

Practical Considerations and Support

During my redundancy journey, the business I worked for (and I) managed to “survive” for 11 months until, in November 2015, the administrators were called in and the business folded. How did I feel?

Sad.

But relieved.

I genuinely felt relief that after months of uncertainty on a daily basis, which reached a crescendo towards the end, there was finally some clarity. The administrators were in at 11.00am on a Monday morning and I left my desk for the last time around an hour later. There was lots of sadness and tears as we all went for lunch together, and contemplated what each of us might do. We all had different skills and backgrounds. We also all had different personal situations which would impact how we would each decide to move forward. But in those immediate few days after being made redundant, my overwhelming feeling was one of relief that I no longer had to constantly worry about what each day would bring and I could now focus 100% on what I would do moving forward. One of my mantras in life is “responding positively in adversity”. For those of you who know me, you may have heard me use the phrase “you cannot control what has happened – but you can control how you respond to it” and that is what I set about doing.

However, that is not always easy, and after the initial relief, there was a realisation that there was no longer a Plan A (to stay with my employer) and I was now needing to focus firmly on Plan B. We were advised about signing on at the Job Centre and this was something I had never done before and for some reason, seemed very daunting. I know it sounds stupid, but that was how I felt. And I know I was not alone.

Having worked in recruitment, I was acutely aware of how challenging the jobs market was. The majority of my work over the preceding months had been providing outplacement support to those made redundant, and now I needed to take some of my own advice! Everyone’s situation is different, but in the current market, flexibility was the key and below is a few of the considerations:

- Relocating – Are you in a position to relocate? Many people are having to consider opportunities outwith Aberdeen. I know of people who are now commuting on a weekly basis to Northern England and Dumfries. In my situation, I was not keen to leave Aberdeen for a variety of reasons so flexibility outwith the North of Scotland was not something I considered.....which meant I needed to be flexible elsewhere.
- Salary – this is another area to consider in terms of flexibility. In an ideal world, no-one wants to take a drop in salary. However, market forces dictate that this is something people need to be open to and it is worth seeking financial advice to ascertain what your Net Pay will be on a monthly basis. The majority of people quote their gross salary in terms of what they are earning, but it is more important to consider what your Net position is (ie how much do you take home in your pay, after deductions, on a monthly basis). Although your gross salary may take a significant hit, you will also likely notice significantly lower deductions from your pay on a monthly basis, so the drop may not be as pronounced. You

can seek financial guidance and support to talk through and discuss the different options in terms of financial planning.

- Childcare – another issue was childcare and I know, from speaking to others, that this is another added headache at an already stressful time. Do you pay to keep your child in nursery while you seek employment (and are not earning a salary) or do you remove them and hope that you can get the space back if/when you secure another job? This is another issue affecting many people at the current time. I would encourage you to enter into dialogue with your childcare provider as, in my experience, they are happy to try and be as flexible as possible, knowing the challenges people are facing at present.

As part of the **You're Not Alone** project, an event has been organised for 16th May from 5.30pm – 7.00pm at the Central Library. This will provide an opportunity for anyone looking for some assistance to come together and find out more about the range of support that is available. Please get in touch if you are interested in finding out more.