

## Acas issues advice on redundancies following record increase in calls to its helpline

5 August 2020

Workplace expert, Acas, has issued advice to employers who are considering staff redundancies following a record increase in calls to its helpline.

The coronavirus pandemic has seen redundancy related calls to the Acas helpline increase by over 160% over the past two months when compared to the same period in 2019.

Acas Chief Executive, Susan Clews, said:

"At the moment nearly a third of calls to our helpline are redundancy related. The economic impact of coronavirus, alongside fears around the furlough scheme tapering off, has left many employers and their staff concerned about their future livelihoods.

"Some businesses have found innovative ways to deal with the crisis through restructuring that has allowed them to safeguard jobs in consultation with trade unions.

"Our advice in this area recommends alternatives to redundancies, which should always be used as a last resort, as well how to follow the law if it cannot be avoided."

Acas' key advice is for employers to properly consult with their staff to seek their views on ideas that can help mitigate the financial difficulties that the business may be facing due to coronavirus. Solutions could include a recruitment freeze or limits on overtime.

Other options that employers can consider include:

- look at more flexible ways of working – you can agree to update employment contracts to allow more flexible working such as remote working to reduce office costs, compressed hours or job shares
- temporarily stop working or reduce working hours – you can agree with staff to stop working for a while or to work fewer hours
- move employees into other suitable jobs – you should try and move employees who would otherwise be made redundant into other jobs within the organisation. If a role is suitable and you do not offer it to them then it could be judged as an unfair dismissal

Redundancies should always be a last resort after all options have been exhausted. If an employer has no choice then there are strict rules around consulting affected employees that they need to adhere to. The minimum consultation period will vary depending on the number of employees that an employer wishes to make redundant.

Employers who wish to make 20 or more staff redundant need to also consult a recognised trade union or elected employee representatives about the proposed changes. During the consultation period, an employer must let their staff know in writing:

- why they need to make redundancies

- the number of employees and which jobs are at risk
- how they will select employees for redundancy
- how they plan to carry out the redundancies, including timeframes
- how they will calculate redundancy pay
- if they are using agency workers, how many, where they're working and the type of work they're doing

[Read our advice on managing staff redundancies.](#)

Acas has also published advice on the new law changes that clarifies what pay staff are entitled to if they have been given notice of a redundancy. When an employer is calculating redundancy or notice pay for furloughed staff, they must use the employee's full normal pay, not their reduced rate due to furlough. [Read our advice on pay during furlough.](#)

Find out more about:

- [pay during the notice period](#)
- [your redundancy rights and pay](#)
- [working out redundancy pay for employees](#)

## Notes to editors

1. The Acas helpline saw a 169% increase in call volumes in June/July that were about redundancy compared to the same period in 2019. There were 33,169 calls on redundancy in June/July compared to 12,313 calls last year.

## Media enquiries

[Contact the Acas press office.](#)