

If wages are not paid

1 . Checking your wages

By law (Employment Rights Act 1996), employers must pay wages on an agreed pay day.

If an employer does not pay on time, it can:

- affect a worker's financial security and wellbeing
- damage the working relationship
- lead to legal action

Checking how much you are owed

If you have not been paid, or were paid the wrong amount, work out how much you think you're owed.

It can help to take into account:

- how much you think you should have been paid after tax and other deductions – [find out what your employer can deduct from your wages](#)
- when you should have been paid
- how much you received, if you have been paid the wrong amount

Find information about your pay

You can find information about your pay in your:

- [payslip](#) – this shows what's included and deducted each time you're paid
- employment contract – your [written statement](#) must say how much you'll be paid, and when you'll be paid

It can also help to check:

- how your employer pays you – for example, by bank transfer or cash
- the period of time your pay covers, and how many hours you worked during that time
- if you need to follow any processes to get paid – for example if you need to get your timesheets or overtime approved
- if your employer has a deadline for submitting timesheets or overtime, and what happens if you miss the deadline
- your hourly rate if you're paid by the hour, and if the rate varies – for example, if you get a different rate for overtime or night work
- if the contract says your employer can withhold pay, and the situations this applies to
- if anyone else you work with has had a similar issue with their pay, and the steps they've taken

If it's your final pay

Your final pay when you leave a job will often be different from your usual pay.

[Find out more about final pay](#)

Help checking your pay

If you have not received your payslip or written statement, or need help getting information, you can:

- talk to your employer, payroll team or manager
- talk to your trade union representative, if you're a member
- [contact the Acas helpline](#) for more advice

2. Raising an issue with your employer

If you have not been paid your full wages, follow your organisation's policy for raising problems with pay. If there's no policy, raise the problem as soon as possible with your manager, payroll team or someone in HR.

It's usually best to raise the problem informally first. You can do this by [talking with your employer](#). This can help resolve it quickly if there's been a mistake.

If you talk with someone to raise the issue, it can help to also put it in writing so that you have a record. For example, confirm what you've discussed in a letter or email.

If you cannot resolve it informally, you can [raise a grievance](#). This is where you make a formal complaint to your employer.

Whether you raise it informally or formally, it can help to:

- explain how much you think you're owed and why
- show any calculations you've done
- share any evidence of wages you're owed – for example, copies of your payslip, contract, timesheet, roster or any written agreement about your pay or hours
- ask your employer to respond within a specific amount of time – for example, within 7 days, or before your next pay day

If you have not been paid the minimum wage

Your employer could be breaking [minimum wage law](#) if:

- you have not been paid at least the legal minimum wage
- your employer does not resolve it by your next pay day

If it's a minimum wage issue, you have other options for raising it formally.

[Find out more about the steps you can take if your employer pays less than the minimum wage](#)

Making a claim to an employment tribunal

You might be able to make a claim to an employment tribunal if:

- your wages have not been paid correctly
- you have not been able to resolve this with your employer

[Find out more about employment tribunals](#)

How far back you can claim

There are strict time limits for making a claim to an employment tribunal.

For claims about unpaid wages, you have 3 months minus 1 day from the date you should have been paid.

If you were underpaid or not paid more than once, you have 3 months minus 1 day from the last time it happened.

You can claim up to 2 years back as long as either of the following apply:

- there's less than 3 months between each underpayment or non-payment
- the underpayments or non-payments are linked – for example, they might be linked if they are caused by the same error

[Find out more about employment tribunal time limits](#)

Get more advice and support

For more advice about unpaid wages, you can:

- [contact the Acas helpline](#)
- talk to your trade union representative, if you're a member

For advice on financial support:

- [find advice on debt and money from Citizens Advice](#)
- [check benefits and financial support you can get on GOV.UK](#)
- find out what financial support your trade union offers, if you're a member

3. Handling unpaid wages

If wages have not been paid, employers should:

- keep workers informed
- fix the issue as soon as possible

Keeping workers informed

Employers should tell workers in writing as soon as possible if:

- they know that they cannot pay a worker on time
- there has been a delay in the payroll
- there has been a mistake in the payroll that means workers have not been paid the right amount

Employers should:

- let workers know how they're going to resolve the situation
- make any payments owed as soon as possible

If the issue affects a number of workers, the employer does not need to write to everyone separately. The employer can tell the whole group in writing at the same time. For example, in a group email.

If the issue only affects a few workers the employer should contact people individually. Employers should remember that pay can be sensitive.

Employers should offer workers the opportunity to discuss any concerns. For example, if late pay will cause any financial difficulty or bank fees.

Repaying workers

As soon as an employer identifies a pay issue, they should:

- tell workers about it
- take steps to fix it

This will help workers to manage their finances so they can avoid penalties or charges.

If an employer does not pay workers, they will be in breach of contract.

A worker could make a claim for:

- any wages owed
- any losses they have suffered as a result of non-payment or late payment (for example, bank charges)

Compensation

If employers are not able to pay on time, they could consider compensating workers. For example, they may want to pay any late charges workers get for not paying bills. This could help maintain a positive working relationship and avoid legal action.

Get more advice and support

If you have any questions about unpaid wages, you can [contact the Acas helpline](#).

You can also find advice on GOV.UK on:

- [payroll](#)
- [getting financial help with statutory pay](#)

4. If the employer is no longer trading

Someone with the [legal status of employee](#) can make a claim to the Redundancy Payments Service (RPS) if:

- they have been made redundant
- their employer is legally registered as insolvent

Employees can use the RPS to claim for redundancy pay and check if they can claim some or all of the wages they're owed.

Someone is not likely to be an employee if they're:

- an agency worker

- a casual worker
- on a zero-hours contract

Employees can [find out more about claiming for redundancy and other money owed on GOV.UK](#).

If an employer has not registered as insolvent

If an employer has not registered as insolvent, employees might be able to either:

- make a claim to an [employment tribunal](#)
- contact the RPS if the employer registers as insolvent later

If the organisation cannot afford to make redundancy payments

If the organisation cannot afford to make redundancy payments, employers can ask the Redundancy Payments Service (RPS) for financial help.

[Find out how employers can get financial help from the Redundancy Payments Service on GOV.UK](#)