



A practical guide for managers: Managing Redundancy

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Few workplace conversations are as challenging as discussing redundancy. For employees, it can create uncertainty and anxiety. For managers, it can bring the responsibility of balancing business needs with fairness, empathy and professionalism. While redundancy is never easy, a well-managed process helps ensure that employees are treated with dignity, that decisions are made fairly and that trust is maintained across the organisation.

As a manager, your role is not simply to communicate decisions. You are responsible for helping employees understand the business rationale, ensuring they are consulted properly, exploring alternatives where appropriate and treating everyone with dignity and respect. How you handle the process can influence not only the experience of those directly affected, but also the trust, morale and confidence of the wider workforce.

Redundancy should never be approached as an isolated management decision. Before beginning any formal process, managers should seek guidance from their HR team, people adviser or external professional adviser to ensure the process is handled fairly, consistently and in line with organisational policies and current legal requirements.

It is equally important to understand what redundancy is not. Redundancy is not a tool for addressing performance issues, a process that can be completed without meaningful consultation, or a decision that should be predetermined before discussions have taken place. Employees must be given a genuine opportunity to understand the proposal, ask questions and have their views considered before any final decisions are made.

Although managing redundancy can be difficult, a structured and respectful approach helps ensure employees are treated fairly and supports the organisation in maintaining trust, credibility and professionalism during periods of change. This guide provides practical advice to help managers navigate each stage of the process confidently and effectively.

Manager Essentials

Your role is to:

- Communicate openly and clearly
- Listen carefully to employee concerns and feedback
- Apply the process consistently and fairly
- Engage in genuine and meaningful consultation
- Treat every individual with dignity, respect and professionalism
- Seek guidance when unsure or faced with complex situations

Manager Responsibilities Through the Redundancy Process

As a manager, your role is to keep each stage clear, fair and well organised. The exact process may differ between organisations, but the principles below will help you manage it consistently.

Preparation

Before speaking to affected employees, make sure you:

- Clearly define the business rationale
- Identify the appropriate selection pool
- Agree fair and objective selection criteria
- Prepare supporting documentation and guidance

Prepare yourself emotionally:

- Take time to understand the process before meetings
- Anticipate emotional reactions. Employees may experience shock, anger, disbelief, anxiety and withdrawal
- Plan how you will respond calmly
- Avoid becoming defensive
- Seek HR support if you feel uncertain

Good preparation reduces the risk of inconsistency, confusion and avoidable distress later in the process.

Notifying Employees They Are At Risk

In the first meeting, make sure you:

- Clearly explain the situation and business context
- Confirm that roles are at risk (not confirmed redundant)
- Outline the next steps and consultation process

Keep the message clear and factual. Explain that the role is at risk, outline the process and avoid implying that the outcome has already been decided.

Consultation

Consultation is one of your most important responsibilities. Managers should remain neutral throughout consultation. Avoid creating an impression that redundancy is inevitable or that alternative solutions will definitely be found. Your role is to facilitate a fair process, not to influence employees towards a particular outcome.

At this stage, make sure you:

- Give employees a genuine opportunity to ask questions
- Allow them to share their perspective
- Ensure they understand how the selection criteria will be applied

- Explore reasonable alternatives to redundancy, such as redeployment or reduced hours
- Listen carefully during consultation meetings
- Consider suggestions properly and fairly

Pause and seek HR guidance if:

- An employee becomes highly distressed
- There are requests for reasonable adjustments
- An employee raises discrimination concerns
- There is disagreement about selection criteria and the final scoring
- A grievance is submitted during the process

Genuine consultation means:

- Listening to suggestions
- Considering alternatives
- Answering questions honestly
- Being willing to adjust proposals where appropriate

It does not mean simply informing employees of a decision that has already been made.

