added to your redundancy pay for tax purposes.

So, for example, if you receive a company car valued at £10,000 and redundancy pay of £25,000, your redundancy package will be worth £35,000 for tax purposes. You will have to pay tax on the £5,000 that is above the £30,000 tax-free limit.

Pay in lieu of notice (PILON)

PILON is treated the same way as basic pay – so you'll still have to pay Income Tax and National Insurance on any PILON payments you get.

This means you'll be taxed the same regardless of whether you worked during your notice period of not.

PILONs are payments for your work, and aren't the same as compensation payments you might get for your redundancy.

Set aside enough money to pay any extra tax

When you get your redundancy pay, your employer will usually have already deducted tax from it. But because the tax you pay is worked out on a yearly basis, it's very common to find that too much or too little tax has been deducted.

You are responsible for ensuring the correct amount of tax is paid, so you must check you've paid the right amount at the end of the tax year.

If you have paid too much tax, you will need to claim a rebate. If you have paid too little, you will have to pay the shortfall.

Get help and advice from HMRC. See *Useful contacts* on page 46.

Bear in mind that the size of the payment could mean you become a higher or additional rate taxpayer for the year, even if you're normally a basic rate taxpayer.

Other payments when you leave

You may receive other lump sum payments in your final pay packet when you are made redundant. If you are owed these under your contract of employment (rather than as compensation for losing your job), they will be taxed in the same way as your normal pay.

Payments may include any of the following:

	How does this work?	How is it taxed?
Wages owing and bonus payments	This is your pay up to the day your contract ends and any bonus payments you are owed under your employment contract.	Tax and National Insurance contributions will have been deducted as usual from these payments before you get them.
Pay in lieu of notice	This is paid when your employer does not want you to work your notice period and offers you a lump sum instead (see p15).	Pay in lieu of notice counts as taxable pay and so tax and National Insurance contributions will have been deducted.
Holiday pay owing	Your employer may ask you to take some holiday during your redundancy notice period. You only have to do this if your employment contract says you must. Otherwise, it is up to you. You may decide the money is more useful if you are about to become unemployed.	Tax and National Insurance contributions will have been deducted as usual from these payments before you get them.

Decide what to do about your pension

If you belong to a workplace pension, you need to decide what to do with your pension once you leave. The choices depend on what type of scheme it is.

To find out what type of pension scheme you are in and what rights you have, contact your pensions or HR department at work. For general information about pensions, including definitions of the different types of pension scheme, see **moneyhelper.org.uk/pensions**

A workplace pension

If you are made redundant, you will usually have to do one of the following:

- Leave your pension with your employer and when you retire you will receive a retirement income from that scheme. This is usually the best option if you belong to a defined benefit scheme.
- Transfer your pension pot. This could be to a new employer's scheme when you find a new job, if the new scheme will allow this, or to your own personal pension. Compare the costs and terms carefully with your old employer's scheme and be wary of giving up any existing legacy benefits that might apply.
- If you are old enough, you may be able to take early retirement (see p7).

Consider getting professional advice from a financial adviser who can talk with you about your options – see *Useful contacts* on page 46.

National Employment Savings Trust (NEST)

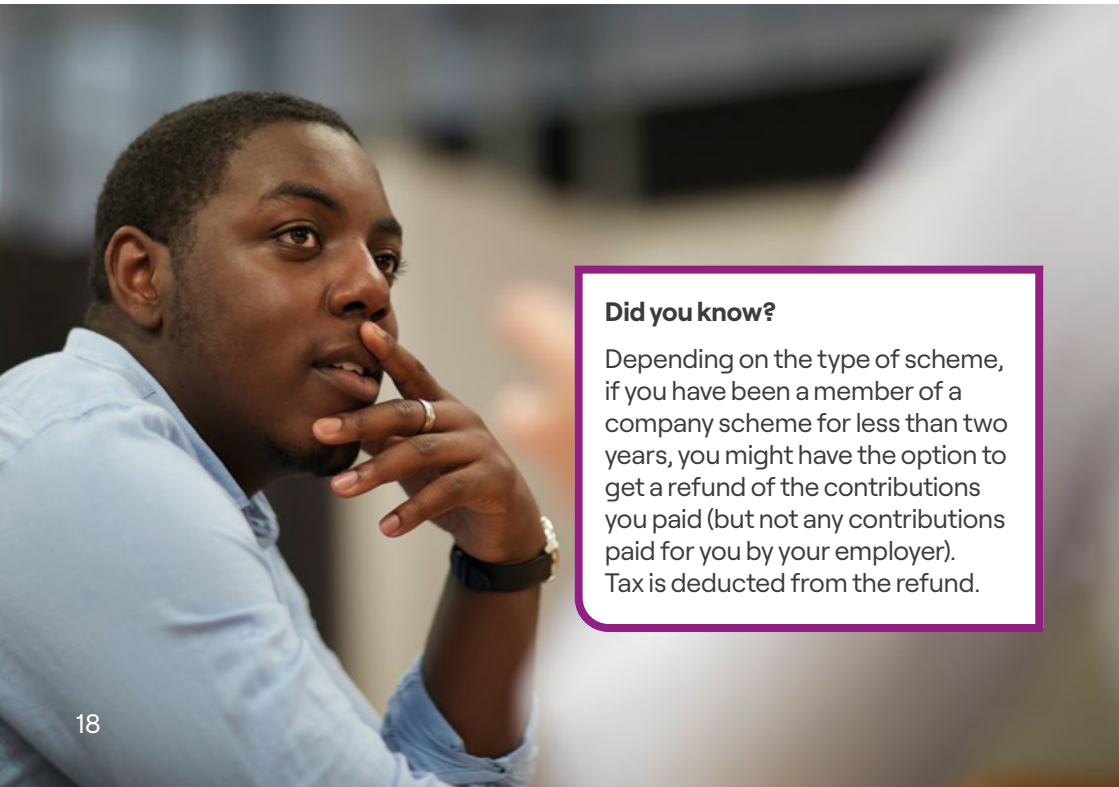
NEST is a national defined contribution pension scheme. If your employer has enrolled you in NEST, even though you are leaving the job, you still remain a member of NEST and can continue to contribute to it (but your employer's contributions will stop).

