

Acas equality information report 2023 to 2024

4 July 2025

About this report

The Equality Act 2010 requires relevant public bodies, including Acas, to publish information to show how they comply with the public sector equality duty. This ties in with the equality objectives we publish at least every 4 years.

To understand, produce, measure and ultimately achieve our objectives, we produce an equality information report.

Although the Equality Act has 9 protected characteristics, for the purpose of measuring and confidentiality, due to the size of our workforce we limit our focus on age, disability, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation.

We only collect and measure data where there could reasonably be a clear plan to make use of the data being collected to promote equality between the protected characteristics.

The report covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

1. Equality objectives and Acas strategy

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities such as Acas must meet the public sector equality duty. They must have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic
- foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic

We do this by looking at employees' needs across our services.

We are experts in promoting diversity and inclusion outside our organisation through our training and advice services. But we want to do more to promote diversity and inclusion internally as well as making sure that our services are accessible for everyone who needs us. We are held to account through Ambition 4, a key strand in our strategy focusing on 'embracing difference, increasing inclusion, creating fairness'.

The Ambition 4 objectives are that, by 2025, we will:

- influence the state of equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace, through our services and in partnership with organisations across Britain
- provide services that are accessible and effective for those who need to use them, irrespective of place, sector, and individual circumstances
- be an organisation that fully reflects the diversity of the communities that we serve

We are on track to deliver on all our Ambition 4 success measures by the end of our strategy in 2025.

Our Ambition 4 focus in 2023 to 2024 has seen us focus on the following areas.

We are delivering partnerships across equality, diversity and inclusion in the public, private and voluntary sectors, with evidence of impact on policy and practice. We have provided partners and customers with authoritative guidance across the range of protected characteristics: race, disability and sex guides were all published this year 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 to 2025.

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 completing the roll out of Equality Impact Assessment training, creating an accessibility governance framework, and carrying out a second external website audit. We have completed the Business Disability Forum self-assessment and will be putting a plan in place to follow up on recommendations.

We have reviewed our organisational diversity data and completed a recruitment review. Our diversity data has been integrated into a Power BI 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.

We are continuing to work with our diversity networks to strengthen their role and impact. We supported training and encouraged 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. 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.

We have equipped our line managers with the skills required to identify and support employees who are experiencing poor mental health, through delivering 'Mental Health Skills for Line Managers' sessions throughout 2023 to 2024. 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.

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 – bullying and harassment, diversity and inclusion, and recruitment and selection policies are available on our staff intranet, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). We have also relaunched our speak up policy, which is an additional way for employees to report concerns at work.

During National Inclusion Week in September 2023, 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 – we saw high levels of attendance from across all areas of Acas.

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 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 also 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.

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

2. Our staff

The equality and diversity figures in this report are based on a headcount total of 1,011 members of staff on 31 March 2024 and are taken from Acas's iTRENT system, unless otherwise stated. Staff on loan and not paid directly by Acas are not included in the analysis, nor are agency staff or contractors.

Latest figures show that:

- 60% of our employees are women
- 10% are ethnic minorities
- 20% are disabled
- 6% identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual

The representation of ethnic minority employees is lower than the wider working population of 17.4%, while the representation of disabled employees is above the working population of 18.1%. Our representation for gay, lesbian or bisexual employees is slightly below the civil service representation of 6.4%.

Declaration

Overall declaration rates for each reported characteristic as of 31 March 2024 (includes staff who selected 'prefer not to say')

Characteristic	Number of employees who declared	Proportion
Age	1,011	100%
Disability	670	66%
Ethnicity	846	84%
Sex	1,011	100%
Sexual orientation	834	82%

3. Representation by grade

The data in this section shows Acas's workforce by grade as of 31 March 2024.

The pay grades within Acas with the equivalent civil service grade

Acas grades	Civil service grades	Proportion of staff in grade
Senior civil service (SCS)	Senior civil service	1%

Acas grades	Civil service grades	Proportion of staff in grade
Grade 6	Grade 6	1%
Grade 7	Grade 7	5%
Grade 8	SEO	17%
Grade 9	HEO	43%
Grade 10	EO	29%
Grade 11	AO	4%

Age

The age demographics at Acas remain relatively stable with the majority of employees aged between 30 and 60 years of age.

Compared to the 2022 to 2023 report, grades 6 and 7 have seen an increase in employees under the age of 50. Grades 8 and 9 have seen an increase in employees under the age of 40, with a slight increase in those aged 60 to 64 but a decrease in those who are 65 and over.

Across Acas the percentage of those aged 65 or over remains the same.

Age demographics across grades at Acas

Grade	16 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 64	65 and over
SCS	0%	0%	29%	43%	14%	0%
Grade 6	0%	15%	38%	31%	8%	8%
Grade 7	0%	22%	35%	39%	2%	2%
Grade 8	5%	23%	25%	31%	13%	3%
Grade 9	5%	23%	24%	31%	13%	4%
Grade 10	12%	26%	26%	25%	10%	2%
Grade 11	20%	9%	18%	30%	16%	7%
Total	7%	23%	25%	30%	12%	4%

Disability

The overall percentage of employees that shared their disability status as disabled, not disabled or prefer not to say was 66%. This is an increase of 1 percentage point from the 2022 to 2023 declaration.

