

Help yourself... if you're made redundant

If you've been made redundant, this leaflet will help you find out about your rights, what benefits you may be entitled to, and where you can get more help and information.



This leaflet will help you if you've recently been made redundant and want to check your rights and what benefits you can get while you're looking for work.

If you're not looking for work, for example, because of sickness or disability or you have reached retirement age, there may be other benefits you can claim. Your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) can advise you further or see www.adviceguide.org.uk.

1 Check your legal rights

If you're being made redundant, you have legal rights. For example:

- you must not be unfairly chosen for redundancy
- your employer must consult with you before deciding to make you redundant
- your employer must follow the correct procedures and give you proper notice
- you should be offered any suitable alternative work and be given time off to look for a new job.

If you feel you've been treated unfairly, get advice. Don't delay as there are very strict time limits for some courses of action. If you're a union member, your union representative can help. Or, you can phone the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) on ☎ 0845 747 4747.

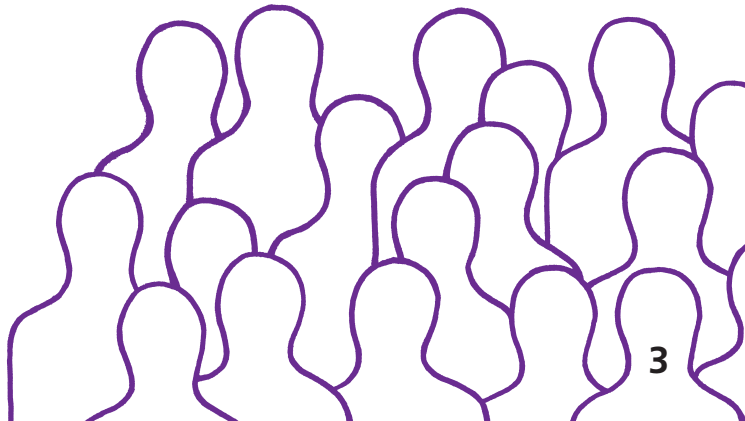
2 What should my employer pay me?

If you've worked for your employer for at least two years, by law you can normally get redundancy pay – this is called statutory redundancy pay. The amount depends on your age, your gross weekly income and the length of time you have worked for your employer. Your contract of employment may pay you more – known as contractual redundancy pay.

If your employer refuses to pay or cannot pay, get advice from your local CAB.

You should be paid your normal wages up until the end of your notice period. If your employer wants you to go earlier, they may still have to pay you instead of giving you notice. This is called pay in lieu of notice. Check your contract of employment and get advice if you're unsure.

If your redundancy pay is less than £30,000, you will not have to pay any tax. But check whether it includes other payments that are taxable. Don't forget to see if you are entitled to a tax rebate. Contact your local tax office or phone Taxaid on © 0845 120 3779 or visit www.taxaid.org.uk



3 What benefits can I claim?

The main benefits you can get if you are looking for work are:

- jobseeker's allowance (JSA)
- housing benefit to help pay your rent
- council tax benefit to help pay your council tax.

If you were getting working tax credit while you were working, make sure you tell HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) that you've been made redundant.

If you don't, you may have to pay back any overpayment.

If you have children, you may get more child tax credit now that your income has gone down.

4 Can I still claim benefits if I get redundancy pay?

There are two types of benefits. Means-tested benefits depend on your income and savings. Contribution-based benefits depend on your national insurance contributions.

Statutory redundancy pay is treated as capital (savings). The way your contractual redundancy pay is treated depends on things like which benefits you claim. If you are not sure, get advice. If your savings are over £16,000, you can't get means-tested benefits like income-based JSA and housing and council tax benefit but you may be able to claim contribution-based JSA.

Savings between £6,000 and £16,000 will reduce the amount of benefit you get.

You may be treated as still having savings if you have deliberately spent them in order to get benefit – get advice if this happens to you.

5 Jobseeker's allowance

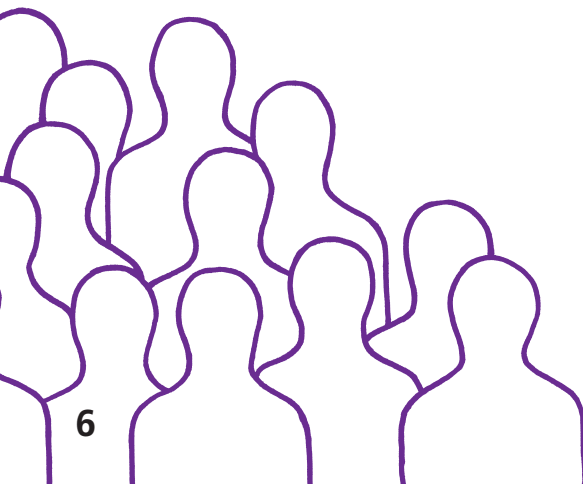
You can claim jobseeker's allowance (JSA) if **all** of the following apply:

- You're 18 or over but below pension age. Some 16 and 17 year olds can claim – get advice.
- You work less than 16 hours.
- You are fit for work, available for work and looking for work.

