

Acas helpline data January to March 2025

4 July 2025

1. Introduction and main points

This quarterly statistical bulletin uses the Acas helpline data capture system (DCS) data to highlight trends seen within the Acas helpline service. The latest data in this bulletin was collected in January to March 2025 (quarter 4 2024 to 2025).

All values in this bulletin are rounded to zero decimal places unless specified otherwise.

Main points:

- the helpline service handled around 165,100 calls this quarter, around a 4% increase on the previous quarter – this continues a quarter-on-quarter increase in the volume of calls across the financial year
- around 86% of calls handled were employee-side calls, while around 10% were employer-side calls
- the most common call topic this quarter was discipline, dismissal and grievance, with around 40% of calls related to this topic
- calls related to discipline, dismissal and grievance, redundancies, lay-offs and business transfers, and diversity and discrimination are more common than in January to March 2024
- calls related to holiday and working time are less common than in January to March 2024
- the most common call subtopics this quarter were grievance procedure (16%), dismissal (15%), and redundancy procedure (10%)
- Grievance procedure and dismissal have remained the two most common subtopics over the past year
- calls related to grievance procedure and disability discrimination have risen over the past year
- employees were most likely to call the helpline with queries relating to discipline, dismissal and grievance, diversity and discrimination, and wages and National Minimum or Living Wage
- employers were most likely to call the helpline with queries relating to absences, sickness and stress, contracts, holiday and working time, maternity, paternity and adoption, and redundancies, lay-offs and business transfers

2. Who is calling the helpline?

Call volumes

The helpline handled around 165,100 calls in January to March 2025. This is roughly a 4% increase on the previous quarter and roughly a 22% increase on January to March 2024. Values in Figure 1 have been rounded to 4 significant figures.

Edit mediaFigure 1: Helpline call volumes in the 5 latest quarters.