Your contributions to NEST are flexible and you might want to stop them if money is tight right now. Payments will automatically stop if it is deducted from your salary. But you can still leave your pension pot with NEST.

Personal pension

You may belong to a workplace scheme that is a personal pension (typically, a group personal pension or stakeholder scheme) or you may have taken out your own personal pension. These schemes are linked to you, not to a particular job.

This means, on leaving the job, you may be able to continue paying into the scheme if you wish, but your employer will stop paying contributions. If your employer had negotiated special terms, such as reduced charges, these may no longer be available to you.



Did you know?

Depending on the type of scheme, if you have been a member of a company scheme for less than two years, you might have the option to get a refund of the contributions you paid (but not any contributions paid for you by your employer). Tax is deducted from the refund.

Leaving work

Once you have been told you will be made redundant, you have various rights to help you adjust and find new work. You are also entitled to a minimum period of notice.

Notice

The minimum period of notice you should be given is shown in the table below. However, if your contract of employment entitles you to a longer notice period, your employer must give you this.

Check your contract to find out.

Time off to look for work or training

You are entitled to time off to search for work or undergo training, provided you have worked continuously for your employer for at least two years.

The amount of time you can take has to be reasonable and you are entitled to up to maximum two-fifths (40%) of a week's pay while you are off. For example, if you work a five-day week and take two days off in total to go to interviews, then your employer will pay you for this time. If you take four days off in total, you may only be paid for the first two days. Some employers are more generous, so it's worth discussing this when negotiating your redundancy.

Minimum notice period

If you have been employed:	The minimum notice you should be given is:	Example:
At least 1 month and up to 2 years	1 week	If you have been employed for 18 months, you should be given at least one week's notice.
Over 2 years and up to 12 years	1 week's notice for each year worked	If you have been employed for five years, you should be given at least five weeks' notice.
More than 12 years	12 weeks' notice	If you have been employed for more than 12 years, you should be given at least 12 weeks' notice.

Gardening leave

Your employer may ask you to serve out your redundancy notice period away from work (called 'gardening leave' or 'garden leave'). You are still legally employed so you must keep to the rules of your contract, such as any confidentiality clauses. Your employer may offer you garden leave because, for example, you have access to confidential information or customers, or they would like some time to pass before you start working for a competitor.

If you are on gardening leave, your employer can call you back to work if you are needed. During this period you will receive your normal salary and benefits but are not allowed to start a job with a new employer.

Top tip

If you are offered a job and your new employer wants you to start before your notice ends, speak to your current employer. You need to be aware that you could lose your entitlement to your redundancy pay and/or your notice pay.

If you are unsure, take advice from your trade union, Acas or, in Northern Ireland, the Labour Relations Agency – see *Useful contacts* on page 46.

Last day checklist

On your last day at work you should receive the following:
Details of your pension
Job references from your employer
A letter stating the date of your redundancy
Your P45 (to give to your new employer so you're taxed correctly). If your employer doesn't provide you with your P45 on your last day, it must be within a reasonable time. You might agree, for example, to get it on your final payday.
Any redundancy pay, wages, holiday pay and other money due to you. This will usually happen on your next scheduled payday.
A written statement showing how your redundancy pay has been calculated.

Claim benefits and entitlements

As soon as you stop work, you should contact Jobcentre Plus or the Jobs and Benefits Office in Northern Ireland. These are the government agencies that handle benefit claims.

National Insurance credits

The amount of State Pension you eventually get and your entitlement to some other benefits depends on your National Insurance record.

You can get National Insurance credits automatically to keep up your entitlement to these benefits if you are unemployed and actively seeking work while claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or other means-tested benefits, including Universal Credit.

Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)

If you've lost your job, the main benefit you can claim is JSA. However, this depends on your National Insurance contributions (NICs) and household circumstances.

New style Jobseeker's Allowance

If you've made enough Class 1 NICs in the last two full tax years, you might be able to get new style Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). You can get this for up to six months and it will be paid into your bank, building society, or credit union account every two weeks.

Any lump sum redundancy payments won't affect your eligibility to claim JSA as claiming it doesn't depend on how much you have in savings. It will keep your National Insurance credits up to date as well.

Claiming Jobseeker's Allowance

To qualify for new style Jobseeker's Allowance, you must be under State Pension age and available for and actively seeking work. You will normally be able to claim this if you have been paying National Insurance contributions as an employee for the last two complete tax years (a tax year runs from 6 April one year until 5 April the next).

You will have to attend an interview as part of your claim and might have to attend the Jobcentre Plus (or Jobs and Benefits Office if you live in Northern Ireland) regularly.

How much is it?

JSA is paid for up to 182 days (roughly six months) and is not affected by your household savings. In 2025/26, JSA is paid at a flat rate of £92.05 a week, or £72.90 if you are under 25.

