

Factsheet



How to Handle Redundancy

The IET Benevolent Fund

Losing your job can be a blow to your self-esteem, your confidence and your finances. Stress and feelings of rejection can be overwhelming. It's natural to go through a type of grieving process and initially you might feel hurt, shocked and angry.

Everyone reacts differently and even the most positive of people can find it hard to keep optimistic. After you've got over the shock, it's important to move on. On the plus side you might see this change as an opportunity.

Here are some tips to help you cope:

What happens...

1. **Check your financial situation.** Losing or changing your job, for whatever reason, raises a huge range of financial issues. Find out what your payout will be (generally you only pay tax on anything over £30,000). Keep control of your budget. List all of your outgoings, divide them into essentials (utility bills, food and the mortgage) and non essentials (such as socialising and leisure), and work out the total sum you spend on each category. Think about whether you can reduce any expenditure. The Fund can also advise on how to handle any debts that you may be having trouble repaying.

You may be entitled to state benefits. Some benefits are contribution based and the amount depends on what type of national insurance contributions you paid when you were working. Other benefits are means tested which means that an assessment will be made of what income, savings or capital you have.

You may be entitled to Jobseeker's Allowance. If you have children, you may be entitled to Child Tax Credit. If you are sick or disabled you may be eligible for Incapacity Benefit or Income Support. You may also qualify for the latter if you are a lone parent or a carer. Housing Benefit, towards rent, and Council Tax Benefit might also be available if you are on a low income. If you own or are buying your own home and you receive Income Support, Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance or Pension Credit, you can be entitled to help with your housing costs, although this may not be immediately available.

Different Benefits are dealt with by Different agencies. Contact your local Job Centre for advice on Job Seeker's Allowance, your Local Authority for Housing and Council Tax Benefits, HMRC for Tax Credits (<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/TAXCREDITS>) and the Benefits Agency for Income Support and other benefits advice.

The Citizen's Advice Bureau or the Benevolent Fund can also help with advice on entitlement, or alternatively check the Citizens Advice Bureau website at <http://www.adviceguide.org.uk> .

2. **Check your legal position.** Redundancy is not the same as being sacked and it comes with a number of statutory rights, including minimum standards, notice and pay. If you disagree with what you're offered, you only have six months to do something about it. It's advisable not to sign anything until it has been checked by a union or an employment law solicitor. The Benevolent Fund has a legal helpline for members and it can advise on redundancy and employment and you contact the Fund for more information.

3. **What other help is there?** Check your contract. Your former employer might help you with a career-coaching session.

What next...

4. **Be open minded.** For some people, redundancy can be the stimulus behind making the career change they've always dreamed about, like starting their own company, retraining, changing career, getting a better work-life balance or even traveling.

5. **Give yourself a career check.** Refresh and update your CV. Make a list of all of your skills, not just those you used in your most recent job. Write down what you know you are good at. Ask others they think you are good at. Remind yourself of your skills and your achievements. Remember, that these skills are personal assets and transferable, so don't take any of them for granted.

6. **Don't rush into the first available job** because you are worried you won't get another one. You spend a lot of time at work so you want to be sure you get the right job for you.

7. **Imagine yourself in your dream job and lifestyle.** What changes will you need to make to get there? Thinking about your ideal job will help keep you open minded and focused.

8. **Think about what motivates you** and what is important to you. You will be more effective if you can fit these values to a job. Keep active and

fit. It is proven that physical exercise helps people to feel better about themselves.

9. **Think carefully about retraining** - talk to professionals in your chosen sector first before embarking on a course.

10. **Consider part-time study.** Look at research grants and charitable trusts that could sponsor you. The Educational Grants Directory, published by the Directory of Social Change, lists thousands of sources of funding. The Benevolent Fund can also advise you.

11. **Watch out for volunteering opportunities** for work placements (even if they are unpaid). Useful skills can be built up, show a productive use of time and count just as much as experience gained in paid work.

12. **Use online recruitment services** such as Guardian Jobs to get an idea of the skills needed and the salary that you can expect.

13. **Most jobs come through networking.** Talk to everyone you know in your field as well as anyone else.

14. **Don't be ashamed of being made redundant,** it's commonplace and doesn't carry the stigma it used to. Talk about your redundancy in neutral terms, such as 'It happened to the whole department'. Tell interviewers how much you learnt in your job but that you are now having the chance to follow other challenges.

Remember it isn't you that is redundant it is your job. Most career changes end up as success stories, as people draw on unused skills and resources to find a more rewarding lifestyle.

More information

There are plenty of sources of help and advice.

- For general advice contact IET Connect on 0845 685 0685 or visit the website at www.ietconnect.org
- www.redundancyhelp.co.uk offers information on everything from CV writing, debt management to keeping positive.
- Get more assistance from Acas on 0845 7474747 or www.acas.org.uk
- Check www.businesslink.gov.uk to find out how to go about setting up a new business.
- For legal advice contact IET Connect, which has access to a free legal helpline for members. Otherwise, www.lawsociety.org.uk can help you to find an employment specialist.
- <http://www.adviceguide.org.uk> is the Citizens Advice Bureau website

puts practical, reliable, up-to-date information on legal and statutory rights.

- For advice on tax credits visit the HMRC website at <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/TAXCREDITS/>. You can also apply for tax credits online.