

Advisory, Conciliation and  
Arbitration Service (Acas)  
**Annual Report and  
Accounts 2023-2024**

# Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) **Annual Report and Accounts 2023-2024**

Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 253(1) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 18 July 2024.



© Crown Copyright 2024

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/official-documents](https://www.gov.uk/official-documents).

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at 8th Floor, Windsor House, 50 Victoria Street, Westminster, SW1H 0TL

ISBN 978-1-5286-4820-2

E03112755 07/24

Printed on paper containing 40% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by HH Associates Ltd. on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office

# Contents

<b>Foreword from the Chair of Acas</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CEO Summary</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Performance Report</b>	<b>12</b>
Performance overview	12
Who we are:	12
Our purpose	14
Our structure	16
The Acas Council	18
Strategic Ambitions – our plans and progress	25
Highlights of 2023-24	45
<b>Performance Analysis</b>	<b>48</b>
Performance of our Services	48
<b>Accountability Report</b>	<b>126</b>
The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Houses of Parliament	191
<b>Financial Statements</b>	<b>204</b>
Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	204
Statement of financial position	205
Statement of cashflows	207
Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity	208

Financial Statements and notes to the accounts for  
period ended 31 March 2024

209

# Foreword from the Chair of Acas



## Clare Chapman Chair

In every year of its 125-year history, Acas has made a real difference in resolving disputes and promoting better industrial relations, benefitting employers and employees across Britain as well as the wider economy. This year was no different.

We brokered confidential talks in more than 600 collective disputes, almost half of which involved threatened or actual industrial action. A positive outcome was secured in more than nine out of ten. With individual disputes, we secured settlement outcomes of 39% in early conciliation notifications to Acas – 4 percentage points above our key performance indicator target – which significantly reduced the number of claims progressing to an employment tribunal. Of those which did start to progress towards a tribunal hearing we achieved a resolution rate of 78% ahead of a hearing, further avoiding lengthy and stressful experience for both employees and employers. This performance continues to deliver significant savings for

His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Services (HMCTS) and the public purse. Alongside which, we dealt with more than 18 million individual enquiries, by phone and online, helping Britain's workplaces operate more effectively.

The annual cost of workplace conflict in Britain is still calculated, sadly, to be almost £30bn. While the number of strike days in the United Kingdom (UK) fell by nearly 50% in 2023-24 when compared to 2022-23, inflationary pressures and a cut in real pay across the wider economy, sharper in the public sector than the private, have still been marked. These continuing tensions and the disputes they trigger in an increasingly fragmented labour market still present a regrettable cost, both financial and personal, to the public and private sectors.

Our proven expertise – enabling early resolution of collective and individual disputes and widespread promotion of good practice – helps significantly mitigate that cost. Consequently, according to the independent Economic Impact Assessment, the delivery of Acas services produces £12 of benefit to the UK economy for every £1 invested in Acas.

This year, we've been approaching the finishing line of our 2021-2025 strategy. Measurable delivery of the strategy has been a primary focus for all staff, members of Council, our Non-Executive Board. I'm delighted that we're firmly on track to meet almost all our 2021-25 ambitions which will:

- **Grow our reach and access** – reaching twice as many small and medium-sized businesses, and twice as many employees
- **Resolve disputes more quickly and effectively** – resolving three out of every four disputes before they reach a costly employment tribunal
- **Forge consensus on issues around the future of work** – using our convening power to predict and respond to challenges in the world of work and tackle the big issues; and
- **Embrace difference, increasing inclusion, creating fairness** – ensuring our services and ways of working are inclusive and accessible to all who need them.

We're continuing to equip ourselves to respond more quickly and more effectively to challenges in the economy and the labour market, including strengthening our Individual Conciliation Service. We've done this by embracing digital opportunities to make the service even more efficient and accessible. We're resolving disputes more quickly and we're reducing still further the number of cases progressing to Employment Tribunal.

In her summary below of our strong operational performance for 2023-24, Chief Executive Susan Clews details one of the operational challenges faced this year, with our helpline response performance dipping as demand for our services increased. Our team are now working hard to learn from this and use the demand



pressures to develop new ways of working to deliver a stronger and more resilient service. Early results are promising.

Susan and all her colleagues have embedded significant internal changes in the last year, implementing a new, simplified operating model enabling Acas to respond to the increasing demand for most of our services. This work, in my view, has been an exemplar of investment in ‘organisational health’, which Acas recognises, is inextricably linked to effective performance.

For me, organisational health consists of three key components: –

- how well an organisation rallies around its purpose and strategy,
- how well it executes both its day-to-day operations and that strategy, and
- how well it innovates its way out of problems and renews itself over time to meet its stakeholder needs.

I’ve seen evidence of all three happening at Acas during 2023-24 and thank everyone for ‘staying the course’ of the organisational re-design which is unlocking benefits for our customers.

Understanding what's good for business and at the same time good for employees lies at the heart of both effective employment relations and our social partnership approach at Acas. This understanding will be central to our strategic planning for the next five years. In addition, we will do further work in the next year to support businesses in establishing what social impacts, alongside environmental and governance ones, are most likely to support their future growth and mitigate risk. We'll share this insight freely to help Britain's companies deliver financial value hand in hand with social value in the decade ahead.

On behalf of the whole Council, I'd like to thank every staff member at Acas for their dedicated service to our millions of customers this year. They deploy their expert knowledge of workplace relations and conflict resolution day in, day out, for the benefit of people across Britain. And I express particular thanks to Susan Clews in her valedictory year as Chief Executive, after 31 years of hugely effective and notable public service to Acas.

I also thank our Council members for their continuing commitment and hard work. They provide invaluable insight and support from a rich range of backgrounds and are consequently a vital ingredient of our success. I am similarly grateful to officials at our sponsor department, the Department for Business and Trade, for their advocacy of the work of Acas and its fantastic team of people.

At the beginning of the reporting year over 1.41 million employers and 32 million employees continued to face unprecedented workplace challenges – economic, technological, social and global. In the year ahead, Acas will continue to be by their side. We will work with the new administration to make a real difference, to make working life better for all.

**Clare Chapman**

Chair

# CEO Summary



## **Susan Clews** Chief Executive

The last year has seen alarmingly persistent workplace conflict, arising from labour market pressures. In response, I am pleased to report that Acas, the organisation charged with improving employment relations, has delivered exceptional results, reducing the impact of conflict.

2023-24 saw significant and sustained economic pressure: high inflation, increased levels of economic inactivity and global political instability, resulting in a charged labour market, with pressures felt by both businesses and employees. Rising wage demands prompted focus on costs and working processes. In many cases, innovative approaches and positive strategies were deployed to solve these challenges, whilst in other contexts, disputes arose, with resulting industrial action. By the close of 2023-24 more than 2 million days were lost to industrial action and the impacts felt widely.

With this backdrop, Acas service performance in 2023-24 has been extraordinary and is clearly evidenced

in 6 of our 7 Key Performance Indicators being met or exceeded.

Over the last year, as acknowledged by our Chair, Clare Chapman, Acas resolved more collective disputes, 94%, (against a target of 88%), and we reached a record conciliated settlement rate of 39% between parties or another positive outcome, (against a target of 35%), and Employment Tribunal (ET) resolution rates of 78% (against a target of 77%). This matters to everyone involved, as it means fewer people and businesses suffer the distress and cost of lengthy conflicts and citizens suffer less disruption.

As well as reducing the cost of conflict at work at an early stage, Acas advice enables business to grow and workers to thrive. Over the last year Acas advice was accessed via nearly 18 million visits to the website and nearly 600,000 calls to our advice helpline. We provided much needed information on compliance with employment law, and we upskilled businesses and managers to be able to create working environments where both commitment and productivity are strong. We were not able to fully cope with the demands for our telephone advice service and towards the end of the year call wait times increased and we did not meet this service KPI. We have implemented a recovery action plan which is already supporting the service to return to effective operation in the first quarter of the new business year.

In addition to delivering services directly to customers, we used our insight on the world of work to inform employment policy. We responded to a range of government consultations and at the close of the year we published a new Acas Code of Practice on the Right to Request Flexible Working. We partnered with stakeholders to share our expert knowledge, supporting a range of Good Work Charters and good practice events.

We have achieved more through better use of technology, upskilling of our teams, and increasing Acas's visibility and reputation as experts in workplace dispute resolution. Our technology enhancement will go further in 2024-25 when we connect our online system to HMCTS, enabling real-time data flow for more timely conciliation interventions.

To support ongoing future innovation and productivity gains we made internal changes. Acas embedded a new operating model to build capability; strengthened our Executive Board and improved our Governance arrangements. We have launched projects to better understand customer needs to ensure we can meet demand efficiently as also acknowledged by our Chair Clare Chapman.

In 2023-24, we have started to see the benefit of innovation, with significant efficiency made in our key service costs when compared to previous operational year's. This includes: a significant reduction in the unit cost of our conciliation and arbitration services, where

the cost of an individual conciliation case reduced by 11%; A collective conciliation case by 30% and the cost of an arbitration hearing by 51%. A clear and tangible cost saving benefit in delivering our services more effectively and efficiently.

Acas's strong performance has been achieved alongside improving our sustainability as an organisation. We have identified and managed the environmental and social impacts we have on our staff, customers, and the communities in which we operate. A standout achievement is reducing our purchase of single use plastics by over half compared to last year, which has been achieved alongside continuing to keep our emissions significantly below our baseline. We assess our social sustainability using a framework developed in our policy work, this year we have made significant investment in our internal human capital through offering tailored training programmes to our staff, and externally through training over 40,000 people in our open access events.

Our plans for innovation in the coming year centre on increasing engagement with early conciliation, developing tailored support to meet sector specific training needs and reaching more employers and using our data to lead improvements in workplace relations.

The work of the Acas team is enhanced by the expert advice and direction of the Acas Council, clearly role-

modelling the strong social partnership which underpins all we do.

I also value the support and collaboration of our Minister and officials at the Department for Business and Trade.

This is my last year reporting on Acas's performance as I plan to retire in 2024. It has been a privilege to lead such an impactful and high performing organisation, respected by customers and stakeholders alike. I am immensely proud of the expert work the team at Acas has delivered in 2023-24, especially given the demands on our services. Their commitment and sheer hard work has been outstanding.

**Susan Clews**

Chief Executive



# Performance Report

## Performance overview

### Who we are:

Acas was established under the Employment Protection Act 1975 and continues to be in existence under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 Section 209.<sup>1</sup> (TULCRA)

Acas has a general duty, set out in TULCRA (209, 247 – 265,) to promote the improvement of industrial relations. It fulfils this role through the powers and duties set out in that act.

Acas's statutory role is reflected in its stated purpose which is to make working life better for everyone in Britain. It does this by improving employment relations, promoting good employment practice, and resolving workplace disputes through the delivery of high quality, impartial and independent services.

The overall responsibility for the governance of Acas rests with the Acas Council, a statutory body that was established for this purpose. The Council is set up in accordance with the terms of TULCRA and reflects the social partnership of sound employment relations. Acas Council is wholly non-executive and consists of members

---

1. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/functions-of-Acas>

drawn equally from employer and worker representative groups and from a third group of independent experts.

Quoracy of Council is determined by Council under the terms of the Act. It is the responsibility of The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) to ensure the timely supply of Council members so that quoracy can be maintained and that the Chair is assisted in their determination of membership succession planning and viability of the Council.



Acas is sponsored, and largely funded, by the Department for Business and Trade (DBT). Its operating budget is comprised of Grant in Aid (GIA) from DBT, and income generated by Acas on a fully cost recovered basis, through the provision of a range of charged for services, including training and business support.

The funding provided to Acas includes an allocation to fund the activities of the Certification Officer (CO) and the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC), both of which have specific statutory responsibilities under TULCRA. The relationships between DBT, Acas and the CO and CAC are governed by tripartite Memoranda of Understanding (MoU).

## **Our purpose**

At the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas), we exist to make working life better for everyone in Britain.

Healthy working relationships are critical, not just to the success of workplaces and the economy, but also because they allow people to flourish and find meaning, purpose, and fulfilment at work.

Where there are problems in working life, relationships suffer and there is a cost. In part, this is financial, paid for by businesses, workers, and the wider economy. But there are personal and emotional costs too, for everyone involved.

At Acas, we help people resolve these problems. We do so by thinking first about the people involved, helping them to have the open, honest conversations that are so often the solution. Whenever we can, we prevent disputes before they happen, through training and advice.

But where they cannot be avoided, we do all we can to resolve them, fulfilling our legal responsibility.

Employers often come to us in their most difficult moments and employees at their lowest ebb. Both are looking for someone they can trust. To be worthy of that trust, we are:

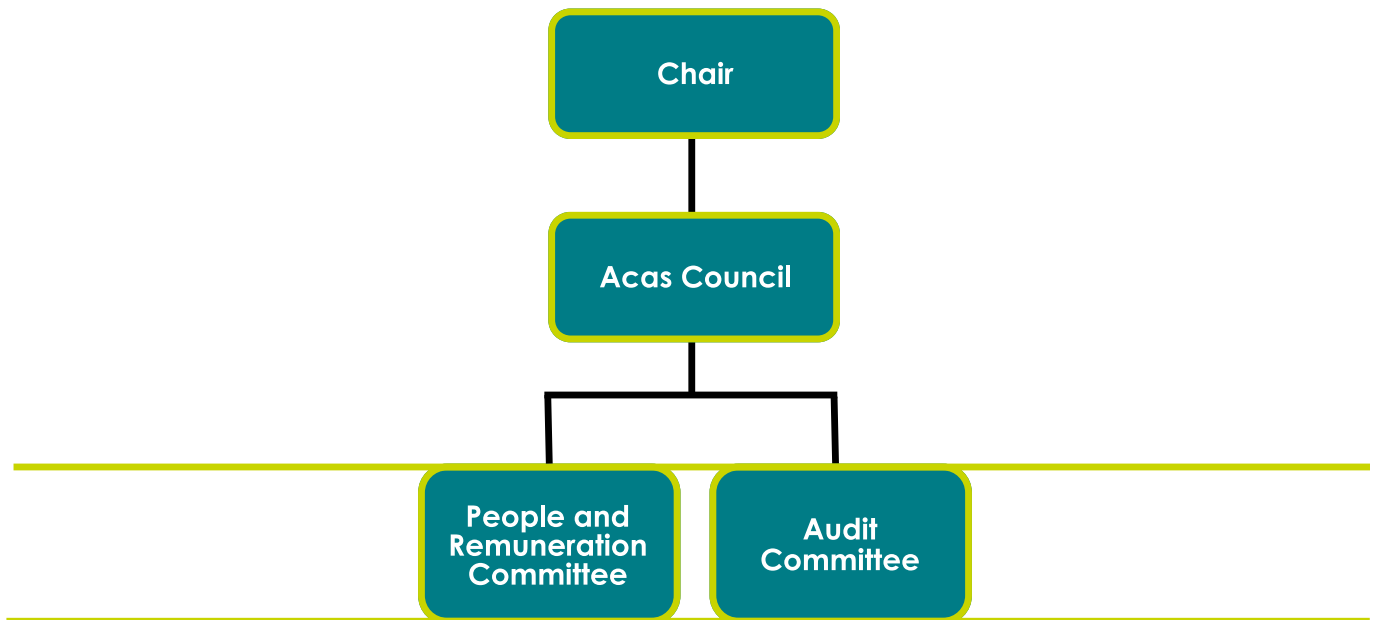
- **Expert.** We have been providing advice and conciliation to Britain's workplaces for over a century. While work has changed beyond recognition, our insight and experience ensure we give the most up-to-date advice. We tackle new issues with authority.
- **Impartial.** We work with all sides to help resolve conflict, treating each side equally. We can always be relied upon to give confidential advice and to be frank and honest.
- **Independent.** We are publicly funded and have been independent since 1974. We act only to promote a better future at work.
- **Fair.** A good workplace is a fair one. At Acas, inclusion is central to all we do – we respect and value difference and aim to follow the highest standards. What we ask of others, we ask of ourselves too.

At Acas, we lead the way in promoting good work and reducing disputes. Our success relies on our people working in partnership with employees and employers, academics and policymakers, trade union and business leaders.

Together, we make working life better for everyone in Britain.

## Our structure

**The Acas Council** sets the overall strategic direction for the organisation and provides strategic leadership in all aspects of the work of Acas, taking account of Government’s wider priorities along with expert advice to the executive team.



## Council Governance Model

**The Acas Executive Board** is responsible for the day-to-day and operational management of Acas and works with the Council to inform the overall strategic direction of

Acas. It oversees organisation performance and delivery of the strategic and business plans; resources and capability; and risk management.



# The Acas Council

## Clare Chapman



(Acas Council Chair from 27 July 2020)

### **Chair, Acas**

Clare is a Non-Executive Director and Remuneration Chair at M&G and is Co-Chair of The Purposeful Company. Clare's executive experience was at Quaker Oats, Tesco, PepsiCo and British Telecom where she had roles in the UK, USA and mainland Europe. She also served as Director General of Workforce at the Department of Health and has had other non-executive roles in the UK and USA. Clare was a Commissioner on the Low Pay Commission before joining Acas as Chair and was a Trustee for the Lambeth Trust and the Reconciliation Leaders Network supporting the Archbishop of Canterbury.

## Neil Carberry



(Acas Council since July 2014)



## **Chief Executive, Recruitment and Employment Confederation**

Neil is Chief Executive of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC), the UK's representative and professional body for recruitment and staffing. Neil is a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD. He sits on the boards of the World Employment Confederation Board and a Primary Academy Trust.

### **Mike Clancy**



(Acas Council since May 2016)

### **General Secretary, Prospect**

Mike is the General Secretary of the trade union Prospect. Mike was appointed as an Employment Appeal Tribunal member in 2002 and became a member of the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) in 2019. He is also a member of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) Executive Committee and the TUC General Council.

### **Jayne Haines MBE**



(Acas Council since April 2018)



## **Head of Talent, Rio Tinto**

Jayne took up her current role as Head of Talent at Rio Tinto in August 2022. Jayne was a Trustee and then Chair of the charity Women in Sport for 10 years and received her MBE in 2021 for services to women's sport. Jayne chairs the Berkshire Cricket Foundation, and is a member of the Recreation Game Board Committee of the England and Wales Cricket Board.

## **Simon Lewis**



(Acas Council since January 2022)

## **Barrister,**

Simon is an experienced barrister and member of Exchange Chambers. He specialises in employment law and sits part-time, as a Deputy District Judge within the County Court. He was appointed Junior Counsel to the Crown in 2015 and reappointed in 2020.

## **Ben Summerskill**



(Acas Council since March 2017)

Ben was Chief Executive of Stonewall from 2003 to 2014, and then Director of the Criminal Justice Alliance. Prior to this, Ben was Assistant Editor and Chief Leader Writer at The Observer. He is a member of the King's Award for Voluntary Service and the Sussex Police Ethics Committee and a trustee of Switchback.

## **Ijeoma Omambala KC**



(Acas Council since January 2022)

### **Barrister**

Ijeoma is an experienced barrister and member of Gray's Inn and Old Square Chambers. She specialises in employment law and has been involved in many important discrimination and equal pay cases.

## **Matthew Percival**



(Acas Council since August 2021)

### **Future of Work & Skills Director, CBI**

Matthew is responsible for the CBI's policy development and campaigns on the interactions between employers

and their workforce. It includes campaigns on education and training, employee engagement, immigration, diversity and inclusion, employee health and wellbeing, pay and pensions, and domestic and international labour law.

## **Roy Rickhuss CBE**



(Acas Council since August 2021)

Roy represents Community on the TUC General Council and sits on both Executive Committees of Industrial Global Trade Union and Industrial Europe. He is a member of the Unions 21 Commission on Collective Voice.

He was invited to join the government's Industrial Strategy Council in 2018 and in the 2019 New Year honours was awarded a CBE for services to the steel industry.

## **Christina McAnea**



(Acas Council since March 2017)

## **General Secretary, UNISON**

Christina was elected General Secretary of UNISON in January 2021. She has held senior positions across the union, negotiating on behalf of public service staff working in local government, police forces, schools, universities and colleges, private and voluntary sectors, and the NHS.

## **Kevin Rowan**



(Acas Council since September 2023)

## **Head of Organisation, Services and Skills Department, TUC**

Kevin is the Head of Organisation, Services and Skills Department at the TUC and the Director of Union Learn.

He leads on public services, trade union renewal, health and wellbeing, trade union education, regional policy and devolution and plays a key role in TUC's leadership and broader campaign work.

He is a member of the Strategic Transport Apprenticeship Taskforce, co-chair of the Manufacturing Skills Task Force.

## Martin McTague



(Acas Council since September 2023)

### **Chair, Federation of Small Businesses**

Prior to becoming National Chair of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) in 2022, Martin served as National Vice-Chair, Policy & Advocacy, and has been a volunteer with FSB for more than 20 years.

As National Chair, Martin works closely with Government and opposition leaders, working to ensure that the views of all UK's small businesses are represented at the most senior levels.

He has been running his own business for 35 years and currently owns and manages three businesses, offering public policy, engineering, and IT consultancy services.

# Strategic Ambitions – our plans and progress

We are now in the final year of our 4-year strategy running from 2021-25 which sets out how we will **Make Working Life Better for Everyone in Britain** and is built around the delivery of 4 ambitions.

In 2024-25, we have actions underway to achieve our 4 ambitions in full, and thereby increase our impact for workers and businesses.

## **We will do this by:**

- Increasing our reach to businesses across GB, by providing more tailored advice, and an improved product range.
- Linking our dispute resolution systems to His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Services so we receive claim details immediately, supporting parties to reach resolution at an earlier stage.
- Increasing the frequency and reach of our workplace data and insight to support our customers and stakeholders and reinforce our position as an evidential authority.
- Innovating, how we use technology to reach more customers, faster.
- Innovating to deliver enhanced operational efficiency and even greater value for money.

**Tables A:** Detail the ambitions benchmark and what we plan to achieve by 2025. Progress by the end of 2023-24 is articulated in the ambition narrative, which has been strongly supported by our 2023-24 Key Performance Indicators for our service delivery which we agree and report on to DBT, these are laid out at **Table B.**





## Tables A: Acas 2021-25 Strategic Ambitions

Ambition 1	
We aim to reach twice as many small and medium sized businesses, and twice as many employees. In doing so, we will have prioritised sectors where issues are more prevalent and union representation is low, and we will have reached customers all over the country.	
From the Ambition start point in 2021, the aim is to:	Our Targets Metrics – By 2025 we aim to have:
1. Increase the number of web sessions each year from 9 million.	1. Doubled the number of web sessions recorded on the Acas website to 18 million.
2. Increase the number of customer interactions from 100,000 through the reach of our good practice advice and training services.	2. Doubled the reach of our good practice advice and training services, increasing interactions from 100,000 to 200,000.
3. Increase awareness of Acas amongst small and medium-sized businesses from 83% and amongst individuals from 56%.	3. Increased awareness of Acas amongst small and medium-sized businesses to 90% and amongst individuals to 60%.

### Progress to-date:

We are on track to deliver on all **three Ambition 1** success measures. By the end of 2023-24 we have:

1. Increased the number of web sessions – particularly driven by Google search traffic – with **17.9 million** sessions between April 2023 and March 2024, keeping us on track to deliver our target of **18 million** sessions by March 2025.
2. Achieved over **141,000** interactions with our services, in 2023-24, an increase of 43% on the



previous year. This takes us well on our way to meeting our 2025 ambition of **200,000**, seeing substantial increases in Open Access Events, webinars, and e-Learning delegates.

3. Increased awareness of Acas amongst individuals and small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and are on track to reach our 2025 target. For 2023-24, awareness amongst SMEs out-turned at **87%** and for Individuals at **80%**, which has been supported by a growth in email contacts and a new cross-Acas marketing plan.

Our Ambition 1 focus has brought **greater impact and improved efficiency** in 2023-24, having:

1. Increased our Digital training programme by extending our event capacity and providing more support to business. Our innovative approach to content creation and delivery has resonated with our audiences, driving engagement, and fostering stronger connections with our customers allowing them to get the basics right.
2. We have continued to provide a variety of training and in-depth support both face-to-face and virtually, which has allowed customers to engage with our services in a way which is cost effective and convenient to them and their business.
3. When compared to 2022-23, working smarter and applying a customer led 'right product, right time'

approach, delegate numbers increased by 33%, and income by 10% (£220k) And our e-Learning service has seen a similar increase in users by 15%. Training event cancellations also reduced by 60%.

4. Partnered with key stakeholders, including HSE and HMRC on joint webinars on ‘Improving Mental Health in the Workplace’ and ‘Helping employers get the National Minimum Wage right’. These topics help employers get the basics right, which in-turn helps avoid fractured employment relations and disputes.

All these approaches have supported the 43% increase in customer interactions reaching the type of employers and sectors where the employers most commonly fail to ‘get the basics right’ as seen through early conciliation or employment tribunal claims.

<b>Ambition 2</b>	
<p>By 2025, we will be resolving three out of every four disputes before they reach a costly employment tribunal, as a result of earlier and more effective conciliation and a fuller understanding of all the possible paths to resolution.</p>	
<b>From the Ambition start point in 2021, the aim is to:</b>	<b>Our Targets Metrics – By 2025 we aim to have:</b>
<p>1. Increase the proportion of disputes we resolve at an early stage, before an employment tribunal application is made from 58%.</p>	<p>1. Increased to 75%* the proportion of disputes we resolve at an early stage, before an employment tribunal application is made, so that fewer businesses and fewer people enter the formal legal process.</p>
<p>2. Increase the proportion of disputes we resolve after an employment tribunal (ET) application is made to 75%.</p>	<p>2. Increased to 75% the proportion of disputes we resolve after an employment tribunal application is made, so that formal legal processes are shortened and the need for a hearing is avoided.</p>
<p>3. Maintain our resolution rate for collective disputes to at least 85%.</p>	<p>3. Maintained our resolution rate for collective disputes to at least 85% and be more responsive in sectors where issues are prevalent, and representation is low, so that the harmful impacts of industrial disputes are minimised.</p>

\*A detailed summary can be found at Para. 1 below and at page 29 of the report

## Progress to-date:

We are on track to deliver all three **Ambition 2** success measures: By the end of 2023-24 we have:

1. Increased the proportion of disputes resolved before an employment tribunal application to **72%** which is 3% points below the target. When we adjust that figure\* to take account of the Smarter Resolution Programme our outturn increases by 2.6% to **74.6%**. Plans are in place to use our data to identify more ways to improve the resolution of early conciliation cases.
2. We have increased the proportion of disputes we resolve after an employment tribunal application is made to **78%** (3 percentage points above the ambition target).
3. We have increased the resolution rate for collective disputes to **94%** (9 percentage points above the ambition target).

Our Ambition 2 focus has brought greater impact and improved efficiency. **The cost of handling a case in both our collective and individual conciliation services has been reduced by 30% and 11% respectively, when compared to 2022-23.** We have stimulated innovation and increased Acas dispute resolution success, reducing more conflict at work at an early stage in 2023-24. We have done this by:

1. Delivering our strongest results ever in dispute resolution and laying the groundwork for a strong outcome in Ambition 2 by 2025. Our achievements stem from improvements in how our early conciliation (EC) service is accessed through the online forms and online guidance, technical changes to how we allocate cases, and investment in the expertise of our skilled staff.
2. Creating clearer guidance on when and how the early conciliation process should be started. This means that some claims which would have reached Acas now do not get to us at all, because they don't meet the criteria to progress. This is better for claimants, better for businesses and better for Acas and the employment tribunal.
3. Investing more in our collective conciliation service, which has experienced another year of high demand. We have worked with trade unions and employers with collective disputes across multiple sectors. We have maintained high levels of service during this period and are exceeding our ambition of maintaining a positive outcome rate of at least 85%, delivering a 94% outcome. This has been achieved during a period of high levels of disputes and significant internal change.

### Ambition 3

By 2025, we will have new approaches to predict and respond to challenges in the world of work, working with partners to shape a better future. We will share our knowledge, data and insight to help us to build healthy work and prosperity for people, places and society.

**From the Ambition start point in 2021, the goal was to:**

**Our Targets Metrics – By 2025 we aim to have:**

1. Create a plan to implement our data strategy and grow our data and insights capability.

1. Be established as authoritative source of information and insight on workplaces relations and an organisation that draws on evidence to change practice.

2. Convene our external partners to develop policies and anticipate new trends in the workplace.

2. Be the convening place which brings together partners to develop creative solutions to the biggest workplace challenges and raise standards for a better world of work. (Good Work, Regional Charters. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG).

3. Launch new evidence on the cost of conflict to employers, engaging others in the importance of improving the management of conflict.

3. Be recognised as the leading authority in the understanding of workplace conflict, its prevention, and resolution.

4. Contribute to government policy agendas so they benefit from Acas’s real-world insight and expertise.

4. Be the leading practical policy authority on the big challenges of today’s working lives.

### Progress in 2023-24:

We are on track to deliver on all 4 of our **Ambition 3** success measures:

1. **Data:** We established an updated source of statistics on early conciliation and shared our data more frequently.
2. **Standards:** We brought employer and employee voices together through events, blogs and speaking engagements (over 8,000 attendees in '23-24).
3. **Conflict:** Our programme of research on conflict management and dispute resolution brought fresh insight to employers and employees.
4. **Policy:** We **published a new Acas Code and provided** 14 published responses to Government and regulatory consultations and calls for evidence.