Representation of disabled employees is mainly evenly spread across grades, although there is a lower representation in higher grades. Due to the small numbers of grade 6s and senior civil servants (SCS), we have amalgamated the data for confidentiality reasons.

SCS and grade 6 disability representation has dropped 9 percentage points from 2023 to 2024. The percentage of staff who are disabled has increased to 20% of the workforce, despite a drop of representation at SCS, grade 6, 9 and 11. This is due to an increase in representation of 3 percentage points in grade 9, which represents 43% of our employees.

Disability status across grades

Grade	Percentage of disabled staff
SCS and grade 6	8%
Grade 7	20%
Grade 8	12%
Grade 9	25%
Grade 10	19%
Grade 11	9%
Total	20%

Ethnicity

Our ethnic minority representation has decreased 1 percentage point to 10%. There has been a decrease at grade 10 by 3 percentage points and a small increase of 1 percentage point at grade 9. The statistics for SCS, grade 6 and 7 are amalgamated due to small numbers, to ensure confidentiality.

Ethnic minority representation across grades

Grade	Percentage of ethnic minority employees at each grade
SCS, grades 6 and 7	9%
Grade 8	13%
Grade 9	12%
Grade 10	7%
Grade 11	9%
Total	10%

Sex

Up from 59% in 2022, 60% of Acas employees are female. Representation of women has increased in grades 6, 7 and 8 (our higher grades) and fallen in grades 9, 10 and 11.

Percentage of women across grades

Grade	Percentage of women
SCS	57%
Grade 6	69%
Grade 7	54%
Grade 8	55%
Grade 9	61%
Grade 10	60%
Grade 11	80%
Total	60%

Sexual orientation

Because of numbers and confidentiality reasons, data for sexual orientation in some grades has been amalgamated. Overall representation has increased by 1 percentage point with significant increases in the higher grades.

Representation of staff who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other by grade

Grade	Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other
SCS, grades 6 and 7	19%
Grades 8 and 9	14%
Grades 10 and 11	10%
Total	6%

4. Recruitment

From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 there were 8,603 applications for vacancies.

Age

When people apply for a job, Acas asks them for their age using 10 age brackets ranging from 16 to 24 to over 65. It also allows the option of 'prefer not to say', although 95% of applicants chose to share this data with us. In every age bracket we received applications and appointed candidates. Candidates aged between 25 and 29 made up the largest group of applications at 16%, (the previous year this was 30 to 34). Those aged 30 to 34 were the age group most likely to be successful at both sift and interview, making up 19% of successful appointments.

Disability

Candidates who shared that they had a disability represented 14% of applications and went on to represent 18% of successful candidates at sift stage, and 17.6% of those successful at interview. Six per cent of applicants chose not to share whether they had a disability or not.

Ethnicity

The data shows that the total number of applications were made up of:

- 20% Asian and Asian black candidates (a rise of 7 percentage points from 2022 to 2023)
- 16% black African, black Caribbean, and black British candidates (a rise of 7 percentage points from 2022 to 2023)
- 4% of candidates from a mixed ethnicity group
- 54% from a white ethnicity group

At sift stage the successful group were made up of:

- 15% from Asian or Asian black ethnicity group (a rise of 5 percentage points from 2022 to 2023)
- 15% from black African, black Caribbean and black British ethnicity (a rise of 9 percentage points from 2022 to 2023)
- 1% from a mixed ethnicity group
- 62% from a white ethnicity

Successful candidates at interview stage shows us a make-up of:

- 11% from Asian and Asian black ethnicity (a rise of 6 percentage points from 2022 to 2023)
- 10% from black African, black Caribbean and black British ethnicity (a decrease of 8 percentage points from 2022 to 2023)
- 3% from a mixed ethnicity group
- 71% from a white ethnicity
- 4% of successful candidates chose not to share their ethnicity

Success rates during the recruitment process for each ethnicity group

Ethnicity	Sift	Interview
Asian and Asian black ethnicity	10%	3%
Black African, black Caribbean and black British ethnicity	13%	4%
Mixed ethnicity	12%	6%
White ethnicity	16%	7%

Gender

The data shows that the total number of applications were made up of:

- 52% – women
- 44% – men
- 4% – a combination of those who wanted to self-describe and those not wanting to share gender

At sift stage the successful group was made up of:

- 55% – women

- 41% – men
- 4% – those who self-describe or prefer not to share

At interview stage the successful group was made up of:

- 57% – women
- 38% – men
- 4% – those who self-describe or prefer not to share

Sexual orientation

Because of small numbers and confidentiality those candidates who do not identify as heterosexual will be identified for the purposes of this information as LGBTI+.

