

## Employment and Coronavirus

Since the beginning of the pandemic we have dealt with **3,237** employment issues.

Many of these enquiries have been from agency workers and those on zero-hour contracts. Evidence suggests that this group of workers are more likely to have their employment rights breached compared to the rest of the working population.

On average they were four times more likely to lose their job, three times more likely to have been made to work while ill and not to have been paid wages they were owed. Many have struggled to understand their rights or defend themselves. This is a cause for concern especially when employment tribunals have a backlog of over 500,000 cases.



### The top 5 employment issues were:

Pay and entitlement	509
Redundancy	431
Dismissal	418
Furlough Scheme	344
Terms and Condition of employment	239

### Case Study

Client is a single parent with 4 young children. With schools being closed the client asked her employer if she could be furloughed.

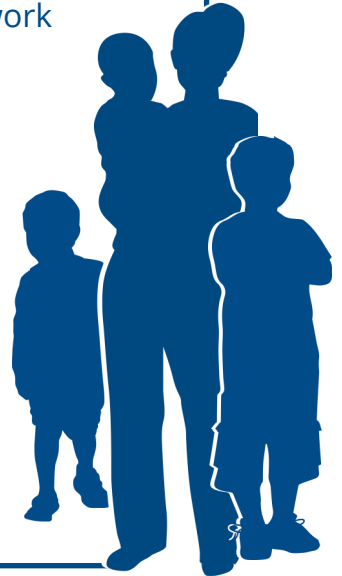
The employer refused, became aggressive and has said if she had to be off work due to childcare, she was to claim Statutory Sick Pay or take unpaid leave.

### How we helped

We advised the client she had different options.

1. Ask her employer to furlough her and provided information to give her employer.
2. If the employer still says no, then she could ask for flexible working.
3. Request indefinite unpaid leave until she was able to work again.

Client was also given advice on benefit entitlement to help her to make a more informed decision.



### Case Study

Client has worked 3+ years for a residential care home, had recently recovered from pneumonia and his wife was expecting a child. He initially agreed to take unpaid leave as he was concerned about his health.

Client's request to be furloughed was refused so he had to return to work. Client was then told he was not allowed to return as a risk assessment showed it was not safe for him to be there. The employer refused furlough, sick pay and insisted the client take unpaid leave. Client says he is well enough to work.

### How we helped

We advised the employer does not have to pay the client if he chooses not to work due to the coronavirus but can agree he takes unpaid leave or receive SSP if he qualifies. If the employer refuses to pay wages and won't let him work, he might be able to challenge illegal deduction of wages. Client was also offered benefits advice.

**We encourage people to seek advice early. The sooner they contact us the sooner we can help find solutions.**

**We are committed to working within the community to provide pro-active and long-term support for our clients.**

**Call our Adviceline on  
0300 456 8390**

**Lines open Monday to Friday,  
9am to 4pm.**

**(Calls charged as 01 & 02 numbers)**

### **Other Agencies that can offer help are Employment Advice Services:**

ACAS Helpline: **0300 123 1100**

Derbyshire Law Centre: **01246 550674**

Equality Advisory Support Service: **0808 800 0082**

Health and Safety Executive (HSE): **0300 790 6287**