Regulatory reforms, labour market shifts and pressures on good workplace relations continued in 2023-24. Our Ambition 3 activity – Acas knowledge, data and insight – helped our customers and stakeholders keep pace with the changing world of work. We worked with our partners to forge consensus on the biggest challenges facing labour relations to support economic growth, promote productivity and wellbeing, and raise work standards. The activity included:

1. **Data:** We gave our customers and stakeholders insight into the trends behind our data series with a new blog series.

2. **Standards:** we gained regional and national reach, with events in partnership with CIPD, West Yorkshire Charter and the Midlands Engine. We influenced national and international standards through sharing insight on the links between investment in the workforce and productivity, making the case for social sustainability.
3. **Conflict:** appearances across the national, specialist and local media have improved understanding of conflict management, paving the way for better routes to resolution. A new programme of research, following the landmark Cost of Conflict report in 2022-23, includes in-depth case studies.
4. **Policy:** The launch of the new Acas Flexible Working Code established a strong policy voice, involving 162 key stakeholder consultees through consultation. Publication saw substantial media coverage setting new and more positive expectations of flexible working. 14 published responses to Government and regulatory consultations and calls for evidence, including proposals on: fair distribution of tips; flexible working and occupational health.



## Ambition 4

By 2025, creating fair and inclusive workplaces will be at the heart of everything we do. Our services will be inclusive and accessible to all. We will be promoting diversity and inclusion in Britain’s workplaces and our own will reflect the values, and diversity, of modern Britain.

### The ambition benchmark

### Our Targets Metrics – By 2025 we aim to have:

1. Establish partnerships nationally and regionally which support levelling up and allow us to influence equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace, developing a plan of work to become a lead body in promoting the best practical solutions to creating truly inclusive workplaces and working practices.

1. Influence the state of equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace, through our services and in partnership with organisations across Britain.

2. Improve the accessibility of our biggest channel, our website, so that as many people as possible can access our information and advice online.

2. Provide services that are accessible and effective for those who need to use them, irrespective of place, sector, and individual circumstances.

3. We will forge ahead with implementation of our internal people strategy, focusing on our race action plan, declaration rates and positive action to make sure that we grow the diversity and harness the potential of staff across Acas.

3. Be an organisation that fully reflects the diversity of the communities that we serve.

## Progress to-date

We are on track to deliver on all our **Ambition 4** success measures:

1. Our external work has delivered partnerships across equality, diversity and inclusion – public, private and voluntary sectors with evidence of impact on policy & practice.
2. Our new customer facing Inclusive Workplaces Plan, including mental health and wellbeing, puts us on track to deliver our goal to influence the state of equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace.
3. We are improving access and inclusion, with the completion of the Business Disability Forum self-assessment and the rollout of Equality Impact Assessment and Public Sector Equality Duty training to senior leaders.
4. We have reviewed our organisational diversity data and completed a recruitment review. We are behind the timeline of implementation but have a plan to get back on track.

Our Ambition 4 focus in 2023-24 has seen us focus on the below External and Internal factors:

## **External**

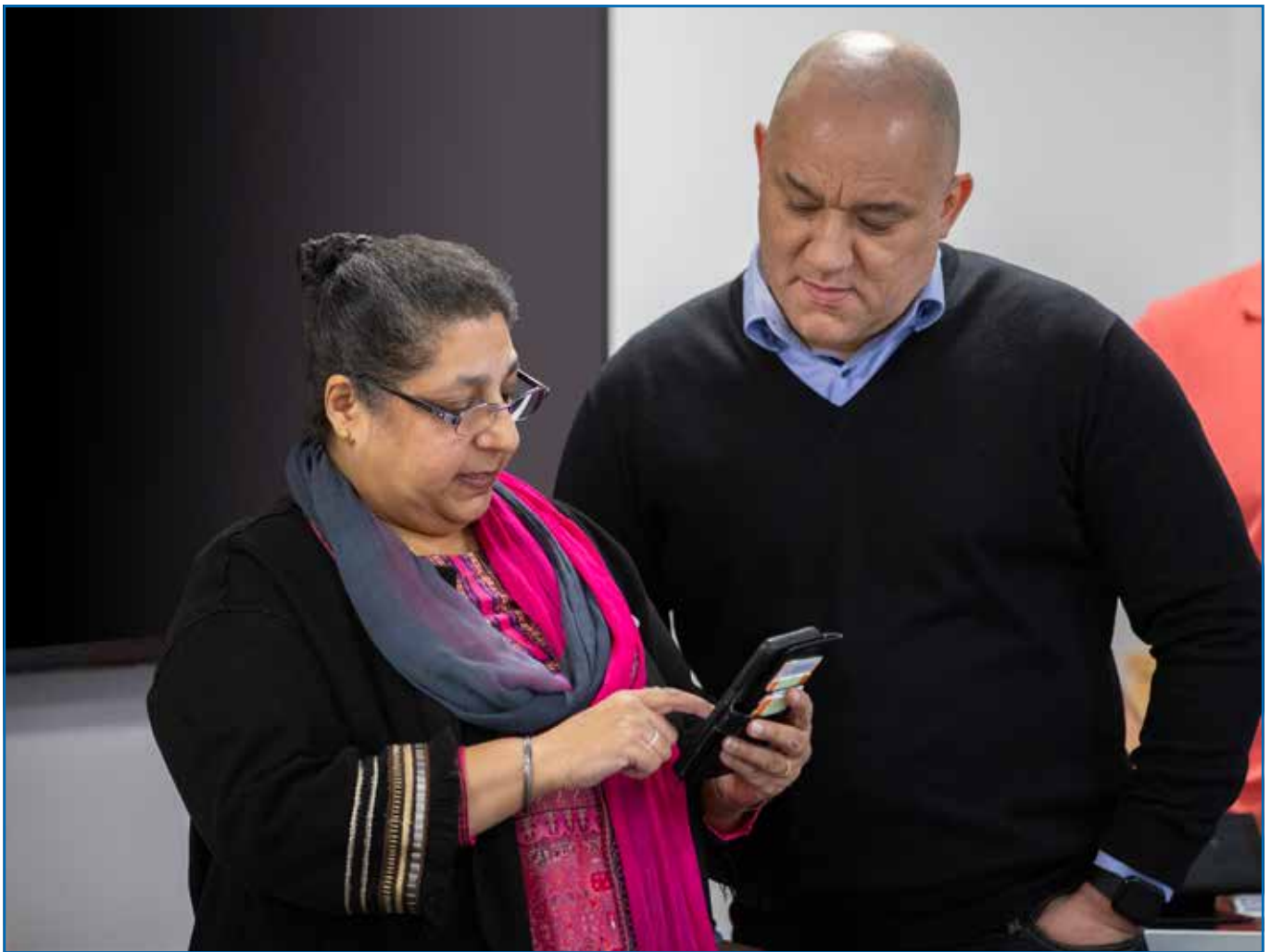
1. Our external policy work is providing partners and customers with authoritative guidance across the range of protected characteristics: race, disability and sex guides were all published this year published in their updated form. We also published overarching guides to address the common issues frequently faced, including discrimination and the Equality Act, making a complaint, handling a complaint, witnessing discrimination, hate crime and bullying. We will complete this substantial series over 2024-25.
2. We are committed to providing services that are accessible and effective for those who need to use them, irrespective of place, sector, and individual circumstances. In 2023-24 we completed an assessment into the accessibility of internal communications and our external services. Actions set us on track to ensure we provide inclusive services that are accessible to all. Plans have been and continue to be implemented to achieve the recommendations suggested by the audit report, ensuring colleagues and customers can access all information and services in the right way and at the right time. We are implementing our accessibility plan to enable greater access for customers,

completing the roll out of Equality Impact Assessment training, creating an accessibility governance framework, and carrying out a second external website audit.

## Internal

1. We continue to invest in our approach to inclusion, rolling out Equality Impact Assessment and Public Sector Equality Duty training across the organisation and be an organisation that fully reflects the diversity of the communities that we serve. As we complete our work on Ambition 4, we will be continuing to work with our diversity networks to strengthen their role and impact, with supported training and encouraging applications to targeted Civil Service development and mentoring schemes. We have focussed on strengthening our pool of diverse candidates, by exploring our recruitment diversity data. We now have clear targets to support and measure our plans. Our diversity data has been integrated into our People Dashboard, to complement and enhance our current system bringing all people data together into one place to ensure diversity data is integrated into all people decisions. And we continue to monitor and encourage development and promotion of all our staff and found it encouraging to have an increase in female staff at senior level in this Gender Pay Gap reporting year.

2. To equip our line managers with the skills required to identify and support employees who are experiencing poor mental health, we have delivered ‘Mental Health Skills for Line Managers’ sessions throughout 2023-24. We also continue to offer mental health and wellbeing e-Learning modules to all our people. Specific ‘vulnerable callers’ training provision has continued for our Helpline Advisers and Conciliators in recognition that they are supporting customers who are increasingly presenting with mental health difficulties.



## Table B: Acas 2023-24 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

These are the key service metrics that Acas agreed with Department for Business and Trade (DBT), which we track and measure throughout the operational year. They are also a key driver of our strategic ambitions to assure ourselves, DBT and our stakeholders of the progress we are making against our 2021-25 strategy.

Service	Key Performance Indicator	2023-24 KPI Out-turn	KPI Target
Collective Conciliation	% Promotion of a settlement or progress towards a settlement in disputes in which Acas is involved.	<b>94%</b>	88%
Individual Conciliation	% of Early Conciliation notifications which result in a conciliated settlement between parties or another positive outcome.	<b>39%</b>	35%
	% of Employment Tribunal cases which are positively resolved following Acas conciliation.	<b>78%</b>	77%
Helpline	% of users able to take clear action following their call.	<b>84%</b>	85%
Training Services	% of Workplace training customers reporting the course met its intended objective.	<b>93%</b>	90%
	% of Open access customers reporting that the training met their learning needs.	<b>82%</b>	82%
Website & Digital Advice	% of positive engagement of users from the website* (where an individual stays longer than 10 seconds on an advice page)	<b>92%</b>	90%

- **Operational performance and service outcomes** have been strong in 2023 to 2024, despite the challenging environment and customer demand fluctuation.
- Across all our services, we have provided **high value** to employers and employees and the wider economy and a **responsive approach** to customer service.
- Year-end data shows all bar one of **Acas KPIs have been met or exceeded**, with **Helpline** missing its KPI by just 1% point.
- Demand for **collective conciliation** exceeded profile by 12% with 618 collective disputes in 2023-24, many of which were protracted and complex. Despite this pressure the team achieved their best KPI outcome of 94%, 6% points ahead of the target of 88%.
- We have seen the best level of success in **Early Conciliation's 10-year history** where we exceeded the resolution target by 4% points. This resulted in fewer cases reaching The Employment Tribunal and demonstrates the value of the Smarter Resolutions Programmes.
- We were not able to fully cope with the **Helpline** demands for advice and towards year end call wait times increased and more calls were abandoned, which in part was due to recruitment not keeping pace with the demand.

- Our **Advice and Business Solutions – Training Services** reached more customers and generated more income than we thought possible at the mid-year point, by increasing delegate numbers at events and delivering more digitally. Interactions saw year-on-year **growth of +43%**, 94% of forecast with both webinars and e-Learning delivering significant growth.
- The **Acas website** continues to be popular for both employers and employees. There were approximately 18 million sessions in 2023-24 which is an increase of over 3.6 million sessions from 2022-23.
- Our strong KPI performance has moved us a step closer to the finish line of our 4-year strategy of 2021-25. At the close of 2023-24, **we are on track to meet the majority of our 2021-25 ambition targets.**



# Our year

in numbers

2023/24



**33,500**  
individual  
conciliation cases  
received



**Nearly  
105,000**  
early conciliation  
notifications

**618**  
collective  
conciliations  
handled



**Over  
578,000**  
helpline calls  
answered



**17.9m**  
web visits



**12m**  
digital advice  
sessions

**Over  
2,100**  
training sessions  
delivered



**£60.6m**  
expenditure



**£11.10**  
cost of a helpline  
enquiry (voice or  
webchat answered)



**£202**  
cost of processing an  
individual  
conciliation case

**£1,008**  
cost of a collective  
conciliation case



**£2,029**  
cost of an  
arbitration  
hearing case



# Highlights of 2023-24

2023-24 was a year of very high demand for Acas, with workplace conflicts arising from continued economic pressures. Acas responded strongly, exceeding, or meeting 6 out of 7 of our Key Performance Indicators. In addition, we embedded significant internal change as part of our Operating Model restructure and continued to progress our ambitious strategy. Our key highlights include:

1. A settlement rate of 94% of the 618 collective disputes against a KPI of 88%, keeping attention on early dialogue.
2. Settling 39% of Individual Conciliation cases at the Early Conciliation (EC) stage, helping approximately 41,000 claims reach an earlier resolution and preventing an Employment Tribunal (ET) claim being lodged. This reduced demand on the Employment Tribunal which in turn delivered savings to the taxpayer, businesses, and individuals.
3. In cases that progressed to an Employment Tribunal claim, we helped 78% reach a resolution which resulted in only 9% of Early Conciliation cases progressing to an Employment Tribunal hearing.
4. The Acas website continued to be a popular resource for employers and employees looking

for advice and guidance on employment rights. There were nearly 18 million sessions in 2023-24, which is an increase of over 3.6 million sessions from 2022-23.

5. Training over 40,000 people through our open access training and workplace training courses, of which 93% reported the course met its intended objectives and 82% fed back that the training met their learning needs, against targets of 90% and 82%.
6. Reaching over 8,500 delegates through stakeholder and external speaking events, 425% more than our target for 2023-24.
7. Increasing customer interactions by 43% to over 140,000 when compared to 2022-23, this includes an 87% increase in webinar interactions and a 35% increase in e-Learning active users.
8. Through our media activity, we grew employee reach by 16% from a target of 70% to 81%. This was largely due to proactive messaging of Acas's role in resolving disputes. Growth was also seen with our SME media activity which grew by 19% from a target of 70% to 83%, seeing national coverage of our flexible working campaign.
9. Deploying our expertise and insight, to set new standards of Workplace Practice, publishing a new Code of Practice on Flexible Working.

10. Significantly reduced the unit costs for our conciliation and arbitration services in 2023-24. Delivering, a reduction of 11% when processing an individual conciliation case; 30% for a collective conciliation case and 51% for the cost of an arbitration hearing. A clear and tangible cost saving benefit in delivering our services more effectively and efficiently.



# Performance Analysis

## Performance of our Services

### Dispute Resolution

Acas has a statutory duty to conciliate – when things go wrong, between employers and employees, we help to resolve workplace disputes.

# Dispute resolution

in numbers

2023/24



early conciliation  
Outcome 39% against a target of 35%

over **105,000**  
early conciliation notifications



employment tribunals  
**33,500**  
individual conciliation cases

Positively resolving of employment  
tribunal cases 78% against a target  
of 77%



collective conciliation  
**618**  
disputes in which Acas were involved

Workplace conflict has continued to be a prominent feature of the economic landscape in 2023-24. Whilst not at the same peak as the previous year there have been more than 2 million days lost to industrial action in 2023-24. Although inflation has eased, pressure on pay settlements has continued to be a significant factor in driving disputes and in fuelling ongoing industrial unrest.

Most days lost to industrial action were in the public sector, which accounts for 83% of those figures, and is where some disputes persist.

The industrial unrest throughout the year has highlighted that the skills and experience needed to manage conflict and to prevent and resolve disputes are not as strong as they need to be across the whole economy to support productive and healthy workplaces.

## **Collective Dispute Resolution (CDR)**

### **Service Purpose**

Acas offers collective conciliation in disputes between an employer and a group of employees. In most cases the employees are represented by a Trade Union (TU), and we also offer collective conciliation in workplaces without a recognised Trade Union. Collective conciliation is one of our high-profile services and the disputes can be complex, especially where they involve multiple Trade Unions and cover several issues. We are impartial and we always work confidentially with parties.

Using our deep expertise and decades of experience we work with parties, helping them to discuss their issues in a safe space. We bring parties together helping to build solutions that are practical and sustainable. Even before formal talks start, we invest time with parties in ‘pre-talks’, seeking to guide them to resolve the matter themselves, and where that isn’t possible working together to set up the best possible environment for a successful outcome in conciliation.

Pay is not the only cause of collective disputes, and we often work with parties where the conflict has several dimensions, including short-, medium- and longer-term issues.

This can include, for example, restructuring plans, and productivity deals, and wider terms and conditions of employment. Our expertise is also used, for example, to reset and reshape the internal structure of a company’s pay negotiation machinery, and therefore help to reduce the risk of further protracted and damaging pay disputes in the future.

Disputes are difficult and emotive for all concerned, and relationships between parties can often be strained even after the specifics of the dispute are resolved. Part of our role is to help parties build a stronger future together, and to help that objective we provide post-dispute support to parties to understand the drivers and causes of the issue. By helping them reflect on what happened and supporting them to positively reset how



they engage through their negotiation process, we help them to remedy fractures in the relationship, building solid foundations to prevent further conflict. This process can be difficult, and having Acas there to support both sides helps them to gain clarity and understanding when engaging in dialogue. The feedback we receive has been positive, and requests for us to tackle these and similar issues are on the rise.

### Trends in Disputes

In recent years there have been high volumes of industrial action, and the challenging economic climate of the last year has seen that trend continue, with the demand for collective conciliation remaining high throughout the year. We received 618 requests for collective conciliation in 2023-24, and we have successfully exceeded our KPI to settle or progress the dispute towards settlement.

	2023-24		Target	2022-23		2021-22	
	Target	Outturn		Outturn	Target	Outturn	
<b>Conciliation in collective disputes:</b>							
The promotion of a settlement in disputes in which Acas were involved	<b>88%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>94%</b>	
	Profile	Actual	Profile	Actual	Profile	Actual	
<b>Collective dispute volumes:</b>							
Number of collective requests received	550	<b>618</b>	520	<b>621</b>	397	<b>510</b>	

Throughout the year we have seen annual pay claims coming in at higher-than-normal levels, or levels that are matched to the higher rate of inflation, and

many organisations have told us they find these to be challenging situations to navigate. Pay or conditions of employment were given as the cause of the dispute in 58% of cases, and we've seen an upsurge in disputes within the public sector. However, the majority, approximately 70%, of disputes we were involved in were in the private sector.

## **Service Demand**

We engaged parties in pre-talks conciliation in 177 disputes in 2023-24, which is 39% higher than the previous year. This enabled us to get involved at an early stage to help resolve a dispute before conflict escalates between the parties.

We have been involved in a total of 786 disputes this year, up from 749 last year. That is the combined total of collective conciliation talks, where we are actively engaged in resolving the dispute, and 'pre-talks' conciliation (see above) where we support parties in dispute guiding them towards managing the situation themselves or laying the groundwork for talks with Acas if necessary.

An increased focus on post-dispute work led us to exceeding this target by 36% across the year. This resulted in workplace projects which cover a range of issues from negotiation frameworks, relationships, and constructing pay systems.

By contrast, demand for collective arbitration and collective mediation declined. We have connected with

peers from around the globe who have also noted a decrease in arbitration requests. We'll be completing a review of our collective arbitration and mediation service in 2024-25 to ensure it is a fit-for-purpose solution for relevant disputes.

### **Our Performance in Resolving Collective Disputes:**

Acas collective dispute resolution services have stepped up to the challenge in 2023-24 and our skilled teams have delivered their best performance ever in a year of high demand. Many of the disputes have been more complex and protracted than in the past, and in spite of these challenges and the high demand for our expert help the team achieved a positive outcome in 94% of cases, which significantly exceeds the key performance indicator target of 88%. It has also exceeded our 2021 – 2025 ambition of maintaining a positive impact rate of at least 85%. Our intervention has assisted in more than 600 disputes across the public and private sectors, in many cases ending actual or threatened industrial action, include Royal Mail, Transport for London ['London Underground'], Asda, Scottish Water, and the BBC.

Given the significant external demand that was put on Acas and the internal change, this result is exceptional.

### **What our customers say:**

“Thank you again for your time last week. The members of the school committee were very grateful for your time and, most importantly, for bringing the dispute to a place

where the Union were happy to take the revised offer to their members.”

“I am pleased to inform you that, having taken the revised offer to their members, the NEU confirmed on Friday that the dispute was over.

Hopefully, we can now start to rebuild relationships as we move forward for the benefit of our pupils.”

“We all were really grateful for the last meeting – it was incredibly helpful and has led to a much, much smoother and less acrimonious pay negotiation this time around. (The pay offer will hopefully be finally signed off this week in time for implementation)”

## **Mediation**

Acas offers an individual mediation service to employers where individuals and small groups are in dispute or experiencing conflict. Mediation is a way to mend relationships when there is a disagreement at work, and Acas can supply independent and impartial mediators to help solve those issues and to avoid them progressing further.

At the end of the year Acas delivered 203 individual mediations. This is below the target we set for ourselves, and we have taken action to review and develop the service, including training new mediators, reviewing our ways of working and deploying dedicated mediators to help us grow this service in 2024-25.



## Individual Dispute Resolution (IDR)

### Service Purpose

If an individual decides to make a claim to an employment tribunal, they must first notify Acas.

We then offer our early conciliation service to try and resolve the problem without the parties having to go to an employment tribunal. It is a free service, where Acas speaks with the individual and employer separately to try and resolve the problem. Parties can use a representative to act on their behalf during early conciliation. For example, a trade union representative or a family member.

The benefits of using early conciliation are:

- it's free;
- it's confidential;
- it's quicker than going to tribunal;
- it's easier – without the need for tribunal paperwork;
- it's voluntary – either party can refuse talks;
- outcomes can be agreed between parties– including outcomes that you cannot get from a tribunal, for example a job reference.

However, if the parties are unable to resolve the dispute at the early conciliation stage, the individual can still pursue a claim to the employment tribunal, where once again Acas will offer conciliation.



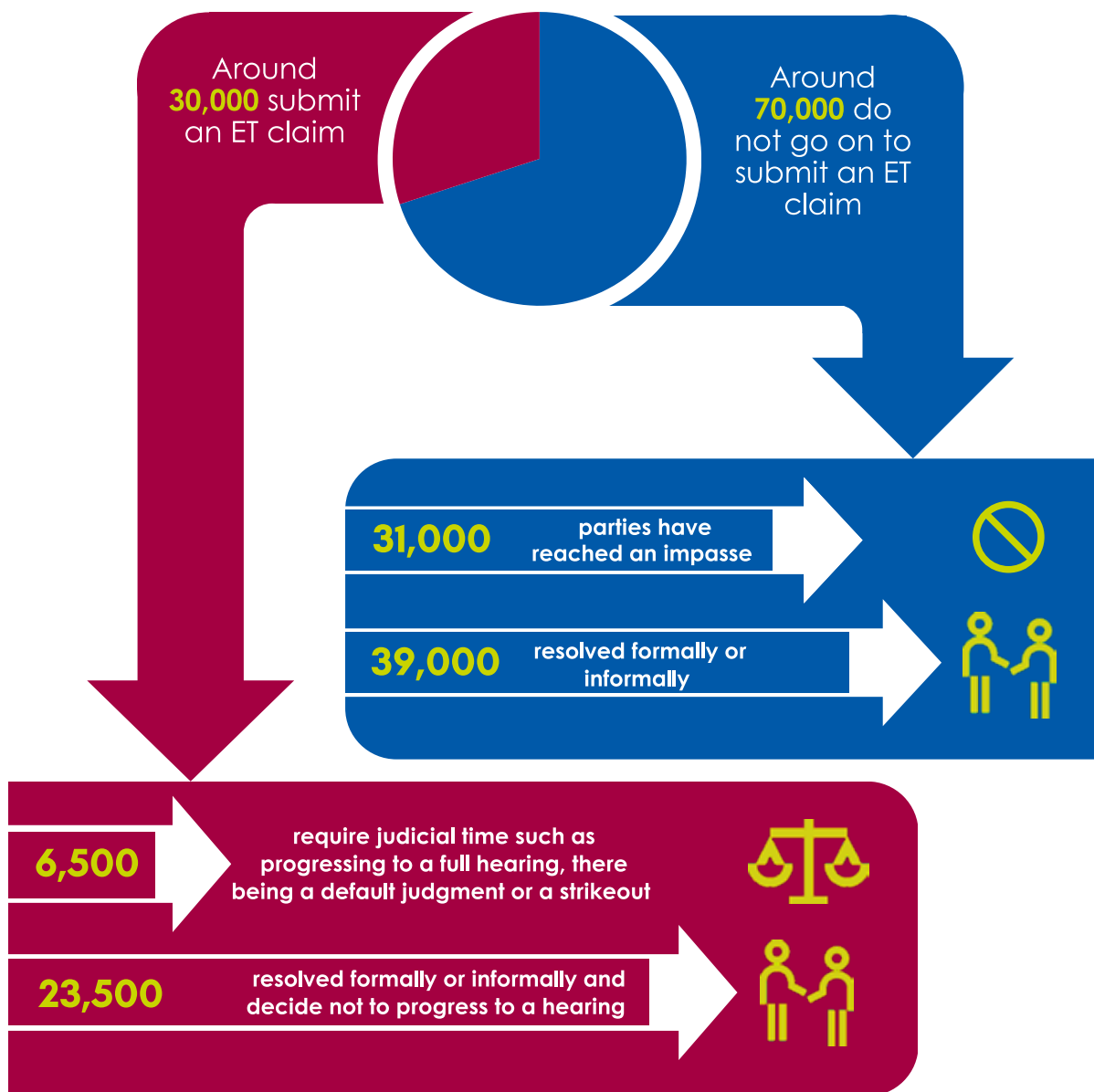


# Early Conciliation

## employee led conciliation



Approx 100,000 cases led by claimant which are eligible for conciliation





## **Service Demand**

The close of the 2023-24 reporting year marked ten years since the introduction of Early Conciliation in April 2014. In that time the service has received over 1 million requests for Early Conciliation, and fewer than one third of these have gone on to submit a claim at the Employment Tribunal Service.

At the end of 2023-24, our individual conciliation service had received almost 105,000 Early Conciliation Notifications. While this is 1.5% lower than 2023-24, later in the year we have seen a trend of rising volumes.

## **Our Performance in Resolving Individual Disputes**

In our early conciliation service, we achieved a positive outcome in 39% of notifications, which means that approximately 65,000 claimants have been able to resolve their dispute without progressing into the employment tribunal system. When claims have entered the employment tribunal system 78% have been resolved without progressing to a hearing, saving businesses and individuals time, money, and emotional distress. It is a matter of real pride that the past year has delivered our best Early Conciliation results to date. The service delivered a resolution rate of 39% against a target of 35%, which result in a conciliated settlement between parties (or another positive outcome). This performance reflects the investment we've made in developing our people and systems.

In the Employment Tribunal stage, 78% of cases are positively resolved following Acas conciliation. This is 1% above our target Key Performance Indicator and above our performance across the last 3 years.

These outcomes have given us strong foundations to deliver our Ambition 2 targets.

\*When we take account of the of the Smarter Resolutions programme, that was implemented in 2023-24, and as detailed in our ‘better use of technology’ section, we can see that this programme of innovation which has brought improvements to the service, has had an impact on how we report on Ambition 2. Specifically, it has affected our ambition to prevent three out of every four early conciliation notifications from becoming an employment tribunal claim. This has been the result of a clearer form and better guidance which has meant that some people now do not make a claim too early, which previously would have been the case, leading to a reduction in those cases which were most likely **not to return** as an employment tribunal (ET) claim. We estimate that this impact on our ET avoidance rate i.e., the outturn of our ambition target increases by C. **2.6%**. We propose to use two figures when reporting in next year’s annual report i.e., the recorded figure and an adjusted figure, which has **an added 2.6%**. We are optimistic that we will close the gap between the adjusted figure of 74.6% and our ambition of 75% by the end of March 2025. This is a one-off adjustment.

<b>Ambition 2 in Early Conciliation</b>	<b>2021 baseline</b>	<b>Employment Tribunal avoidance March '24</b>	<b>Adjusted Employment Tribunal avoidance</b>
<b>Employment Tribunal Avoidance in Early Conciliation</b>	<b>c.58%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>[72 + 2.6%] 74.6%</b>

### **Better use of technology in 2023-24:**

In April 2023 Acas’s ‘Smarter Resolutions’ programme of work was completed, and its positive impact on our individual conciliation service is clear. Smarter Resolutions was an investment in technology and digital development which was jointly funded by Acas, the Department for Business and Trade and the Ministry of Justice.

The programme delivered:

- Enhanced web, email and video content for parties considering use of Acas’s conciliation services.
- An improved online form for individuals lodging an early conciliation notification, so that we know more about their dispute, and so that they have better information to decide whether a notification is the right thing for them at the time.
- Automated distribution of cases to our conciliators, speeding up the start of conciliation and allowing us to

put our resource where it's needed most, in front-line conciliation.

- Enhancements to how we handle notifications of group cases, and new processes to improve our service on group cases.

Acas will publish its evaluation of the Smarter Resolution programme in 2024-25 which will show that our service users were able to reach settlement more frequently. They were also found to have reduced anxiety, be more confident in the service and able to start conciliation much more quickly, and we believe that these improvements have contributed to the increase in performance across Individual Dispute Resolution.

We haven't stopped innovating. Throughout the year we have made further improvements to our notification service, based on learning from our customers to further simplify access to the service and increase the proportion of users providing full contact details. Throughout 2023-24 Acas has been working with His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service to deliver a connection between our respective systems so that information about Employment Tribunal (ET) disputes will be transmitted more rapidly, allowing an earlier start to ET conciliation.

We have also improved how we use technology in Collective Dispute Resolution. We have invested in our capability for digital delivery of conciliation which provides our customers greater flexibility and supports us

in delivering an efficient and effective service that meets customer needs.

