

Managing Redundancy, Looking for Work & Getting Support

Unemployment in East Herts has risen considerably as a result of Covid. This fact sheet aims to provide some tips and reference points for people managing the transition in and out of work. Details on how to contact us for tailored advice are at the end.

Check how much redundancy pay you can get

Have a look at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/leaving-a-job/redundancy/redundancy-pay
If you're not able to access the internet, give us a call and we can go through with you.

Check you have received all the money you are entitled to

When you get your final pay, you should check you received:

- any redundancy pay you're entitled to (or you've been told when you'll get it)
- your last wages/salary
- any 'pay in lieu' if you're not working your full notice
- any holiday pay you're entitled to
- any outstanding bonus, commission or expenses you're entitled to

Speak to your employer or call us if there's a problem with your final pay. **ACAS** can help resolve disputes with your employer. 0300 123 1100 www.acas.org.uk

Check if you have to pay tax on your redundancy pay

The first £30,000 of your redundancy pay is tax free. For any redundancy pay over £30,000, your employer will take the tax from your redundancy pay at your normal tax rate. However, if your employer pays you your final pay after you leave your job, they'll take the tax from your redundancy pay at the basic rate of 20%. If you pay a higher tax rate, you need to call HMRC to arrange to pay the extra tax. Your notice pay is taxed as your normal pay would be.

HM Revenue and Customs Taxes Helpline: 0300 200 3300 Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm;
Saturday 8am to 4pm

Get independent financial advice

If you got redundancy pay, you might want to speak to an independent financial adviser about what to do with it. For example, you might choose to put it in a high-interest account or invest it. You can find an independent financial adviser through:

- **Independent Financial Promotions (IFAP)**
Website: www.unbiased.co.uk
- **Personal Finance Society (PFS)**
Email: customer.serv@thepfs.org
Website: www.findanadviser.org

The Money Advice Service also has useful information to help you decide how to make the most of your redundancy pay - www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/making-the-most-of-your-redundancy-pay

Claiming benefits

You might be able to claim benefits while you're looking for a new job, like Universal Credit. You might also be able to get a higher amount of benefits you already get, for example:

- Universal Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Reduction
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- tax credits

To see what benefits you may be entitled to you can use an online calculator, eg www.betteroffcalculator.co.uk/free. If you are unable to use the online benefit calculator, please call us and one of our advisers will carry out a benefit check for you.

Citizens Advice has a dedicated **Help to Claim** service, which offers support for anyone who is applying for Universal Credit for the first time. Call us on 0800 144 8 444 or contact us at citizensadvice.org.uk/helpclaim

If you receive tax credits (whether working or childcare elements) and your circumstances change it is vital that you tell the tax credits office within one month, otherwise you could be fined £300 as well as paying back any overpayments.

Help paying your rent or mortgage

- **You might be able to claim Universal Credit housing costs or Housing Benefit** to help pay your rent - the benefits checkers above will help you to find out what benefits you may be entitled to.
- **Check your mortgage protection policy** to see what it says about redundancy. You might get some money towards your mortgage while you look for a new job.
- **Mortgage lenders should offer a 'payment holiday' or 'partial payment holiday'**, allowing a temporary break from or reduction in mortgage payments if needed. If you're going to apply for this it's best to do it online if possible as lenders' phone lines are very busy. NB. Don't just stop or change your direct debit or standing order. Any mortgage holiday **MUST** be agreed with your lender first.
- **Mortgage holders already on a payment holiday should be able to extend it for a further 3 months.** If you can't start making full or part payments on your mortgage once your initial deferral comes to an end, you should be able to ask to extend your payment holiday. If the lender thinks this would land you in financial difficulty, it will be able to deny the payment holiday and offer other help.
- **Mortgage holders who haven't yet applied for a payment holiday can do so until 31 October 2020.** This lets people who are currently making payments but are concerned about the future have more time to make the decision.
- **Lenders won't be able to repossess properties until after 31 October.** The previous ban on this has also been extended.

Get advice about any debts

You should get advice about any debts you have already. If you don't know where to start, our advisers can help – call for an appointment.