The amount of JSA you get is reduced pound for pound by any earnings you have over £5 a week. If your pension is over £50 a week, JSA is reduced pound for pound by the excess amount

Other income, such as interest from savings, does not affect the amount of JSA you get. If you have a partner, their earnings do not affect your JSA.

Did you know ?

If you haven't paid enough NICs to claim JSA, you might be able to claim Universal Credit instead.

Universal Credit

If your household income and savings are low and you need extra help with essential living costs, such as housing costs or bringing up children, you might be able to claim Universal Credit.

Universal Credit is based on household income, so if you live with someone as a couple, their income will affect how much you will get.

It is a means-tested benefit, so if you've received a lump sum redundancy payment and it takes your savings over £6,000, this will reduce the amount of Universal Credit you're likely to get.

If your household savings are over £16,000 you won't be able to claim Universal Credit. If you're worried about how savings or a payout might affect the Universal Credit you're getting now, it's best to speak to a Benefits specialist. You can find advice near you using Advicelocal.

See our website to find out more about Universal Credit **moneyhelper.org.uk/universal-credit-introduction**

Universal Credit payments

Universal Credit is paid directly into your bank, building society or credit union account.

If you live in England or Wales, you will receive a single household payment each month.

In Scotland, you can choose to receive payments every two weeks.

In Northern Ireland, you automatically get payments every two weeks, but can choose monthly payments instead.

Claiming Universal Credit

If you're claiming Universal Credit you will usually have to make your application and manage your claim online.

If you want help learning how to use a computer or improving your skills:

- Call or visit your local library
- Ask your Jobcentre Plus (Jobs and Benefits Office in Northern Ireland) work coach
- Call the National Careers Service on 0800 100 900, or Careers Service NI on 0300 200 7820.
- Visit **gov.uk/ukonline-centre-internet-access-computer-training** to find your nearest training centre
- Try the free courses on computer skills at **learnmyway.com**

Key point

You can use our Benefits calculator to get an estimate of how much you might get, **moneyhelper.org.uk/benefits-calculator**

Claimant commitment

If you're claiming Universal Credit, you will need to attend a face-to-face interview at Jobcentre Plus.

A work coach will help you draw up an agreement setting out the steps you agree to take to find work. This is called a claimant commitment.

You might have to attend your local Jobcentre Plus or keep in touch online with your work coach regularly to confirm your benefits claim.

Savings and means-tested benefits

Savings over £6,000 will start to reduce the amount of Universal Credit you get and savings over £16,000 will mean you don't qualify for an award.

Universal Credit elements

Depending on your circumstances, you will get a Universal Credit basic allowance and separate elements to cover housing, children and caring costs. The following amounts are for the 2025/26 tax year.

Basic allowance

If you're claiming Universal Credit, you will get one basic allowance for your household. The amount you will get is:

- £316.98 per month for single claimants under 25
- £400.14 per month for single claimants aged 25 or over
- £497.55 per month for joint claimants both under 25
- £628.10 per month for joint claimants with either aged 25 or over.

Child element

If you're looking after a child under the age of 16, or a qualifying young person under the age of 20, you qualify for the child element. This entitles you to:

- £339.00 per month for first or only child born before 6 April 2017
- £292.81 per month per child in all other circumstances.

You can only claim the child element for a maximum of two children, unless an exemption applies, such as a multiple birth or adoption.

If your child has a long-term health condition or is disabled, you might be entitled to one of the following disabled child elements:

- £158.76 per month per child or qualifying young person currently getting the lower rate addition of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- £495.87 per month per child or qualifying young person if they get the higher rate addition of DLA or enhanced rate of PIP, or are registered blind.

Help with childcare costs

If you're working you can get up to 85% of your childcare costs paid for, up to a maximum of £1,031.88 per month for one child, or £1,768.94 per month for two or more children. Both of you must be working if you're claiming as a couple unless the non-working partner:

- has limited capability for work or limited capability for work and work-related activity (LCWRA)
- is a carer for someone with a severe disability
- is temporarily absent, for example in prison, hospital or residential care.

Free childcare

If you find a job and need help with paying a deposit for a childcare place, or keeping a childcare place while you wait to start another job, speak to your work coach to see if the Flexible Support Fund can help.

In England, you're entitled to 15 hours of funded childcare for your child between nine months and two years old - from September 2025, this will go up to 30 hours. All three and four year olds are already entitled to 30 hours of funded childcare.

Schemes are different in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland - full information at **moneyhelper.org.uk/help-with-childcare-costs**

Limited capability for work and work-related activity element

This is paid if you or your partner can't work because of illness or disability. You will get £423.27 per month if you satisfy the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) and have a limited capability for work and work-related activity (LCWRA).

There are special rules around claiming LCWRA, so speak to a Benefits specialist if you need advice about making a claim.

Carer element

If you or your partner are caring for a severely disabled person for at least 35 hours a week, you will get £201.68 per month.

If you're claiming as a couple, certain rules apply, depending on how many people you're caring for and who is claiming the carer's element. Speak to a Benefits specialist to see how this will apply to you.

Find out more about how much Universal Credit you can get at **moneyhelper.org.uk/how-much-is-universal-credit**

Help with housing costs

Most people now have to claim Universal Credit if they need help with rent.

Housing costs element

The housing costs element helps you pay for all, or part, of your rent and some service charges.

How much you get depends on where you live and if you're a private or social tenant - see page 25.

In England and Wales, this money is paid into your bank account and you will be responsible for making the payment to your landlord.

In Scotland, you can choose to pay your rent yourself or have it paid directly to your landlord.

In Northern Ireland, your rent is automatically paid to your landlord. But you can choose to receive the money directly and pay your landlord yourself.