## **Strengthening our Expert Reputation**

We have spoken publicly on the value of dialogue as the best way to resolve disputes and maintain working relationships, in a year where relationships were strained in many sectors. We work with stakeholders across the economy to build awareness of our expertise in employment relations and dispute resolution. In 2023-24 our focus has been on sectors where disputes have continued and increased our engagement with key stakeholders at home and abroad. We have participated in conferences with other global leaders in dispute resolution, where we have shared our expertise and learned from other leading practitioners, helping us to maintain our reputation in leaders in dispute resolution.

As well as delivering a strong service across Great Britain Acas has been asked to support multiple overseas organisations engaged in dispute resolution. Acas is recognised internationally for its expertise in dispute resolution and the opportunity to demonstrate our approach to Individual Dispute Resolution and learn from the experiences of others is very valuable. Examples in this year include supporting a Sharia Court to understand the GB conciliation process and working with the Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management (TADM) of Singapore to support them in training their conciliators as they broaden their legislation. Working with TADM has

proven helpful to Acas as an opportunity to understand some of the digital innovation undertaken in Singapore to equip their users to resolve their disputes prior to a request for conciliation.

Between April 2023 and March 2024, we sent out statements and press notices on our collective conciliation service, which resulted in 729 pieces of media coverage across national, local and trade media.

The media coverage included our YouGov polls on the involvement of mediation experts to resolve strike action as well as several high-profile disputes such as Royal Mail and Scottish Water, as well as commentary on other disputes such as those in the health sector.

### **Growing our Capability in Dispute Resolution**

In 2023-24 Acas changed its operational structures and brought together all our dispute resolution services so that we now have a consistent national approach to dispute resolution, delivered through our local offices.

Last year we increased our investment in staff learning and development, so that our conciliation teams have the most relevant knowledge, expertise, and skills to deliver our services, and we have continued to invest in our managers, so they have the necessary skills to support, develop and lead their teams to deliver in an effective and engaging way. We have shared knowledge across teams, identifying best practice and understanding of case law and legal developments.

In Collective Dispute Resolution we have also invested in the professional development of our conciliators. In 2023-24 we have concentrated on reinforcing the team's knowledge and expertise, enabling us to be even more effective in the ever-shifting employment relations landscape and adapting to the challenges this brings when assisting parties with negotiations.

This year the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023 was introduced, which is designed to ensure there is a level of service during strikes in critical sectors like health, education, and transport. We have explored what this means for our services and upskilled our people, so that we can assist parties where this legislation applies.

*'Some of the data reported in this report are also reported in our quarterly bulletin. Please note that figures are not coherent due to differences in timings for the data cuts. For a more full explanation of where the discrepancies lie please see the Q4 bulletin: [Early conciliation and employment tribunal data for England, Scotland, and Wales: January to March 2024 | Acas](#)'*

### **What our customers say:**

Lauren assisted me with my COT3 case, and her support was exceptional. She demonstrated remarkable patience, taking the time to thoroughly explain everything I needed to understand. Lauren highlighted aspects of the proposed agreement that I had initially overlooked and clarified their legal implications. Her expertise made me

feel confident that I was in good hands. I am extremely grateful for all of Lauren's help.

Acas really helped when my company did not follow a proper redundancy process. Acas helped me obtain another 3 months of salary from my ex-company as well as getting them to pay my solicitor fees. Acas was very understanding and supportive and I was provided with lots of valuable information both verbally and via the use of videos. I would particularly like to thank Gemma who was my conciliator, who did an excellent job.

Joe was fantastic when dealing with my case. Always very quick with replies and kept me up to date as the process went on. I've never had to go through this process before so was a bit lost on everything going into it but Joe explained everything perfectly. Absolute top bloke.

I want to leave a good feedback to Richard, Individual conciliator for his prompt help received. He was able to address my request and that was very appreciated because it gave me a guideline to follow.

I wanted to take the opportunity to thank Rebecca for her exceptional support and guidance in helping me through the Acas conciliation service. She was very supportive, informative and clear with her guidance and the services and support available.



## **Helpline**

### **Service Purpose**

Alongside our statutory dispute resolution services, Acas has a wider duty to provide free advice and guidance to both employees and employers to promote good work and reduce disputes. Acas works with millions of employers and employees every year to improve workplace relationships through our Advice and Business Solution Services which include our Helpline, Training and Web advice.

### **Service Demand**

In December our helpline celebrated its 21st year of providing an invaluable service to employers and employees who need immediate and impartial advice, options to consider or advice on complex issues. Since then, we've helped over 17 million callers navigate workplace disputes,

In 2023-24 we delivered advice to nearly 600,000 callers over the telephone as well as over 66,000 pre-recorded pieces of advice and over 5,000 queries handled via accessible services, letters, and webinar queries.

Of the calls we handled, c.40% were related to discipline, dismissal and grievance; c.17% were related to contracts and diversity/discrimination, wages and redundancies accounted for c.12% of all calls.

In receiving over 5,000 accessible service queries, it resulted in more than a 600% increase when compared

to 2022-23. Our helpline also saw a significant rise in customers calling and needing additional support, for example due to neurodiversity, poor mental health or speaking English as an additional language. By taking action to increase our service accessibility, we are better meeting customer needs.

To deal with this change in demand, throughout the years we've adapted our approach to how we deliver advice to make sure we are meeting our customer needs, and this year has been no exception.

We have been raising the profile of our accessible services, pioneering new ways of reaching customers who would have difficulty using our telephone helpline. To better support our customers with hearing difficulties we launched video appointments with the choice of closed captions or British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation. This has received positive feedback with one customer saying:

“I've had problems as a BSL user in the past accessing services, but the process was really smooth, the adviser approachable and the advice helpful.”



## **Service Performance**

Considering the changing demands for our services, it has meant we missed our key performance indicator of 85% by 1% point resulting in our average handle time increasing, which in turn has impacted on average wait times. In part this was a result of recruitment not keeping pace with demand. To address this challenge, we have improved our recruitment processes and workforce planning; redeployed staff to the front line; worked with our advisers and managers to develop and improve training. This in-turn is better meeting customer needs and providing support for our colleagues in helping vulnerable and distressed callers.

However, our advisers don't just provide advice to the public. Their insight into employment law issues, trends and customer needs is sought and used internally

and by external organisations to shape services and inform debate. With new customer needs identified and advances in technology available we launched our Future of Advice project in December, seeking feedback from stakeholders, customers, and staff on how we can adapt our approach to make sure the service is fit for the next 21 years and beyond.

### **What our customers say**

*‘You are all so helpful on the Acas helpline and it is so useful to be able to make sure we are doing the right things in difficult situations. Without being able to call Acas it would be an absolute minefield. Thank you to you and all your colleagues’.*

*“I’d just like to say thank you for your support and guidance, I’m in a daunting position but your adviser helped in so many different ways.*

*Understanding, compassionate and gave me relevant information and useful links to guide me through my process. I feel less anxious now and better prepared.”  
Your helpline advisers do an amazing job.*

*‘I would like to say a big thank you for all your help, advice, and support that I have received, on the money owing to me. I am pleased to say, that I have received the money owing, and very grateful for the template to email him a letter. Thank you again, a big worry lifted.’*



# Helpline advice

in numbers

2023/24



We answered  
**over 578,000**  
helpline calls

Our helpline pre recorded  
advice was accessed  
**over 66,000** times



Our helpline colleagues also dealt with  
**nearly 5,000**  
other contacts for advice via webinar  
questions and customer correspondence

# Advice and Business Solutions Training and in-depth support

in numbers

# 2023/24



Over **2,100**  
training sessions

Over **27,000**  
delegates received training



Over **43,000**  
undertook e-learning sessions

Nearly **1,150**  
indepth advisory calls





## **Service Purpose**

Acas provides training courses on employment relations and the latest good practice to help deal with workplace problems, allowing employers, HR professionals, managers and their employees to keep up to date.

Our training courses are run remotely or face to face, led by workplace experts on a range of topics and can be provided remotely via online platforms.

## **Training, webinars, and in-depth support**

We have changed how we manage our services and a new centralised planning approach for all Open Access training events has driven resource efficiencies and improved customer experience. Responding to customer demand and feedback and in advance of the 2023-24 operational year we re-evaluated the Open Access training programme of events.

## **Service Demand and Performance**

Over the course of the year, we have trained over 128,700 people and achieved an income of over £4.56 million (an increase of 10% compared to 2022-23).

## **Webinars**

Our webinars have reached over 44,000 people who either attended the sessions live or watched them at a later point (87% increase compared to 2022-23).

We developed additional webinar topics, including carers leave, flexible working and neurodiversity. We



also collaborated with HMRC and HSE on several joint webinars.

## **Open access and workplace training**

We welcomed 12,129 delegates on our open access events (33% increase on last year). Our most popular open access event events were Management Training for New Managers, HR for Beginners and Employment Law Update. Delegate attendees are from all industries with Health and Social Work, Education and Manufacturing the top three.

We trained over 27,288 delegates through our workplace training services (an 11% decrease on last year), helping businesses raise awareness and upskill employees on a range of topics, including line management skills, discipline and grievance and developing employee forums. Delegates ranged from across all industries with the largest number of delegates attending from the manufacturing industry (19%).

We delivered our accredited Certificate in Workplace Mediation training course to 255 delegates through both our open access and in-house training sessions, allowing businesses to proactively manage conflict and address challenges within their own workplace.

We reached over 1,000 delegates through our digital conferences, covering key employment issues, including mental health, menopause, TUPE, and the changing face of employment relations.

## **e-Learning**

There have been 43,619 e-Learning users (15% increase on last year). Of the 25 modules available and like previous years, the most popular accessed topics were equality, diversity and inclusion and bullying and harassment.

## **In-depth support**

We continue to provide businesses with tailored in-depth support that goes beyond training, working closely with employers, employees, and sometimes employee representatives (Trade Unions) to diagnose potential issues within the workplace and tailor support to address the challenges they face. This year, most projects have focused on helping companies resolve workplace conflict, mediation, and change management.

## **What our customers say**

Customer feedback remains high, and we met our KPIs, with 82% of open access event delegates reporting that the training met their learning needs (against a target of 82%) and 93% of workplace delegates reporting the training met its intended objective (against a target of 90%). Webinar feedback shows that 95% of attendees were very, or fairly satisfied with the service.

## **Feedback examples:**

*‘Convenient format and good price’ – open access event delegate.*

*“New legislation was clearly explained, and I felt confident at the end. Great free webinar – webinar attendee.*

*“The training was relevant to our absence policy and quizzed our knowledge on this. Group work made everyone feel included.” – workplace training customer.*

*“It was an excellent session, and the speakers were all superb.” – conference delegate.*



## Online advice and guidance

Our website is the first place most customers access Acas advice and guidance and provides us with our greatest reach. It provides information and good practice advice for employers and employees. Demand for the service has increased significantly this year, particularly in the last two quarters. We estimate, once cookie consent is accounted for, that we have seen nearly 18 million user sessions. The service also met its KPI of 92% of users positively engaging with the website (against a target of 90%).

The website has performed particularly well in Google search again this year, seeing an increase of one million clicks from Google search results on 2022-23. Increases have been driven by improved ranking against a variety of search terms. Google click data is unaffected by cookie consent and is a reliable indicator of additional demand. We also saw growth in referrals from social media and other websites.

For the last quarter of the 2023-24, our website saw an increase in searches for our homepage (185,000 clicks up 15%,) plus advice on minimum wage (165,000 clicks, up 175%), holiday entitlement (159,000 clicks, up 30%) and dismissals (90,000 clicks, up 40%).

We published 15 new advice guides on a range of important employment areas including stress, sick leave, managing absence, whistleblowing, witnessing discrimination, hate crime and interim relief. We

also developed three new letter templates covering reasonable adjustments for mental health. For the first time users have been able to submit responses to Acas consultations through our website using a form on the website.

We have made some significant improvements to site accessibility this year and improved our internal site search to be more relevant and useful.

### **What our customers say:**

*“This is very useful info. For someone whose working its good to have a platform to explain the position of the employee, its helped me to pursue the issue I have from a more knowledgeable standpoint” on if your wages are not paid*

*“The information I needed is well set out, and uses plain English to explain the key points under question.” on check if your employer can make deductions from your wages*

*“As I am guiding some of our female workforce to develop a company Menopause Policy and supporting guidance etc., this page was useful as it is straightforward, easy to read and uses clear English. The links and download functions are also very helpful for further reading” on menopause at work*

*“The templates, guides and information are very useful. The letter templates, in particular, have provided a good base to create templates for my organisation. The*

*language is clear and straight forward in the guides which means they are able to be tailored for business use.*

*Thank you!” – template page for employers*

*“It was helpful to see and understand the process. The details and the explanation were perfect” on asking and answering questions about discrimination*

*“Disability and discrimination explained simply and it was easy to understand.” on disability discrimination*

*“Excellent advice. Really helps with my processing and making sure the rules are adhered to for our employees. Many thanks.” on managing your employee’s maternity leave and pay*

## Key Performance Indicators

	2023-24		2022-23		2021-22	
	Target	Outturn	Target	Outturn	Target	Outturn
<b>Conciliation in collective disputes:</b>						
The promotion of a settlement in disputes in which Acas were involved	88%	<b>94%</b>	85%	<b>91%</b>	85%	<b>94%</b>
<b>Individual disputes referred for conciliation:</b>						
Percentage of Early Conciliation notifications which result in a conciliated settlement between parties	n/a	<b>n/a</b>	n/a	<b>n/a</b>	19%	<b>23%</b>
Percentage of Early Conciliation notifications which result in a conciliated settlement between parties or other positive outcome	35%	<b>39%</b>	32%	<b>37%</b>	28%	<b>36%</b>
Percentage of Employment Tribunal cases which result in a conciliated settlement disregarding those which have been struck out by the courts	n/a	<b>n/a</b>	n/a	<b>n/a</b>	55%	<b>53%</b>
Percentage of Employment Tribunal cases which are positively resolved following Acas conciliation	77%	<b>78%</b>	77%	<b>77%</b>	75%	<b>77%</b>
<b>Acas training services:</b>						
% of Workplace training customers reporting the course met its intended objective	90%	<b>93%</b>	90%	<b>92%</b>	90%	<b>93%</b>
% of Open Access & Webinar customers reporting that the training met their learning needs.	82%	<b>82%</b>	82%	<b>83%</b>	82%	<b>83%</b>
<b>Telephone helpline advice on workplace problems:</b>						
The percentage of users who were able to take clear action following their call to the Acas Helpline	85%	<b>84%</b>	85%	<b>87%</b>	85%	<b>88%</b>
<b>Digital advice on workplace problems:</b>						
Percentage of positive engagement of users from the website (where an individual stays longer than 10 seconds on an advice page)	90%	<b>92%</b>	90%	<b>90%</b>	85%	<b>92%</b>

\*New revised/combined KPIs launched in Q2 2022/23



## Volume indicators

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
Number of EC notifications	104,884	105,754	90,811
Number of ET1s received	33,507	32,058	31,198
Number of re-employments	252	238	202
Number of collective conciliation requests received	618	621	510
Number of workplace projects started	81	74	81
Number of requests for trade dispute arbitration	6	12	13
Number of calls answered by National Helpline	578,463	649,179	644,153
Number of advisory visits and in-depth phone calls	1,382	2,478	3,505
Number of training sessions delivered	2,116	1,908	1,709
Number of website sessions	17.9m	14.4 m	14.5m
Number of digital advice sessions	12m	10.5m	10.9m

## Cost of key services

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
Cost of a Helpline enquiry (voice or webchat answered)	£11.10	£9.59	£10.48
Cost of processing an Individual Conciliation case*	£202	£227	£248
Cost of a Collective Conciliation case	£1,008	£1,443	£1,193
Cost of an Arbitration hearing case	£2,029	£4,107	£4,367

\*Please note that for the purpose of this calculation a case is one notification. This includes group claims which may represent many thousands of claimants in total.

## Arbitration

2023-24 saw a decrease in operating cost when compared to 2022-23, in part, this is due to Acas undertaking more mediations than arbitrations and where an agreement is reached in mediation, there is no report.



## **Our performance in facts and figures**

This section provides a breakdown of service volumes across a range of services. To facilitate comparisons, figures for the last three years have been provided (where available).

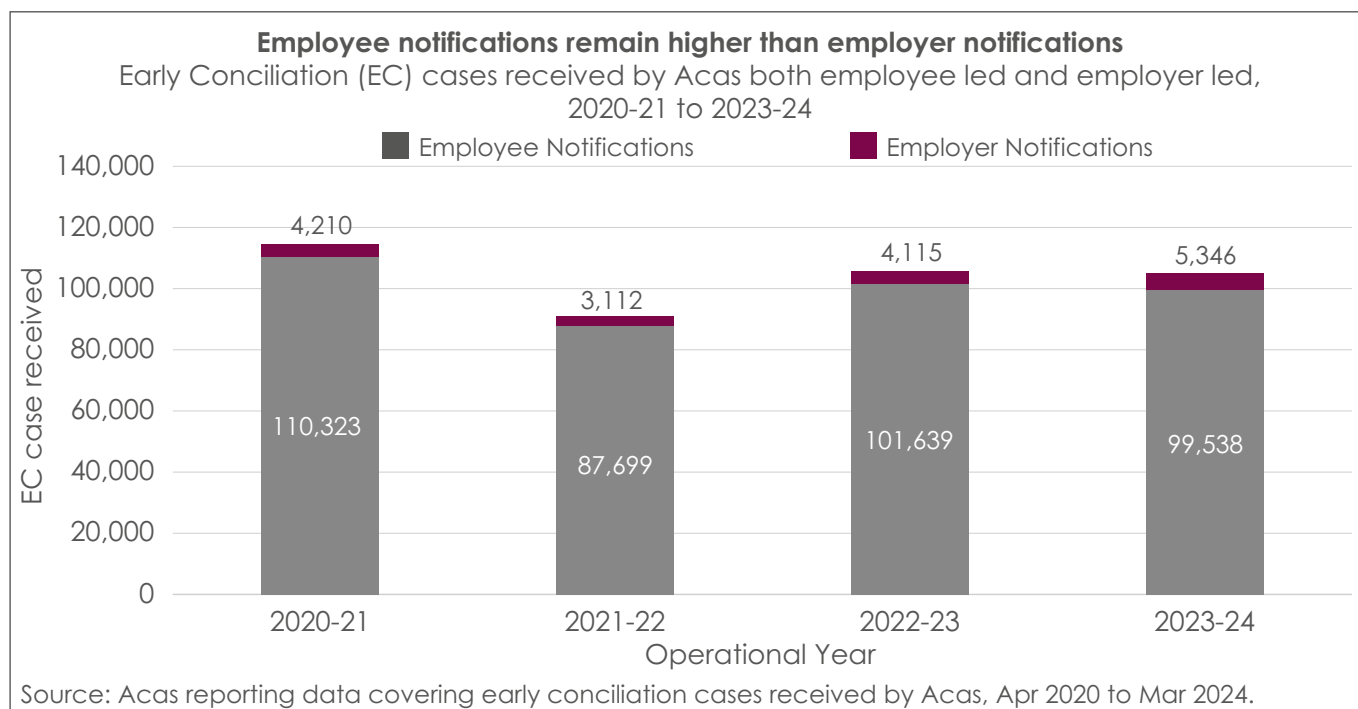
### **Individual disputes**

#### **Early Conciliation notifications received**

		2023-24		2022-23		2021-22	
		Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%
<b>Employee Notifications</b>	No track identified	19,110	19.2%	23,489	23.2%	17,025	19.4%
	Fast track	28,347	28.5%	31,324	30.8%	26,773	30.5%
	Standard track	18,949	19.0%	17,082	16.8%	17,837	20.3%
	Open track	33,132	33.3%	29,744	29.3%	26,064	29.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99,538</b>		<b>101,639</b>		<b>87,699</b>	
<b>Employer Notifications</b>	No track identified	2	0.0%	3	0.1%	5	0.2%
	Fast track	924	17.3%	928	22.6%	444	14.3%
	Standard track	3,489	65.3%	2,436	59.2%	1,922	61.8%
	Open track	931	17.4%	748	18.2%	741	23.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5,346</b>		<b>4,115</b>		<b>3,112</b>	
<b>Total notifications</b>	<b>104,884</b>		<b>105,754</b>		<b>90,811</b>		

Throughout the individual dispute resolution section, Early Conciliation group notifications are each counted as '1' case as are ET1 multiples (where a number of claimants sharing representation raise the same dispute). Acas receives several thousand group notifications annually for Early Conciliation in addition to the individual notifications.

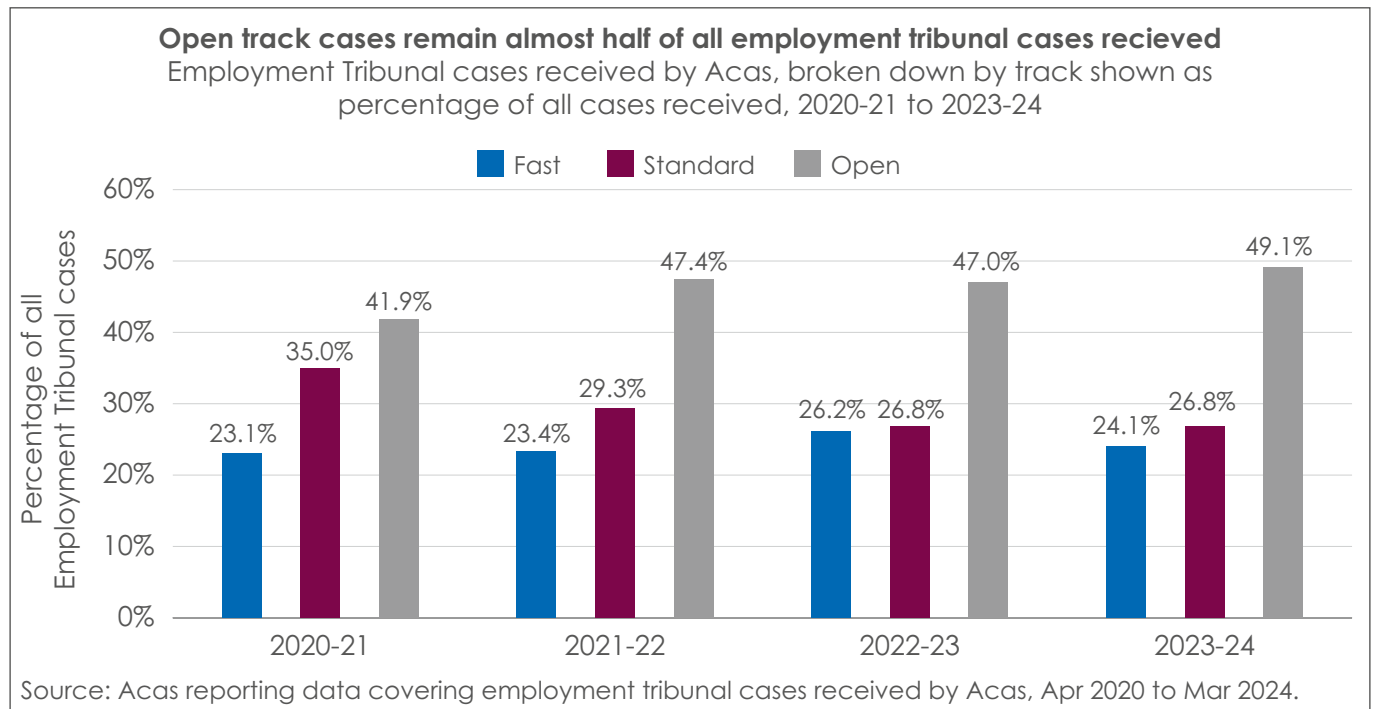
Following a change in case management system between 2018 and 2019, we have been able to make progressive refinements which have implications for the way that we count cases. This means that counting of cases is now more accurate and group cases can be more easily identified. Due to this, figures presented for EC notification numbers, group cases and employment tribunal cases are not able to be directly compared between the previous and current case management systems. A full explanation of the changes, along with quarterly statistics on the figures is now published on our website.



## ET1 conciliation cases received

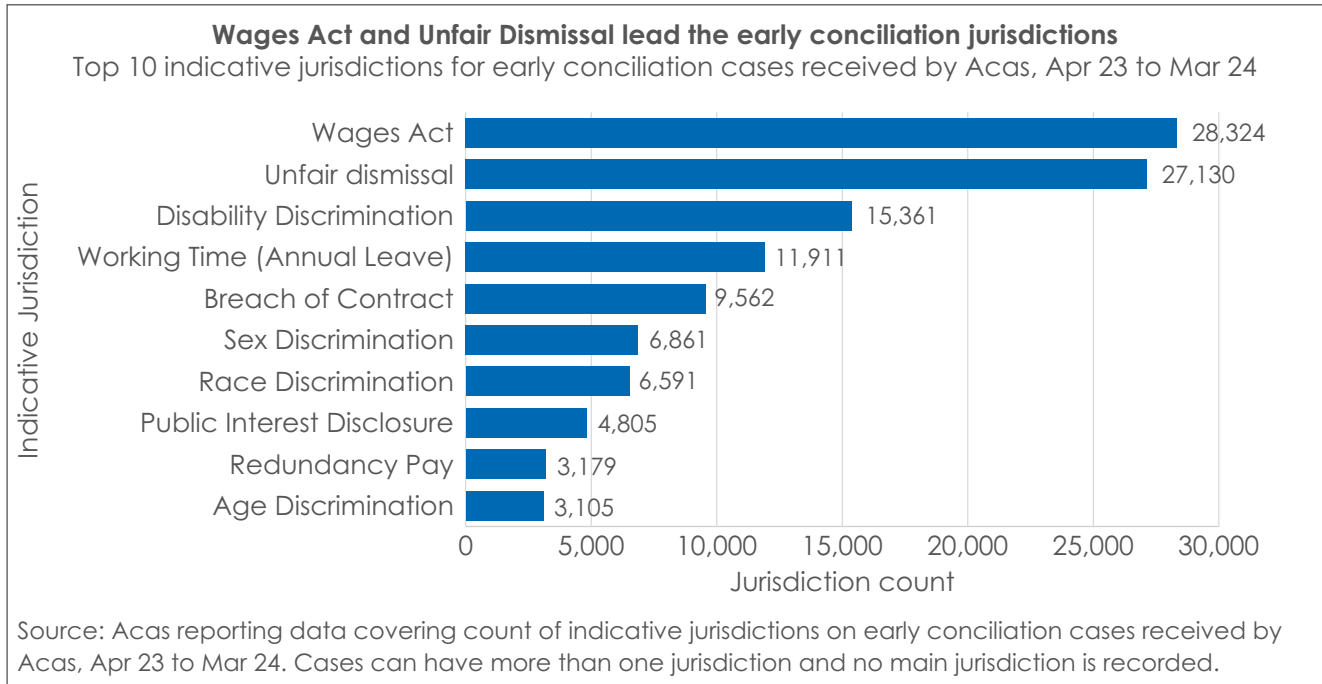
		2023-24		2022-23		2021-22	
		Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%
ET1s received following EC notification	Fast track	7,509	23.90%	7,519	25.60%	6,849	23.10%
	Standard track	8,436	26.80%	7,974	27.10%	8,786	29.60%
	Open track	15,506	49.30%	13,931	47.40%	14,042	47.30%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>31,451</b>		<b>29,424</b>		<b>29,677</b>	
ET1s received without prior EC notification	Fast track	568	27.80%	882	33.50%	445	29.20%
	Standard track	547	26.80%	618	23.50%	344	22.60%
	Open track	927	45.40%	1,134	43.10%	731	47.90%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,042</b>		<b>2,634</b>		<b>1,520</b>	
<b>Total Cases</b>		<b>33,493</b>		<b>32,058</b>		<b>31,197</b>	

The “ET1s received without prior EC notification” section details those cases which are exempt from notification under the Employment Tribunals (Early Conciliation: Exemptions and Rules of Procedure) Regulations 2014.