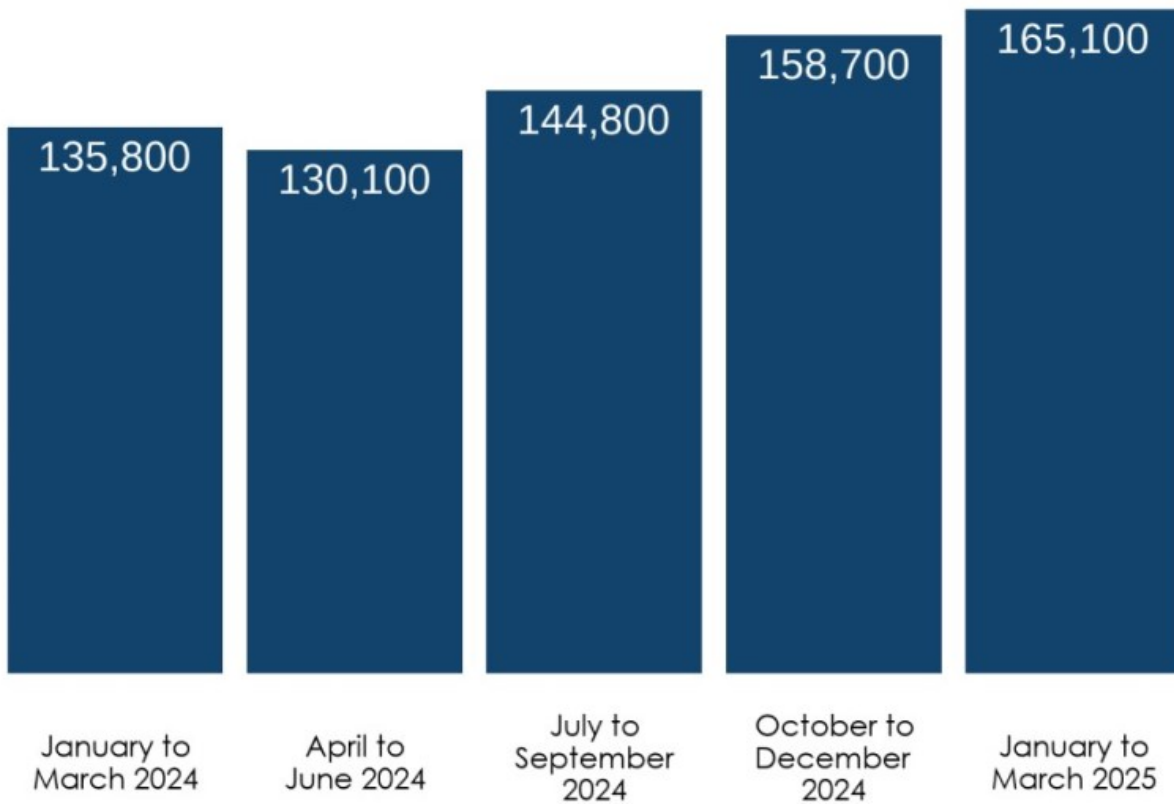


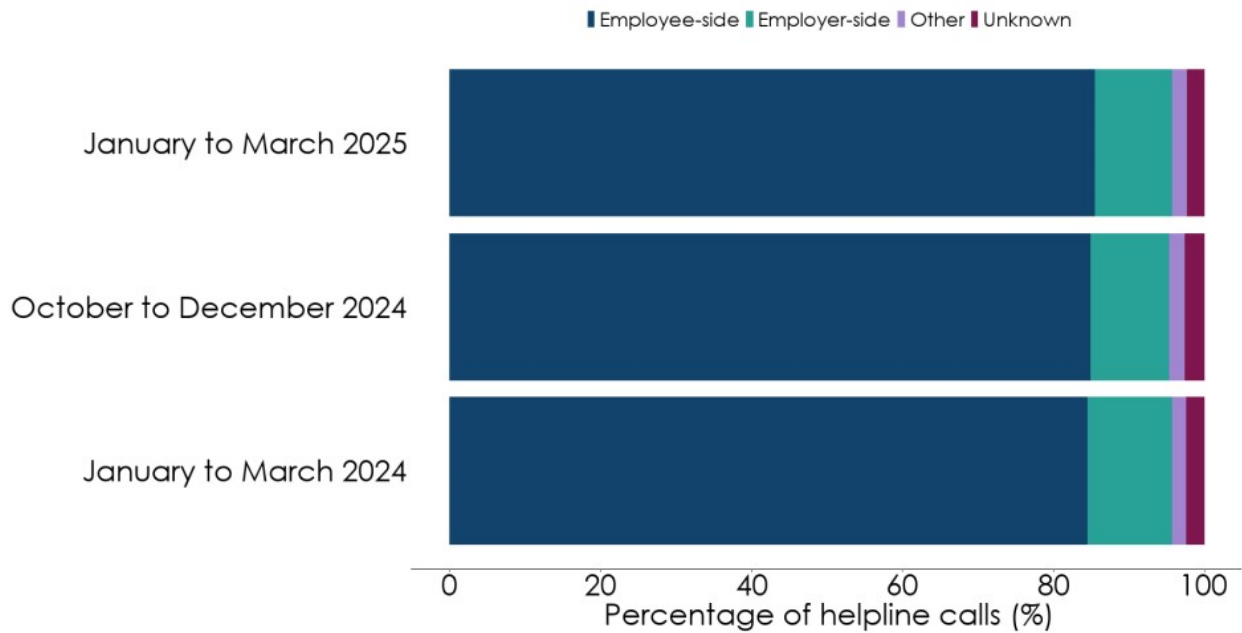
Table of data: Helpline call volumes in the 5 latest quarters

Quarter	Call volume
January to March 2024	135,800
April to June 2024	130,100
July to September 2024	144,800
October to December 2024	158,700
January to March 2025	165,100

Employee-side calls include calls from employees, third parties on behalf of employees, agency workers, apprentices, and interns whereas employer-side calls include calls from employers and third parties on behalf of employers.

Of the calls handled this quarter, 86% were employee-side calls and 10% were employer-side calls. This is similar to the previous quarter, where 85% of calls were employee-side and 10% of calls were employer-side. In quarter 4 last year, 85% of calls were employee-side, while 11% of calls were employer-side.

Edit mediaFigure 2: Helpline caller types



The legend order reflects the order of the categories across the bars.

Table of data: Helpline caller types

Type of caller	January to March 2024	October to December 2024	January to March 2025
Employee-side	85%	85%	86%
Employer-side	11%	10%	10%
Other	2%	2%	2%
Unknown	2%	3%	2%

