

Step 4 Hold consultations

Redundancy, including the consultation process, only applies to those with the [legal status of employee](#).

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

- an agency worker
- a casual worker
- on a zero-hours contract

You should consult with your employees before making a decision about any redundancies.

If you do not hold genuine and meaningful consultation before making redundancies, employees could claim to an employment tribunal for [unfair dismissal](#).

Consultation is when you talk with and listen to affected employees. In 'collective consultation' you also consult with their representatives.

You should use consultation to try and agree actions wherever possible.

During consultation, you should discuss:

- the changes that are needed, what you propose to do, and why
- ways to avoid or make fewer redundancies
- the skills and experience needed for the future
- the criteria for selecting employees for redundancy
- any concerns employees may have
- how you can support and arrange time off for affected employees, for example to update their CVs and get training

Employees will often have good ideas that may help to avoid redundancies. You do not have to agree to their suggestions, but it's important to seriously consider any ideas that could avoid or reduce redundancies. Otherwise employees could claim the redundancy process has been unfair.

If you have any questions about holding redundancy consultations you can [contact the Acas helpline](#).

Check if you need to hold collective consultation

You must hold 'collective consultation' if either of the following apply:

- you're proposing to make 20 or more redundancies in a 90 day period
- you have a workplace policy or agreement that says you must collectively consult

It can still be good practice to collectively consult even if you do not have to. It can help:

- you to fully be involved with employees about ways to achieve the change that's needed

- reduce negative effects on employees
- the process be fairer and quicker
- employees feel that any decisions are fair, and so reduce risks of legal claims
- you minimise risk where the number of proposed redundancies is close to, or might reach 20

Employees could make a claim to an employment tribunal for a protective award if you fail to collectively consult. You could be ordered to pay compensation for up to 90 days' pay for each affected employee.

Important: For redundancy dismissals on or after 6 April 2026 the maximum protective award for failing to consult in collective redundancy will increase. It will double from 90 days' pay to 180 days' pay for each affected employee.

[Check if you need to hold collective consultation](#)

If employee representatives are needed

There may be employee representatives already in place, for example as part of an [information and consultation agreement](#).

If there are no employee representatives in place, employees affected by redundancy have the right to:

- vote for employee representatives
- stand for election

[Find out more about electing employee representatives](#)

How to hold individual consultation meetings

Some parts of consultation could be in small groups or team meetings.

You should meet each affected employee in private, at least once.

Meetings can be on the phone if you both agree to it and there is a clear need, for example if someone works remotely.

You should consider allowing employees to be accompanied at any one-to-one meeting. A companion can be helpful as they can:

- give the employee support
- be a neutral person to observe
- speak for the employee if needed

You should make sure any managers who lead consultation meetings:

- have had training in managing the meeting appropriately
- are fully informed about the redundancy proposals and process
- can present the plan for the redundancy process clearly
- can provide everyone with a questions and answers document

[Use our template letter inviting an employee to a consultation meeting](#)

How long consultation lasts

There are no rules in legislation for how long individual consultation should last. But you should check if you have a policy or agreement in place that does have rules.

Consultation must be meaningful. You should be able to show you have genuinely considered any suggestions or points made by each employee. This includes suggestions you do not accept.

You do not need to reach an agreement for consultation to end.

If there has been a TUPE transfer

If redundancies are being considered after a TUPE transfer, consultation can start before the transfer and continue after. But you should not select employees for redundancy before the transfer takes place.

[Find out more about TUPE](#)

Related content

[Podcast – managing redundancies](#)