Private tenants

The housing costs element for private tenants is based on the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for where you live.

LHA is calculated on a formula for rental prices in your area for the number of rooms you need.

For example, a single claimant with no children, will have their LHA based on the cost of renting a one bedroom flat in that area.

This means your housing costs element might not cover all your rent. If this happens, you can apply to your local council for a Discretionary Housing Payment, which may help to make up the shortfall.

Social housing tenants

If you're a social housing tenant, the housing costs element is based on your eligible rent.

The eligible rent takes into consideration the number of bedrooms your household needs. This depends on things like: how many adults live in the house, how many dependent children you have and whether they are able to share a room. If you have more rooms than you need, you might have to pay a bedroom tax.

Homeowners

If you're a homeowner getting certain income-related benefits, including Universal Credit, you might be able to get help with your mortgage interest payments.

This is called Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) and is offered as a loan. SMI is normally paid directly to your lender, but only covers your interest payments, and not the amount you borrowed.

The loan must be repaid when you sell the property. It'll also need to be repaid if you die, unless your home is passed to your spouse or civil partner - the loan can then be paid back when they decide to sell the property.

You will usually have to wait 13 weeks before the loan will start, so you will need to think about how you pay your mortgage while you are waiting.

Talk to your mortgage lender to see if they can help.

You can find further information, options for repaying your loan and to find out if you qualify at **moneyhelper.org.uk/smi**
For housing advice and support see pages 37 to 39.

Council Tax Reduction

Most adults in England and Wales must pay Council Tax to their local council. However, if your income is low, your council may agree to reduce your bill. How much the reduction will be depends on your own council's local scheme.

Most councils won't backdate payments. So if you're claiming Universal Credit or Jobseeker's Allowance for the first time, don't waste any time. Make sure you apply for a reduction as soon as you've made your claim.

If you live alone, you are entitled to a single person discount.

Claim through your local council. Find out more on how to apply at **gov.uk/council-tax-reduction**

Rate rebate If you're claiming Universal Credit in Northern Ireland

If you're getting Universal Credit, you might be able to get some help towards paying your rates.

Find out more about applying for a Rate Rebate at **nidirect.gov.uk/articles/homeowners-and-tenants-applying-rate-rebate**

Land & Property Services, who look after Rate Rebate claims, won't backdate payments. So if you're claiming Universal Credit for the first time, don't waste any time.

You can find out more about rate relief at **nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/guide-rates**

Other benefits

If you're claiming Universal Credit you might be eligible for other means-tested benefits, depending on your circumstances.

You can get further information on all benefits and what you might be entitled to at **moneyhelper.org.uk/benefits**

Make the most of your redundancy pay

You may have received a lump sum redundancy payment. While you are deciding the best way to use the money, there are two things you need to do first.

Step 1 – Put some money aside for tax.

So if you end up with a tax bill at the end of the year you will be prepared. See page 15 for more about tax on redundancy pay.

Step 2 – Put it in an easy-access savings account.

This will mean it earns more interest than a current account but allows you to get it quickly when you need it.

The table on the next page gives some ideas for how to make the best use of your money.

Need help to keep on top of bills and payments?

Use our **Bill prioritiser** to help you sort out which ones to pay off first
moneyhelper.org.uk/cost-of-living/bill-prioritiser

Using your redundancy pay

Supplement your income until you get a new job	• Use the Budget builder on page 32 to work out how much you will need each week or month, and how long you can make the money last.
Clear debts, if this will bring spending down to a more manageable level	• Use the Budget builder on page 32 to work out the impact of the weekly or monthly saving on repayments. • Interest charged on debts is nearly always higher than the interest paid on savings. If you can, aim to clear any priority debts as quickly as possible. • Check if there are any early repayment penalties on debts you are thinking of repaying in full. • Repaying debts could affect any claim for means-tested benefits if you did not have to repay the debts and did so at least in part to increase your benefits by reducing your savings. But paying off priority debts, such as mortgage or rent arrears, is unlikely to affect your benefits. This is a complex area so get advice from a benefits or debt adviser — see *Useful contacts* on page 46.
Use as capital to retrain or start your own business	• Pay for retraining to broaden your skills. • If you are claiming benefits, ask Jobcentre Plus (Jobs and Benefits Office in Northern Ireland) about financial support while you start up your business.
Boost your pension savings or invest in other ways	• You get tax relief on the amount you pay into a pension scheme up to set limits (see p30). • If you're thinking of doing this, make sure you get advice from a financial adviser – see *Useful contacts* on page 46.

Top tip

Try to keep some of your redundancy money for unexpected costs, such as a car or house repairs. Aim to have an amount equal to three months' essential spending.

Saving or investing redundancy pay

If you don't need to use your redundancy money straight away, you may want to save or invest it.

Short-term and low-risk saving

If you will need to access the money to help you now, a savings account is likely to be suitable. You could consider for example:

- **Cash ISAs.** Interest is tax free and many give you easy access. You can save up to £20,000 in a cash ISA in the current tax year 2025/26. You can either invest in just one type of ISA, or split the allowance between different types. Even if you split it, you can't invest more than £20,000.
- **Fixed-term accounts.** If you are confident you don't need the money now, you can usually get a better interest rate by agreeing to leave your money untouched for a set period, usually between one and five years.

Shop around for the best savings accounts online at **moneysavingexpert.com/savings/savings-accounts-best-interest/**

Longer-term investing

If you don't need your redundancy pay for immediate expenses, you could consider investing it. But if you are not sure how long you will be unemployed, this may not be a good idea.