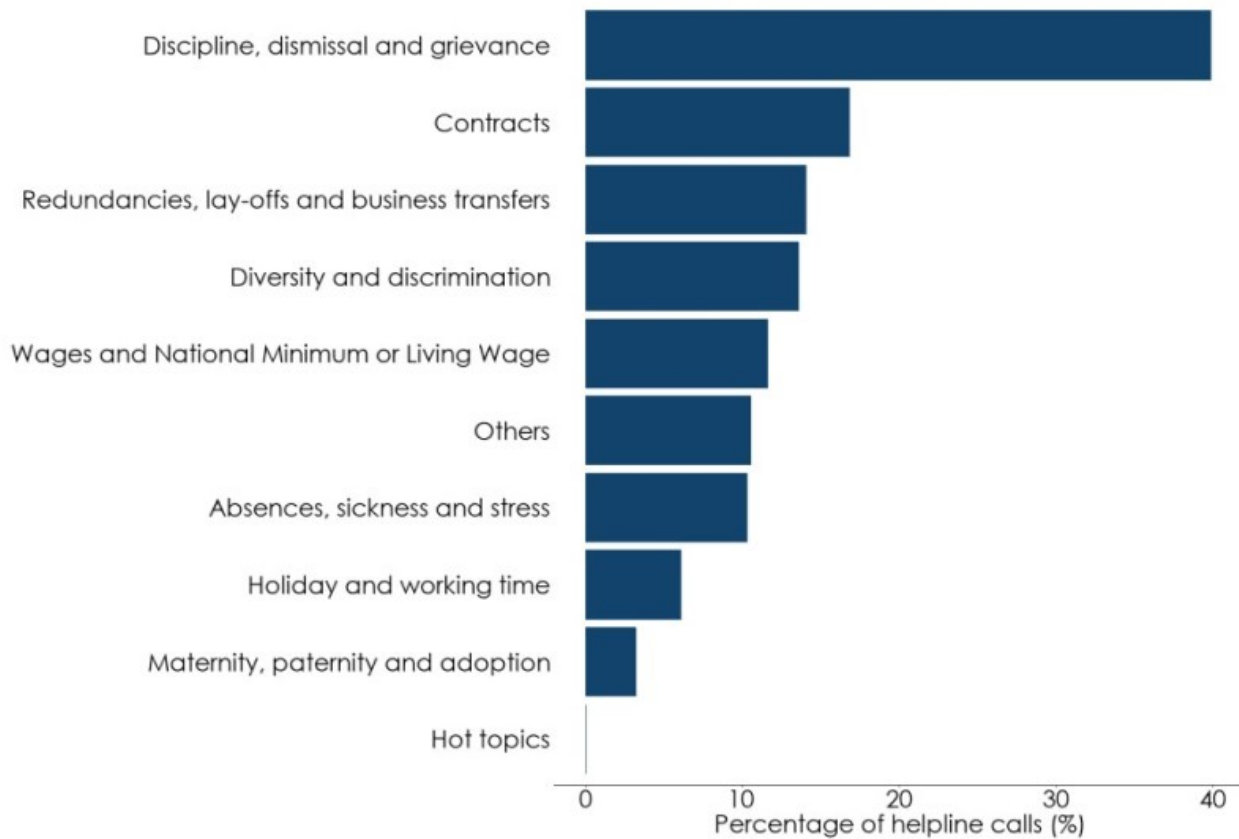
3. What are people calling about?

Call topics

Each data capture system record is assigned up to 5 call topics. These are assigned manually by the adviser and based on the subjects discussed during a call. The most common call topics in this period were:

1. Discipline, dismissal and grievance (40% of data capture system records).
2. Contracts (17%).
3. Redundancies, lay-offs and business transfers (14%).

Edit mediaFigure 3: Helpline call topics in January to March 2025



Data capture system records can be assigned up to 5 call topics, therefore percentages may not add up to 100%.

Table of data: Helpline call topics in January to March 2025

Call topic	Percentage of helpline calls
Discipline, dismissal and grievance	39.9%
Contracts	16.9%
Redundancies, lay-offs and business transfers	14.1%
Diversity and discrimination	13.6%
Wages and National Minimum or Living Wage	11.6%
Others	10.6%
Absences, sickness and stress	10.3%
Holiday and working time	6.1%
Maternity, paternity and adoption	3.3%
Hot topics	0.1%

Table 1 highlights the change in the percentage of data capture system records with each call topic. These are compared with the previous quarter and the same quarter in the previous year. A positive change means that a particular call topic was more common in

the most recent quarter.