The data shows that the total number of applications were made up of:

- 80% of those who described themselves as heterosexual
- 20% of those who identified as LGBTI+ (including self-described, preferred not to share or omitted to share data)

At sift stage the successful group was made up of:

- 80% heterosexual
- 21% LGBTI+ (including self-described, preferred not to share or omitted to share data)

At interview stage the successful group was made up of:

- 79% heterosexual candidates
- 22% LGBTI+ candidates (including self-described, preferred not to share or omitted to share data)

5. Leavers

The data analysis presented here shows the reasons why employees left during the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

The overall data shows that:

- there were 3 main reasons for leaving – transfer to another government department 28%, resignation 35% and retirement 23%
- those who transferred to another government department were aged between 20 and 49
- those who resigned and left due to 'another reason' were aged between 20 and 49
- those who retired were all over 50
- 5% of employees left due to the end of their contract and 5% were dismissed – the same percentages as 2022 to 2023
- those who left due to the end of their contract were all aged between 20 and 39

Reasons for leaving by protected characteristic

Sex

- women were more likely to resign, with 58% of leavers compared to 42% of men
- women were more likely to leave for 'other reason', with 75% of leavers compared to 25% of men
- an equal number of women and men retired from 2023 to 2024

Ethnicity

- 10% of employees who transferred to another government department were from ethnic minorities – 8% of employees who resigned and 4% of employees who retired
- 20% of the employees who were dismissed were ethnic minorities – dismissals counted for 5% of total leavers, which is 1% of the total number of leavers

Disability

- 15% of employees leaving Acas in 2023 to 2024 had a disability, compared to 20% of those in post
- of the employees who retired, 13% had a disability
- 10% of employees who transferred to another government department had a disability
- 60% of employees who were dismissed had a disability – dismissals counted for 5% of total leavers and therefore this figure is 3% of total leavers

LGBTI+

- 5% of employees who identified as LGBTI+ left Acas in 2023 to 2024
- 8% of those who resigned identified as LGBTI+
- 4% of those who retired and 3% of employees transferring to another government department identified as LGBTI+

6. Performance management

An assessment of performance data available showed that less than 1% of staff did not demonstrate the standards for their role. Therefore, due to confidentiality we are not reporting on this data.

7. Recognition and reward

- 90% of women were awarded a bonus
- 92% of men were awarded a bonus

8. Grievances and disciplinarys

During the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 there were 18 formal grievances raised with 10 different subject areas. Informal grievances are dealt with by management within the directorate and not recorded centrally. There were also a small number of disciplinarys during this period, made up of a number of different protected characteristics.

The following tables show the percentage of employees with different protected characteristics who have raised a grievance.

Formal grievances by disability

	Percentage of grievances
Disabled	13%

	Percentage of grievances
Not disabled	20%
Prefer not to say	13%
Unknown	53%

Formal grievances by ethnicity

	Percentage of grievances
White	67%
Ethnic minority	20%
Prefer not to say	7%
Unknown	7%

Formal grievances by sex

	Percentage of grievances
Women	80%
Men	20%

Formal grievances by sexual orientation

	Percentage of grievances
Heterosexual	73%
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or other	0%
Prefer not to say	20%
Unknown	7%

Reasons for grievances (combined)

Reasons were:

- discrimination, disability discrimination or failure to implement reasonable adjustment
- trade union detriment
- bullying and harassment, unfavourable treatment or inappropriate behaviours
- workplace decisions including recruitment

9. Employee engagement

The results for engagement, discrimination, bullying and harassment are taken from the Civil Service People Survey conducted annually over September and October.

At the end of the survey, staff are asked to complete a diversity monitoring form, which is voluntary. Not all who complete the survey fill in the monitoring information at the end. Questions within the diversity monitoring form are optional and therefore, of those who chose to fill in the survey, not all questions were answered.

From the data available, the table below shows the engagement index scores.

The engagement score is based on 5 questions asking if employees:

- are proud to work at Acas
- would recommend working here to others
- are motivated and inspired
- have a strong personal attachment to the organisation

The overall engagement score for Acas is 62%, down 1 percentage point from 2022. The engagement scores for those with different protected characteristics are lowest for those who have a disability or are LGBT+. The highest engagement scores are from women and ethnic minorities. This is the same pattern as last year and the scores are similar.

The People Survey measures inclusion – this covers respect for individuals within their teams, respect for individual differences within the organisation and being treated fairly at work. This remains at 77%, with no change from last year.

The survey results show discrimination remains static at 8% and bullying and harassment has risen by 3 percentage points to 8%.

Engagement indicators across protected characteristics

	Response rate	Engagement rate
All of Acas	646	62%
Disability	240	61%
Ethnicity	61	68%
Women	338	66%
Gay, lesbian or bisexual	44	61%

Average inclusion rate and difference from previous year

Percentage	Differential on previous year
77%	No change

Participants who felt they had been discriminated against, bullied or harassed

	Percentage	Differential on previous year
Discriminated against	8%	No change
Bullied or harassed	8%	+3%

10. Gender pay gap

[Read the Acas gender pay gap report 2024](#)

11. Ethnicity pay gap

[Read the Acas ethnicity pay gap report 2024](#)