- **Stocks and shares ISA.** Your money will be invested in stocks and shares, but you can still take advantage of the tax-free ISA limit.

Share-based investments are riskier because the value of your investment can fall as well as rise, so they are not a home for money you might need back soon or at short notice.

If you are new to investing or you have a large amount to invest, get help from a financial adviser – see *Useful contacts* on page 46.

For more information visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/beginners-guide-to-investing**

Key point

If you think you might need access to your money immediately, a savings account is going to be more suitable than shares or other investments.

Use your redundancy money to boost your pension

- If you are close to retirement, you could put some or all of your redundancy money into your pension scheme at work to boost the pension you are about to take. Discuss this with your HR department to find out how it could increase the pension you might get.
- If retirement is still some way off, you could invest your redundancy money in a personal pension scheme to help boost your income in retirement. If you belong to NEST, you could put some of your redundancy money there instead.

Tax relief on pensions

Putting money into a pension is a tax-efficient way of investing, but you will not usually be able to access your savings until you are at least 55 years old (rising to 57 from 2028).

The amount you pay into a pension may qualify for tax relief, within limits.

If you're a UK taxpayer, in the tax year 2025/26 you may qualify for tax relief on pension contributions of up to 100% of your earnings or £60,000 (known as the annual allowance), whichever is lower.

For example, if you earn £20,000 in total during the tax year, you can get tax relief on up to £20,000 of pension contributions.

If you have no earnings, or earn less than £3,600 a year, then you can still get tax relief added to your pension contributions up to £2,880 a year.

Including tax relief, this means £3,600 will be paid into your pension scheme.

If you've already started to draw an income for your pension, a reduced annual allowance of £10,000 may apply if you're paying into a defined contribution pension, known as the money purchase annual allowance (MPAA).

For more information visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/tax-on-pension-contributions**

The Tapered Annual Allowance

For every £2 of income above £260,000 a year, £1 of annual allowance will be lost. The maximum reduction will be £50,000, meaning that if you're earning over £360,000 you will have your annual allowance capped at £10,000.

An income floor will mean the taper will not apply unless your income excluding pension contributions exceeds £200,000 (referred to as your 'threshold income').

This is a complex area so always get help from a financial adviser. See *Useful contacts* on page 46.

How to manage on less money

Whether your job is already at risk or you're worrying about potential cuts, one of the most important things you can do at this time is to take stock of your finances and start to take control.

Draw up a budget

A budget is simply a list of all your income and spending. If you've already been made redundant you may need to budget carefully until you get a new job.

Use our online Budget planner at **moneyhelper.org.uk/budget-planner**

Or complete the **Budget builder** on p32.

Whatever is going on in your life, there are ways to make your income go further. Learn how to cut back on costs and see what extra help is available.

Find out more at **moneyhelper.org.uk/cost-of-living/squeezed-income**

Budget planner

Use our **Budget planner** to work out how you can make changes to stretch your money.

This tool will give you a clear picture of what you have coming in and what needs to go out.

Visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/budget-planner**

Budget builder

Your income		£
Benefits (Jobseeker's Allowance, Universal Credit, other)		
Income from any insurance policies		
Earnings from any jobs or self-employment		
Other income (for example, from savings, rental income)		
Total income	**A**	

Your spending		£
Housing costs (rent or mortgage, service charge/ground rent, Council Tax, Rates in Northern Ireland, maintenance/repairs) but not any amounts covered by Council Tax Reduction or support for housing costs.		
Household bills (electricity, gas, oil/solid fuel, water, phone, broadband, TV)		
Food and general shopping		
Insurance (buildings, contents, car, life, health, pet)		
Transport costs (petrol/diesel, road tax, car maintenance and MOT, parking, bus, train, tube, other)		
Loan repayments (other than mortgage)		
Regular savings		
Job search costs (using internet, phone calls, photocopying, postage, travel to interviews)		
Other spending		
Total spending	**B**	
Spare cash or overspend	**A–B**	

Money-making tips

Facing redundancy? There are lots of ways to boost your income when times are tough. In this section we highlight a few things you can do.

Shop around to save money

- Make sure you get the best deals on your bills. Use more than one comparison website to shop around.
- Shop around when your car and home insurance come up for renewal as many insurers may charge more if you are unemployed.
- See whether there are other ways to spend less and shop smarter or cut back on non-essentials.

Get help with heating bills

Most big energy suppliers have a Warm Home Discount for vulnerable customers. It is up to each fuel provider to decide who they consider as vulnerable. Your income must be low, but you may need to meet other conditions too, such as having children or an elderly or disabled person as part of your household.

If you're claiming certain benefits or looking for work, you might qualify for social tariffs with your energy, phone and broadband providers. Ask your provider or search 'social tariffs' at **ofcom.org.uk** for a list of who offers phone and broadband deals.

For information contact your energy provider directly or visit **gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme**

Did you know?

Turning down your heating by one degree can save around £145 a year in a typical home.
Source: Energy Saving Trust

See if you can claim a tax rebate

Find out from your tax office whether you are due a tax rebate now that your income is lower. If your earnings stop part-way through the year, you may have some unused allowance for the year and can claim a tax rebate.

Visit
moneyhelper.org.uk/tax-rebate

Take in a lodger

Under the rent-a-room scheme, you can earn up to £7,500 a year in rental income tax-free if you take in a lodger. However, bear in mind that any taxable income from renting out a room might be taken into account when working out your entitlement to some benefits.

- Get permission from your mortgage provider or landlord.
- Tell your home insurer – having a lodger may affect your cover or premium.
- If you're claiming benefits, get specialist advice before you rent out a room to find out how it could affect you.

