

Acas business plan 2024 to 2025

2 May 2024

1. Executive summary

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 and purpose 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 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.

Organisational facts

Head office: Windsor House, Victoria Street, London SW1H 0TL

Locations: Serving employers and employees across Great Britain, from 11 sites

Chair: Clare Chapman

CEO: Susan Clews

Organisational overview

Acas is a non-departmental public body of the [Department for Business and Trade \(DBT\)](#) providing expert and impartial services for businesses and employees to prevent and resolve disputes. We have responded to the needs of our customers for approaching 50 years, and with statutory powers enshrined in the Employment Protection Act 1975. Our public funding is provided by the Department for Business and Trade, and we generate additional income from fee-earned services.

We are governed by an independent Council of experts and influencers in employment relations. The Council has employer, worker and independent members appointed by the Secretary of State for Business and Trade. They shape our strategic direction, policies and priorities and oversee how we work effectively to meet our objectives and targets.

Chief Executive foreword

Acas plays a vital role in Britain's working life. Our services are underpinned by a statutory duty to promote the improvement of employment relations, resolve disputes, and provide advice and Codes of Practice.

We enter our new business year at a crucial moment for relationships at work. The year just ended saw more working days lost to industrial action since 1989, with impacts on businesses, workers, citizens and our economy.

With this context, as Chief Executive (CEO), I am immensely proud of the work of the team in 2023 to 2024. Acas staff have stepped up to resolve disputes and reduce the cost and impact of conflict. We have exceeded plans and provided much needed advice and support for workers and businesses. Through these services Acas brings a strong and positive impact on the economy, business performance and people's experience at work.

Our strong performance over the last year places Acas in a firm position to build for the coming year.

Acas will help organisations to adapt and grow. We recognise the challenges that go with transitions to new technologies, to scaling up and to rapidly responding to new customer demands. We are improving our training and business support to be even more relevant for line managers and business leaders.

Our expertise will help to create workplaces, where people can thrive. We understand the value and competitive edge that good work can bring, and how positive work environments secure employee wellbeing, retention, and commitment.

We will keep our laser focus on disputes, looking for resolution at the earliest opportunity and innovating our processes to be even more efficient.

And we will use our insight of successful workplace relations, built from interactions with millions of employers and businesses every year, to raise standards at work. This year we will publish 2 new Codes of Practice and share our knowledge on workplace relations widely with policy makers.

This business plan sets out what we will achieve in 2024 to 2025 as we move towards the finish line of our current [4-year strategy](#); working with colleagues across Acas to meet the 4 ambitions in that strategy is the primary focus for myself, Acas Chair and Acas Council members, who help to bring a range of external perspectives from our varied social partners and are a vital ingredient to our success.

Acas like all other businesses must continually adapt and innovate. We strive to do more so we can help to create fair and productive workplaces, that are the bedrock of a strong economy.

We will do this by:

- increasing our reach to businesses across Great Britain – providing an exceptional experience through our advice product improvements and solutions
- stabilising our helpline service, where we have not been able to meet demand over recent months, so that we can provide quick advice on conflict at work
- making technical and process improvements – increasing opportunities for dispute resolution, generating better data, and helping parties make better informed decisions about their case
- increasing the frequency and reach of our workplace data and insight to support our customers and stakeholders – reinforcing our position as an evidential authority
- innovating – using technology to reach more workers and organisations faster
- innovating to deliver clearly defined business benefits and enhance operational efficiency and value for money – being even more effective

Behind the scenes our fabulous team of people are enhancing our service offerings to better serve our customers and be even more efficient. Their can-do attitude reflects our commitment to improvement, growth, and most importantly a desire to reduce conflict in workplaces and to make working life better for everyone in Britain.



Susan Clews
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

2. Our priorities

Our strategic ambitions

Our work is delivered through 4 strategic ambitions, which set our direction to 2025.

These are:

- Growing our service reach and access
- Resolving disputes more quickly and effectively
- Forging consensus on the biggest workplace challenges
- Advancing fairness and inclusion

To ensure we are in the best shape to deliver on our strategic ambitions by 2025, Acas strengthened its executive board roles and restructured how it operates in 2023.