## Early Conciliation notification forms received by all grounds of complaint

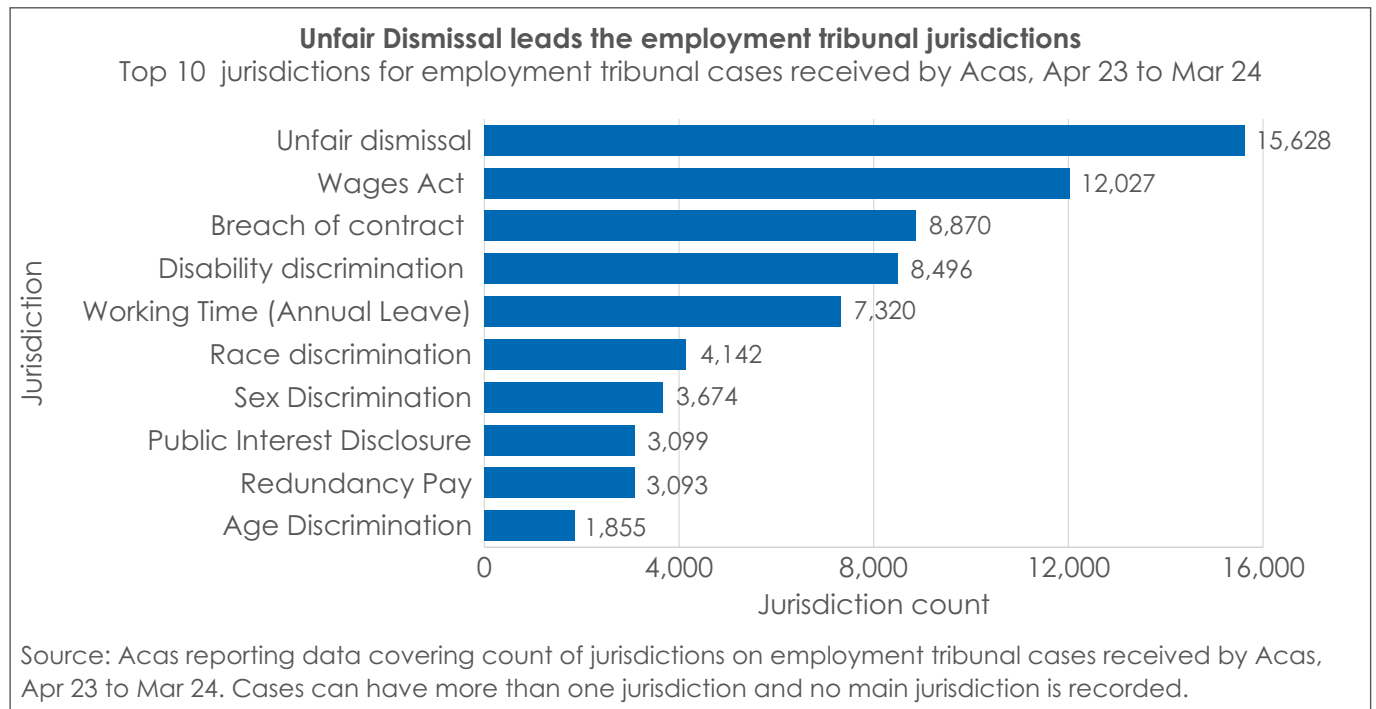
	Indicative Jurisdictions	Early Conciliation					
		2023-24		2022-23		2021-22	
		Volume	% of forms	Volume	% of forms	Volume	% of forms
<b>Major jurisdictions by volume</b>	Wages Act	28,324	27%	32,545	31%	27,950	31%
	Unfair dismissal	27,130	26%	21,744	21%	21,370	24%
	Disability Discrimination	15,361	15%	14,018	13%	10,991	12%
	Working Time (Annual Leave)	11,911	11%	13,881	13%	13,514	15%
	Breach of Contract	9,562	9%	7,829	7%	5,779	6%
	Sex Discrimination	6,861	7%	7,075	7%	5,348	6%
	Race Discrimination	6,519	6%	6,392	6%	5,123	6%
	Public Interest Disclosure	4,805	5%	2,844	3%	2,271	3%
	Redundancy Pay	3,179	3%	2,679	3%	2,296	2%
	Age Discrimination	3,105	3%	3,083	3%	2,504	3%
	Other	12,822		15,599		12,167	
	<b>Total jurisdictions</b>	<b>129,579</b>		<b>127,689</b>		<b>109,313</b>	
	<b>Total notifications</b>	<b>104,884</b>		<b>105,754</b>		<b>90,811</b>	



## ET1 cases received for conciliation from the Employment Tribunal Service by all grounds of complaint

	Jurisdictions	ET1					
		2023-24		2022-23		2021-22	
		Volume	% of cases	Volume	% of cases	Volume	% of cases
<b>Major jurisdictions by volume</b>	Unfair dismissal	15,628	47%	14,314	45%	14,747	47%
	Wages Act	12,027	36%	12,891	40%	11,472	37%
	Breach of contract	8,870	26%	8,439	26%	7,834	25%
	Disability discrimination	8,496	25%	7,361	23%	6,545	21%
	Working Time (Annual Leave)	7,320	22%	8,163	25%	7,523	24%
	Race discrimination	4,142	12%	3,720	12%	3,489	11%
	Sex Discrimination	3,674	11%	3,590	11%	3,410	11%
	Redundancy Pay	3,099	9%	2,648	8%	2,414	8%
	Public Interest Disclosure	3,093	9%	2,613	8%	2,569	8%
	Age Discrimination	1,855	6%	1,776	6%	1,817	6%
	Other	7,633		8,316		8,622	
	<b>Total jurisdictions</b>	<b>75,837</b>		<b>73,831</b>		<b>70,442</b>	
<b>Total cases</b>	<b>33,501</b>		<b>32,058</b>		<b>31,198</b>		





## Take-up of employee-led Early Conciliation

Employee Notifications	2023-24		2022-23		2021-22	
	Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%
Out of scope for conciliation	2,620	2.60%	2,798	2.8%	2,514	2.9%
Employee cannot be contacted	7,023	7.10%	8,627	8.5%	9,399	10.7%
Employee declines conciliation	22,616	22.70%	25,235	24.8%	20,338	23.2%
Employer declines conciliation	9,206	9.20%	9,130	9.0%	9,140	10.4%
Matter proceeds to conciliation	58,073	58.30%	55,849	54.9%	46,308	52.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>99,538</b>		<b>101,639</b>		<b>87,699</b>	

## Early Conciliation notification outcomes

Final Status of Early Conciliation Notifications	EC Notifications Received								
	Jan 23-Dec 23		Jan 22-Dec22		Jan 21-Dec 21		Jan 20-Dec 20		
	Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%	
<b>COT3</b>									
No Track	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
Fast Track	4,120	14%	4,300	16%	4,085	15%	4,909	14%	14%
Standard track	3,233	18%	2,905	20%	3,511	18%	6,925	32%	32%
Open track	4,883	15%	4,578	19%	4,123	15%	4,406	17%	17%
<b>All tracks</b>	<b>12,236</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>11,783</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>11,719</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>16,240</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>No Track</b>									
Did not progress to tribunal claim	11,108	59%	19,369	78%	13,000	72%	14,139	76%	76%
Dispute progressed to tribunal claim	7,822	41%	5,574	22%	5,137	28%	4,379	24%	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,930</b>		<b>24,943</b>		<b>18,137</b>		<b>18,518</b>		
<b>Fast track</b>									
Did not progress to tribunal claim	22,197	77%	19,907	74%	21,021	78%	24,875	70%	70%
Dispute progressed to tribunal claim	6,598	23%	7,006	26%	6,015	22%	10,735	30%	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,795</b>		<b>26,913</b>		<b>27,036</b>		<b>35,610</b>		
<b>Standard track</b>									
Did not progress to tribunal claim	12,431	68%	8,993	61%	12,801	66%	12,691	58%	58%
Dispute progressed to tribunal claim	5,848	32%	5,723	39%	6,707	34%	9,288	42%	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,279</b>		<b>14,716</b>		<b>19,508</b>		<b>21,979</b>		
<b>Open track</b>									

Final Status of Early Conciliation Notifications	EC Notifications Received							
	Jan 23-Dec 23		Jan 22-Dec22		Jan 21-Dec 21		Jan 20-Dec 20	
	Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%
Did not progress to tribunal claim	19,589	62%	13,336	55%	16,864	61%	15,104	57%
Dispute progressed to tribunal claim	12,030	38%	11,037	45%	10,674	39%	11,221	43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,619</b>		<b>24,373</b>		<b>27,538</b>		<b>26,325</b>	
<b>All tracks</b>								
Did not progress to tribunal claim	65,325	67%	61,605	68%	63,686	69%	66,809	65%
Dispute progressed to tribunal claim	32,298	33%	29,340	32%	28,533	31%	35,623	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97,623</b>		<b>90,945</b>		<b>92,219</b>		<b>102,432</b>	

In order for these statistics to accurately represent the final outcome of Early Conciliation it is necessary to allow a period of time after the notification is received as claimants have time (sometimes up to three months) after the end of Early Conciliation to decide whether to progress the case to tribunal. This table therefore considers notifications by calendar year up until December 2023.

## ET1 conciliation case outcomes

		2023-24		2022-23		2021-22	
		Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%
<b>Fast track</b>	Struck out	627	7.90%	660	7.7%	652	7.3%
	Settled	2,706	34.30%	3,067	36.0%	2,962	33.2%
	Withdrawn	1,688	21.40%	1,955	22.9%	2,356	26.4%
	Default judgment	1,180	14.90%	1,163	13.6%	1,221	13.7%
	Heard	1,692	21.40%	1,681	19.7%	1,733	19.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7,893</b>		<b>8,526</b>		<b>8,924</b>	
	<b>Resolution rate</b>		<b>60.50%</b>		<b>63.8%</b>		<b>64.3%</b>
<b>Standard track</b>	Struck out	715	8.50%	739	7.8%	918	8.0%
	Settled	4,139	49.00%	4,680	49.6%	5,414	47.0%
	Withdrawn	1,555	18.40%	1,804	19.1%	2,038	17.7%
	Default judgment	398	4.70%	450	4.8%	884	7.7%
	Heard	1,637	19.40%	1,761	18.7%	2,274	19.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8,444</b>		<b>9,434</b>		<b>11,528</b>	
	<b>Resolution rate</b>		<b>73.70%</b>		<b>74.6%</b>		<b>70.2%</b>
<b>Open track</b>	Struck out	1,197	7.80%	1,208	8.1%	1,165	7.9%
	Settled	8,974	58.20%	8,516	57.1%	8,183	55.4%
	Withdrawn	3,114	20.20%	3,105	20.8%	3,137	21.2%
	Default judgment	145	0.90%	182	1.2%	184	1.2%
	Heard	1,986	12.90%	1,904	12.8%	2,113	14.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15,416</b>		<b>14,915</b>		<b>14,782</b>	
	<b>Resolution rate</b>		<b>85.00%</b>		<b>84.8%</b>		<b>83.1%</b>
<b>Overall</b>	Struck out	2,541	8.00%	2,607	7.9%	2,735	7.8%
	Settled	15,819	49.80%	16,263	49.5%	16,559	47.0%
	Withdrawn	6,357	20.00%	6,864	20.9%	7,531	21.4%
	Default judgment	1,723	5.40%	1,795	5.5%	2,289	6.5%
	Heard	5,315	16.70%	5,346	16.3%	6,120	17.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>31,755</b>		<b>32,875</b>		<b>35,234</b>	
	<b>Resolution rate</b>		<b>75.90%</b>		<b>76.4%</b>		<b>74.1%</b>

Resolution rates are calculated excluding cases struck out by the Tribunal since these are generally not susceptible to conciliation.

## Individual Mediation

		2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
New cases started in year		251	229	269
Cases closed by outcome	Settled	90	118	116
	Progress Made	28	49	61
	Unresolved	13	11	36
	Unprogressed	22	37	58
	<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>271</b>
	<b>Success rate</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>83%</b>

Unprogressed cases are where no meaningful mediation activity took place even though the parties formally agreed to mediation and as such these cases are excluded for the purpose of calculating the ‘success rate’.

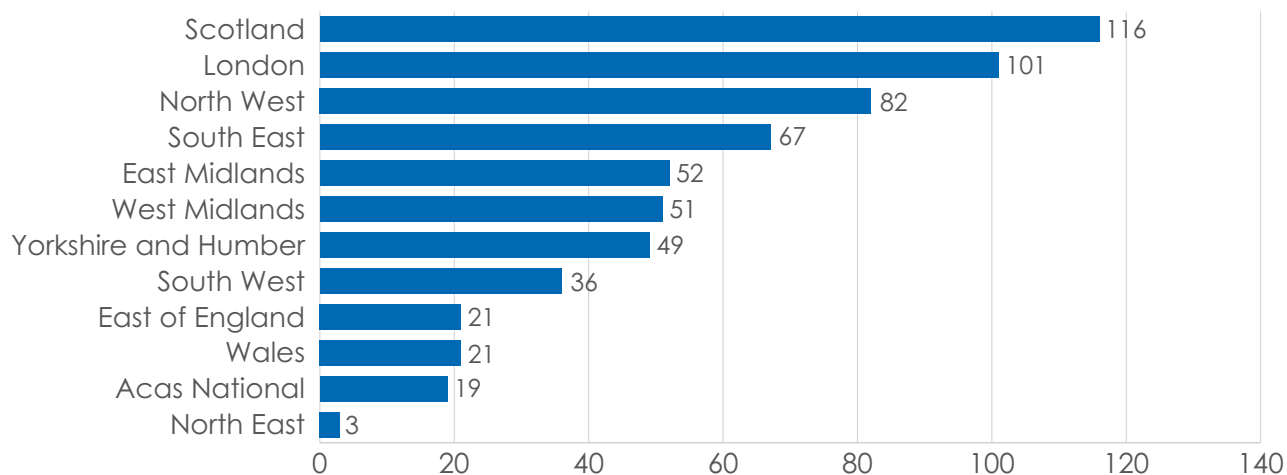
# Collective disputes

## Collective disputes received for conciliation by region

Region	2023-24		2022-23		2021-22	
	Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%
Acas National	19	3.1%	34	5.5%	17	3.3%
London	101	16.3%	103	16.6%	95	18.6%
South East	67	10.8%	39	6.3%	33	6.5%
East of England	21	3.4%	23	3.7%	21	4.1%
East Midlands	52	8.4%	25	4.0%	31	6.1%
West Midlands	51	8.3%	48	7.7%	34	6.7%
North East	3	0.5%	32	5.2%	18	3.5%
Yorkshire and Humber	49	7.9%	50	8.1%	28	5.5%
North West	82	13.3%	76	12.2%	70	13.7%
Scotland	116	18.8%	148	23.8%	119	23.3%
South West	36	5.8%	23	3.7%	19	3.7%
Wales	21	3.4%	20	3.2%	25	4.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>618</b>		<b>621</b>		<b>510</b>	

### Scotland had the highest number of collective disputes received in 2023-24

Collective disputes received for conciliation by region, Apr 23 to Mar 24



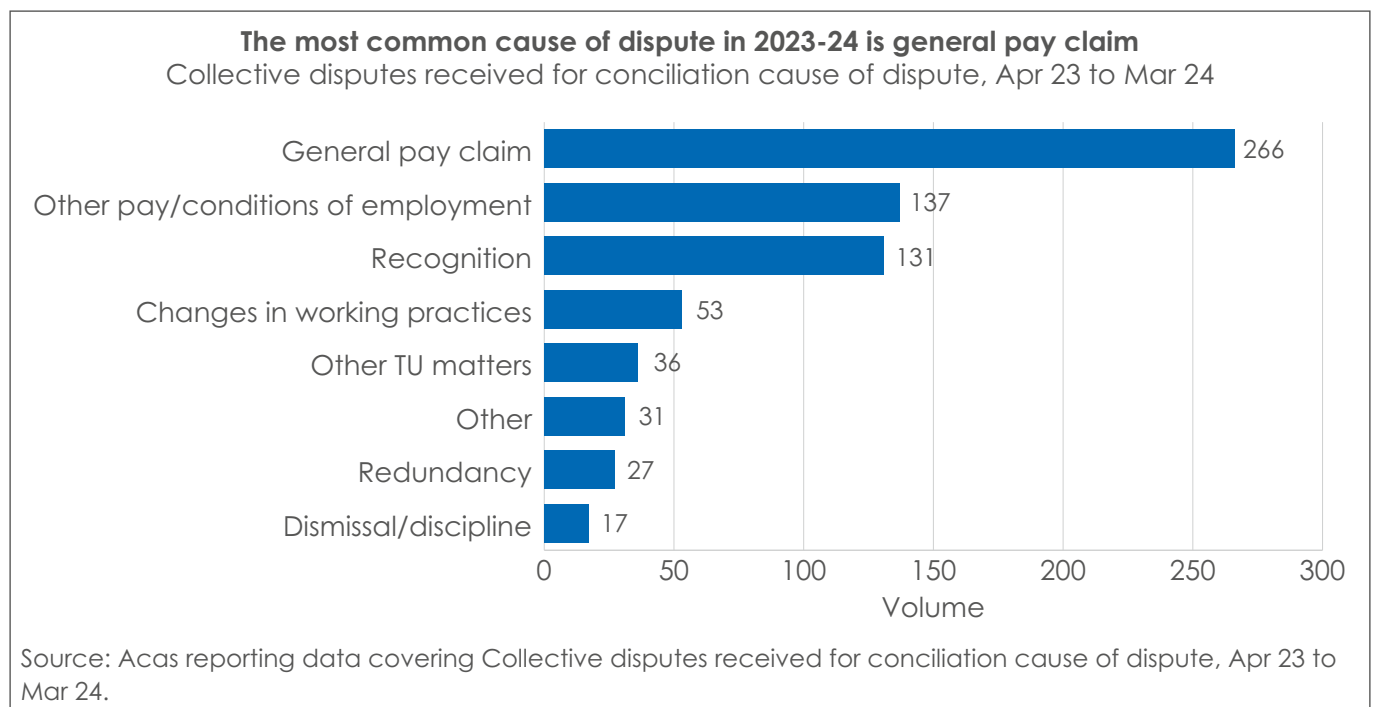
Source: Acas reporting data covering Collective disputes received for conciliation by region, Apr 23 to Mar 24.



## Collective disputes received for conciliation by dispute cause

Dispute cause	2023-24		2022-23		2021-22	
	Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%
General pay claim	266	43.0%	276	44.4%	167	32.7%
Other pay/conditions of employment	137	22.2%	171	27.5%	173	33.9%
Changes in working practices	53	8.6%	50	8.1%	46	9.0%
Recognition	131	21.2%	95	15.3%	81	15.9%
Other TU matters	36	5.8%	42	6.8%	37	7.3%
Dismissal/discipline	17	2.8%	21	3.4%	22	4.3%
Redundancy	27	4.4%	16	2.6%	17	3.3%
Other	31	5.0%	25	4.0%	37	7.3%
<b>Total dispute causes</b>	<b>698</b>		<b>696</b>		<b>580</b>	
<b>Total collective cases received</b>	<b>618</b>		<b>621</b>		<b>510</b>	

Since a collective case can have multiple dispute causes, the sum of the percentages in this table exceeds 100%.



## Collective disputes closed by outcome

Dispute outcome	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
Successfully completed	511	467	374
Unsuccessfully completed	36	45	35
<b>All completed cases</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>409</b>
Cases withdrawn	71	60	141
<b>Total</b>	<b>618</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>550</b>

## Collective disputes received by source of request

Source of request	2023-24		2022-23		2021-22	
	Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%
Employer	202	32.2%	187	30.1%	127	24.9%
Trade Union	212	34.5%	221	35.6%	209	41.0%
Joint	117	19.0%	116	18.7%	94	18.4%
Acas Initiative	87	14.3%	97	15.6%	80	15.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>618</b>		<b>621</b>		<b>510</b>	

## Cases referred to collective arbitration and dispute mediation

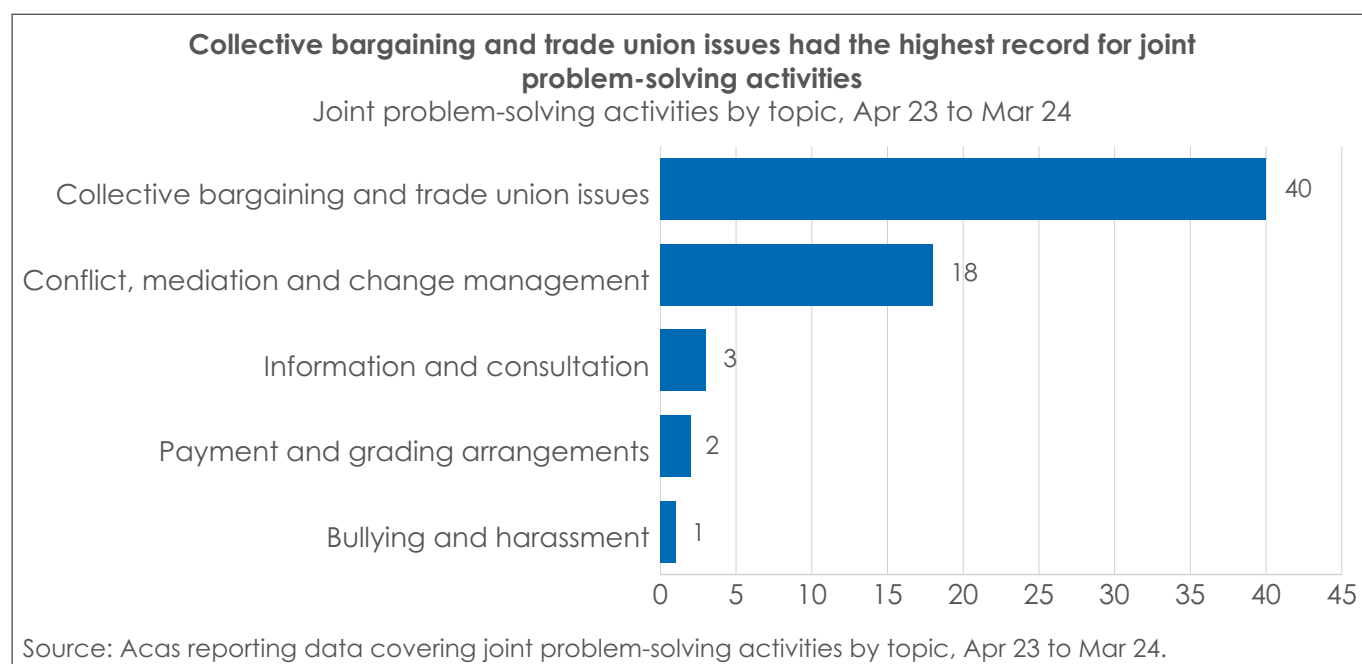
Case Type	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
Single Arbitration	3	8	9
Single Mediation	3	4	4
Other	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>

## Issues referred to collective arbitration and dispute mediation

Issue	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
Annual pay	3	8	8
Other pay and conditions of employment	2	1	2
Dismissal and discipline	1	2	2
Grading	0	0	0
Other	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>

## Joint problem-solving activities by topic

Topic	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
Absence and stress management	0	1	0
Bullying and harassment	1	1	1
Collective bargaining and trade union issues	40	25	30
Conflict, mediation and change management	18	21	23
Discipline and grievance	0	0	1
Employment law	0	0	0
Equality, diversity and discrimination	0	0	0
Implementing flexible working arrangements	0	0	0
Information and consultation	3	3	3
Managing people	0	0	0
Payment and grading arrangements	2	0	0
Recruitment and employing people	0	0	0
Redundancy	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>58</b>



# Helpline

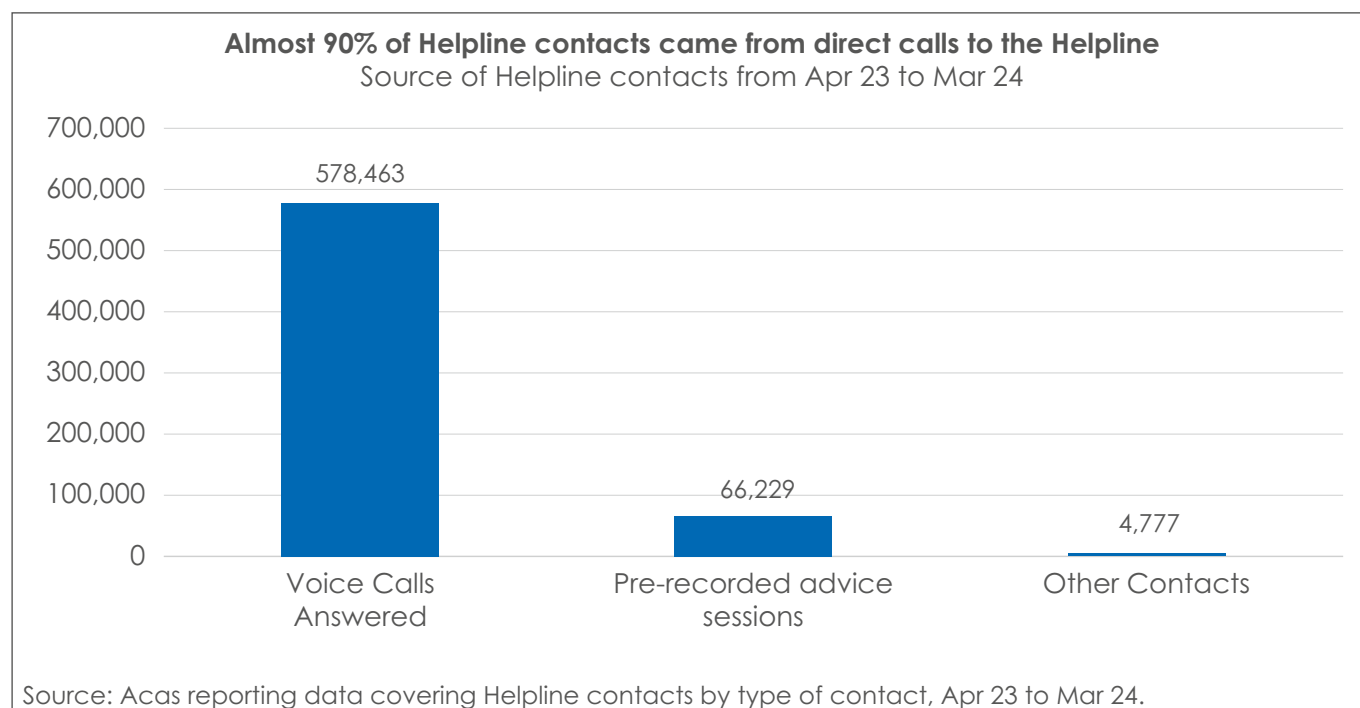
## Acas Helpline Contacts

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
<b>Voice Calls Answered</b>			
<i>Helpline advice delivered over the telephone.</i>	578,463	649,179	644,153
<b>Pre-recorded advice sessions</b>			
<i>Helpline callers can select pre-recorded advice regarding Minimum Wage, Holidays, Wage Deductions or P45's/ P60's before being connected to an adviser.</i>	66,229	81,870	72,310
<b>Helpline Online Sessions</b>			
<i>Helpline Online is an interactive database of frequently asked questions written by Helpline advisers.</i>	–	–	–
<b>Facebook Advice Sessions</b>			
<i>The Acas Helpline provides advice to customers via the Acas Facebook page.</i>	–	1,904	2,508
<b>Other Contacts</b>			
<i>Responding to webinar questions and customer letters</i>	4,777	5,117	–
<b>Webchat Sessions</b>			
<i>Webchat allows real time text-based conversation with Helpline advisers.</i>	–	–	0
<b>Total Contacts</b>	<b>649,469</b>	<b>738,070</b>	<b>718,971</b>

Approximately 2% of the pre-recorded advice figures are estimates for the first part of 2019-20, reflecting systematic omissions in call logging which have since been rectified.

Note that as Helpline Online and Webchat were discontinued in February 2021 the volumes for these services do not reflect the full twelve month period for 2020-21.

Note that Facebook Advice sessions were discontinued for 2023-24 due to security and GDPR concerns.

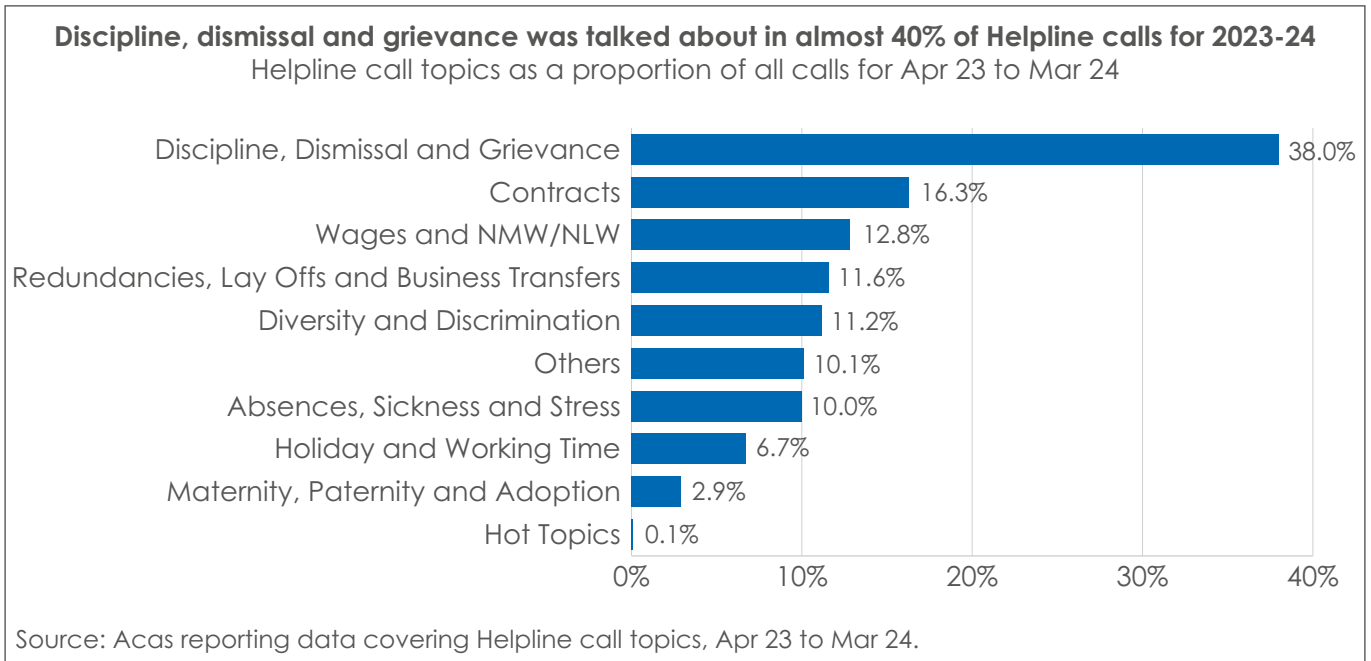


## Acas Helpline voice call topics

Topic of Enquiry	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
	% of calls	% of calls	% of calls
Discipline, Dismissal and Grievance	38.0%	38.7%	36.7%
Contracts	16.3%	17.9%	17.2%
Wages and NMW/NLW	12.8%	15.3%	15.2%
Redundancies, Lay Offs and Business Transfers	11.6%	10.6%	9.9%
Diversity and Discrimination	11.2%	10.8%	9.1%
Others	10.1%	9.5%	9.2%
Absences, Sickness and Stress	10.0%	11.4%	11.5%
Holiday and Working Time	6.7%	8.8%	9.8%
Maternity, Paternity and Adoption	2.9%	3.3%	2.9%
Hot Topics	0.1%	0.5%	
Family Friendly Policies	–	0%	2.0%

As some calls relate to more than one of the specified core topics, the sum of percentages in this table exceeds 100%.

