“Who’s going to pay me and when?”

Cambridge Citizens Advice is playing a key support role during the lockdown

“The government will pay you, not me.” This is what some local employers have been reported as saying by worried callers to the Cambridge Citizens Advice helpline.

Rachel Talbot, CEO says “If your place of work has shut down or there’s no work for you because of coronavirus, you can carry on getting paid.

Your employer should use the government Coronavirus Job Retention scheme to pay you while there’s no work to do. This includes if you’re a casual worker, on a zero-hours contract or an agency worker.

When your employer applies to the scheme, you’ll be paid 80% of your normal pay up to a maximum of £2,500 a month. This will continue until the government ends the scheme or you return to work.

When your employer applies to the scheme, they have to pay you for any time you were sent home from 1 March 2020. This is called ‘backdating’ your pay.

The Coronavirus Job Retention scheme only covers you if you’re not working. If you’re working from home you should get your normal pay from your employer.

The government has published more details about the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme. There might be changes - we’ll update our advice with any changes as they happen.

We are getting about 3 times the number of calls we normally would from people concerned about their employment status and how this affects their income, having been furloughed, laid off or made redundant.

People are understandably very concerned. Many who have never have found themselves in this situation before are having to apply for benefits. This is particularly true of those who are self-employed. Many of our clients don’t have a straightforward way of working - a mixture of employed and self-employed work and this makes accessing some of the government schemes more complicated. We’re finding there’s a lot of misunderstanding over the support available and how to access it. Many believe they are going to get the money next week.”
Following Government advice, Cambridge Citizens Advice closed its drop-in advice services on March 24th. Yet this has not stopped people contacting the organisation via the **Adviceline 0344 848 7979** to help them cope with work worries, money problems and isolation during the coronavirus lockdown. The helpline is open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Calls are redirected to a team of specialist advisors and volunteers who are continuing to deliver much-needed confidential, impartial and independent help and support. In total, **1095** people in the Cambridge area have been helped since the lockdown began, by more than 100 volunteers and staff.

“When it comes to work-related enquiries, a lot of what we are doing is explaining what the process and procedure is, who qualifies, and how people will be able to apply for financial help,” explains CEO Rachel Talbot. “People who have never accessed our service before are now contacting us for guidance. We are doing our best to respond to as many enquiries as we can. We are also collaborating with other voluntary agencies, as well as our local councils and with health colleagues. I am incredibly proud of my team of staff and volunteers who are working tirelessly to make sure that the most vulnerable people across Cambridge can get the help and advice they desperately need during this continuing crisis.”

As well as via the Adviceline **0344 848 7979**, Cambridge Citizens Advice can be contacted for email advice via their website [www.cambridgecab.org.uk](http://www.cambridgecab.org.uk)

**Notes to editors**

For further information, contact Lorraine Payne, Head of Communications at Cambridge Citizens Advice on 01223 222671 or via email at lorrainep@cambridgecab.org.uk

- People can find frequently updated advice on a range of issues related to the Coronavirus outbreak at citizensadvice.org.uk/coronavirus.
- Anyone seeking to make a new claim for Universal Credit should call the Universal Credit Help to Claim line on 0800 1448444
- You can get consumer advice from the Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133.

Ends.