This also gives us the structure we need to deliver our business priorities.

Our business priorities for 2024 to 2025

These priorities outline what we plan to achieve in 2024 to 2025. It includes the key performance indicators (KPIs) for our services, which show what we will report on and how we will measure success.

We will enhance our [Service](#) offer through the priorities, set out below, explaining what and how we plan to deliver them:

Growing our reach and access

This year, we will increase our reach to businesses across England, Scotland and Wales, delivering 200,000 customer interactions by March 2025.

We'll do this by:

- renewing our online booking systems and processes to improve the customer experience and deliver a service that is more efficient and effective for all users
- building the resilience of our Advice and Business Solutions Service and introduce a refreshed product portfolio that better meets our customers' needs

Resolving disputes more quickly and effectively

This year, we will target conciliation support so that 3 out of every 4 early conciliation notifications to Acas do not progress to become an employment tribunal claim in 2024 to 2025.

We'll do this by:

- linking our dispute resolution systems with that of HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS) to be in receipt of claim details instantly – supporting parties to reach resolution at an earlier stage
- implementing actions to increase engagement in conciliation

Forging consensus on the biggest challenges facing work and working life

This year, we will increase the frequency and reach of our workplace data and insight to support our customers and stakeholders and reinforce our position as an evidential authority.

We'll do this by:

- increasing the number of research and policy publications, events, and roundtables on workplace relations – ensuring the insight reaches and informs more customers and stakeholders
- publishing new Codes of Practice and high-quality guidance to support customers through the regulatory changes of 2024 to 2025

Advancing fairness and inclusion

This year, we will implement enhanced talent attraction actions for Acas recruitment and strengthen accessibility governance to improve internal inclusion and wellbeing and external accessibility for our customers.

We'll do this by:

- increasing the conversion rate of black and minority ethnic candidates from application to interview to 10% or more
- implementing our accessibility plan to enable greater access for customers

Our corporate ambition for 2024 to 2025

We will also enhance our [Service](#) offer through the corporate ambition, set out below, explaining what and how we plan to deliver this:

Building resilience and operational efficiency

This year, we will build our organisational resilience, establishing initiatives that will deliver clearly defined benefits and enhance operational efficiency.

We'll do this by delivering projects and programmes that will:

- review how we deliver advice and business solutions, creating flexible approaches to increase effectiveness and efficiency
- improve workforce planning approach to support critical roles, service delivery and operational effectiveness

3. Delivering our plans

Key performance indicators for 2024 to 2025

These tables show our performance targets for the financial year April 2024 to March 2025.

Conciliation in collective disputes		2024 to 2025
Promotion of a settlement or progress towards a settlement in disputes in which Acas is involved		89%
Individual disputes referred for conciliation		2024 to 2025
Percentage of early conciliation notifications which result in a conciliated settlement between parties or another positive outcome		36%
Percentage of employment tribunal cases which are positively resolved following Acas conciliation		77%
Acas training services		2024 to 2025
Percentage of workplace training customers reporting the course met its intended objective		90%
Percentage of open access customers reporting that the training met their learning need		82%
Telephone helpline advice on workplace problems		2024 to 2025
The percentage of users who were able to take clear action following their call to the Acas helpline		85%
Digital advice on workplace problems		

Percentage of positive engagement of users from the website, where an individual stays longer than 10 seconds on an advice page (this refers to individual users and excludes corporate information)

Service volumes for 2024 to 2025

Advice and training services	Volumes 2024 to 2025	Income 2024 to 2025
Web visits (sessions)	18 million	n/a
Digital advice visits (sessions)	12 million	n/a
Helpline calls and related advice	655,200	n/a
In-depth advice	2,500	n/a
Training services – non charged	Volumes 2024 to 2025	Income 2024 to 2025
Online training sessions	50,000	n/a
Webinar delegates (includes webinar recordings)	50,000	n/a
Training services – charged	Volumes 2024 to 2025	Income 2024 to 2025
Training delegates (includes training activities)	44,300	£4.82 million
Workplace projects (delivery days)	45	£30,000
Collective conciliation and arbitration	Volumes 2024 to 2025	Income 2024 to 2025
Collective conciliation requests	640	n/a
Arbitration and mediation requests	12	n/a
Joint working projects (units)	100	n/a
Individual dispute resolution	Volumes 2024 to 2025	Income 2024 to 2025

Early conciliation notifications	110,300	n/a
Conciliation in employment tribunal cases	30,000	n/a
Mediations in individual disputes	240	£220,000

Total income for 2024 to 2025 is £5.07 million.