- **For online information and advice** about how to start dealing with your debts, go to www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/help-with-debt/
- **National Debtline** provide free, independent help with managing your debts online or over the telephone www.nationaldebtline.org/
- **Use a budgeting tool** if you're worried about getting into debt after your redundancy, such as this one from Citizens Advice, which helps you to see exactly where your money goes each month. www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/budgeting/budgeting/work-out-your-budget/
- **If you've bought something on credit**, check whether you've got a payment protection insurance policy that will pay off the credit because you've been made redundant.
- **Numerous other measures** are in place to support people whose incomes have been directly impacted by coronavirus. This includes credit card and loan help, overdrafts, car finance, and energy support, as well forms of payment holidays. Speak to one of our advisers for more information.
- **The Money Advice Service** has produced a helpful guide which helps you to manage your money, find out what help is available from your account providers and what to think about if you need to borrow money. www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/articles/coronavirus-and-your-money

Making a career change

The National Careers Service provides advice if you want to get a new qualification or make a career change, like starting your own business. www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk, 0800 100 900 - Open 8am to 10pm seven days a week

You might be able to get help paying for training and qualifications. For information on:

- **professional and career development loans** - to pay for courses and training to further your career go to www.gov.uk/career-development-loans
- **student loans** - to help you pay for a degree www.gov.uk/student-finance
- **grants and bursaries** - to help pay for courses and training www.gov.uk/grant-bursary-adult-learners

Volunteering is also a great way to learn new skills and enhance your CV.

Ongoing support

Redundancy can often take more of an emotional toll than people expect, especially if the consultation and selection process has taken a while. If you're finding the redundancy process difficult, check any paperwork you were given as part of your package to see if you're entitled to any ongoing support. For example, some organisations provide a free helpline number for people to talk about their redundancy or any other personal issues. Your employer might also pay for you to speak to a professional adviser about your CV. Losing your job can add stress to any relationship. Don't be afraid to tell family and friends your news.

- Relate can help with relationship problems www.relate.org.uk/ 0300 0030396
- The Samaritans are always there to help, either through their website or on the phone 116 123 (it's free to call). <https://www.samaritans.org/>

Help getting a new job

- Ask your employer for a written reference, as you can send this with your job applications.
- **Contact your local Jobcentre** and ask for their Rapid Response Service - they specialise in helping people who have been made redundant. You can use the service during your notice period and for up to 13 weeks after you've been made redundant. www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus. NB. Please note Jobcentres are currently temporarily closed for face to face support but are offering virtual support by telephone.
- **The National Careers Service** includes useful career profiles, CV builder, training advice etc. <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>
- **Prospects** provides useful graduate focussed career advice, job-searching information, etc. <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/>
- **The new Job Help website** set up by the Government has information to help you in your job search as well as thousands of jobs from registered employers www.jobhelp.campaign.gov.uk/
- Julie Marson MP (Hertford & Bishop's Stortford) is hosting a **virtual jobs fair on Friday 18th September 10am-1pm**. Details to follow – see <https://www.facebook.com/JulieMarson.MP>

Support with travel costs

A Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card is provided to those unemployed claiming Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit for 3-9 months (18-24 year olds) or 3-12 months (over 25s). Other benefit recipients may receive a Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card from 3 months of their claim if they are actively engaged with a Jobcentre Plus adviser. Cardholders are entitled to a 50% discount on selected rail tickets. You can also get this discount added to your Oyster card if you live in or near London. It gives you 50% off Oyster pay-as-you-go fares, or allows you to pay the children's rate for weekly or monthly travel cards. The cards are valid for three months – the expiry date will be printed on the front of the discount card.

Contact us

We're here to help if you need to talk things through:

- **Adviceline (Herts):** 03444 111 444 (10:00 – 16:00 Monday – Friday)
- **Message Line for East Herts residents:** 01920 459944 – call anytime and leave a message. An adviser will get back to you within 24 hours (messages received between Thursday 15:00 – Sunday, will be responded to on the following Monday)

www.citizensadviceeastherts.org.uk