## April 2022 changes to topics within DCS – Family Friendly redistributed and Hot Topics introduced.



## Advisory services

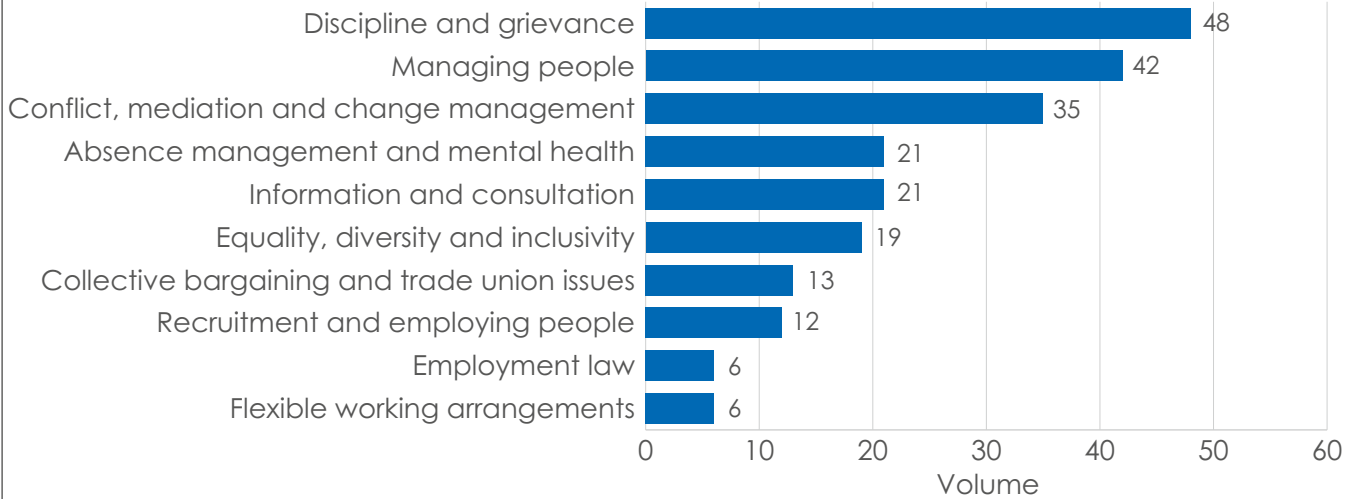
### In-depth advisory meetings by topic

Topic*	2023-24		2022-23		2021-22	
	Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%
Absence management and mental health	21	9.0%	15	4.5%	31	6.7%
Bullying and harassment	4	1.7%	13	3.9%	13	2.8%
Collective bargaining and trade union issues	13	5.6%	11	3.3%	35	7.5%
Conflict, mediation and change management	35	15.0%	75	22.7%	123	26.5%
Discipline and grievance	48	20.5%	34	10.3%	60	12.9%
Employment law	6	2.6%	8	2.4%	8	1.7%
Equality, diversity and inclusivity	19	8.1%	27	8.2%	24	5.2%
Flexible working arrangements	6	2.6%	9	2.7%	8	1.7%
Information and consultation	21	9.0%	29	8.8%	42	9.1%
Managing people	42	17.9%	63	19.1%	54	11.6%
Payment and grading arrangements	0	0.0%	6	1.8%	14	3.0%
Recruitment and employing people	12	5.1%	26	7.9%	31	6.7%
Redundancy	2	0.9%	9	2.7%	13	2.8%
TUPE	4	1.7%	3	0.9%	3	0.6%
Acas employee feedback survey	0	0.0%	2	0.6%	1	0.2%
Coronavirus	1	0.4%	0	0.0%	4	0.9%
Other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>234</b>		<b>330</b>		<b>464</b>	

\*Includes charged advice

**The most frequent topic for in-depth advisory meetings is discipline and grievance**

Top 10 In-depth advisory meetings by topic, Apr 23 to Mar 24

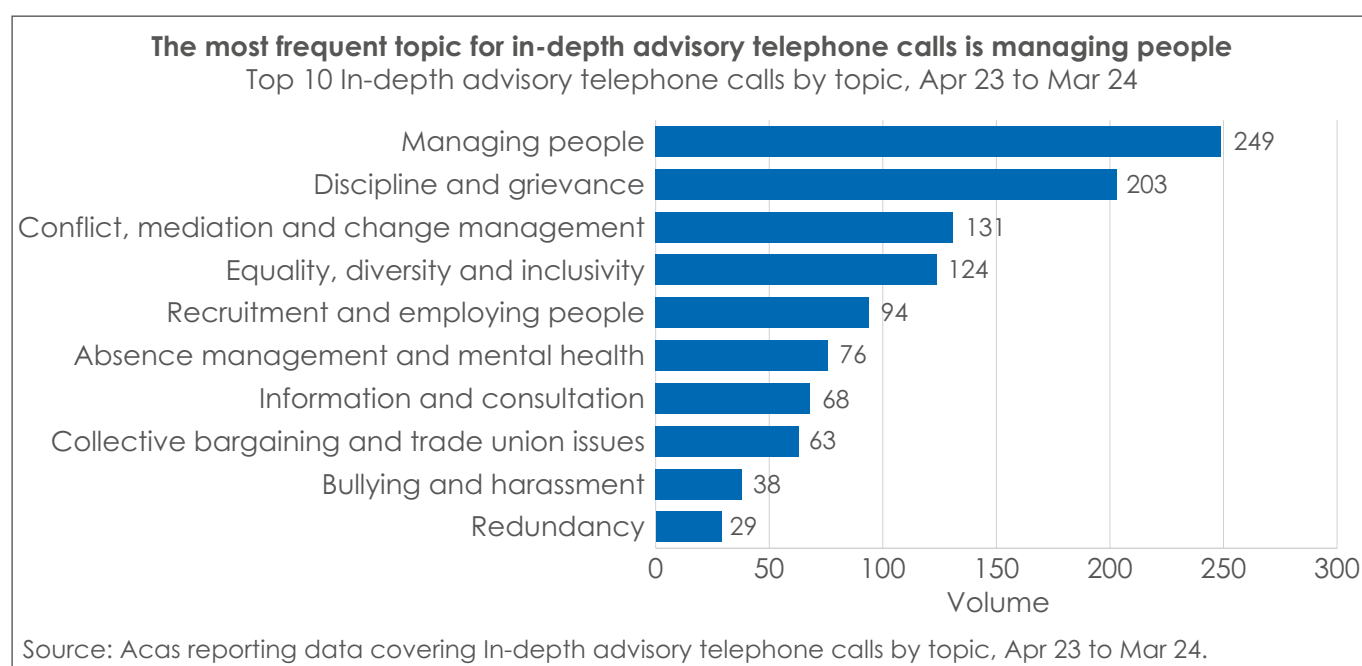


Source: Acas reporting data covering In-depth advisory meetings by topic, Apr 23 to Mar 24.



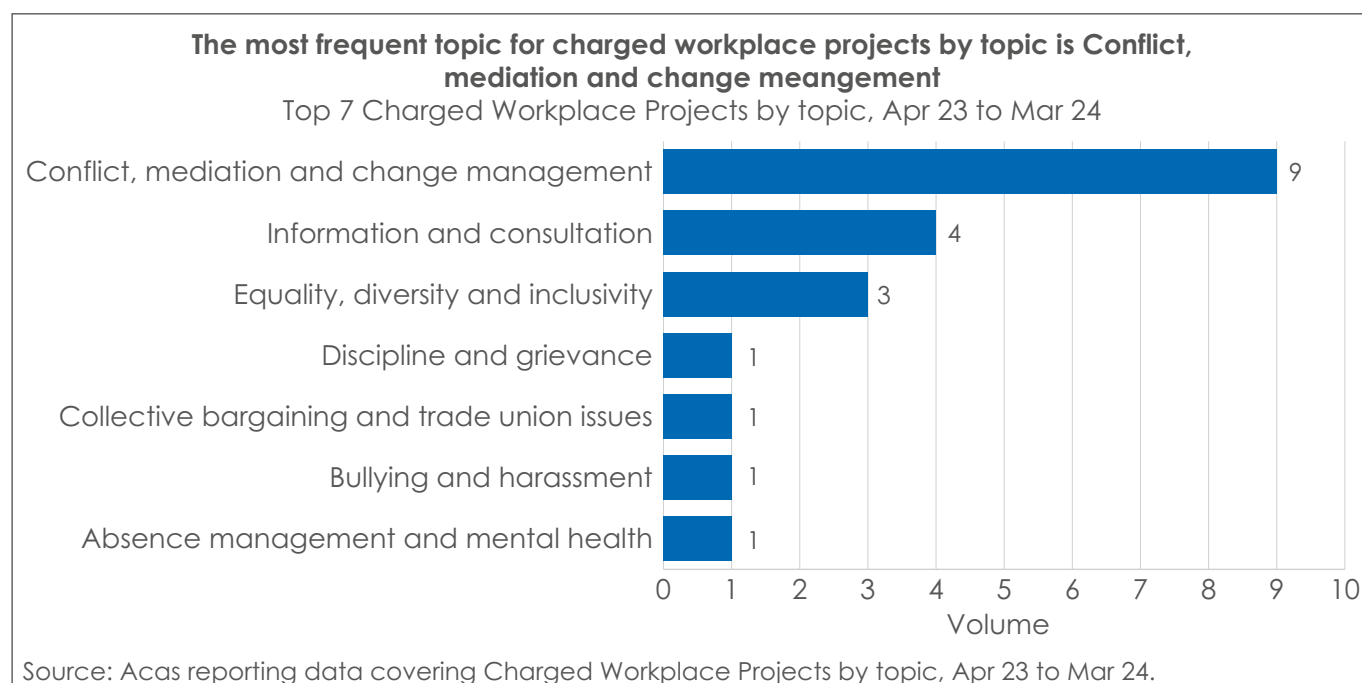
## In-depth advisory telephone calls by topic

Topic	2023-24		2022-23		2021-22	
	Volume	%	Volume	%	Volume	%
Absence management and mental health	76	6.6%	129	6.0%	182	6.0%
Bullying and harassment	38	3.3%	73	3.4%	80	2.6%
Collective bargaining and trade union issues	63	5.5%	69	3.2%	60	2.0%
Conflict, mediation and change management	131	11.4%	449	20.9%	577	19.0%
Discipline and grievance	203	17.7%	510	23.7%	772	25.4%
Equality, diversity and inclusivity	124	10.8%	160	7.4%	178	5.9%
Employment law	15	1.3%	39	1.8%	41	1.3%
Flexible working arrangements	25	2.2%	64	3.0%	66	2.2%
Information and consultation	68	5.9%	87	4.1%	119	3.9%
Managing people	249	21.7%	282	13.1%	275	9.0%
Payment and grading arrangements	11	1.0%	20	0.9%	59	1.9%
Recruitment and employing people	94	8.2%	182	8.5%	479	15.8%
Redundancy	29	2.5%	58	2.7%	66	2.2%
TUPE	18	1.6%	20	0.9%	38	1.2%
Other	2	0.2%	2	0.1%	3	0.1%
Coronavirus	1	0.1%	4	0.2%	44	1.4%
Acas employee feedback survey	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,147</b>		<b>2,148</b>		<b>3,041</b>	



## Charged workplace projects by topic

Topic	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
Absence management and mental health	1	0	1
Bullying and harassment	1	0	3
Collective bargaining and trade union issues	1	0	2
Conflict, mediation and change management	9	14	6
Discipline and grievance	1	1	1
Employment law	0	0	0
Equality, diversity and inclusivity	3	3	1
Flexible working arrangements	0	0	0
Information and consultation	4	1	2
Managing people	0	1	3
Payment and grading arrangements	0	0	1
Recruitment and employing people	0	1	0
Redundancy	0	0	0
Acas employee feedback survey	0	1	1
Other	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>



## Certificate in Internal Workplace Mediation (CIWM) training

Type	2023-24		2022-23		2021-22	
	Courses	Delegates	Courses	Delegates	Courses	Delegates
In-house CIWM	12	16	12	109	10	71
Open access CIWM	25	198	31	202	29	185
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>256</b>

## Key Risks and Mitigations

Risk management is the process of identifying, assessing, and managing issues which could impact on successful fulfilment of our aims. Through this process we aim to minimise the impact of uncertainty on the delivery of our strategic ambitions.

Acas's activities are monitored through monthly reporting to our Executive Board, Department for Business and Trade (DBT) and bi-monthly to the Acas Council, and to every Audit Committee, using a Strategic Risk Register.

The key risks identified, and the mitigations in place to manage these are as follows:

### Head Count Reduction:

**Risk:** Delivery of Acas's services and strategy is impacted by a significant head count reduction.

**Impact:** Using the proposed September 2023 baseline, it could represent a c11% cut to our planned staffing number causing damage to Acas's ability to fulfil its ambitions and its statutory duties and harming its reputation.

**Action Taken:** Engaging with DBT following a commission re: headcount reduction, submitting our full staff cadre along with narrative on the detrimental impact of being below cadre.

**Planned Action:** Develop & implement relevant actions dependent on receipt of submission return.

### **Acas Advice service (Helpline) fails to deliver**

**Risk:** Acas Advice Services (Helpline) fails to deliver the KPI and meet service demand due to resource utilisation, impacting on response and abandonment rates, customer experience and the service's ability to contribute to Strategic Ambition 1.

**Impact:** Failure to deliver for the customer, leading to increased customer distress and negative economic impact.

**Action Taken:** Alternative approaches to recruitment implemented along with the onboarding of agency and Rapid Response Government resource.

**Planned Action:** Monitoring of shrinkage and time lost to better understand productivity of resource available; absence & leave and impact of new staff on average call handle time.

### **Significant High Inflation**

**Risk:** The consequence of high inflation continues in the medium term, adversely impacting future year budgets, especially at the end of the Spending Review 21 period.

**Impact:** Acas's ability to plan service delivery and effectively manage its staff resource in the short term will be constrained.

**Action Taken:** Started to prepare development of the medium-term planning, ahead of next Spending Review which will be discussed in July 2024 Executive Board meeting.

**Planned Action:** Continue to monitor Admin pressure particular in light of reduced admin funding and contribute to the anticipated Spending Review – likely to be completed by Autumn 2024.



## Financial Review

The majority of Acas's funding is through Grant in Aid from DBT. Acas's resource allocation for 2023-24 was £55.3 million and expenditure was £60.6 million (£62.0 million, 2022-23). In addition, Acas charges customers for some of our services, and in 2023-24 this generated £4.7 million (2022-23 £4.3 million).

The resource allocation funds Acas's day-to-day activities, including the delivery of frontline services and back-office costs.

The capital allocation, for assets, was £2.9million (which includes £1.7million for leases captured under International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS)16) and total capital expenditure was £1.7million.

	Acas Outturn (£'000)	DBT Allocation (£'000)
<b>Resource</b>		
Income	(4,690)	–
Expenditure	58,543	55,310
Depreciation <sup>1</sup>	2,044	2,637
Capital <sup>1</sup>	1,701	2,974

<sup>1</sup> Includes both the allocation for IFRS16 expenditure and 'business as usual' activities.

Our funding (including capital allocation) plus income derived from business activities totals £63m which after expenditure results in an underspend of £2.1million (3.8%). The main drivers for this underspend were driven in particular by IFRS16 related depreciation (£0.6m), unplanned estates-related credits of £0.5 million, the decision to limit spending on Smarter Resolutions 2 project and a reduced depreciation requirement as not all the planned leases changes could be capitalised under IFRS16.

We continue to return towards pre-Covid levels of income, but also have been responsive to increasing customer demand for non-face-to-face training options, such as webinars.

An average pay increase of 5% was awarded in August and this was a contributing factor to the increase in salary costs which was partly offset by a reduced headcount.

Accommodation costs which include depreciation on leased buildings continue to fall as the estate



requirements are managed. Travel costs increased as post-Covid there was a return to more face-to-face activities. Other expenditure increased as a result of the continuing Smarter Resolution programme which aimed to deliver enhanced Individual Dispute Resolution (the cost was captured in Professional Fees as a more managed service approach to procurement was followed). Additional training and development costs increased as we undertook a programme of development for Executive Board colleagues and for all members of the Senior Leadership Team. All other movements were as a result of normal business activities.

The movements on the balance sheet are driven by the changes to office leases, the Acas estate comprises offices in 11 locations, Acas entered into two new leases in the year (replacing expired leases in Glasgow and Fleet) and anticipates up to four new leases in the year 2024-25 (replacing leases in London, Cardiff and Nottingham), consequently the right of use assets and leases liabilities of these leases are low. Additionally, our cash balance has increased driven by the timings of receipt of Grant in Aid and payments to suppliers at year end.

## **Regularity of Expenditure**

Expenditure is reviewed throughout the year, with transactions over £250 checked to ensure that our funding is used for the purposes it was intended for and offers value for money.



## **Auditor's Remuneration**

The external auditor of Acas is the Comptroller and Auditor General. The annual audit fee was £69,000. No non-audit services were provided.

## **Charging regime**

Acas provides some services for which it charges fees. The level of fees complies with the cost allocation and charging requirements set out in HM Treasury and Office of Public Sector Information guidance. We have a financial objective to full cost recovery for charged-for services. Full disclosure of the cost allocation and income from charged for services can be found in Note 2 to the accounts on page 105.

## **Consultancy and Contingent Labour**

During the year, Acas's expenditure on consultancy and contingent labour was £1.2 million (2022-23, £1.2million).

## **Matters of Public Interest**

Acas has established policies and procedures designed to protect public resources, including property, assets, and information from attempts by the public, contractors (and sub-contractors) and its own employees to gain financially by corruption or fraud. Acas expects integrity and honesty from its staff to ensure the safeguarding of the public resources they are responsible for.

There were no identified cases of actual or attempted fraud, bribery, or corruption this year.

## Sustainability statement

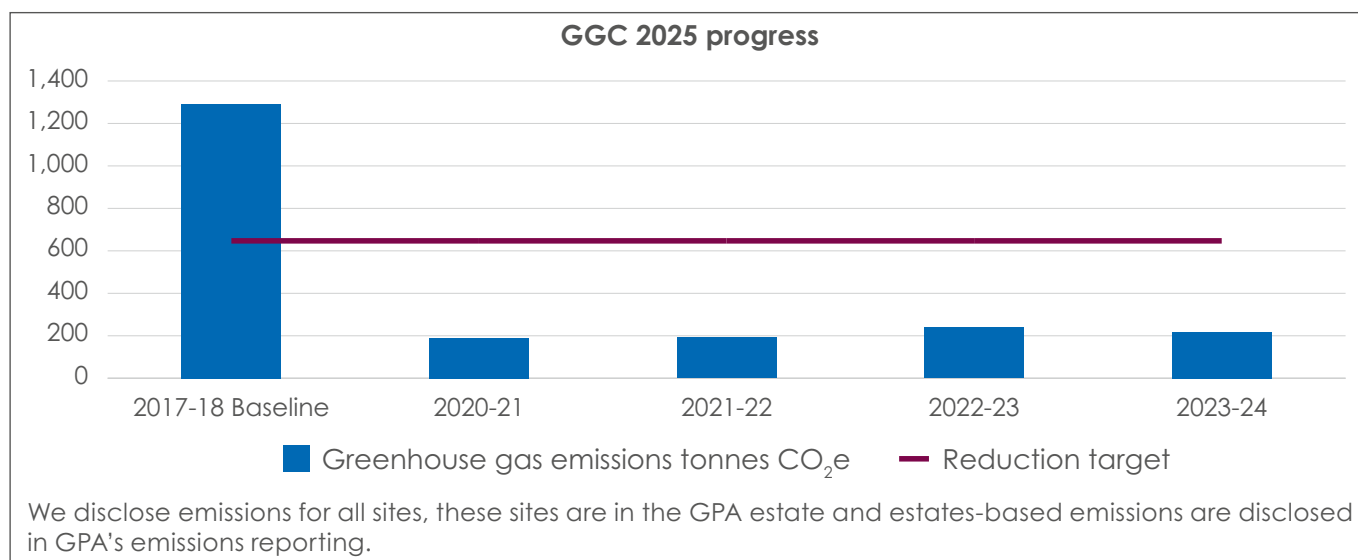
We continue progress our sustainability strategy which covers the period from 2021 to 2026. This strategy is aligned to that of DBT, our sponsor department and sets out our ambition to improve sustainability to achieve our Greening Government Commitments (GGC) targets and establish the foundations for reaching net zero. This work is a part of Acas's social responsibility goals.

Over the last few years, Acas has adopted a hybrid approach to ways of working and we are committed to support staff in improving environmental sustainability in all our working ways. Going forward we will also ensure that our approach is sufficiently flexible to adapt to any future changes to our ways of working.

In line with our Estates Strategy, we are committed to delivering a cost effective, modern working environment for our staff and customers, delivered through the government estate where this meets business needs. We have also pledged to deliver a flexible estate to ensure that changing business needs can be accommodated with a preference for centrally located offices in city or town locations, readily accessible by public transport. We are therefore also aligned and to some degree governed by Government Property Agency and their Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy.

We have a small but determined team looking at sustainability in the organisation which includes our Executive Board Green Champion, James Vincent.

As part of our commitment to environmental sustainability, and in line with the Greening Government Commitments (GGC), Acas reports on greenhouse gas emissions, waste generated, and water and paper use (see table below). We have our 2025 target from DBT which we are currently on track to surpass.



Our emissions are increasing marginally year on year. However, as a result of a hybrid working approach, we are still well under our 2017-18 baseline, and within our target reduction.

## Acas offices

We continuously work to improve data capturing processes and have quarterly discussions with Government Property Agency (GPA) around our usage data. We also collect other non-financial information to help us understand our usage and our estate. This helps us better target problem areas.

Much of our estate is housed in GPA property and it is our ambition that where possible we continue to

operate in this way. GPA have a detailed and ambitious environmental, social and governance (ESG) strategy, pertaining to the highest sustainable standards where possible. We have engaged in conversations with GPA's Net Zero team to keep us informed on other projects for sustainable improvement impacting our estate.

Internally, we continue to promote our policies around smarter working, including digital by default, smarter use of our office space and the reduction of paper and single use plastics.

## **Carbon offsetting**

Our everyday actions consume energy and produce carbon emissions, such as driving, travelling and heating buildings. We use carbon offsetting to compensate for our emissions by funding an equivalent carbon dioxide saving elsewhere. Last year we offset over 300 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e in collaboration with Carbon Footprint.

## **Travel**

The majority of our travel is by train or road and air travel is by exception only. We endeavour to use public transport wherever possible and travel this year is on a similar scale to that of 2022 to 2023 but with marginally reduced fleet travel. Smarter Working principles and the development of digital Good Practice Service products are a key factor in enabling us to reduce the necessity for travel whenever practical and appropriate.

## **Green Network**

The Acas Green Network is a well-regarded channel within Acas and staff engagement is commendable. Throughout the year staff have shared information on relevant events, recycling habits, greener ways of travel, keeping data green and new technologies to make our homes more power efficient.

Staff are encouraged to use of the Cycle to Work scheme which continues to be popular.

## **A forward look**

As Acas continues to shape its estate in line with strategy and primarily work from Government hubs, we can ensure value for money through a smaller, better-utilised, better-condition office estate, with common technology, security, and improved sustainability through reducing carbon emissions.

We will continue to promote and effectively focus on our sustainability targets giving consideration to our hybrid way of working and we also continue the roll out of Carbon Literacy training.

## **Sustainable procurement**

Acas uses government frameworks to procure goods and services (primarily Crown Commercial Services, although other frameworks are used where they offer best fit and value for money). All Acas contracts require that the supplier must use reasonable endeavours to meet the applicable Government Sustainable Procurement Buying

Standards. Acas ensures that all of its redundant IT equipment is recycled and that contracts adhere to legal and sustainable timber procurement rules.

We work with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) wherever possible, and at least 33% of our contracts were with SMEs this year.

## **Social sustainability**

Acas is committed to social as well as environmental sustainability. Our commitments have been carefully considered in line with our purpose to make working life better for the wider workforce. Our impacts are set out in our Ambitions, detailed in the Performance Analysis section of this report. Our policy work on ESG has developed a framework for organisations through which to review their social sustainability footprint and we have used that to review our priorities:

- **Human capital and stakeholder engagement:** We have made significant investment in people through offering training programmes, including tailored leadership training for our senior leadership team. In our external work, we published a new Code of Practice on Flexible Working. The Acas website hosted 18 million sessions in 2023-24 and we trained over 40,000 people through our Open Access training and workplace training courses.
- **Fairness, equality, diversity and inclusion, and community impact:** We ensure we are fairly

recruiting staff through transparent recruitment processes. Further information on our gender and ethnicity pay gap is set out in the Staff Report. We also operate staff diversity networks and actively consult with these networks to give all of our staff members a voice. We've also been through a lengthy process to assess and improve our accessibility to all, both internally and externally. In our external work, we have comprehensively updated our guidance covering discrimination and the Equality Act, making a complaint, handling a complaint, witnessing discrimination, hate crime, bullying, race, disability and sex.

- **Health, safety and wellbeing:** We promote both mental and physical wellbeing through training programmes, organisational updates and carefully considering our people survey results. Externally, we have published new advice on stress at work and mental health reasonable adjustments in April 2023, which had more involvement from partners than we have seen in some years and led to podcasts, campaign activity and extensive media coverage. See page 18 for further detail.
- **Human rights:** To ensure an ethical and sustainable approach to human rights we continue our work relating to modern slavery and the national minimum wage. We procure using Cabinet Office approved, sustainable frameworks.

## **Environmental sustainability**

Our greenhouse gas, waste, water, paper and travel emissions are included in the below table. We have a closed paper cycle whereby all paper is recycled for reuse.

Our estate is managed by the GPA, whose minimum requirements for new build projects are to achieve BREEAM<sup>1</sup> excellent or equivalent, and major refurbishments are to achieve BREEAM very good or equivalent.

BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) is a sustainability assessment method that is used to masterplan projects, infrastructure and buildings.



## Greening Government Commitments

	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18 Baseline
<b>Greenhouse gas emissions tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e<sup>2</sup></b>							
Scope 1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Scope 2 and Scope 3	217	240	193	189	715	–	1,291
<b>Related energy consumption<sup>3,4</sup></b>							
Electricity, MWh	398	414	388	379	–	–	1,560
Natural gas, MWh	399	373	430	457	–	–	1,228
Solid fuels, MWh	0	8	10	1	–	–	–
<b>Business flights</b>							
Total number of domestic flights	24	17	24	–	–	–	512
Total number of international flights	10	27	–	–	–	–	4
<b>Travel</b>							
Public transport (including flights), km	920,676	612,699	100,413	4,693	–	–	2,063,111
Grey fleet/hire car, km	253,642	352,330	116,175	9,847	–	–	1,199,301
<b>Waste<sup>3,4</sup></b>							
Recycled externally, tonnes	20	27	25	33	–	–	134
Landfill, tonnes	12	3	3	–	–	–	250
<b>Water<sup>3,4</sup> and paper</b>							
Water consumption, m <sup>3</sup>	2,036	2,132	1,426	1,526	–	–	7,864
Paper procured, reams	249	383	396	228	–	–	5,261
Single use plastic, individual items purchased directly	14,856	31,968	13,113	–	–	–	–
<b>Related costs £'000</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
Business mileage	67	123	31	3	230	238	274
Public transport and flights	280	173	24	–	551	634	582
Utilities <sup>5</sup>	120	109	72	46	61	86	84

- 1 BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) is a sustainability assessment method that is used to masterplan projects, infrastructure and buildings.
- 2 Scope 1: direct emissions from sources owned or controlled. Scope 2: indirect emissions from consumption of purchased electricity or sources of energy generated upstream. Scope 3: other indirect emissions occurring as a consequence of Acas' operations, but not directly controlled or owned by Acas.
- 3 GPA have provided Acas with the estates-based emissions data which they receive from the end landlord. They have not done any independent reviews of this data; however, we have used best estimate for any gaps in the data, or when inconsistent information was provided.
- 4 Some of our estates-based emissions are disclosed by other organisations for GGC purposes. However, we disclose emissions for all sites which we receive information on in our annual report.
- 5 Some of our estate-related consumption costs are billed through the service charge, as such, this does not offer a full picture. We are working with GPA to gain more transparency around these costs.

*Susan Clews*

**Susan Clews**  
Accounting Officer

15 July 2024

# Accountability Report

## Directors' Report

This accountability report is produced to comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, adjusted for the public sector context as required by the HM Treasury Financial Reporting Manual 2023 to 2024. It should be read in conjunction with the Governance statement, the Remuneration Report, and the Performance Report.

## Members of the Board

In 2023-24, the membership of the Acas Executive Board consisted of:

- Susan Clews, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
- Anne Boyd, Director of Advice and Business Solutions
- Daniel Ellis, Director of People
- Robert Mackintosh, Director of Finance and Governance
- Kate Nowicki, Director of Dispute Resolution
- James Vincent, Director of Digital, Data and Technology
- Kirsty Watt, Director of Strategy and External affairs

No conflicts of interest were disclosed in year.