Web and digital advice sessions are estimated, based on sessions that accept cookies. We estimate 35% of sessions accept cookies on the Acas website.

Sustainability plan for 2024 to 2025

Acas's Sustainability Strategy sets out our ambition to improve sustainability to support the Greening Government Commitments (GGC) targets.

Objectives

We have a set of objectives to drive our sustainability work across the organisation that are in place from 2021 to 2026. These objectives are:

People

To embed sustainability in decision making and our ways of working, have clear communication on our ambition and progress, and increase engagement with staff in a way that is accessible and inclusive for all.

During 2024 to 2025 we will:

- continue to roll out carbon literacy training
- continue to review and refresh dedicated intranet pages for sustainability and the Acas Green Network, ensuring content is consistent and interesting, and kept up to date

Emissions

To reduce from 2017 to 2018 baseline our greenhouse gas emissions, in line with government targets.

During 2024 to 2025 we will:

- meet the Greening Government Commitments target of reducing the emissions from domestic business flights and report distance travelled by international business flights
- meet the Greening Government Commitments target reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- work with Department for Business and Trade on the exploration of a cross-government carbon offsetting policy for travel

Resources

To increase the efficiency of resources and reduce waste volumes in all areas of general waste, ICT and paper.

During 2024 to 2025 we will:

- achieve the Greening Government Commitments target of reduction in water use
- achieve the following Greening Government Commitments targets for waste and recycling
- focus on sustainable purchasing and minimise consumption

- reduce the overall amount of waste generated, reduce landfill, and increase recycling
- report on the adoption of the Greening Government Commitments

Procurement

To drive sustainability through our supply chains.

During 2024 to 2025 we will:

- determine the sustainability impact of our existing supply chain by reviewing key suppliers' sustainability credentials
- speak with our sponsor department on how to approach future reporting of supply chain emissions
- develop an internal sustainable procurement policy in line with the government's Social Value Model

Nature

To get creative in thinking up ideas for introducing biodiversity to our city-based estate or working collaboratively across the Department for Business and Trade family to assist them in improving the biodiversity value of their estates.

During 2024 to 2025 we will:

- ensure products and services bought are the most sustainable and efficient, demonstrating overall value for money for society
- report on systems in place and actions taken to buy sustainably in line with the Greening Government Commitments sustainable procurement guidance

Corporate governance

As we embedded our new operating model, we have reviewed our internal governance framework. This is supporting stronger decision making, built on transparent processes and clear accountability. Our governance underpins delivery of our objectives and development of our organisational culture.

4. Financials

Financial allocation for 2024 to 2025

The table shows the amount of money allocated to Acas by the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) for the financial year April 2024 to March 2025, and includes IFRS 16 funding.

This is provisional.

2024 to 2025 funding allocation	Amount
Capital	£4,550,000
Total capital	£4,550,000
Programme (non-ringfenced)	£45,090,000
Programme (ringfenced)	£2,100,000
Depreciation (ringfenced)	£2,427,000

2024 to 2025 funding allocation	Amount
Total programme resource	£49,617,000
Administration (non-ringfenced)	£7,020,000
Administration (ringfenced)	£500,000
Total administration resource	£7,520,000
Annual managed expenditure (AME)	(£206,000)
Total AME	(£206,000)

Acas has based the deliverables in this business plan on the resourcing agreed in our new operating model, introduced in 2023. Should a headcount reduction target be introduced into Acas during the year, we will review the 2024 to 2025 business plan, including the outputs we can deliver, to ensure we have realistic and transparent plans.