Find out more at
moneyhelper.org.uk/rent-a-room

Take on casual work

You may be able to get some temporary or casual work, but this will affect your entitlement to some benefits.

Top tip

Comparing deals on mobile phone, broadband, satellite TV, credit cards and other bills could save you £100s each year.

Get help with borrowing and debts

Borrowing and credit are part of everyday life, whether it's your mortgage, car loan or card repayments. These payments are easy to make when you have money coming in, but can become difficult if you lose your job.

Use your savings to pay off loans

It doesn't make sense to sit on your savings while you're paying for expensive borrowing. Use your savings if you have them to pay off credit card bills and loans. Savings usually earn less interest than is charged on loans, so this will usually improve your finances.

To find out more, visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/save-or-pay-off-debt**

Talk to people you owe money to

If you're starting to have problems with your debts you should make a budget, prioritise your debts (see next page) and talk to the people you owe money to.

To find out more, visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/en/money-troubles/dealing-with-debt**

Get help if you are struggling with debt

If you're having money worries, getting advice might seem a scary thought – but it can be the best thing you can do.

The good news is that free, confidential help is available to everyone. Citizens Advice, National Debtline, StepChange and other debt advice charities are run by experienced and knowledgeable people who can help.

See *Useful contacts* on page 46 or go to: **moneyhelper.org.uk/debt-advice-locator**

Priority and non-priority debts

By paying the right debts first, you're more likely to be able to keep your home – and the heating on. And by being clever about how you repay, you could also save money and clear your debts faster.

To find out more, visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/cost-of-living/bill-prioritiser**

Priority debts	Non-priority debts
These are a priority because there are serious consequences if you don't pay them, for example, you could lose your home or your gas and electricity could be cut off. But this would be a last resort.	If you do not pay these, you could be taken to court. This could lead to bailiffs removing your belongings from your home.

Examples of priority debts	Examples of non-priority debts
• Your rent or mortgage (or other loan secured on your home) • Gas and electricity bills • Essential items bought on hire purchase (such as a car you need for work) • Council Tax arrears (England and Wales only) • Court fines and maintenance payments • TV Licence • Tax debts	• Credit debts, such as overdrafts, loans, hire purchase on non-essentials, credit cards and catalogue debts • Student loans (although repayments should stop if your income falls below a specified level) • Money borrowed from friends and family

Watch out for companies with misleading names that sound like debt charities but are actually businesses. Never pay for debt advice services. Use one of the free services – see *Useful contacts* on page 46 or visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/how-to-prioritise-debts**

Safeguard your home

If you lose your job you may be worried about losing your home as well. Make paying your rent or mortgage (or any other loan secured on your home) a priority and get advice quickly if you get into difficulties.

If you're having problems paying your rent or mortgage, don't suffer in silence – help is available. The first thing you should do is contact your landlord or mortgage lender. Several organisations offer free housing advice and can help you claim any benefits you are entitled to. You also have housing rights, which ensure you cannot be forced to leave your home without notice.

Shelter (England and Scotland)

0808 800 4444
shelter.org.uk

Shelter Cymru (Wales)

08000 495 495
sheltercymru.org.uk

Housing Rights Service (Northern Ireland)

028 9024 5640
housingrights.org.uk

Problems paying your rent

If you are having difficulty paying your rent, find out if you qualify for any benefits. This may include:

- Housing costs element of Universal Credit towards your rent payments (see p22-23), or
- other benefits which could help ease the strain on your budget (see p26).

If you were getting Housing Benefit

If you were getting Housing Benefit and have now applied for Universal Credit, your Housing Benefit will be paid for a further two weeks after you submit your Universal Credit claim. After then, it will stop. If you will have a problem paying your rent before you get your first Universal Credit payment, talk to your work coach about an advance payment.

Discretionary Housing Payments

The housing costs element may not cover all of your rent, particularly if you live in private rented accommodation. If you have a rent shortfall you can apply to your local council for a Discretionary Housing Payment to make up the difference.

Contact your landlord straight away

As soon as you start having difficulty paying your rent, contact your landlord and explain your situation. You may be able to come to an arrangement with them to pay back any arrears in instalments each week, on top of your usual rent payments. If you are a council tenant, your local council will have a policy about how it collects rent arrears.

Get help and advice

If your landlord wants to evict you because you are behind with your rent, don't panic. By law, your landlord must follow set procedures for evicting you, and while this is happening, you will have time to get advice and help with finding a new home. Whatever your circumstances, free help and advice is always available.

Find out more at
moneyhelper.org.uk/rent-arrears

Shelter (England and Scotland)

0808 800 4444
shelter.org.uk

Shelter Cymru (Wales)

08000 495 495
sheltercymru.org.uk

Housing Rights Service (Northern Ireland)

028 9024 5640
housingrights.org.uk

Problems paying a mortgage

If you are a homeowner and having difficulty paying your mortgage, there are two things you should do first:

1. Check whether you have mortgage or income payment protection insurance that you can claim on to help with your mortgage repayments.
2. Find out if you are entitled to any benefits (see p21).

If you don't think you'll be able to carry on making your mortgage payments, contact your lender straight away. Delaying this could reduce the options available to you. Your lender should discuss with you ways to make your repayments more affordable. These could include:

- **reducing your monthly repayments** by lengthening the term of your mortgage
- **taking a payment holiday** or agreeing a temporary reduction in your payments
- **renting out your property** temporarily while you live somewhere cheaper
- **giving you time to sell your home**, as you are likely to get a better price than if your lender repossesses your home and sells it for you.

