

Acas business plan 2025 to 2026

12 June 2025

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 to the success of workplaces and the economy and to allow people to flourish and find meaning and purpose at work.

Where there are problems at work, 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 and health-related costs too, for everyone involved.

At Acas, we help people collaborate and resolve workplace relations 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. Where they cannot be avoided, we resolve them, fulfilling our legal responsibility.

Employers often come to us in their most difficult moments and workers 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 resolve conflict, treating each side equally. We can always be relied upon to give clear and 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, 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 collaboration with workers and employers, academics and policymakers, trade union and business leaders.

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

Organisational facts

Head office: 14 Westfield Avenue, Stratford, London, E20 1HZ (more than 80% of staff are based outside Acas head office)

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

Chair: Clare Chapman

CEO: Niall Mackenzie

Organisational overview

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 209.1 (TULRCA).

We have a general duty, set out in the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (sections 209, and 247 to 265) to promote the improvement of industrial relations. It fulfils this role through the powers and duties set out in that act.

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. In 2024 to 2025, Acas passed the milestone of responding to the needs of our customers for 50 years. Our public funding is provided by the Department of Business and Trade, and we generate additional income from fee-earned services.

We are governed by an independent Council made up of employer, worker and independent members appointed by the Secretary of State for Business and Trade. The Council is central to establishing new standards for workplace practices, founded on social partnership. They shape our strategic direction, policies and priorities, and oversee how we work effectively to meet our objectives and targets.

Chief Executive foreword

As we step into 2025 to 2026, I am proud to present my first Business Plan as Acas Chief Executive – a roadmap that reflects both continuity and ambition in a rapidly evolving world of work.

Our vision remains clear: to make working life better for everyone in Britain. In delivering that vision, this year's plan reflects not only our enduring values of impartiality, independence, and integrity, but also a renewed commitment to agility, innovation, transformation and inclusive service delivery. In 2025 to 2026, we will continue to support employers and employees through advice, training, dispute resolution, and policy input, adapting to the evolving workplace landscape.

The UK's labour market continues to face an increasing pace of change with the growth of hybrid and remote working, technological innovation, and rising expectations for wellbeing and fairness. Both employers and workers must handle continued pressure from global economic conditions which directly impact employment relationships.

Against this backdrop, Acas plays a vital role in promoting good employment practices, preventing disputes, and ensuring that, when conflict does arise, it is managed constructively and resolved effectively. Acas can also model good employment practices including the ability to modernise using technological innovation to sustain rewarding jobs and career progression for our people.

Over the past year, Acas has seen a sharp increase in demand for our dispute resolution services, as has our helpline, which continues to support thousands of employers and workers every week, often at their most challenging moments. Our early conciliation and collective dispute services have helped avoid costly legal proceedings and industrial action, keeping workplaces functioning and relationships intact.

But we are not standing still. This business plan sets out what we will achieve in 2025 to 2026 as we also enter into a new strategy period; working with colleagues across Acas to meet the 3 ambitions:

- healthier employment relations
- managing conflict better in workplaces
- enhancing our ability to resolve disputes quickly

Meeting these ambitions is the primary focus for the Acas Chair and I with the support and oversight of the Acas Council members, who bring a range of helpful external perspectives from our varied social partners, and are a vital ingredient to our success.

We will enhance the way we deliver our services to meet new expectations of the governments 'Make Work Pay Plan' and reflect the diversity of the modern workforce.

We will do this by:

- expanding our digital services, ensuring that users can access clear, trustworthy advice in a way that best serves their needs – this includes improvements to our helpline and website
- deepening our insights and impact measurement, using data and research to refine our interventions and demonstrate the value we provide across the economy
- fostering a modern, skilled, agile and inclusive workforce within Acas, ensuring our people have the support, learning opportunities, and wellbeing culture they need to thrive

Our digital development this year will be the start of a multi-year programme, subject to funding, which will be accompanied by training and support for our people. Our work will also be guided by a strong focus on collaboration – with government departments, trade unions, employers, employee representatives, and other stakeholders. We know that improving the UK's workplace culture, productivity and growth is a shared endeavour, and we are committed to being a trusted partner in driving forward fairness, inclusion and resilience across the world of work.

I would like to thank my dedicated Acas colleagues who deliver every day for our customers when they need us most. My colleagues' expertise, compassion, and professionalism continue to be the foundation of our success. Together, we look forward to building on our achievements and shaping a future of work that Makes Work Pay for everyone.

Niall Mackenzie

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

2. Our priorities

Our strategic ambitions

Our 3 ambitions

Our strategy is structured around 3 new ambitions that articulate Acas's overarching goals for 2025 and beyond and gives us the structure we need to deliver our business priorities.

Our commitment to creating more inclusive workplaces runs throughout our strategy: making our services and the employment relations system more accessible to all.

Our 3 ambitions are:

1. Prevent – healthier employment relations.
2. Manage – better conflict management in workplaces.
3. Resolve – earlier dispute resolution.

Our business priorities for 2025 to 2026

These priorities outline what we plan to achieve in 2025 to 2026. 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:

Healthier employment relations

We will help employers and employees prevent conflict arising by:

- defining and demonstrating the value of good employment relations
- identifying the best steps for employers to get their workplace relations practice right and prevent conflict
- improving knowledge of our services among target audiences and communities

Better conflict management in workplaces

Where conflict does arise, we will help employers and employees manage conflict better:

- by developing our partnerships
- through sectoral targeting
- by building Acas capability –?skills,?training and?technology

Earlier dispute resolution

Where conflict remains unresolved, we will deliver earlier, more positive outcomes for employers, individuals and the wider economy.