Table 1: Changes in the percentage of helpline calls with each call topic

Call topics	Percentage of helpline calls in January to March 2025	Percentage point change versus October to December 2024	Percentage point change versus January to March 2024
Discipline, dismissal and grievance	39.9%	0.6	0.9
Contracts	16.9%	0.7	0.3
Redundancies, lay-offs and business transfers	14.1%	1.4	1.3
Diversity and discrimination	13.6%	0.9	1.6
Wages and National Minimum or Living Wage	11.6%	-1.0	-0.6
Others	10.6%	-0.2	0.6
Absences, sickness and stress	10.3%	0.0	0.0
Holiday and working time	6.1%	-0.1%	-0.9
Maternity, paternity and adoption	3.3%	0.4	0.2
Hot topics	0.1%	0.0	-0.1

Change from period to period tends to be very small though year on year changes can be more significant and highlight emerging issues. However, the percentage of calls about each call topic have remained stable over the last 12 months, which suggests the issues that have been affecting employees and employers over the last year have not changed much.

Call subtopics

Each call topic also has a number of subtopics. Up to 10 subtopics can be selected in each data capture system record. Figure 4 shows the most common subtopics this quarter. Figure 5 shows the most common subtopics last quarter. Figure 6 shows the most common subtopics in the equivalent quarter last year.

Data capture system records can be assigned up to 10 call subtopics, therefore percentages may not add up to 100%.

Edit mediaFigure 4: 10 most common helpline subtopics for January to March 2025

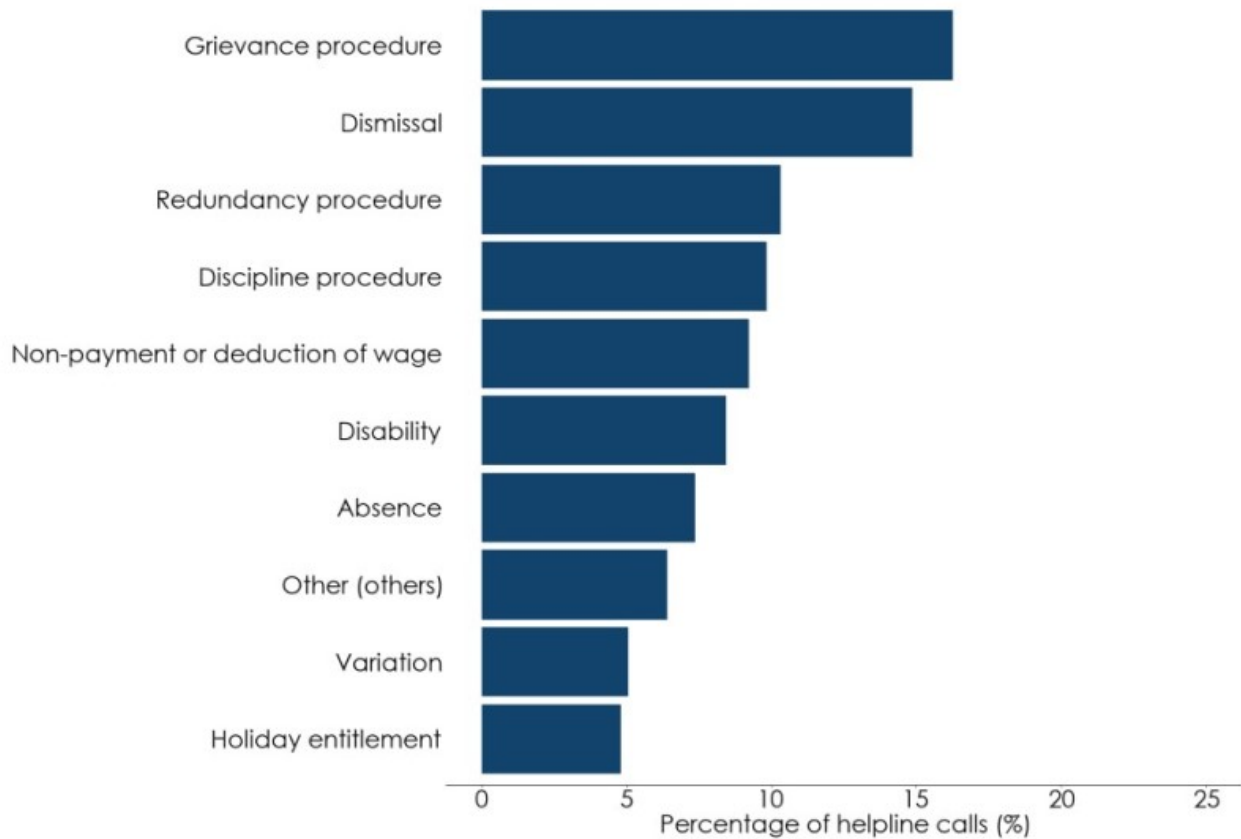


Table of data: 10 most common helpline subtopics for January to March 2025

Call subtopic	Percentage of helpline calls
Grievance procedure	16.3%
Dismissal	14.9%
Redundancy procedure	10.3%
Discipline procedure	9.8%
Non-payment or deduction of wage	9.2%
Disability	8.4%
Absence	7.4%
Other (others)	6.4%
Variation	5.0%
Holiday entitlement	4.8%