Help with mortgage costs

If you're on certain means-tested benefits, including Universal Credit, you may be able to get help with your mortgage interest payments, called Support for Mortgage Interest. This is paid as a loan 13 weeks after your claim.

This is capped on the first £200,000 of your mortgage balance, or £100,000 if you're on Pension Credit.

Find out more about Support for Mortgage Interest, including who's eligible and how much you'll get: **gov.uk/support-for-mortgage-interest**

If you are facing repossession, get advice straight away. Call the Shelter Helpline on 0808 800 4444.

Find out what you can do if you're in mortgage arrears or have problems paying your mortgage at **moneyhelper.org.uk/problems-paying-your-mortgage**

Work on your job search

State help finding a job

Your local Jobcentre Plus (Jobs and Benefits Office in Northern Ireland) will give you help and advice on getting back to work. This includes:

- **Job vacancies** – Jobcentre Plus has the UK's largest database of job vacancies (called Find A Job or JobCentre Online NI in Northern Ireland).
- **Help and advice** on writing a CV, applying for jobs, filling in application forms and preparing for interviews.

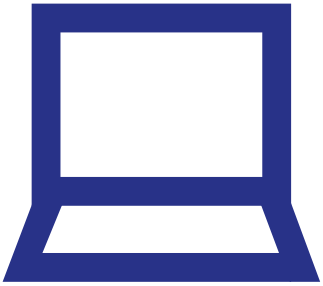
They can also talk to you about the extra help that may be available if you need help with your reading, maths or English, or if you need help looking for professional or executive jobs.

If you are still unemployed after three months, you may be required to join a Work and Health Programme. These are run by organisations working in partnership with the government and provide tailored help preparing for and finding work. Learn more at **gov.uk/work-health-programme**

Jobcentre Plus may also be able to arrange a work trial for you. This is where you can try out a job to see if you are the right person for it. Work trials can be for up to 30 working days and your benefits continue throughout this period. If the trial doesn't work out and you are not offered a job, this won't affect your benefits.

Look for a new job

Jobs are advertised in many places, some of which are shown opposite. It is also worth contacting employers direct, because companies do not always advertise their vacancies – which means fewer people will know about any vacancy so there will be less competition for the job.



Look for a new job

Where?	Details
Jobcentre Plus Rapid Response Service (England)	You can contact the Rapid Response Service if you're in your notice period and up to 13 weeks after you've left your job. They offer: ● help with writing CVs ● help with claiming benefits ● work trials ● access to work if you're disabled ● support with travel and childcare costs ● support with work clothes, tools or equipment. Find out more at **gov.uk/redundancy-your-rights/get-help-finding-a-new-job**
Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (Scotland)	**myworldofwork.co.uk**
Working Wales (Wales)	**workingwales.gov.wales**
ni direct (Northern Ireland)	**nidirect.gov.uk/articles/employment-support-information**
Recruitment agencies	● For agencies in your area, search local agencies online or contact the Recruitment and Employment Confederation – see *Useful contacts* on page 46. ● For agencies that cover particular job types, try business directories and the internet.

Where?	Details
The internet	• Many employers and newspapers advertise jobs on their websites. • Some websites allow you to search a large number of job listings across the UK, such as Indeed and LinkedIn. • There are also online employment agencies as well as local recruitment agency websites. • You can use computers at public libraries if you don't have your own access to the internet.
Newspapers	• Many local newspapers advertise jobs and national newspapers often cover different types of jobs on different days.
Professional and trade journals	• If you are looking for work in a particular field, find out if there is a journal for that type of work – your public library should know. These journals often have job advertisements.
Shop windows	• Local shops, businesses and supermarkets often place a card in their window or on a noticeboard inside.
Work contacts	• Don't feel embarrassed to mention to people that you are looking for a new job. Ask if they know of any possible jobs that may be suitable for you, at their company or another firm.
Friends and family	• They may hear about job opportunities, perhaps in their own firm if they are working, and may be able to put in a good word for you.

Write an effective CV

Your CV is your gateway to getting interviews. It's essential that your CV grabs the recruiter's attention and gives the information they are looking for.

- Use the free CV builder on the National Careers Service website – see *Useful contacts* on page 46.
- For free help and advice on writing an effective CV, contact your nearest Jobcentre Plus.

Improve your interview technique

Most people find interviews nerve-wracking. But good preparation can help you feel more confident and can improve your chance of getting the job.

As part of the redundancy process your former employer may offer interview training and, if you have joined a recruitment agency, it will give you advice. There is also guidance on the National Careers Service website – see *Useful contacts* on page 46.

Consider retraining

Redundancy can be a time to reassess your job ambitions. You may decide to update your skills or learn new ones to improve your chances of getting a job or to give you new work opportunities.

Training courses

There are hundreds of training courses held at local and private colleges at various times. You have to pay for most courses, but if you are unemployed they may be free or at reduced rates.

- Contact local colleges or the National Careers Service (England), Skills Development Scotland, Careers Wales or Careers Service Northern Ireland or local colleges – see *Useful contacts* on page 46.
- If you are interested in distance learning, Learn Direct offers a wide range of courses that you can do at your own pace over the internet, or you could consider courses offered by The Open University – see *Useful contacts* on page 46.

Apprenticeships

As an apprentice, you earn a wage while you are being trained and may eventually gain a qualification. For details of apprenticeship schemes see *Useful contacts* on page 46.

Alternatives to formal training

There are several other things you can do to gain valuable experience, which can help you feel more confident and improve your chances of getting a job. These may include:

- taking on part-time or temporary work
- getting involved in a local community group
- volunteering.