For income-based JSA your income and savings must also be low enough and your partner (if you have one) must work less than 24 hours. Couples without dependant children may have to make a joint claim.

For contribution-based JSA, you must have paid enough national insurance contributions and any part-time earnings or pension payments you get must be low enough.

Even if you think you can't be paid any JSA, it might be worth claiming as you will get national insurance credits which will protect your entitlement to things like your state retirement pension. Get advice if you are unsure what to do.



6 How do I claim JSA?

Don't delay making a claim. Phone ☎ 0800 055 6688 or claim online at www.direct.gov.uk.

You will need details of your:

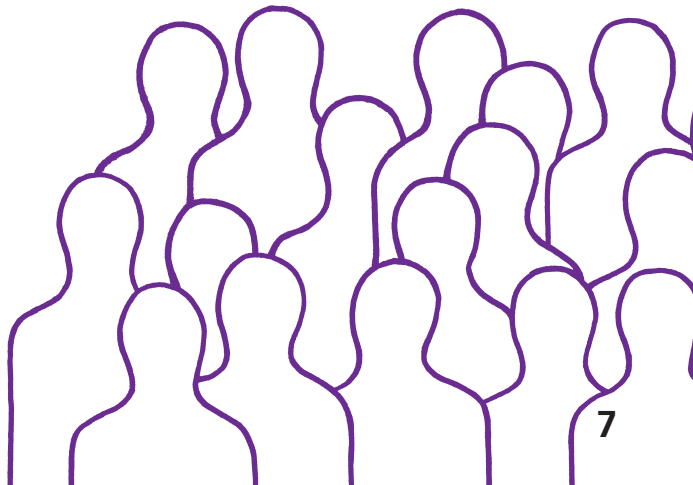
- national insurance number
- current or most recent employment
- rent or mortgage
- income and savings.

If you are claiming for your partner, you will need the same details for them.

Jobcentre Plus will work out which type of JSA you can get from the details you give them. You will be given an appointment at your local Jobcentre Plus office so you can give proof of the above. You'll have to draw up a Jobseeker's Agreement. This outlines the steps you will take each week to look for work.

Generally, if you put limits on what you will do, you risk not being considered available for work. But you may be able to limit your job search to similar work and pay for a period of time.

You will normally be expected to go to your local Jobcentre Plus office to sign on every two weeks and attend more in-depth job search reviews at regular intervals. If you don't take action recommended by Jobcentre Plus, your benefit may be reduced or stopped (sanctioned). Get advice if this happens to you.



7 Help with housing costs

Check if you can claim on any mortgage protection insurance you took out.

When you claim JSA, you will be asked for details of your rent or mortgage.

Jobcentre Plus will check if you can get income-based JSA to help with housing costs, for example, mortgage interest payments. You can't get help for the first 13 weeks unless you are 60 or over.

If you are struggling to pay your mortgage, get advice.

Make sure you are not paying too much council tax. You may get a discount if, for example, you live alone. Your local council can advise you further.

Your local council deals with housing and council tax benefit. When you claim JSA, this normally includes a claim for housing and council tax benefit so you shouldn't have to make a separate claim. The amount you get may not cover all of your rent or council tax. In exceptional circumstances, you may be able to get extra money, called a discretionary housing payment.

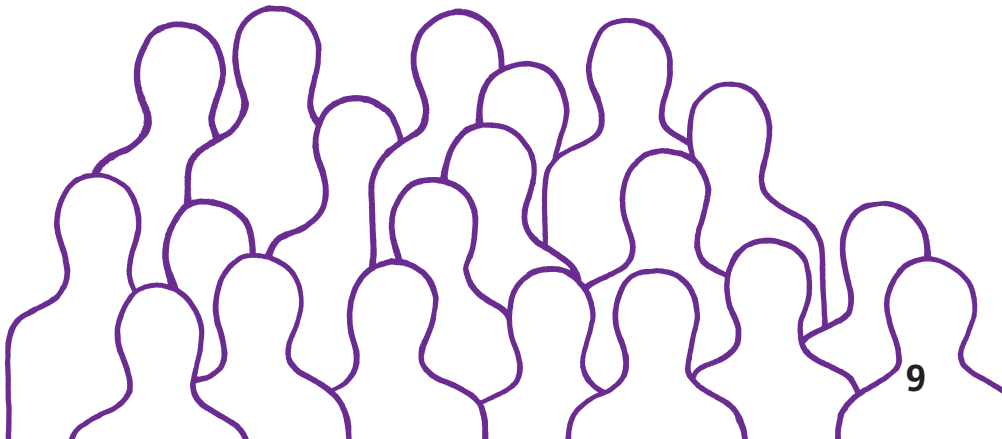
8 Other help

Getting a means-tested benefit like income-based JSA means you may also get:

- help with health costs, such as free prescriptions
- help with education costs such as free school meals, school uniform grant and, in Wales and Scotland only, an education maintenance allowance (EMA) for young people staying on at school after 16. The EMA scheme ended in England for new applicants on 1 January 2011
- grants or loans from the Social Fund to help with one-off expenses. These include funeral and maternity grants
- help with legal costs
- help with the costs of looking for work, for example, reduced price travel – ask at your local Jobcentre Plus office.