We will do this by:

- exploring and deploying new technology that assists claimants by improving the flow of information, helping users understand their case and creating opportunities for conciliators to influence resolution
- informing, educating and influencing potential customers to support earlier resolution of cases
- using our expertise to influence the most critical dispute resolution reforms
- stronger stakeholder engagement to make earlier contact with parties in dispute, including in sectors most likely to be subject to disputes

3. Delivering our plans

Key performance indicators for 2025 to 2026

This table shows the performance targets for the financial year April 2025 to March 2026.

Conciliation in collective disputes	2025 to 2026
Promotion of a settlement or progress towards a settlement in disputes in which Acas is involved	90%

Individual disputes referred for conciliation	2025 to 2026
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	2025 to 2026
Percentage of workplace training customers reporting the course met its intended objective	93%
Percentage of open access customers reporting that the course met its intended objective	85%
Telephone helpline advice on workplace problems	2025 to 2026
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 (pages and excludes corporate information)	

Service volumes for 2025 to 2026

Advice and training services	Volumes 2025 to 2026	Income 2025 to 2026
Web visits (sessions)	6.9 million	£0
Digital advice visits (sessions)	4.6 million	£0
Helpline calls and related advice	610,000	£0
In-depth advice	1,200	£0
Training services – non charged	Volumes 2025 to 2026	Income 2025 to 2026
E-learning sessions	32,450	£0
Webinar delegates (includes recording views)	100,000	£0
Training services – charged	Volumes 2025 to 2026	Income 2025 to 2026

Training delegates (includes training activities)	30,000	£5.38 million
Workplace projects (delivery days)	36	£115,200
Collective conciliation and arbitration	Volumes 2025 to 2026	Income 2025 to 2026
Collective conciliation requests	615	£0
Arbitration and mediation requests	8	£0
Joint working projects (units)	85	£0
Individual dispute resolution	Volumes 2025 to 2026	Income 2025 to 2026
Early conciliation notifications	127,000	£0
Conciliation in employment tribunal cases	34,000	£0
Mediations in individual disputes	210	£240,000

Total income for 2025 to 2026 is £5.74 million.

Sustainability plan for 2025 to 2026

Environmental sustainability

In 2025 to 2026 Acas will publish its new sustainability strategy for the period 2025 to 2030, which will align to the new Greening Government Commitments (GGCs) for the period. The strategy will focus on 3 outcomes.

1. We will focus on working towards net zero and adapting to climate change. This will include planning to reduce our direct, overall and ICT emissions. This is a challenging commitment given the existing efficiency of our estate, but we will strive to make savings. We will also enhance our travel policy to encourage more sustainable travel and manage climate risks.
2. We will focus on working with our landlord, the Government Property Agency, to restore and enhance nature across our estate. We will also work with our Green Network to identify opportunities to contribute to enhancing nature, including identifying opportunities to use staff volunteering on environmental days.
3. We will focus on improving our use of resources; we will increase sustainable procurement, reduce our waste, increase recycling and reduce our water consumption. This will include raising staff awareness about their environmental impact, helping colleagues to make better environmental choices.

Social sustainability

Acas has developed a model to assess and guide its social sustainability practices. This strategy focuses on 7 key areas:

1. Loyalty

We gather proactive feedback and regularly review our services to ensure responsiveness, quality, and maintain the trust of customers and stakeholders. We measure and improve staff engagement.

2. Community impact

By helping to resolve workplace issues early, Acas plays a vital role in reducing conflict, improving workplace culture, and strengthening the UK economy.

3. Management and capability

We have implemented a performance management system that supports personal development at all levels. Our Leadership Excellence in Acas Programme (LEAP) has strengthened leadership across the Executive Board and senior leadership team, with ongoing focus on consolidating learning and strategic delivery.

4. Labour relations

We maintain a strong, constructive partnership with recognised trade unions (PCS and FDA), through regular engagement, formal agreements, and collaborative input into strategy and change initiatives.

5. Human rights

We are committed to preventing modern slavery and human trafficking, and we only procure through sustainable, Cabinet Office-approved frameworks. We promote dignity and equality, ensure fair treatment, and maintain inclusive policies across all stages of employment.

6. Health, safety and wellbeing

Our risk assessments, health and safety governance, and wellbeing initiatives – including mental health support, counselling, and proactive health screening – ensure our employees can work safely, confidently, and with access to support when needed.

7. Fairness

We are an equal opportunities employer, committed to non-discrimination, inclusive hiring, reasonable adjustments, and ongoing accessibility improvements informed by regular audits and consultation with staff networks and trade unions. We ensure our services are fully accessible to all.

Corporate governance

In reviewing our internal governance framework in 2024 to 2025, this is supporting stronger decision making, increased transparency of processes and clearer accountability. Our governance underpins delivery of our objectives and development of our organisational culture.

4. Financials

Financial allocation for 2025 to 2026

The table shows the amount of money allocated to Acas by the Department for Business and Trade for the financial year April 2025 to March 2026, and includes International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) 16 funding. This is provisional.

2025 to 2026 funding allocation	Amount
Capital	To be confirmed
Total capital	To be confirmed
Programme (non-ringfenced)	£55,870,000
Programme (ringfenced)	£0
Depreciation (ringfenced)	To be confirmed
Total programme resource	To be confirmed
Administration (non-ringfenced)	£8,520,000
Administration (ringfenced)	£0
Total administration resource	£8,520,000
Annual managed expenditure (AME)	£0
Total AME	£0