Confidentiality

Managers should:

- Avoid discussing individual circumstances with colleagues
- Share information only with those who need to know
- Respect sensitive personal information raised during consultation
- Ensure documents and scoring records are stored securely

Selection and Outcome

When consultation has concluded, make sure you:

- Apply selection criteria consistently and fairly
- Base decisions on objective evidence
- Communicate outcomes clearly in a formal meeting

If redundancy is confirmed, explain the decision clearly, show how the process has been followed and make sure the individual understands what happens next.

Notice and Support

If redundancy is confirmed, your focus should shift to practical support and clear follow-through. Make sure you:

- Clearly explain notice periods, payments and next steps
- Provide written confirmation

- Offer appropriate support (for example, outplacement, references, or well-being resources)

This stage should be handled with the same care as the earlier conversations. Clear written confirmation and respectful support help people leave with dignity.

How Managers Should Communicate

Your tone matters. Managers need to be clear, steady and respectful, especially when employees are processing uncertainty or difficult news. In every conversation, make sure you:

- Be clear and straightforward, avoiding jargon
- Show empathy without creating confusion
- Allow space for questions and reactions
- Avoid rushing or overloading conversations

Managers should not feel they need to fill every silence. Employees may need time to process information, and allowing space for reflection is often more supportive than speaking continuously.

You do not need to have every answer straight away. You do need to be accurate, calm and consistent. If you do not know something, say so and explain when the employee will receive an answer.

Avoid: presenting redundancy as a performance issue, making promises you cannot keep, speculating about final outcomes, or sharing information about individual cases with others who do not need to know.

The phrases below can help you communicate clearly while keeping the process open and neutral:

- “This is a difficult situation, and I want to explain things as clearly as possible.”
- “We are beginning a consultation process, and no final decision has been made at this stage.”
- “I want to make sure you understand the process and have the opportunity to ask questions.”
- “If I cannot answer something today, I will come back to you with the correct information.”

A helpful rule is: be clear about what you know, be honest about what you do not know and never guess.

Managing the Wider Team

Redundancy also affects the colleagues who remain. Employees who remain may experience uncertainty, increased workloads, concern about further change, or guilt regarding colleagues who are leaving.

As a manager, make sure you:

- Communicate appropriately with the wider team
- Maintain confidentiality where needed
- Provide reassurance and clarity about next steps
- Recognise the impact on morale and engagement

Handled well, communication with the wider team can reduce uncertainty, support morale and show that change is being managed responsibly.

Final Reminder for Managers

Managers set the tone for how redundancy is experienced. A fair process, meaningful consultation and respectful communication will not make the situation easy, but they will help people feel properly treated and help protect trust in the organisation.

Common manager mistakes include:

- Treating consultation as a formality
- Discussing outcomes before decisions are final
- Mixing performance concerns with redundancy discussions
- Applying criteria inconsistently
- Failing to document conversations
- Sharing confidential information
- Making promises about redeployment opportunities.
- Avoiding difficult conversations with affected employees

Employees may not remember every detail of the process, but they will remember how they were treated.

If your organisation does not have in-house HR support, Viewpoint HR can provide guidance throughout the redundancy process. For further advice or support, please contact us: info@viewpointhr.co.uk, www.viewpointhr.co.uk

Manager Checklist

Stage	Manager actions
Before the process	• Define the business rationale. • Agree the selection pool and criteria. • Seek guidance from your HR team or professional adviser. • Prepare documents and key messages.
At-risk meeting	• Plan the conversation and key messages. • Allow enough time and privacy. • Explain the next steps clearly. • Provide a written summary if appropriate.
During consultation	• Encourage questions and discussion. • Keep notes of key points. • Explore alternatives where possible. • Maintain regular communication.
Decision stage	• Apply criteria fairly and consistently. • Review outcomes carefully. • Prepare to communicate decisions clearly.
After outcome	• Confirm decisions in writing. • Explain notice, pay and support. • Communicate appropriately with the wider team. • Provide ongoing support where needed.