However, you should first check whether this could affect any benefits you are claiming – contact Jobcentre Plus, or Jobs and Benefits Office in Northern Ireland, or a Benefits adviser – see *Useful contacts* on page 46.

Starting your own business

Working for yourself can be very rewarding and, in some cases, highly profitable too. It's a chance to do something that really interests you in a way that fits in with your lifestyle and commitments.

However, new business start-ups are notoriously fickle and many end in failure. You don't want to end up putting in hours of hard work and investing a lot of money, only for your business to fail in the end.

Fortunately, when it comes to starting your own business, there's plenty of help and advice out there.

Jobcentre Plus (Jobs and Benefits Office in Northern Ireland) can tell you about financial support available to help people receiving benefits start a business.

Visit the GOV.UK website for guidance on how to register a new business so that you meet the tax rules, and for advice on all aspects of starting up a new business.

Remember

The message is simple: when you're setting up a business – plan, plan, then plan some more.

Useful contacts

MoneyHelper

MoneyHelper is independent and backed by government to help you make the most of your money. We give free, impartial money and pensions guidance to everyone across the UK – online and over the phone.

Visit us at **moneyhelper.org.uk**

Or contact us via:

Phone

Money guidance
UK: **0800 138 7777**
if you're outside the UK:
+44 20 3553 2279
Mon - Fri 8am to 6pm

Pensions guidance
UK: **0800 011 3797**
if you're outside the UK:
+44 20 7932 5780
Mon - Fri 9am to 5pm

Webchat

moneyhelper.org.uk/moneychat

moneyhelper.org.uk/pensionschat

WhatsApp

+44 7701 342744
(money guidance only)

Online communities

Join our Facebook groups for support: **moneyhelper.org.uk/online-communities**

Debt problems

Citizens Advice

citizensadvice.org.uk

Citizens Advice Help to Claim

Telephone: 0800 144 8848
Textphone: 18001 0800 144 8 444

StepChange Debt Charity

0800 138 1111
stepchange.org

National Debtline

0808 808 4000
nationaldebtline.org

Money Advice Scotland

0141 204 0086
moneyadvicescotland.org.uk

AdviceNI

028 9064 5919
adviceni.net/money-debt

Find a financial adviser

The Personal Finance Society

For financial advisers in your area.
thepfs.org

Finding a job

Recruitment and Employment Confederation

020 7009 2100
rec.uk.com

National Careers Service

0800 100 900
nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

Housing advice

Shelter (England and Scotland)

0808 800 4444
shelter.org.uk

Shelter Cymru (Wales)

08000 495 495
sheltercymru.org.uk

Housing Rights Service (Northern Ireland)

028 9024 5640
housingrights.org.uk

Citizens Advice

citizensadvice.org.uk

Help with benefits

If you're claiming Universal Credit for the first time, Citizens Advice has a dedicated service to help you.

England: 0800 144 8444

Scotland: 0800 023 2581

Wales: 08000 241 220

Or find your nearest Citizens Advice at **citizensadvice.org.uk** in England and Wales or **cas.org.uk** in Scotland.

Jobcentre

Jobcentre Plus (Great Britain)

0800 055 6688
gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

Find a job
gov.uk/find-a-job

Jobs and Benefits Office or Social Security Office (Northern Ireland)

Search for jobs and benefits
nidirect.gov.uk

Job vacancies: Jobcentre Online NI
jobapplyni.com

Local authority or council

Local council – to find yours visit
gov.uk/find-your-local-council

Pensions

Pension Wise

0800 138 3944
moneyhelper.org.uk/pensionwise

Redundancy

Redundancy Payment Service

gov.uk/claim-redundancy

Acas

0300 123 1100
acas.org.uk

Citizens Advice

citizensadvice.org.uk

Labour Relations Agency (Northern Ireland)

03300 555 300
lra.org.uk

Employment Tribunals Service

gov.uk/courts-tribunals/employment-tribunal

Retraining

Apprenticeship schemes

England:
gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

Wales:
gov.wales/welsh-government-apprentices

Scotland:
apprenticeships.scot

Northern Ireland:
nidirect.gov.uk/apprenticeships

National Careers Service

0800 100 900
nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

Careers Wales

0800 028 4844
careerswales.com

Careers Service Northern Ireland

0300 200 7820
nidirect.gov.uk/careers

Learn Direct

01202 006 464
learndirect.com

Open University

open.ac.uk

Skills Development Scotland (career advice and guidance)

0800 917 8000
myworldofwork.co.uk

Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) – redundancy support service in Scotland

0800 917 8000
redundancyscotland.co.uk

Online Centres Network

gov.uk/ukonline-centre-internet-access-computer-training

Learn My Way

learnmyway.com

Tax

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)

0300 200 3300
hmrc.gov.uk

Use this page to record your notes

This guide is produced by MoneyHelper and is also available in Welsh. To see our full range of guides and request copies visit **moneyhelper.org.uk/free-printed-guides**

Cymraeg

Contact us

Money guidance **0800 138 7777**
Mon - Fri 8am to 6pm

Pensions guidance **0800 011 3797**
Mon - Fri 9am to 5pm

Text relay services **1800 1 0800 915 4622**
Mon - Fri 8am to 6pm

WhatsApp **+44 7701 342744**

Website **moneyhelper.org.uk**

MoneyHelper

Calls from the UK are free. To help us maintain and improve our service, we may record or monitor calls.

Accessible formats
If you would like this guide in Braille, large print or audio format please contact us on the above numbers. Information correct at time of printing (April 2025). These guides are reviewed once a year.

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