## **Directorships**

Directors are required to disclose any other business interests in the Register of Interests that may conflict with their responsibilities. No director has declared any business interest that may conflict with their role.

## **Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibility**

Under Part VI section 253 subsection (2) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 the Secretary of State, with the consent of HM Treasury, required Acas to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of Acas's state of affairs at the year end, its income and expenditure, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows for the year.

In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and to:

- Include relevant accounting and disclosure requirements; and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis.
- Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis.

- State whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the government financial reporting manual have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.
- Confirm that this annual report and accounts is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

The Accounting Officer for DBT has designated the Chief Executive of Acas as the Accounting Officer for Acas.

The responsibilities of an accounting officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the accounting officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the Service's assets, are set out in 'Managing Public Money', published by the HM Treasury.

As the Accounting Officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that Acas auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

The Accounting Officer has taken all reasonable steps to ensure the annual report and accounts is fair, balanced and understandable and I take personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgments required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

## **Governance Statement**

### **Scope of responsibility**

1. As Accounting Officer, I am responsible for maintaining sound governance and internal controls that support the achievement of Acas policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money. In delivering this role I am supported by the Acas Executive Board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (a sub-committee of the Acas Council) which regularly monitors risk management in Acas. I also use Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) for additional assurance.
2. As Accounting Officer, I have received the training needed for me to fulfil the duties of this role.

### **The purpose of the Governance Statement**

3. This Governance Statement, for which I as Accounting Officer take responsibility, is designed

to give a clear understanding of how the duties set out above have been carried out during 2023-24.

## **Acas governance structure**

4. Acas is a non-departmental public body which is governed by the Acas Council. It was established under the Employment Protection Act 1975 and continues in existence under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. The Council (formed of publicly appointed non-executive directors) is responsible for determining Acas's strategic direction and priorities, and for ensuring that statutory duties are carried out effectively. Day-to-day operations are managed by a management board (the Executive Board).
5. On 7th February 2023, the Prime Minister announced a major machinery of government change which redistributed the activities of several existing government departments and created three new departments including the Department for Business and Trade (DBT). The Department for Business and Trade was designated to the Acas with accounting officer responsibilities formally transferred from 1 April 2023.
6. Acas is sponsored and mainly funded by DBT, with which it has very regular contact regarding a wide range of governance and policy issues, as well as sharing insights on the labour market from our frontline functions. Acas provides DBT with regular

performance updates through the Organisational Performance Dashboard and Strategic Risk Register as well as financial management information. The respective roles of Acas and the Secretary of State for DBT are set out in Acas's Framework Document.

7. The governance structure provides reasonable and not absolute assurance, as it is designed to manage risk to an acceptable level in order to provide flexibility to deliver on our services, aims and objectives. It provides clarity and accountability in managing the delivery of Acas's aims and objectives, and ensures Acas has the capacity to make decisions, monitor performance and assess and manage resources and risk within our appetite.
8. The system of internal controls reflects good practice. It is designed to identify and prioritise the risks to achieving Acas's policies, aims and objectives; to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and their impact; and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. These controls have been in place throughout the year ending 31 March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts and accord with HM Treasury guidance.



## Review of Governance

9. Acas has undertaken a review of its governance framework following an Operating Model restructure. In May 2023, Acas Executive Board convened to consider how it can enhance its governance. In doing so, they agreed the vision, principles and success factors for good governance of its new operating model to bring about clear accountabilities, efficiency and a greater strategic alignment across the organisation. This framework is now being embedded into the organisation and a lessons learned exercise will take place in 2024-25 to evaluate its effectiveness.

## The Acas Council

10. The Acas Council consists of a publicly appointed Chair, currently held by Clare Chapman, and 11 members (a balance of employer, employee and independent members), appointed by the Secretary of State for DBT. All appointments must adhere to the Governance Code on Public Appointments.
11. The Acas Council sets the strategic direction, policies and priorities for Acas, and monitors delivery of strategic aims and objectives, key performance indicators, and statutory duties. The Acas Council observes the highest standards of corporate governance and provides challenge (where applicable) in line with the provisions of HM

Treasury's Corporate Governance Code. The Code of Good Practice for the Acas Council sets out the general responsibilities of members of the Council.

12. The Council is responsible for:

- Overseeing that Acas (the Service) fulfils its statutory duties;
- Ensuring compliance with requirements for the use of public funds;
- Determining key policy objectives and targets of the Service;
- Oversight of strategic planning covering areas such as: the Service's financial performance; the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations and the quality of the Acas services;
- Monitoring and identification of any external changes that are likely to impact on the strategic direction of Acas or on the attainability of its targets, and determining the steps needed to deal with such changes;
- Overseeing the delivery of planned results by monitoring performance against agreed strategic objectives and targets;
- Issuing, and giving appropriate publicity to, an annual report and full statement of accounts;

- Ensuring that high standards of corporate governance are always observed; and
  - Ensuring that the Service operates sound environmental policies and practices in accordance with relevant Government guidance.
13. The Acas Council has two sub-committees, which report back to the Council: The Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (Audit Committee) and the People and Remuneration Committee.
14. Council members' attendance at Council meetings for 2023-24 was as follows:
- Clare Chapman (6/6)
  - Neil Carberry (6/6)
  - Mike Clancy (6/6)
  - Jayne Haines (4/6)
  - Simon Lewis (6/6)
  - Christina McAnea (4/6)
  - Ijeoma Omambala (6/6)
  - Matthew Percival (5/5)
  - Roy Rickhuss (4/6)
  - Ben Summerskill (6/6)
  - Kevin Rowan (3/4)

– Martin McTague (3/4)

15. The Council held a strategic planning day in January 2024. Council tested the progress made against Acas strategic ambitions set out in our 2021-25 Strategy. They also spent the day, exploring the challenges and opportunities for change and improvement in individual dispute resolution, along with a focus on the potential future development of collective dispute resolution, and the opportunities and challenges ahead.
16. This has been a stable year for the Acas Council. However, several appointments/ reappointments are currently being progressed to ensure we maintain a good mix of social partners, and skills to maintain quoracy and expertise. Acas have worked closely with the department to put effective succession planning in place to progress members appointments for which we are expecting outcomes, before the Summer of 2024.

## **Assessment of Council effectiveness**

17. In August 2023 Council members were surveyed on the effectiveness of processes and operations. The results of the survey showed that all Council members affirmed that the Chair effectively facilitates meetings, creating an environment where everyone can freely contribute. They were satisfied with the quality of the Council paperwork, agreeing that it was timely, accurate, well-written,

and comprehensive enough to facilitate meaningful contributions. Members were also unanimous in their agreement that the Acas Council makes a strong contribution to the strategic direction of Acas.

18. The Council reviewed the results at the September Council meeting and discussed potential ways to improve Council effectiveness which included the induction process for new members and the need for sufficient contact with Acas colleagues. Along with the need to address imbalances in speaking frequency and build confidence among all Council members for more inclusive and well-rounded discussions.

## **The Audit Committee**

19. The Audit sub-Committee of the Acas Council is an advisory, rather than executive body, which supports and challenges me as Chief Executive of Acas in my responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance, finance and associated assurance. The Committee is made up of members of the Council, including the Chair, Ben Summerskill. They are supported by an independent financial expert to provide an external perspective, technical advice and guidance.
20. Meetings are attended by members of the Acas Executive, internal and external auditors, and DBT officials who lead the Department's relationship

with Acas. Both external National Audit Office (NAO) and internal auditors engage as required with the Audit Committee Chair and members.

21. The duties of the Audit Committee are to:
- Review corporate governance assurances including Acas’s systems for the assessment and management of risk, the Governance Statement and monitoring arrangements for maintaining standards of business conduct and probity;
  - Review the accounting policies and accounts, including the process for review of the accounts prior to submission for audit, levels of error identified and management’s letter of representation to the external auditors;
  - Consider the planned activity and results of both internal and external audit work;
  - Consider the adequacy of management’s response to issues identified by audit activity; and,
  - Consider assurances relating to the corporate governance requirements for Acas.
22. The Audit Committee met four times in 2023-24. Audit Committee attendance at the meetings was as follows:
- Ben Summerskill, Chair (4/4)

- Roy Rickhuss (3/4)
  - Jayne Haines (3/4)
  - Martin Veale, Independent  
Financial Expert (4/4)
23. The Committee's Terms of Reference were reviewed in year and were updated to provide additional assurance in respect of the ethical behaviour and integrity of Committee members.
24. A self-assessment exercise for the Audit Committee was reported in the May 2023 meeting. The Committee was found to be working effectively in the four areas tested (skills, role and scope, communications and reporting, and membership, independence, objectivity and understanding).
25. An action plan to implement the feedback from the Committee's members was drawn up and one recommendation requiring further action was implemented.
26. This proposed the introduction of an Assurance Map, the purpose of which is to provide evidence for the assessment of risk and control within Acas.

## **The People and Remuneration Committee**

27. The People and Remuneration sub-Committee of the Council is chaired by the Chair of Acas and comprises three members of the Acas Council.
28. The role of the Committee is to:

- Support the executive, by providing stimulus, oversight and assurance on the vision and delivery plans for Acas people strategy;
- Ensure that the pay of the Acas Chief Executive is awarded fairly, according to contribution, both in achievement of objectives and in development of competencies, skills and knowledge;
- Make decisions on the distribution of performance awards to the Acas Chief Executive and their SCS direct reports, ensuring that awards are made fairly and equitably in line with current guidance and with regard to equal opportunities;
- Provide a further mechanism for employee voice to be understood by Acas Council members; and
- Provide oversight for any changes to the pay arrangements of Council members within the parameters set by the DBT.

29. The People and Remuneration Committee met twice in 2023-24. Its members and attendance are as follows:

- Clare Chapman, Chair (2/2)
- Neil Carberry (2/2)
- Mike Clancy (2/2)



- Ijeoma Omambala (0/2)\*

\*Ijeoma has provided input and feedback on items by correspondence

## **Conflicts of Interest**

30. As part of its due diligence, Acas require Conflicts of Interests to be disclosed at the commencement of its board and committee meetings. No Conflict of Interests were noted during 2023-24. Members are also required to submit a related Parties and Conflicts of Interest declaration annual to include nil returns.

## **The Executive Board**

31. The Executive Board met 12 times in 2023-24.

## **Membership**

32. In 2023-24, the membership of the Acas Executive Board consisted of:
- Susan Clews, Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
  - Robert Mackintosh, Director of Finance and Governance
  - Kate Nowicki, Director of Dispute Resolution
  - James Vincent, Director of Digital Data and Technology
  - Daniel Ellis, Director of People

- Kirsty Watt, Director of Strategy & External Affairs
- Anne Boyd, Director of Advice and Business Solutions

## Duties

33. The Executive Board is responsible for the operational management of Acas. All major policies and decisions that affect the delivery of Acas's business objectives are considered and made by the Executive Board.
34. Non-classified papers of the Executive Board are made available to staff via the intranet. Board members are committed to raising visibility of the Board and its work to all staff. The Executive Board hold meetings at Acas office locations around the country (rotated throughout the year), and local office staff are invited to attend a face to face Q&A session with the Board and challenge Board members on issues of their choosing.
35. The Executive Board uses management information to monitor performance of Acas including data on finances, human resources and performance indicators. There are a range of process controls in place that ensure the quality of the data is of the standard expected for reliable and informed business decisions.

36. The terms of reference for the Executive Board are to:

- Support the Council in setting the direction of Acas and developing the Acas strategic plan 2021 to 2025 and for future years;
- Oversee the implementation of Acas’s strategic plan;
- Ensure effective communication on the strategic direction and objectives of Acas both internally and externally;
- Set the annual business plan, outlining activities across all business areas, and agreeing and reviewing policies to enable appropriate and efficient delivery plans;
- Ensure appropriate processes and controls are maintained, including thorough examination of management information, evaluation data and customer feedback;
- Oversee organisational change and development and ensure change management systems are effective and appropriate;
- Support the Accounting Officer in reporting to the Acas Council and DBT;
- Oversee use of all public funds and assets, including any approved income or other

receipts, in accordance with the rules and controls governing public spending;

- Oversee financial and non-financial performance in a timely way through fit for purpose management and accounting systems;
- Ensure human resource management policies are fit for purpose and used effectively;
- Maintain the high standards of corporate governance, transparency and sustainability; and
- Oversee the systematic identification and management of organisational risk.

37. The Executive Board has oversight of Health and Safety matters and ensures there is an effective relationship with our staff and Trades Unions.

38. The Executive Board has several sub-boards, which report on their individual areas. Membership depends on the subject matter requirements.

These are:

- Customer Services Board (CSB): co-chaired by the Director of Advice and Business Solutions and Director of Dispute Resolution. It reviews and focuses on how we run our customer facing services and deliver our Strategic Ambitions 1 and 2. The Board met 9 times in 2023-24 and

- reviewed its membership in November 2023 as part of the organisational Governance review.
- Technical Design and Delivery Board (TDDB): chaired by the Director of Digital Data and Technology. The TDDB met eleven times in 2023-24 and is responsible for the strategic leadership and oversight of all Acas activities carried out under our Digital and Technology work streams.
  - Finance and Portfolio Board (FPB): which replaced the Planning, Performance and Change Board in November 2023 as part of the Acas Governance review was chaired by the Director of Finance and Governance. The FPB met three times in 2023-24 and oversee the delivery of the portfolio of projects and programmes to ensure they remain affordable, achievable, and strategically aligned. It also scrutinises Acas’s budget to ensure that areas of variance are understood, and any investment delivers value for money.

## **Assessment of Board effectiveness**

39. An internal effectiveness review was carried out in September 2023. It found that all Board members agreed the Board fulfils its purpose and makes a positive overall contribution to the strategic direction of Acas. That the chair effectively facilitates meetings, creating an environment that

promotes effective decision making, constructive debate and teamwork. Furthermore members agreed that the integrity of the financial controls and systems of relevant risk management are robust and resilient. Also, that there are clear procedures and effective triggers to help identify, escalate and treat risk and issues.

40. The Executive Board reviewed the results in November 2023 and discussed what additional support would have been helpful when they first became a board member to develop a formal induction process for new Board members. This included clarity on which type of decisions should be made by the sub-board as opposed to those that should be made by Executive Board as part of the Governance review. There was also an appetite for improvements in obtaining relevant data for monitoring internal performance/external developments and seeking further assurances over the integrity of data provided.

## **The risk and internal control framework**

41. Acas Council retains oversight of the management of risk in Acas. Every two months, the Council reviews and challenges the Strategic Risk Register. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) also receives and reviews the risk register, with the Chair of ARAC reporting to Council after each meeting. The purpose of this is to monitor Acas

processes for assessing, reporting and mitigating business risk. A member of the Executive Board is allocated responsibility for each identified risk so that its management can be explored in detail.

42. Members of the Executive Board review the Strategic Register monthly. The identification and assessment of risk is embedded within the Acas executive management arrangements. The Acas risk management policy defines how risk is managed and is explicit on the roles and responsibilities of all staff. The risk management policy, which has been reviewed in year, and risk awareness guidance incorporating good practice is accessible to all staff on the intranet.
43. The overall risk appetite remains as ‘Open’, though within each business area, certain activities take a more cautious approach to risk management.
44. The Executive Board regularly assesses and monitors key strategic risks, reviewing the current status of the risks, including the risks’ trajectory and all Executive Board papers include a risk assessment of the issue under consideration. The Strategic Risk Register is underpinned by local, sub-boards and project risk registers from which significant risks are escalated to the Strategic Risk Register as required. Local risk registers are reviewed at least quarterly and project registers at each project board meeting. Assurance has been

gained on this as part of the annual Compliance Review process.

45. Principle risks faced by Acas are set out on page 58. Risk owners (Executive Board members) and managers (responsible for day-to-day management of the risk) provide a commentary on the risks, the impact if the risk crystallised and the likelihood of this happening with the current mitigations in place.
46. The format of the Strategic Risk Register focusses on clearly demonstrating the current status of the risks identified and the mitigations in place to manage them. The register includes previous assessments of the risk, to allow for the monitoring of the on-going risk management and a future risk trajectory, to show the expected future risk severity in response to the actions taken to mitigate them.
47. Acas also maintains a separate Fraud and Error Risk Register, which is reviewed annually. Acas participates in the Counter-Fraud Network, a body that brings together Partner Organisations from across the DBT family to share good practice in reducing and mitigating the risk of fraud and error.
48. Acas has completed the Annual Assurance self-assessment to measure compliance around governance and management actions, which reflects the Cabinet Office Sponsorship Code of Good Practice.



## Review of organisational effectiveness

49. As Accounting Officer, I am responsible for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management and internal control. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:
- The work of the internal auditors;
  - Annual statements on corporate governance by each Director, supported by challenge panel examinations of a sample of these;
  - The in-year operation of the risks and control framework; and
  - Observations made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports.
50. The system of control is kept under review during the year by:
- The Acas Executive Board meeting regularly to consider the plans, risks and strategic direction of Acas;
  - Full consideration of internal audit reports by the Acas Audit Committee, and the Committee Chair's regular reports to Acas Council;
  - Regular reports by internal audit, to standards defined in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, which include the Head of Internal Audit's opinion on the adequacy

and effectiveness of Acas system of internal control, together with recommendations for improvement;

- The Corporate Governance Framework for Acas, which is published on our intranet and available to all staff;
- Reports from Acas Directors on specific risks which are their responsibility and the steps they are taking in respect of them;
- My review of the annual Corporate Governance returns by each of the Directors and the Corporate Governance Challenge Panel scrutiny of those returns;
- The use of an organisation-wide dashboard in conjunction with the Strategic Risk Register, to measure in-year organisational performance;
- A systematic review of compliance with internal control procedures and governance arrangements;
- A high level assurance mapping of controls; and
- Data security procedures which are regularly reviewed and, where necessary, strengthened to ensure that personal information is safeguarded.

## Corporate Governance Challenge Panel

51. The annual Corporate Governance Challenge Panel sat in May 2024 to consider the individual corporate governance assessments of three members of the Executive team.
52. The purpose of this exercise is to provide assurance to the Committee that the assurances made in the Accounting Officer's Governance Statement are robust. The Directors of Dispute Resolution, Strategy and External Affairs and Advice and Business Support were challenged by the Chair of the Committee, supported by the Independent Financial Expert and GIAA.
53. Key themes identified in their statements were discussed; these focused on:
  - the embedding of the Operating Model to ensure we have the optimum resourcing and workplace culture to drive forward the delivery of our ambitions;
  - making the customer the focus of our decision making with joined up service plans for a range of stakeholders; and
  - the impact of an election on the delivery of services.
54. No issues were raised that would undermine the assurance that a sound system of corporate governance is being maintained.

## **Project assurance and capacity to change**

55. The Finance and Portfolio Board is now an established part of our governance and provides assurance to Executive Board for the management of strategic projects and changes. They drive forward robust delivery and ensure that controls are in place to enable the delivery of projects to time, cost and quality, with a strong focus on value for money and benefits realisation. The Portfolio Management Office is a small team which supports effective project and change management practice in the delivery of key projects to realise our strategic ambitions. The Head of Strategic Portfolio and Change conducts quarterly reviews of the portfolio with Executive Board to ensure that we have a prioritised and balanced portfolio which is delivering the most strategic value.
56. The Portfolio Management Office (PMO) produce a monthly portfolio report which includes dashboards which captures ‘portfolio health’ so that the Finance and Portfolio Board can scrutinise project delivery and respond to emerging risks, issues and dependencies. As part of this analysis ‘change capacity and capability’ is assessed to better plan where our resource is best focused and where we may need to course correct. The Learning team work collaboratively with the PMO to plan and deliver effective learning solutions for the

organisation to upskill the organisation in great change management practise.

## **Operating Model**

57. We have completed the Operating Model restructure with most organisational functions implemented in June 2023 and all role mapping and matching completed by July 2023.
58. The new Operating Model provides a number of benefits for the organisation to increase strategic alignment, accountability, efficiency, and clarity.
59. A lessons learned exercise was conducted with the Executive Board and the Project Team in June 2023 which will help inform our approach to future organisational change projects.
60. We plan to audit the operating model project in October 2024.

## **General Data Protection Regulations**

61. GDPR practices continue to be embedded in the business. Regular reviews of data breach causes have been reported to Executive Board and Council during 2023-24 outlining governance measures to be put in place. Mandatory GDPR awareness training is carried out by all staff every eighteen months and was last completed in July 2023, with the next training to be commissioned in January 2025.

## Internal Compliance Reviews

62. The annual Compliance Reviews have demonstrated that controls are working sufficiently and there have been no significant deviations from Acas governance and internal control procedures and processes. Feedback on the review was presented to senior managers, both on an individual basis and to share good practice from across the organisation. There were no significant actions needed following on from the review to improve governance.
63. The Compliance Review was reviewed in year and enhancements made to ensure that the coverage of the review was complete.

## Corporate Assurance Mapping

64. An updated Corporate Assurance Map has been used in year to assess the control environment in Acas and to provide assurance that these controls are being adhered to and to identify if any areas need strengthening.
65. The Assurance Map uses the 'Three Lines of Defence' model, namely management oversight, functional management and independent review. This model provides a broad view of the controls in place for each business area.
66. Throughout the process, we have engaged with local management to define what should be

covered and have provided support in completing the assessment.

67. The Assurance Map has been completed for Corporate Services and other specific areas that include GDPR and Information Asset Management and Management of the Estate.
68. Overall, the Assurance Map has provided an assessment that controls are sufficient in most areas, but with some room for improvement.
69. Improvements identified include producing better management information to support decision making and introducing more management oversight of the controls in place. An Action Plan has been drawn up to ensure that these improvements to the control regime are enacted.

## **Government Internal Audit Agency**

70. The 2023-24 Internal Audit Plan covered the following areas, with the outcomes of those review noted:
  - Stakeholder Engagement: this audit examined the effectiveness of the governance, risk management and control arrangements around internal and external stakeholder management. The outcome was a ‘moderate’ rating.
  - Collective Conciliation: the objective for this audit was to provide assurance over the training, learning and development

arrangements supporting delivery of Collective Conciliations. The outcome was a ‘moderate’ rating.

- Workforce Planning: this covered assurance that strategies and plans are in place and align to the principles outlined in Global HR processes. The outcome was a ‘moderate’ rating.
- Finance Health Check: the financial control environment was reviewed, with a particular focus on creditor and expenses transactions, including GPC purchasing, resulting in an overall ‘moderate’ rating.
- Data Strategy: audit work provided assurance on the governance, risk management and control arrangements around Acas data strategy to support the delivery of Acas strategic ambitions. This was an advisory activity and therefore no assurance opinion was provided by GIAA.

71. Ransomware: this review provided assurance over the adequacy of the control environment designed to reduce the risk of successful ransomware attacks and the process to respond effectively if such an attack was to arise. The outcome was a ‘moderate’ rating. Overall, Internal Audit gave a ‘Moderate’ assurance opinion on the control and governance framework. Some improvements



are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control. Appropriate action has been agreed and new procedures introduced to address recommendations for improvement.

72. In summary, there were five moderate audit opinions from the work undertaken during the year and in addition there were two advisory reviews where GIAA were not tasked with providing an opinion.
73. In the reports, GIAA highlighted 0 ‘High’, 23 ‘Medium’ and 6 ‘Low’ priority recommendations. Progress in the implementation of agreed audit recommendations is reported to the Audit Committee. At the end of the reporting year, there were no outstanding recommendations.
74. The Audit Committee have reviewed and challenged the GIAA Audit plan for 2024-25.

## **Cyber security**

75. A cyber security incident was recorded in April 2023 impacting the Facebook account of an Acas Facebook page Administrator. This led to the Acas page being locked due to suspicious activity. Social media account security processes were reviewed to ensure that all administrative security options, such as multi-factor authentication, were robust. Work was carried out to restore the Acas

page. Better connections have been established between Meta and Acas via the Cabinet Office to resolve future issues more quickly. No data was compromised during this incident.

76. A cyber security incident was recorded in June 2023 due to a cyber security policy breach. A member of staff made a network connection from an Acas laptop in China resulting in a significant incident response. The network and account connections were blocked. Additional controls have been put in place to prevent network connections from outside of Western Europe and trusted locations. There was no indication of a compromise resulting from this incident.
77. The Cyber Security Strategy and roadmap forms the basis of continuing work to strengthen Acas's cyber security posture during a prolonged period of heightened threat. Measures taken include an increase in dedicated cyber security staff resource, new monitoring and defensive capabilities, improved vulnerability assessment tools and a security audit focusing on Ransomware response readiness within Acas. An external penetration test was performed and is notable for the report's praise of Acas network infrastructure in exceeded standard security expectations and showcasing our commitment to robust cybersecurity practices.

## Other issues

78. No recommendations were made in NAO's Management Letter as part of the 2022-23 audit that required action in year.
79. To support staff the 'Speak Up' policy has operated all year. Three Nominated Officers remained in post in year. These act as an impartial point of contact for staff who wish to raise a concern. In 2023-24 we had one anonymous whistleblowing allegation which was investigated, and it was held that there was no case to answer.
80. We answered 77 of the 77 Freedom of Information requests received within the prescribed timeframe.
81. We answered 433 of the 437 Subject Access Requests received within the prescribed timeframe. Others were extended within prescribed allowances by UK GDPR.
82. One incident was reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) as a precautionary measure as no harm to individuals resulted. The ICO considered no follow-up actions were necessary.
83. In accordance with best practice, Acas considered its quality assurance processes, and determined that these were at a level appropriate for the nature of the organisation.

84. Acas has reviewed the status of contractors engaged by the business; all were found to be compliant with IR35 regulations.
85. To meet the requirements set out by DBT, the Director of Finance and Governance reviews expenditure items for appropriateness of spend, and challenges expenditure if it appears not to offer value for money or does not support the achievement of Acas objectives.
86. There were no breaches of Cabinet Office spend controls in year; a new process for monitoring adherence was introduced to provide assurance that Acas remains compliant.
87. Acas adheres to the appropriate Functional Standards set by the Cabinet Office.
88. Acas continues to publish details of individual expenditure over £250, prompt payment statistics, and organisation charts on gov.uk.
89. Tailored financial and corporate governance training continues to be provided to those with financial and governance responsibilities. This covers the fundamentals of their roles in ensuring financial and governance compliance.
90. Acas continued to work collaboratively with DBT and other Partner Organisations and was represented on several networks (both within the DBT family and pan-Government).

## **Assessment of effectiveness**

91. There have been no significant control issues during the course of this financial year. I have considered the evidence provided with regards to the production of the Governance Statement. The conclusion of this review is that governance and control structures have been appropriate for Acas and have been working satisfactorily throughout 2023-24.

## **Remuneration and Staff report**

Subject to the provisions of the Civil Service Management Code, Acas has delegated authority from the Secretary of State for DBT to determine the pay and grading of staff in non-Senior Civil Service (SCS) grades.

The salaries of the Acas Chair, the Certification Officer (CO), the Chair of the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC), and 7 Acas staff who are members of the Senior Civil Service are set by the Prime Minister following independent advice from the Review Body on Senior Salaries. In reaching its recommendations, the Review Body has regard to:

- The need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified people to exercise their different responsibilities;
- Regional/local variations in labour markets and their effects on the recruitment and retention of staff;

- Government policies for improving public services including the requirement on departments to meet the output targets for the delivery of departmental services;
- the funds available to departments as set out in the government's departmental expenditure limits; and
- the government's inflation target.

The Review Body takes account of the evidence it receives about wider economic considerations and the affordability of its recommendations. Further information about the work of the Review Body can be found at: [www.ome.uk.com](http://www.ome.uk.com).

The salaries of the Acas Council are set by DBT.

The Certification Officer (Sarah Bedwell) is a member of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). No pension contributions are made in respect of the Acas Chair and Acas Council members.

The Chair of the Central Arbitration Committee (Stephen Redmond) was appointed by the Secretary of State for DBT and his fee for one day a week is set by DBT. The members of the CAC committee (deputy chairs and members) are appointed by the Secretary of State for DBT. Their rates are set by the Ministry of Justice and are set out below.

## **Audited information**

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Executive Board of Acas, CAC and CO. There were 7 (2022-23; 10) senior civil servants at pay band 1, and 3 (2022-23; 3) senior civil servants at pay band 2.