If you get contribution-based JSA, you may still get help with some of these on low income grounds.

Useful contacts on page 10 has details of who to contact for further information.



9 Get advice

If you need further help or advice, visit your local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). To find your nearest CAB and for more information, including factsheets, visit www.adviceguide.org.uk

10 Useful contacts (check call rates before dialling)

ACAS www.acas.org.uk

free, confidential, impartial advice on all employment rights issues

Helpline: ☎ 0845 747 4747

Textphone: 0845 606 1600 (if you have difficulty hearing or speaking clearly)

Community Legal Advice www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

free legal help, adviser search, legal aid calculator (England and Wales)

Helpline: ☎ 0845 345 4345

Minicom 0845 609 6677 (if you have difficulty hearing or speaking clearly)

Directgov www.direct.gov.uk

online benefits adviser, how to claim benefits, redundancy pay calculator

The Money Advice Service www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

information and guidance on money matters and financial services

Helpline: ☎ 0300 500 5000

Typetalk 18001 0300 500 5000 (if you have difficulty hearing or speaking clearly)

HM Revenue and Customs www.hmrc.gov.uk

income tax, national insurance, tax credits

Tax credits helpline: ☎ 0845 300 3900

Textphone 0845 300 3909 (if you have difficulty hearing or speaking clearly)

Jobcentre Plus www.direct.gov.uk

benefits for people of working age

Benefit claim line: ☎ 0800 055 6688

Textphone 0800 023 4888 (if you have difficulty hearing or speaking clearly)

For Social Fund payments, contact your local Jobcentre Plus office

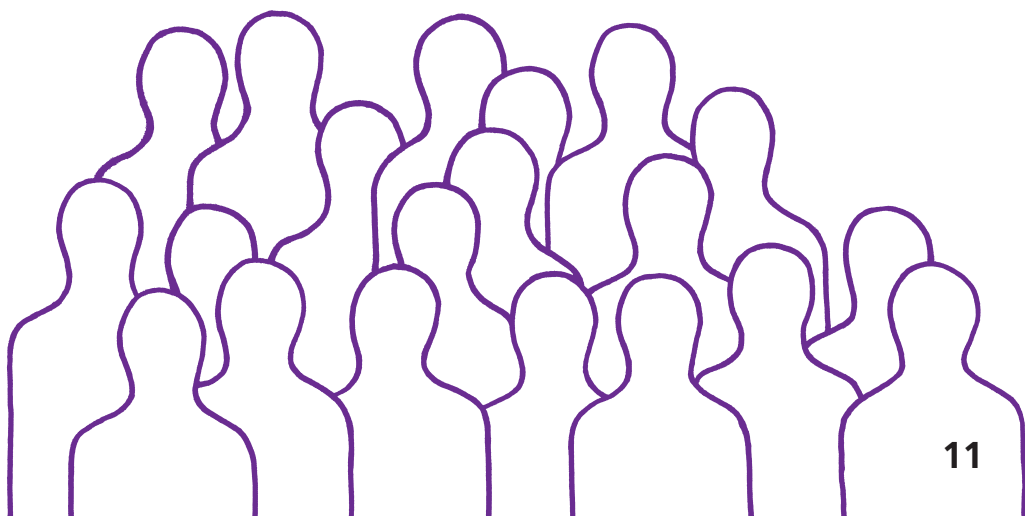
National Debtline www.nationaldebtline.co.uk
free independent debt advice line: ☎ 0808 808 4000

Shelter www.shelter.org.uk
housing advice including mortgage and rent arrears, repossession,
eviction, court action
Helpline: ☎ 0808 800 4444 (England and Scotland), ☎ 0845 075 5005 (Wales)

Education Maintenance Allowance www.direct.gov.uk/EMA
Learner support helpline: ☎ 0808 100 9000 (Scotland)
Student Finance Wales: ☎ 0845 602 8845 (Wales)

Help with health costs
Health costs advice line: ☎ 0845 850 1166

Ask your **local council** about council tax, housing and council tax benefit,
free school meals, school uniform grants. You can find your local council at
www.direct.gov.uk



Our principles

The Citizens Advice service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

Our aims

- Provide the advice people need for the problems they face.
- Improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

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www.adviceguide.org.uk

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Bilingual version (Welsh/English) also available

Further copies of this leaflet are available to order from:
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/publicity_materials_order

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