## Remuneration (salary, bonus and pensions)

	2023-24			2022-23			
	Salary <sup>6</sup> (£'000)	Bonus payments (£'000)	Total <sup>5</sup> (£'000)	Salary (£'000)	Bonus payments (£'000)	Pension benefits <sup>5</sup> (£'000)	Total (£'000)
<b>C Chapman</b> (Chair) <sup>1</sup>	55 – 60	0	55 – 60	55 – 60	0	0	55 – 60
<b>S Bedwell</b> (Certification Officer)	140 – 145	0	140 – 145	135 – 140	0	53	185 – 190
<b>S Clews</b> (Chief Executive, Acas) <sup>2</sup>	130 – 135	5 – 10	140 – 145	125 – 130	5 – 10	-47	85 – 90
<b>M Tavares</b> (Chief Executive, CAC) <sup>2</sup>	60 – 65	0 – 5	60 – 65	55 – 60	0 – 5	-9	45 – 50
<b>A Cooper</b> (Chief Operations Officer until 30 June 2022) <sup>3</sup>	0	0	0	25 – 30	0	-8	20 – 25
<b>R Mackintosh</b> (Director, Finance, Estates, and Procurement) <sup>2</sup>	90 – 95	5 – 10	95 – 100	85 – 90	0 – 5	-30	60 – 65
<b>J Vincent</b> (Director, Digital, Data and Technology) <sup>2</sup>	95 – 100	5 – 10	100 – 105	90 – 95	5 – 10	33	130 – 135
<b>D Ellis</b> (Director, Organisational Development and Human Resources) <sup>2</sup>	80 – 85	5 – 10	90 – 95	75 – 80	5 – 10	30	115 – 120
<b>C Nowicki</b> (Director of Strategy and, from 1 October 2022, Director of Dispute Resolution) <sup>2</sup>	80 – 85	5 – 10	85 – 90	75 – 80	0 – 5	9	85 – 90
<b>W Parker</b> (Acting Chief Operations Officer from 6 January 2022 until 31 August 2022) <sup>3</sup>	0	0	0	30 – 35	0	15	45 – 50



	2023-24			2022-23			
	Salary <sup>6</sup> (£'000)	Bonus payments (£'000)	Total <sup>5</sup> (£'000)	Salary (£'000)	Bonus payments (£'000)	Pension benefits <sup>5</sup> (£'000)	Total (£'000)
<b>S Clark</b> (Acting Chief Operations Officer from 14 June 2022 until 31 December 2022) <sup>3</sup>	0	0	0	40 – 45	0	21	60 – 65
<b>K Watt</b> (Director of Strategy & External Affairs from 1 September 2022) <sup>2,3</sup>	80 – 85	0 – 5	80 – 85	45 – 50	0	-4	40 – 45
<b>A Boyd</b> (Director of Advice & Business Solutions from 21 September 2022) <sup>3</sup>	100 – 105	0	100 – 105	50 – 55	0	20	70 – 75

<sup>1</sup> C Chapman is not a member of the pension scheme.

<sup>2</sup> In 2023-24, S Clews, M Tavares, R Mackintosh, J Vincent, D Ellis, C Nowicki and K Watt received a non-consolidated payment relating to their performance.

<sup>3</sup> This table shows the amounts paid in individual's capacity of the named roles within the reporting years. In the prior year, A Cooper's annual salary was in the range of £80k-£85k, W Parker's was in the range of £70k-£75k, S Clark's was in the range of £70k-75k, K Watt's was in the range of £75-£80k and A Boyd's was in the range of £95k-£100k.

<sup>4</sup> SCS salary levels are set in accordance with Civil Service pay policy.

<sup>5</sup> Accrued pension benefits for directors are not included in this table for 23/24 due an exceptional delay in the calculation of these figures following the application of the public service pension remedy. The value of pension benefits accrued during the prior year (2022-23) is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) plus (the real increase in any lump sum) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increase excludes increases due to inflation or any increase or decrease due to a transfer of pension rights. The pension benefit for staff in 2022-23 for staff has been calculated by myCSP and reflect the in-year benefit to staff of either the civil service or stakeholder pension.

There were no compensation payments for loss of office paid to senior managers in 2023-24. In 2022-23 compensation payments were made under voluntary exit of £95k for A Cooper and £95k for W Parker, these were accrued in 2021-22.

### **Fair pay disclosure (audited)**

There has been an increase from 2022-23 with respect to the full-time equivalent pay of the highest paid official of 7.5% which is due to pay review. There has been an average increase for employee's full time equivalent pay, excluding the highest paid official, of 5.47% largely due to the pay award. There has been no change from 2022-23 with respect to the performance pay of the highest paid official. There has been an average decrease of 16.67% for employee's performance pay, excluding the highest paid official. This is due to the final Reward and Recognition review panels being held in April 2024 and so the performance pay will be recognised in 2024-25.

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid official in their organisation the median, and the upper and lower percentile remuneration of the organisation's workforce. The ratio for the 75th percentile has increased by 0.1 in 2023-24, whilst the median and the 25th percentile remain consistent with those in 2022-23. The median pay ratio for the relevant financial year is consistent with the pay, reward and progression policies for the entity's employees taken as a whole.

	2023-24		2022-23	
	Total Salary	Total Remuneration	Total Salary	Total Remuneration
Band of highest paid official's remuneration (£k)	140 – 145	140 – 145	135 – 140	135 – 140
25th percentile (£)	27,172	27,575	25,587	25,757
Ratio	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.3
Median (£)	33,630	33,880	32,105	32,322
Ratio	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.3
75th percentile (£)	40,841	40,973	39,363	39,531
Ratio	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.5

The calculation is based upon the full-time equivalent staff of the reporting entity at the reporting period end date on an annualised basis. Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

In 2023-24, 0 (2022-23, 0) employees received remuneration in excess of the highest paid official. Remuneration within the organisation ranged from £20,000 to £25,000 to £140,000 to £145,000 (2021-22, £20,000 to £25,000 to £135,000 to 140,000).

## Council and CAC members

Acas Council members	2022-23 (£)	2023-24 (£)
Annual salary	1,695	1,695
Daily rate for attendance	172	172
Neil Carberry	0	0
Michael Clancy	2,813	2,899
Jayne Haines	3,243	3,157
Simon Lewis	2,985	2,813
Christina McAnea	2,211	2,383
Martin McTague	0	1,243
Ijeoma Omambala	2,469	3,071
Matthew Percival	2,813	2,555
Kevin Rowan	0	1,243
Ben Summerskill	4,619	4,877

Acas Council members are paid an annual remuneration fee and are entitled to receive a daily rate for attending on Acas business. In 2023-24, all Acas Council members, excluding the Chair whose salary is disclosed in the table on page 78.

CAC members	2023-24 (£)	2022-23 (£)
CAC deputy chairs daily rate	575	537
CAC members daily rate	327	306
Arbitrators daily rate	409	382

The CAC deputy chairs and members are reimbursed at the daily rate for attending CAC business. Acas has financial management of the CAC.

## Civil Service Pensions

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. From 1 April 2015 a new pension scheme for civil servants was introduced – the Civil Servants and Others Pension Scheme or alpha, which

provides benefits on a career average basis with a normal pension age.

Equal to the member's State Pension Age. From that date all newly appointed civil servants and the majority of those already in service joined alpha. Prior to that date, civil servants participated in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). The PCSPS has 4 sections: providing benefits on a final salary basis (classic, premium or classic plus) with a normal pension age of 60; and one providing benefits on a whole career basis (nuvos) with a normal pension age of 65.

These statutory arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions payable under classic, premium, classic plus, nuvos and alpha are increased annually in line with Pensions Increase legislation. From the 1 April 2022 all members of the PCSPS who were in a legacy scheme have been moved into alpha. Because the Government plans to remove discrimination identified by the courts in the way that the 2015 pension reforms were introduced for some members, eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 may be entitled to different pension benefits in relation to that period (and this may affect the Cash Equivalent Transfer Values shown in this report. All members who switch to alpha have their PCSPS benefits 'banked', with those with earlier benefits in one of the final salary sections of the PCSPS having those benefits based on their final salary when they leave alpha. (The pension figures

quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the 2 schemes.) Members joining from October 2002 may opt for either the appropriate defined benefit arrangement or a ‘money purchase’ stakeholder pension with an employer contribution (partnership pension account).

Employee contributions are salary-related and range between 4.6% and 8.05% for members of classic, premium, classic plus, nuvos and alpha. Benefits in classic accrue at the rate of 1/80th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to 3 years initial pension is payable on retirement. For premium, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike classic, there is no automatic lump sum. Classic plus is essentially a hybrid with benefits for service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per classic and benefits for service from October 2002 worked out as in premium. In nuvos a member builds up a pension based on their pensionable earnings during their period of scheme membership. At the end of the scheme year (31 March) the member’s earned pension account is credited with 2.3% of their pensionable earnings in that scheme year and the accrued pension is uprated in line with Pensions Increase legislation. Benefits in alpha build up in a similar way to nuvos, except that the accrual rate is 2.32%. In all cases

members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004.

The partnership pension account is an occupational defined contribution pension arrangement which is part of the Legal & General Mastertrust. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member). The employee does not have to contribute, but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of classic, premium and classic plus, 65 for members of nuvos, and the higher of 65 or State Pension Age for members of alpha. (The pension figures quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the 2 schemes but note that part of that pension may be payable from different ages).

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at the website [www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk](http://www.civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk).

## **Cash Equivalent Transfer Values**

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme.

A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies.

The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the member has transferred to the Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their buying additional pension benefits at their own cost. CETVs are worked out in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to



benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

This reflects the increase in CETV that is funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

### Compensation for loss of office (audited)

In 2023-24, one person left under efficiency dismissal terms and received a total compensation payment of £24,341 (2022-23: no one left under efficiency dismissal terms).

Exit package cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies	Number of other departures agreed	Total number of exit packages by cost band
< £10k	0	0	0
£10k – £25k	0	1	1
£25k – £50k	0	0	0
£50k – £100k	0	0	0
> £100k	0	0	0
Total number of exit packages	0	0	0
Total cost (£'000)	0	0	0

In the previous year, 14 employees agreed to leave under voluntary exit terms and received a total compensation payment of £1,061k. The exits were as a result of our operating model restructure. These payments are broken down in the table below.

Exit package cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies	Number of other departures agreed	Total number of exit packages by cost band
< £10k	0	0	0
£10k – £25k	0	1	1
£25k – £50k	0	2	2
£50k – £100k	0	11	11
> £100k	0	0	0
Total number of exit packages	0	14	14
Total cost (£'000)	0	1,061	1,061

In 2023-24, no one retired early on ill-health grounds (2022-23 no one retired on ill-health grounds).

## Off payroll engagements

Highly paid off-payroll worker engagements as at 31 March 2024, earning £245 per day or greater:

- No. of existing engagements as of 31 March 2024 6
- Of which:
  - For less than one year at the time of reporting 5
  - For between 1 and 2 years at the time of reporting 0
  - For between 2 and 3 years at the time of reporting 1
  - For between 3 and 4 years at the time of reporting 0
  - For 4 and more years at the time of reporting 0

All highly paid off-payroll workers engaged at any point during the year ended 31 March 2024, earning £245 per day or greater:

- Number of new engagements between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 6
- Of which:
  - Not subject to off-payroll legislation 0
  - assessed as in scope of IR35 5
  - assessed as not in scope of IR35 1

None of the engagements that were not subject to the legislation were reassessed for assurance purposes due to the short-term nature of the engagements and the roles not changing over their term. We have not received any disputes around status determination.

There were no off-payroll engagements of board members or senior officials with significant financial responsibility during the year.

## **Diversity and inclusion at Acas**

At Acas, we continue to be committed to creating and maintaining a non-discriminatory and respectful working environment for our staff. A range of policies support this, such as, bullying and harassment, diversity and inclusion and recruitment and selection are available on our staff intranet in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). We have also relaunched our speak up policy

an additional way for employees to report concerns in the workplace.

We ensure we pay due regard to the three aims of the public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010, by ensuring all policies and change programmes undergo equality impact assessment. This year we have enhanced this process by updating our internal guidance and rolling out Equality Impact Assessment and Public Sector Equality Duty training across the organisation.

Acas remains committed to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and our procurement activities proactively consider the Act: suppliers to Acas are required, on request, to provide an assurance statement on compliance with the Act. Acas strives to ensure that human rights are respected and to promote the benefits of a diverse society.

We continue to make progress to embed the Health and Wellbeing Framework and aim to reach the mature level in the speak up about health and wellbeing category.

We have redesigned the Health and Wellbeing Hub to allow our employees and managers to quickly identify what support is available to assist their physical, mental, social, and financial wellbeing.

We have consulted, reviewed and updated our workplace adjustments guidance to ensure we have a clear and consistent process to enable managers and colleagues to arrange workplace adjustments as quickly as possible.

We had a great response from colleagues during National Inclusion Week. We ran multiple events for our staff with guest speakers, senior leaders, our staff networks and colleagues. The events concentrated on promoting inclusion and achieving a sense of belonging.

Focusing on leadership commitment, we appointed a Board Wellbeing Champion, and our Executive Board took part in a workshop on promoting mental health within the workplace. We have developed and implemented a wellbeing calendar with a purpose of reducing stigma, raising awareness, and creating an environment where staff feel safe to speak up about health and wellbeing.

We have launched 'The Acas leadership way', Acas core leadership values, which promote leadership best practice across the organisation. The framework focuses on trust incorporating inclusion, support, accountability, strategy, customer focus and expertise.

## **Gender Pay Reporting**

The current requirement for gender pay gap reporting is that we report in a binary way rather than including non-binary or other identities.

- 60% of our workforce are women, a 1% increase from the consistency of 59% in 2023 and 2022.
- 57% of our Senior Civil Servants are women.

During 2023-24, the ratio of females to males employed by Acas was 1:0.7 (2022-23, 1:0.7).

At Executive Board level, this ratio was 1:0.7 (2022-23, 1:0.7).

## **Acas Gender Pay Gap 2024**

- Our mean hourly pay gap is 3.5%
- Our median hourly pay gap is 0.7%

In the financial year 2023 to 2024, overall headcount remained at 1,011. However, there were changes in the workforce resulting in minimal fluctuation from 2023 to 2024. These show an improved mean pay gap of 3.5%, down from 5.7% in 2022/23, and a 0.1% increase in our median pay gap to 0.7%, from 0.6% in 2022/23 and about 6% down in the last two years.

The majority of starters/leavers continue to be within our lower grades (grades 9 and 10), with a relatively equal proportion of men being recruited at the lower end of the scale. There has been an increased proportion of women recruited at our senior grades (6 and 7) and a higher proportion of male leavers which may have assisted in reducing mean.

## **Acas Gender Bonus Gap 2024**

In 2022-23 all eligible employees received a bonus due to a decision to split the reward and recognition pot equally amongst all staff, this explains the steep change in the proportion of people receiving bonuses. The figure is not 100% as not all staff received this payment in 2023-24.

- 89.4% of women were awarded a bonus

- 91.5% of men were awarded a bonus
- The mean bonus pay gap is 10.8%
- The median bonus pay gap is 0.0%

## Pay by Quartile

The table below shows the proportion of women and men in each pay quartile for Acas. It shows that there is a higher proportion of females in all quartiles and more females in the organisation overall.

Proportion of male and female employees in each quartile		
Quartile	Female %	Male %
Lower quartile	62	38
Lower middle quartile	62	38
Upper middle quartile	60	40
Upper quartile	56	44

## Steps we are taking to address our gender pay gap

Acas senior leadership team are committed to fair pay irrespective of gender.

We will continue to build on actions and initiatives aimed at eradicating the gender pay gap, including:

- adopting a flexibility by default principle and adhering to the new flexible working guidelines.
- support for women returning to work through shared parental leave, job sharing, compressed hours, part-time, remote working (including working from home) and term-time only opportunities – plus, encouraging

men to also take advantage of flexible working arrangements.

- continuing to monitor pay to identify pay differences and take targeted action where appropriate, within Civil Service pay controls.
- taking a more proactive approach towards monitoring our bonus pay in the future, this includes reviewing our recognition programme and making sure full Management Information (MI) data is collected to ensure fairness of recognition awards across all grades and gender.
- Continuing our approach to anonymise the job application process to reduce the potential for bias and making sure that all panel members have undergone recruitment training which includes ensuring diversity and success profiles.
- having a ‘diverse by default’ approach towards recruitment, for example, by having recruitment panels which are diverse in terms of gender and ethnicity.
- helping women progress in their careers through a clear conversation approach towards performance development, which encourages line managers to have an open ongoing dialogue with staff on career development and progression. This will be supported by a new digital system providing greater fairness and consistency.



## **Ethnicity Pay Reporting**

As part of our Strategic Ambition to promote diversity and inclusion in Britain's workplaces and ensure our own reflect the values and diversity of modern Britain, we have voluntarily published our ethnicity pay gap. We believe this transparency demonstrates our commitment and provides an opportunity to identify any existing pay disparities among different ethnic minorities within Acas. With this data we can carry out meaningful analysis to provide insights into the factors contributing to the pay gap and develop strategies to address them effectively.

The ethnicity pay gap is the percentage difference in the average hourly rate of pay of ethnic minority employees. We calculate our ethnicity pay gap using the same methodology set out in the government regulations for calculating our gender pay gap.

## **Ethnicity representation in Acas**

At the time of reporting on 31 March 2024, we had a total number of 1,011 employees. 802 of our employees have openly shared their ethnicity and this represents 79.3% of the workforce. Of those who have shared, 699 (69.1%) are white and 103 (10.2%) are from an ethnic minority background.

Throughout 2023-24, we have continued our efforts to create an inclusive and diverse organisation. Ethnic minority employees made up 10.2% of our organisation. However, it remains less than the UK ethnic minority working population of 19.3%.

The figures show below that we still don't have 100% disclosure on ethnicity data, and we are working hard to improve this.

### Overall representation of total number of staff

- 10.2% of our workforce identify as ethnic minority
- 69.1% of our workforce identify as white
- 4.4% of our workforce have preferred not to state their ethnicity
- 16.3% of our workforce have yet to disclose their ethnicity

### **Acas Ethnicity Pay Gap**

We look at both the mean (average) and median (middle) for pay gap reporting. The mean pay gap is the difference in average hourly pay; adding all pay rates together and dividing by the total number of employees. The median pay gap is the difference in hourly pay between the middle paid (the person at the mid-point if you were to line all employees up from low to high pay) white employees and middle paid black, Asian or minority ethnic employees.

Looking at staff who are eligible to be included in the calculation (staff who are not receiving full pay are excluded):

	Number of staff	Proportion (%)
Relevant staff count	988	100
Black, Asian and minority ethnic	100	10.1
Prefer not to say (PNTS)	40	4.0
Unknown/Not declared	160	16.2
White	688	69.6

This gives us a mean and median ethnicity pay gap between colleagues who identify as white and those who identify as ethnic minority of:

- Our mean (average) hourly pay gap for ethnic minority staff is -1.01% (ethnic minority colleagues earn a mean of 1.01% more than white colleagues)
- Our median hourly pay gap is 1.65% (white colleagues earn 1.65% more than ethnic minorities in median hourly pay)

These show an improved mean pay gap of -1.01%, down from -1.63% in 2022-23, and a slight increase in our median pay gap to 1.65%, compared to 0% in 2022-23.

## Pay by Quartile

The table below show which quartiles staff in each ethnicity group fall into.

The data also shows we have many staff in the higher quartile who prefer not to disclose their ethnicity and a large proportion of colleagues in the lower quartile

who have not yet disclosed. This lack of information makes it difficult for us to understand the disparities and inequalities that may exist within our workforce and therefore we are focussing on fostering inclusion and transparency to cultivate more disclosure from staff.

Quartile	Q1 (%)	Q2 (%)	Q3 (%)	Q4 (%)
Ethnic minorities	5.26	13.77	9.31	12.15
Prefer not to say (PNTS)	1.21	2.83	5.67	6.48
Unknown/Not declared	36.03	16.19	5.67	6.88
White	57.49	67.21	79.35	74.49

## Acas Ethnicity Bonus Gap

In the 2023-24 financial year:

- The mean bonus pay gap is 23.5% (white colleagues earn a mean of 23.5% more than ethnic minority colleagues in bonuses) This is largely driven by SCS colleagues being on a different reward and recognition platform.
- The median bonus pay gap is 0%.

## Pay gap without senior civil servants

Note that if we remove SCS from the dataset, the mean pay gap changes increasingly more in favour of ethnic minority staff at -1.01% and the median pay gap is 1.65% in favour of white colleagues.

With SCS removed we can see that ethnic minority colleagues earn a mean of just over 1.0% higher than white colleagues, almost double that with the senior civil servants included, suggesting that senior civil servants

are bringing the white mean pay up. The median pay difference 1.65% in favour of white colleagues as the median value is little affected by outliers.

## **Steps we are taking to address our ethnicity pay gap**

Acas senior leadership team are committed to fair pay irrespective of ethnicity. We will continue to build on actions and initiatives aimed at eradicating the ethnicity pay gap, including:

- Continue to foster an inclusive and open environment that encourages employees to share their ethnicity data. In the last year we have maintained a 79% declaration rate, we want to encourage more staff to share their ethnicity data and will continue to run campaigns to raise awareness of the benefits of sharing this data and ensuring employees feel comfortable and confident to do so.
- After a deep dive into recruitment practices and identifying where we are losing ethnic minority candidates in the recruitment process, we have created an action plan to increase attraction, recruitment and retention of ethnic minorities, which will address any biases that may contribute to the pay gap.
- Working in conjunction with our Diversity and Inclusion Forum to develop strategic actions in support of gender and ethnic minority staff and to

integrate diversity and inclusion into all management processes;

- Creating a new development offer for all staff, but particularly targeted at our employee networks, which provides opportunities to apply for Civil Service development and leadership programmes to support career progression to senior roles. Our People Coaches and the Race Network will support employees from underrepresented ethnic groups with their applications, where needed;
- Continuing to monitor pay to identify pay differences and take targeted action where appropriate, within Civil Service pay controls;
- Continuing to take a proactive approach towards monitoring our reward and recognition system allowing us to focus on the opportunities all staff will have to demonstrate their contributions ensuring fairness across all grades and ethnicity;
- Continuing our approach to anonymise the job application process to reduce the potential for bias and piloting new a learning programme for hiring managers on our bulk campaigns
- Continuing to use recruitment panels which are diverse in terms of gender and ethnicity;
- Focusing on different recruitment processes, in line with Civil Service Principles, that allows those with

limited employment history to actively demonstrate their skills at interview; and

- Rolling out a new Performance Development System which helps ethnic minority employees progress in their careers through a clear conversational approach, which encourages line managers to have an open ongoing dialogue with staff on development and progression.

## **Staff engagement**

The Civil Service People Survey ran from 19 September 2023 to 13 October 2023 with 66% of staff giving their views on what it is like to work in the Civil Service and Acas. We have an engagement score of 62%, which is 1 percentage point lower than our 2022 score. At the start of the year, Acas implemented significant organisational changes which is reflected in the score, however there were some improvements in specific areas.

## **Trade union facility time**

Acas recognises Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) and First Division Civil Servants (FDA) Trades Unions.

During the year, there were 32, or 31.1 FTE (2022-23, 40, or 38.5 FTE) employees who were relevant union officials. This equates to 3% (2021-23 4%) of the total number of permanently employed staff. The facility time (as a percentage of their working time) was:

Percentage of time	2023-24 Number of employees	2022-23 Number of employees
0%	12	16
1-50%	20	24
51-99%	0	0
100%	0	0

The total cost of facility time, as a percentage of the total pay bill, was:

	2023-24	2022-23
Total cost of facility time	72	78
Total pay costs (£)	47,831	47,176
Percentage of total pay bill spent on facility time	0.2%	0.2%

100% (2022-23 99.8%) of total paid facility time hours were spent on paid trade union activities.

## Sickness absence

An average of 10.8 days per person were lost to sickness absences in 2023-24 (2022-23 10.3). Mental ill health is one of the largest causes of absence and continues to be an area of focus to provide support for colleagues, particularly through change, detail of our internal focus on this is set out on page 19.

## Staff numbers (audited)

Average number of full-time equivalents employed during the period was as per the table below. The decrease in the number of full-time equivalent staff reflects the filling of organisational vacancies that were determined in the review of the operating model.



			2023-24	2022-23
	Permanently employed	Others	Total	Total
Acas national	138	33	171	186
Regional offices	757	12	769	773
Certification Office and Central Arbitration Committee	13	2	15	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>974</b>

Staff turnover was 10.9% in 2022-23 and 10.1% in the current year.

For staff costs, see Note 4. of the financial statements.

## Service Contracts

The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 requires Civil Service appointments to be made on merit on the basis of fair and open competition. The recruitment principles published by the Civil Service Commission specify the circumstances when appointments may be made otherwise.

Unless otherwise stated below, the officials covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme. All staff, with the exception of the Certification Officer are entitled to a 3 months' notice period.

Further information about the work of the Civil Service Commission can be found at <https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/>.

The roles of the Certification Officer and the Chair of the CAC are quasi-judicial. Their decisions can be appealed to the higher courts. In keeping with appointments of this nature their contract states that ‘you will, unless one of the grounds for non-renewal applies, be offered re-appointment at the end of each subsequent term for a further period of re-appointment’. The grounds for non-renewal and removal are specified. There is a process established for removal of the Certification Officer which requires the Secretary of State to request the Lord Chief Justice to nominate a judge to investigate, and report findings to the Secretary of State and the Lord Chief Justice.

The current appointment period for the Chair of the CAC is for 5 years with a discretionary further 5 years. Any member can only work until 31 March, following their 70th birthday.

Both the Certification Officer and the Chair of the CAC are required to present an annual report on their activities to the Secretary of State and the Chair of Acas. This report is laid before Parliament.

The Chair’s performance is reviewed by the sponsor Department annually. As members of the Senior Civil Service (SCS), the Chief Executive, and the Directors of Advice and Business Solutions, Strategy and External Affairs, Dispute Resolution, DDaT, Finance and Governance, and People are subject to annual assessment in line with the prevailing rules for the

SCS. During her term as Chief Executive of the CAC, M Tavares's assessment is informed by the CAC Chair's comments.

Further information about the work of the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at <https://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk>.

## Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary; overtime; reserved rights to London weighting or London allowances; recruitment and retention allowances; private office allowances; travel allowances and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation. This report is based on accrued payments made by the service and thus recorded in these accounts.

Bonuses are based on performance levels attained and are made as part of the appraisal process. Bonuses relate to the performance in the year in which they become payable to the individual. The bonuses reported in 2023-24 relate to performance in 2022-23 and the comparative bonuses reported for 2022-23 relate to performance in 2021-22.



**Susan Clews**

Accounting Officer

Acas

15 July 2024

# The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Houses of Parliament

## Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

The financial statements comprise the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's

- Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2024;
- Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year then ended; and
- the related notes, including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's financial statements is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards.

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's affairs as at 31

March 2024 and its net expenditure for the year then ended; and

- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and the requirements of HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual.

## **Opinion on regularity**

In my opinion, in all material respects, the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

## **Basis for opinions**

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 *Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom (2022)*. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of my certificate.

Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's *Revised Ethical Standard 2019*. I am independent of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have

fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

## **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

The going concern basis of accounting for the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual, which requires entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial

statements where it is anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

## **Other information**

The other information comprises information included in the Annual Report, but does not include the financial statements and my auditor's certificate and report thereon. The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

## Opinion on other matters

In my opinion the parts of Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual.

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual; and
- the information given in the Performance and Accountability Reports for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

## Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance and Accountability Reports.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service or



returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or

- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual have not been made or parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited is not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

## **Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for:

- maintaining proper accounting records;
- providing the C&AG with access to all information of which management is aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;

- providing the C&AG with additional information and explanations needed for his audit;
- providing the C&AG with unrestricted access to persons within the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service from whom the auditor determines it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view in accordance with the requirements of HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual;
- preparing the annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, in accordance with the requirements of HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual; and
- assessing the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service will not continue to be provided in the future.

## **Auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

### **Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations including fraud**

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud. The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud is detailed below.

## **Identifying and assessing potential risks related to non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud**

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, I:

- considered the nature of the sector, control environment and operational performance including the design of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's accounting policies;
- enquired of management, the internal auditors and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's policies and procedures on:
  - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations;
  - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud; and
  - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations including the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's controls relating to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's compliance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and Managing Public Money;

- enquired of management, the internal auditors and those charged with governance whether:
  - they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations; and
  - they had knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud;
- discussed with the engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, I considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, posting of unusual journals, complex transactions and bias in management estimates. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), I am required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

I obtained an understanding of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service's framework of authority and other legal and regulatory frameworks in which the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service operates. I focused on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service. The key laws and regulations I considered in this

context included the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, Managing Public Money and relevant employment law.

## **Audit response to identified risk**

To respond to the identified risks resulting from the above procedures:

- I reviewed the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described above as having direct effect on the financial statements;
- I enquired of management, the Audit Committee concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- I reviewed minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Board and internal audit reports; and
- I addressed the risk of fraud through management override of controls by testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements on estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential risks of fraud to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud

or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of my certificate.

### **Context of the ability of the audit to detect fraud or breaches of law or regulation**

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that I may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though I have properly planned and performed my audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it.

In addition, as with any audit, there remains a higher risk of non-detection of fraud, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. My audit procedures are designed to detect material misstatement. I am not responsible for preventing non-compliance or fraud and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

## **Other auditor's responsibilities**

I am required to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been, in all material respects, applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control I identify during my audit.

## **Report**

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Gareth Davies

15 July 2024

## **Comptroller and Auditor General**

National Audit Office  
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road  
Victoria  
London  
SW1W 9SP



# Financial Statements

## Statement of comprehensive net expenditure

for the period ended 31 March 2024

consists of:

### Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service Central Arbitration Committee Certification Office

		2023-24		2022-23	
	Note	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Income</b>	<b>3</b>		4,690		4,291
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Staff costs	<b>4</b>	(47,869)		(47,176)	
Depreciation	<b>5</b>	(2,044)		(2,364)	
Other expenditure	<b>5</b>	(10,674)		(12,498)	
			(60,587)		(62,038)
<b>Net expenditure</b>			<b>(55,897)</b>		<b>(57,747)</b>
<b>Other comprehensive expenditure</b>					
Net gain on revaluation of property, plant and equipment and intangibles	<b>6</b>		7		119
<b>Total comprehensive net expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024</b>			<b>(55,890)</b>		<b>(57,628)</b>

The notes on pages 100-115 form part of these accounts.

# Statement of financial position

## as at 31 March 2024

consists of:

### Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service Central Arbitration Committee Certification Office

	Note	31 March 2024		31 March 2023	
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£000
<b>Non-current assets</b>					
Property, plant and equipment	6.1	1,747		2,057	
Right of use assets	6.2	3,214		4,313	
Intangible assets	6.3	3		4	
<b>Total non-current assets</b>			<b>4,964</b>		<b>6,374</b>
<b>Current assets</b>					
Trade and other receivables	7	2,686		2,464	
Cash and cash equivalents	8	921		0	
<b>Total current assets</b>			<b>3,607</b>		<b>2,464</b>
<b>Total assets</b>			<b>8,571</b>		<b>8,838</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>					
Cash and cash equivalents	8	0		(170)	
Trade and other payables	9	(5,916)		(5,827)	
Lease liabilities	10	(1,027)		(1,217)	
Provisions	11	(366)		(147)	
<b>Total current liabilities</b>			<b>(7,309)</b>		<b>(7,361)</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			<b>1,262</b>		<b>1,477</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>					
Lease liabilities	10	(2,217)		(3,087)	
Provisions	11	(473)		(728)	
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>			<b>(2,690)</b>		<b>(3,815)</b>
<b>Assets less liabilities</b>			<b>(1,428)</b>		<b>(2,338)</b>
<b>Reserves</b>					
General reserve			(1,858)		(2,761)
Revaluation reserve			430		423
			<b>(1,428)</b>		<b>(2,338)</b>

The notes on pages 100-115 form part of these accounts.

These accounts were approved on:

*Susan Clews*

**Susan Clews**

Accounting Officer

Acas

15 July 2024

# Statement of cashflows

## for the period ended 31 March 2024

consists of:

### Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service Central Arbitration Committee Certification Office

		2023-24	2022-23
	Note	£'000	£'000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net operating cost		(55,897)	(57,747)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions		2,043	2,422
(Increase)/Decrease in trade and other receivables	7	(222)	(564)
Increase/(Decrease) in trade and other payables	9	90	158
Increase/(Decrease) in lease liabilities		(276)	(1,339)
Increase/(Decrease) in provisions	11	(36)	(173)
Interest on lease liabilities		98	0
<b>Net cash outflow from operating activities</b>		<b>(54,200)</b>	<b>(57,243)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	6.1	(309)	(837)
Purchase of right of use assets	6.2	0	(836)
Proceeds of disposals of right of use assets	6.2	0	189
<b>Net cash outflow from investing activities</b>		<b>(309)</b>	<b>(1,484)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing arrangements</b>			
Grants from sponsoring department		56,800	58,210
Payment of lease liabilities		(1,200)	0
<b>Net cash inflow from financing arrangements</b>		<b>55,600</b>	<b>58,210</b>
<b>Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents in the period</b>		<b>1,091</b>	<b>(517)</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period</b>	8	<b>(170)</b>	<b>347</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period</b>	8	<b>921</b>	<b>(170)</b>

The notes on pages 100-115 form part of these accounts.

# Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity

for the period ended 31 March 2024

consists of:

## Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service Central Arbitration Committee Certification Office

	General reserve	Revaluation reserve	Total reserves
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Balance at 1 April 2022</b>	<b>(3,359)</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>(2,920)</b>
<b>Changes in taxpayers' equity 2022-23</b>			
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	0	119	119
Transfers between reserves	135	(135)	0
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year	(57,747)	0	(57,747)
Grant from sponsoring department	58,210	0	58,210
<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>(2,761)</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>(2,338)</b>
<b>Changes In taxpayers' equity 2023-24</b>			
Net gain/(loss) on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	0	7	7
Transfers between reserves	0	0	0
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year	(55,897)	0	(55,897)
Grant from sponsoring department	56,800	0	56,800
<b>Balance at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>(1,858)</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>(1,428)</b>

The notes on pages 100-115 form part of these accounts.

# Financial Statements and notes to the accounts for period ended 31 March 2024

## 1. Statement of accounting policies

### 1.1 Basis of preparation

These Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by HM Treasury. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of the Service (Acas) for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular accounting policies adopted by the organisation are set out below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material in relation to the accounts. Accounts directions and other guidance issued to non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) are also taken into account.

Where applicable, estimation techniques are applied consistently, and assumptions made are explicitly stated. In the application of Acas's accounting policies, management is required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other

sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors, which are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from those estimates. The estimates and underlying assumptions are continually reviewed. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

The accounting policies set out below have been applied consistently throughout and adhered to fully.

## **1.2 Accounting convention**

These financial statements and related notes have been prepared under the historical cost convention modified to include the fair valuation of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets to the extent required or permitted under IFRS as set out in the relevant accounting policies.

## **1.3 Activities**

The financial statements cover the activities of Acas, the Certification Office (CO) and the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC).

## **1.4 Grant-in-Aid**

Grant-in-Aid received used to finance activities and expenditure which supports the statutory and other objectives of the entity are treated as financing, credited

to the General Reserve, because they are regarded as contributions from a controlling party.

## **1.5 Tangible non-current assets – property, plant and equipment**

Property, plant and equipment consisting of furniture, fixtures and fittings, IT and telecoms equipment, office machinery and improvements to leasehold properties are carried at historical cost or fair value less accumulated depreciation. Minor items of the above are expensed in the year of purchase.

The thresholds for capitalisation are as follows:

- IT and telecom equipment: £100
- furniture, fixtures and fittings: £1,000
- office machinery: £1,000
- improvements to leasehold properties: £3,000

Property, plant and equipment are revalued using relevant published indices. Upward revaluation is transferred to the Revaluation Reserve. Downward revaluations are taken to the Revaluation Reserve where available and then to Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (SoCNE). Assets under construction represent assets not yet in use and are carried at purchase cost.



## 1.6 Intangible non-current assets

Intangible non-current assets consist of capitalised software and licences, revalued using relevant published indices.

## 1.7 Impairment

An annual impairment review is conducted. Impairments are calculated by estimating the recoverable amount; if this recoverable amount is less than the carrying amount, the asset is reduced to its recoverable amount and the impairment loss is recognised in SoCNE.

## 1.8 Depreciation and amortisation

Assets under construction are not depreciated or amortised until the asset is brought into use. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost or valuation of each asset evenly over its expected useful life with a full year's charge being levied in the year of purchase, as follows:

Furniture, fixtures and fittings	up to 7 years
Office machinery	up to 5 years
Computer equipment	up to 5 years
Leasehold improvements	term of lease
Software Licences	Life of agreement

## 1.9 Leases

Under IFRS 16, Acas recognises all leases as finance leases but with exemption given to low value leases, considered to be those with a corresponding asset value

of £10k or less, and short-term leases, being those with lease terms of less than 12 months.

At inception of a contract, Acas assesses whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is or contains a lease if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time. To assess whether a contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset, Acas assesses whether:

- The contract involves the use of an identified asset;
- Acas has the right to obtain substantially all of the economic benefit from the use of the asset throughout the period of use; and
- Acas has the right to direct the use of the asset.

At inception or on reassessment of a contract that contains a lease component, Acas allocates the consideration in the contract to each lease component on the basis of the relative standalone prices.

Acas assesses whether it is reasonably certain to exercise break options or extension options at the lease commencement date. Acas reassesses this if there are significant events or changes in circumstances that were not anticipated at inception.

## **Right of use assets**

Acas recognises a right of use asset and lease liability at the commencement date. The right of use asset is initially measured at cost, which comprises the initial

amount of the lease liability adjusted for initial direct costs, prepayments or incentives, and costs related to restoration at the end of a lease.

The right of use assets is subsequently measured at current value in existing use in line with property, plant and equipment assets. The cost measurement model in IFRS 16 is used as an appropriate proxy for current value in existing use (consistent with the principles for subsequent measurement of property, plant and equipment). Right of use assets are revalued upon a change in rent associated with the underlying lease.

The right of use asset is depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right of use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of the right of use assets are determined on the same basis of those of property plant and equipment assets.

Acas applies IAS 36 Impairment of Assets to determine whether the right of use asset is impaired and to account for any impairment loss identified.

## **Lease liabilities**

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease, or if that cannot be readily determined, the rate provided by HM Treasury (HMT). The HMT discount rates are set out below:

- 0.91% for leases entered into prior to 31 December 2021,
- 0.95% for leases entered into after 1 January 2022 but before 31 December 2022,
- 3.51% for leases entered into after 1 January 2023 but before 31 December 2023, and
- 4.72% for leases entered into after 1 January 2024.

The lease payment is measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. It is re-measured when there is a change in future lease payments arising from a change in the rate or if Acas changes its assessment of whether it will exercise an extension or termination option.

When the lease liability is re-measured, a corresponding adjustment is made to the right of use asset or recorded in the SoCNE if the carrying amount of the right of use asset is zero.

## **1.10 Provisions**

Provisions for liabilities and charges have been created where, at the date of the Financial Position, a legal or constructive obligation exists (i.e. a present obligation arising from past events), where the transfer of economic benefits is probable, and a reasonable estimate can be made. The Accounting Officer and the Executive Board are responsible for determining what obligations should be recognised and for estimating the liability arising.

Material provisions greater than one year are discounted to a value using a discount rate set by HM Treasury (currently dilapidations are discounted at a rate determined by the discounting period of 4.26%).

## **1.11 Operating income**

Operating income is income which relates directly to the activities of Acas from its operations and is measured at the fair value of consideration received or receivable. This is credited to other operating income net of VAT (see Note 3).

The terms and conditions associated with operating income have the following characteristics:

- the parties to the agreement have approved the contract and are committed to perform their respective obligations;
- each party's rights regarding the services to be performed can be identified;
- the payment terms for the services to be performed can be identified;
- the agreement has commercial substance; and
- it is probable that Acas will collect the consideration to which it will be entitled in exchange for the services that will be performed.

At the inception of a contract, Acas assess the services that have been promised and identify the performance obligation as either a distinct service or series of distinct

services, i.e. where training is to be performed over multiple dates.

The transaction price is the amount to which Acas expects to be entitled in exchange for the transfer of services. Where a contract has multiple performance obligations, Acas allocates the transaction price to the performance obligations in the contract by reference to their relative standalone selling prices.

## **1.12 Pensions**

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the Civil Service Pension Schemes which are described in the Remuneration Report. The defined benefit elements of the schemes are unfunded and are non-contributory except in respect of dependents' benefits. The Service recognises the expected cost of these elements on a systematic and rational basis over the period during which it benefits from employees' services by payment to the Principal Civil Service Pension Schemes (PCSPS) of amounts calculated on an accruing basis. Liability for payment of future benefits is a charge on the PCSPS. In respect of the defined contribution elements of the schemes, the Service recognises the contributions payable for the year.

## **1.13 Employee benefits**

In accordance with IAS 19 Employee benefits, a body is required to recognise short term employee benefits when an employee has rendered service in exchange for those

benefits. An example of this is the employee annual leave accrual.

## **1.14 Taxation**

The Service maintains its own registration for VAT and is partially exempt.

Value Added Tax (VAT) is accounted for in the Accounts, in that amounts are shown net of VAT except:

- irrecoverable VAT is charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, and included under the relevant expenditure heading; and
- irrecoverable VAT on the purchase of an asset is included in additions, other than for right of use assets, where irrecoverable VAT is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

The net amount due to, or from, HM Revenue and Customs in respect of VAT is included within payables or receivables on the Statement of Financial Position.

## **1.15 Going concern**

The financial statements cover the activities of Acas, the Certification Office (CO) and the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) and are prepared on a going concern basis. The directors have assessed the financial position as at 31 March 2024. They anticipate the continuation of the statutory basis of Acas services and are content not to doubt Acas's continuing existence for 2024-25 and beyond.



Acas considers there are no material uncertainties in respect of its status as our funding is statutory and there are no consultations on changing the existence, nature or funding of Acas. DBT have agreed Acas's 2024-25 indicative budget. There is no reason to believe that future approvals will not be forthcoming. Acas has assumed that funding will continue beyond the financial year 2024-25 in line with the indicative budgets supplied by the DBT finance and sponsor teams Acas acknowledge the announcement of a General Election in July 2024 and do not anticipate any effect of this on going concern.

The primary consideration remains that many of Acas functions are statutory and to terminate these would require a change in legislation.

## **1.16 Financial Instruments**

The only exposure to financial instruments arises from normal operational activities. They comprise Trade and Other Receivables (measured at amortised cost) and Trade and Other Payables (measured at nominal value).

Financial instruments play a very limited role in managing risk. Acas's exposure to financial instrument risk is detailed in Note 15 to the accounts.

## **1.17 Segmental analysis**

A segment is a distinguishable component of the business engaged in providing particular services or products.



Acas has identified the basis on which future segmental analysis will be reported on and has secured the agreement of our sponsoring department to use an agreed format. The segments identified reflect the main activities of Acas business, which are economically distinct from each other and which are reviewed routinely by management. As there are no differences in the risk and rewards within particular economic environments, no geographic segmental information will be provided.

The information received by management does not include assets and liabilities broken down by segment.

## **1.18 Estimation techniques used and key judgements**

Management has made estimates and assumptions in these financial statements in the areas described below.

### **Holiday pay accrual**

Acas has estimated the liability it currently has in relation to potential payments to staff for untaken annual leave. A sample of employees was taken, and the results gained were extrapolated to produce an estimated figure for the whole workforce in Note 9.

### **Valuation of non-current assets**

The value of property, plant and equipment and intangibles are estimated based on the period over which the assets are expected to be available for use. Such estimation is based on experience with similar assets. The estimated useful life of each asset is

reviewed periodically and updated if expectations differ from previous estimates due to physical wear and tear, technical or commercial obsolescence or other limits on the use of an asset. The valuation of right of use assets assumes that the discounted lease costs are an appropriate proxy for value in existing use. See Notes 6.1 – 6.3.

## **Extension options**

At lease commencement Acas makes a decision as to whether we are reasonably certain to be exercising break clauses or extension options. This estimate determines the length of the lease term impacting the lease liabilities and right of use assets. See Notes 6.2 and 10.

## **Provisions**

Acas reviews the individual lease terms and discuss with GPA to understand on which premises dilapidations are chargeable. For relevant premises, Acas has estimated the dilapidations provisions based on information from GPA and whether any works to premises have been undertaken in the year which might result in a dilapidations charge. See Note 11.

## **1.19 New IFRSs in issue but not yet effective and FReM changes 2023 to 2024**

IFRS 17 'Insurance Contracts' replaces IFRS 4 'Insurance Contracts', which requires reporters to identify insurance contracts, and for those contracts, recognise an insurance contract liability. This standard comes into

effect for annual reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023, however, the implementation timetable in the public sector is being extended to 1 April 2025. Acas has assessed the implementation of IFRS 17 and has concluded that there will be no impact from its introduction.

There are no other major changes to FReM in 2023 to 2024 which would impact on Acas future financial statements.

## 2. Segmental analysis

2023-24	Public services	Conciliation IC and CC	Helpline	Good practice services	CO/CAC	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Income</b>						
Total	0	0	0	(4,688)	(2)	(4,690)
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Total salaries	1,059	31,450	10,290	3,708	1,362	47,869
Total other expenditure	797	6,230	2,616	784	247	10,674
Depreciation	61	1,303	494	148	38	2,044
Total expenditure	1,917	38,983	13,400	4,640	1,647	60,587
<b>Net expenditure</b>	<b>1,917</b>	<b>38,983</b>	<b>13,400</b>	<b>(48)</b>	<b>1,645</b>	<b>55,897</b>

2022-23	Public services	Conciliation IC and CC	Helpline	Good practice services	CO/CAC	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Income</b>						
Total	0	0	0	(4,286)	(5)	(4,291)
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Total salaries	2,361	29,202	10,884	3,116	1,613	47,176
Total other expenditure	737	8,360	2,486	559	356	12,498
Depreciation	191	1,170	697	226	80	2,364
Total expenditure	3,289	38,732	14,067	3,901	2,049	62,038
<b>Net expenditure</b>	<b>3,289</b>	<b>38,732</b>	<b>14,067</b>	<b>(385)</b>	<b>2,044</b>	<b>57,747</b>

The business segments have been identified for Acas as follows and reflect the main activities of the Service's business, which are economically distinct from each other:

## Public services

This covers a range of activities including supporting the Acas Council, employment relations policy development and strategy, knowledge transfer, research and evaluation, information, publications, communications, PR and marketing, stakeholder relations and fee waived activities undertaken by Acas operational staff, including the provision of advice and guidance for which no charge is made.

## Conciliation (Individual and Collective)

Activities included in this business segment include dispute resolution between employers and employees. Expenditure which is incurred to directly support

individual and collective conciliations and arbitrations, and the staff engaged in these activities, is charged here.

## **Helpline**

The Acas helpline is a free telephone advice service.

## **Good practice services (GPS)**

GPS activities cover a range of services designed to improve the knowledge and skills of employers and individuals in employment relations, through training courses, facilitated problem solving support and other activities. In general, these are charged for products. Income recorded here is Acas's operating income.

## **Certification Office and Central Arbitration Committee (CO and CAC)**

This is the cost associated with the fulfilment of the duties of, and the running of, these offices. The CO receives income from fees for its services.

The costs of the business segments are reported to the Executive Board on a monthly basis.

Direct costs, which include salary and Grant Aided Expenditure (GAE), are allocated to the business segments. All costs that cannot be directly attributed to the segments (overhead expenditure, including accommodation costs, non-cash charges, for example, depreciation, and indirect costs) are allocated to the business segments on a headcount basis using an apportionment model built into Acas financial systems.

Included in overhead allocation are other expenditure and non-cash costs included in Note 4 to the accounts.

### 3. Income

Acas charges fees for the provision of training in all major aspects of employment relations and strives towards full cost recovery for these charged for services.

	2023-24			2022-23		
	Acas	CO/CAC	Total	Acas	CO/CAC	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Receipts from fees	4,671	2	4,673	4,278	5	4,283
Other receipts	17	0	17	8	0	8
	<b>4,688</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4,690</b>	<b>4,286</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4,291</b>

	2023-24	2022-23
	£'000	£'000
Receipts from fees and other operating receipts (Acas)	4,688	4,286
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>(4,640)</b>	<b>(3,901)</b>
Net surplus	48	385

Acas provides training courses on employment relations and the latest good practice for employers, HR professionals, managers and employees. In addition, tailored training for organisations is offered. These services are delivered face to face or through virtual events. Acas strives to achieve full cost recovery for charged for services. The CAC has no operating income.

## 4. Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

Acas	2023-24			2022-23
	Permanently employed	Others	Total	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Wages and salaries	33,896	619	34,515	32,885
Social security costs	3,618	11	3,629	3,586
Other pensions costs	8,609	35	8,644	8,491
Voluntary exit scheme	24	0	24	1,061
<b>Total Net Costs</b>	<b>46,147</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>46,812</b>	<b>46,023</b>

CO & CAC	2023-24			2022-23
	Permanently employed	Others	Total	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Wages and salaries	789	0	789	850
Social security costs	84	0	84	95
Other pensions costs	184	0	184	208
Voluntary exit scheme	0	0	0	0
<b>Total net costs</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>1,153</b>

Total Acas, CO & CAC	2023-24			2022-23
	Permanently employed	Others	Total	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Wages and salaries	34,685	619	35,304	33,735
Social security costs	3,702	11	3,713	3,681
Other pensions costs	8,793	35	8,828	8,699
Voluntary exit scheme	24	0	24	1,061
<b>Total net costs</b>	<b>47,204</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>47,869</b>	<b>47,176</b>

## 5. Other expenditure

	2023-24			2022-23		
	Acas	CO/ CAC	Total	Acas	CO/ CAC	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Accommodation costs	1,083	29	1,112	973	56	1,029
Running costs	1,022	8	1,030	913	30	943
Contractor and consultant fees	1,940	19	1,959	4,623	0	4,623
Professional fees	2,222	5	2,227	1,329	6	1,335
Travelling and incidental expenses	564	4	568	407	1	408
Computer software	1,483	1	1,484	1,682	1	1,683
Staff training costs	955	11	966	716	5	721
Research and development costs	620	(11)	609	767	14	781
Legal costs	351	13	364	516	16	532
Equipment rental	56	0	56	29	0	29
Services provided by OGDs	115	0	115	99	58	157
External audit fees	69	0	69	63	0	63
Fees and expenses of arbitrators, conciliators & CAC members	6	4	10	15	6	21
Bad debts	11	0	11	(15)	0	(15)
Conference costs	1	27	28	0	5	5
Provisions for liabilities and charges – dilapidations	0	0	0	122	0	122
Change in, and unwinding of, discount rate	(36)	0	(36)	(46)	0	(46)
Finance charge	98	0	98	49	0	49
<i>Non-cash costs:</i>						
Depreciation and amortisation	2,044	0	2,044	2,364	0	2,364
Revaluation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Losses, write offs and loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment	4	0	4	58	0	58
Other non-cash movements	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>12,608</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>12,718</b>	<b>14,664</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>14,862</b>



## 6.1 Property, plant and equipment

### Property, plant and equipment 2023-24

	Leasehold improvements	Computer hardware, telecomms & office mach.	Furniture fixtures and fittings	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
<b>At 1 April 2023</b>	<b>1,451</b>	<b>5,218</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>7,506</b>
Additions	0	309	0	309
Disposals	0	(249)	(5)	(254)
Revaluations	(3)	23	19	39
Impairment	0	0	0	0
Transfers	0	0	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>1,448</b>	<b>5,301</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>7,600</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
<b>At 1 April 2023</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>4,244</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>5,449</b>
Charge in year	151	405	70	626
Disposals	0	(246)	(6)	(252)
Revaluations	(1)	15	16	30
Adjustment	0	0	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>4,418</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>5,853</b>
<b>Net book value at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>1,747</b>
<b>Asset financing</b>				
<b>Owned</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>1,747</b>

## Property, plant and equipment 2022-23

	Leasehold improvements	Computer hardware, telecomms & office mach.	Furniture fixtures and fittings	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
<b>At 1 April 2022</b>	<b>2,806</b>	<b>5,665</b>	<b>1,037</b>	<b>9,508</b>
Additions	20	814	3	837
Disposals	(1,500)	(1,310)	(261)	(3,071)
Revaluations	125	49	58	232
Impairment	0	0	0	0
Transfers	0	0	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>1,451</b>	<b>5,218</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>7,506</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
<b>At 1 April 2022</b>	<b>1,793</b>	<b>5,056</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>7,635</b>
Charge in year	176	456	82	714
Disposals	(1,470)	(1,298)	(246)	(3,014)
Revaluations	44	30	40	114
Impairment	0	0	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>4,244</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>5,449</b>
<b>Net book value at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>2,057</b>
<b>Asset financing</b>				
<b>Owned</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>2,057</b>

## 6.2 Right of use assets

### Right of use assets 2023-24

	Buildings	Total
	£'000	£'000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>		
<b>At 1 April 2023</b>	<b>7,427</b>	<b>7,427</b>
Capitalised dilapidations provision	0	0
Additions	1,392	1,392
Disposals	(636)	(636)
Lease modifications	(1,074)	(1,074)
Revaluation	0	0
Transfers	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>7,109</b>	<b>7,109</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>		
<b>At 1 April 2023</b>	<b>3,114</b>	<b>3,114</b>
Charge in year	1,417	1,417
Disposals	(636)	(636)
Revaluation	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>3,895</b>	<b>3,895</b>
<b>Net book value at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>3,214</b>	<b>3,214</b>
<b>Asset financing</b>		
<b>Financed</b>	<b>3,214</b>	<b>3,214</b>

Right of use assets represent the value of leases for 12 (2022-23, 12) Acas office buildings.

### Right of use assets 2022-23

	Buildings	Total
	£'000	£'000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>		
<b>At 1 April 2022</b>	<b>6,780</b>	<b>6,780</b>
Cumulative catch up	0	0
Capitalised dilapidations provision	836	836
Additions	0	0
Disposals	(189)	(189)
Revaluation	0	0
Transfers	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>7,427</b>	<b>7,427</b>

	<b>Buildings</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>		
<b>At 1 April 2022</b>	<b>1,465</b>	<b>1,465</b>
Charge in year	1,649	1,649
Disposals	0	0
Revaluation	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>3,114</b>	<b>3,114</b>
<b>Net book value at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>4,313</b>	<b>4,313</b>
<b>Asset financing</b>		
<b>Financed</b>	<b>4,313</b>	<b>4,313</b>

## 6.3 Intangible assets

### Intangible assets 2023-24

	<b>Computer software</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Cost or valuation</b>		
<b>At 1 April 2023</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>
Additions	0	0
Disposals	0	0
Revaluation	0	0
Transfers	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>		
<b>At 1 April 2023</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
Charge in year	1	1
Disposals	0	0
Revaluation	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Net book value at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Asset financing</b>		
<b>Owned</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

## Intangible assets 2022-23

	Computer software	Total
	£'000	£'000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>		
<b>At 1 April 2022</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>
Additions	0	0
Disposals	0	0
Revaluation	0	0
Transfers	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>		
<b>At 1 April 2022</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
Charge in year	1	1
Disposals	0	0
Revaluation	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Net book value at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Asset financing</b>		
<b>Owned</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

## 7. Trade receivables and other current assets

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Trade receivables	739	828
Prepayments	1,637	1,605
VAT	292	7
Deposits and advances (staff)	18	24
	<b>2,686</b>	<b>2,464</b>

## 8. Cash and cash equivalents

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Balance at 1 April	(170)	347
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	1,091	(517)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>(170)</b>
The following balances at 31 March are held at:		
Government Banking Service	921	(170)

Cash balances were showing as a credit as at 31 March 2023 due to a large payment run made at the end of the month. This did not clear the bank until April 2023.

## 9. Trade payables and other current liabilities

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Trade and staff payables	2,144	2,334
VAT	0	0
Accruals	1,718	1,814
Holiday pay	1,427	1,364
Deferred income	627	315
	<b>5,916</b>	<b>5,827</b>

## 10. Lease liabilities

	2024	2023
	Buildings	Buildings
	£'000	£'000
<b>Lease obligations</b>		
Not later than one year	1,027	1,217
Later than one year and not later than 5 years	944	2,429
Later than 5 years	1,273	658
<b>Present value of obligations</b>	<b>3,244</b>	<b>4,304</b>
<b>Amounts recognised in the SoCNE</b>		
Interest on lease liabilities (Finance charge)	98	49
Expenses relating to short term liabilities (Accommodation costs)	22	82
Expenses relating to leases of low value (Equipment rental)	56	29

## 11. Provisions and contingent liabilities

### 11.1 Provisions for liabilities and charges 2023-24

	Dilapidations <sup>1</sup>	Total
	£'000	£'000
<b>Opening provisions at 1 April 2023</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>875</b>
<b>In period:</b>		
Expenditure during year	0	0
Increase in provisions	0	0
Reversed unused in the year	0	0
Change in, and unwinding of, discount rate	(36)	(36)
<b>Closing provision at 31 March 2024</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>839</b>
<b>Summary of cashflow timings</b>		
Within 1 year	366	366
Between 2 and 5 years	473	473
Beyond 5 years	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>839</b>

<sup>1</sup> This covers dilapidations to leasehold properties where negotiations with landlords are ongoing to 'put right' alterations made.

## 11.2 Provisions for liabilities and charges 2022-23

	Dilapidations	Total
	£'000	£'000
<b>Opening provisions at 1 April 2022</b>	<b>1,048</b>	<b>1,048</b>
<b>In period:</b>		
Expenditure during year	(205)	(205)
Increase in provisions	78	78
Reversed unused in the year	0	0
Change in, and unwinding of, discount rate	(46)	(46)
<b>Closing provision at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>875</b>
<b>Summary of cashflow timings</b>		
Within 1 year	147	147
Between 2 and 5 years	728	728
Beyond 5 years	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>875</b>

## 11.3 Contingent liabilities

The estimated cost of legal cases outstanding against Acas as at 31 March 2024 was £Nil (2023, £Nil). There are a number of potential liabilities for Acas in respect of claims from employees which depend on actual or potential proceedings and will be defended. The timing and amounts of any liabilities are uncertain.

## 12. Capital commitments

Acas is committed to further estates moves in 2024-25 for which it is estimated £1,200k capital expenditure (2023-24, £1,200k) will be incurred.

## 13. Commitments under leases

Total future minimum lease payments under leases are given in the table below for each of the following periods.



	2023-24 Other	2022-23 Other
	£'000	£'000
Not later than one year	9	11
Later than one year and not later than 5 years	0	0
Later than 5 years	0	0
	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>

Qualifying leases are reported under IFRS 16. See Note 1.10 for further details.

## 14. Related party transactions

Acas is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) sponsored by DBT. During the year Acas has had various material transactions with DBT. In addition, the service has had various material transactions with other government departments and other central government bodies. Most of these transactions had been with HMRC, Cabinet Office and Government Legal Department.

None of the Acas Council members or key managerial staff has undertaken any material transactions with Acas during the year.

## 15. Financial instruments

As the cash requirements of Acas are met through Grant-in-Aid provided by DBT, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating and managing risk than would apply to a non-public sector body. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts to buy non-financial items in line with Acas expected purchase and

usage requirements and Acas is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

Trade and other receivables are measured at amortised cost (Note 7) and trade and other payables are measured at amortised cost (Note 9).

## **16. Events after the accounting period**

There have been no events after the balance sheet date and up to the date the accounts were authorised for issue requiring an adjustment to the financial statements.

The date the accounts were authorised for issue is interpreted as the date of the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General's signature.

The Chief Executive has confirmed that she will retire from her position at Acas after the summer. The post will be advertised through open competition.



E03112755  
978-1-5286-4820-2