Edit mediaFigure 5: 10 most common helpline subtopics for October to December 2024

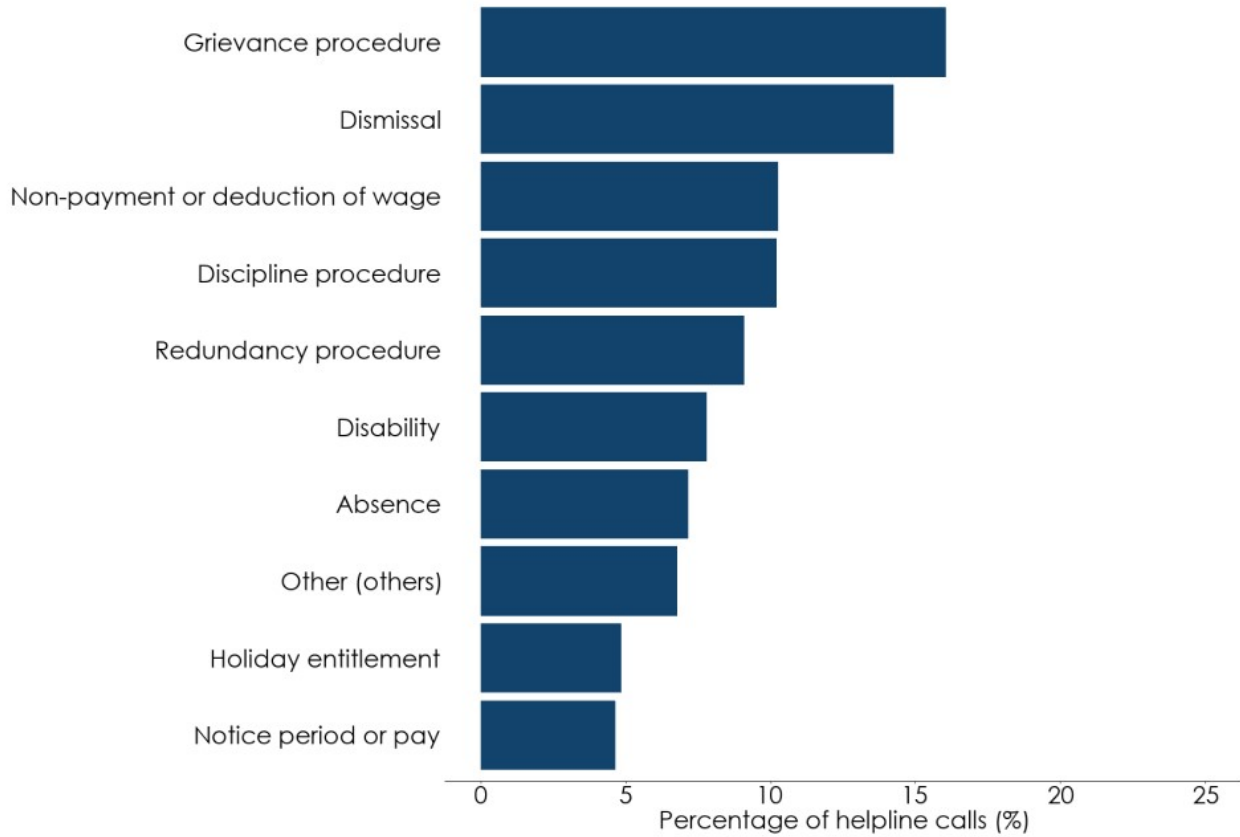


Table of data: 10 most common helpline subtopics for October to December 2024

Call subtopic	Percentage of helpline calls
Grievance procedure	16.1%
Dismissal	14.3%
Non-payment or deduction of wage	10.3%
Discipline procedure	10.2%
Redundancy procedure	9.1%
Disability	7.8%
Absence	7.2%
Other (others)	6.8%
Holiday entitlement	4.8%
Notice period or pay	4.6%

Edit mediaFigure 6: 10 most common helpline subtopics for January to March 2024

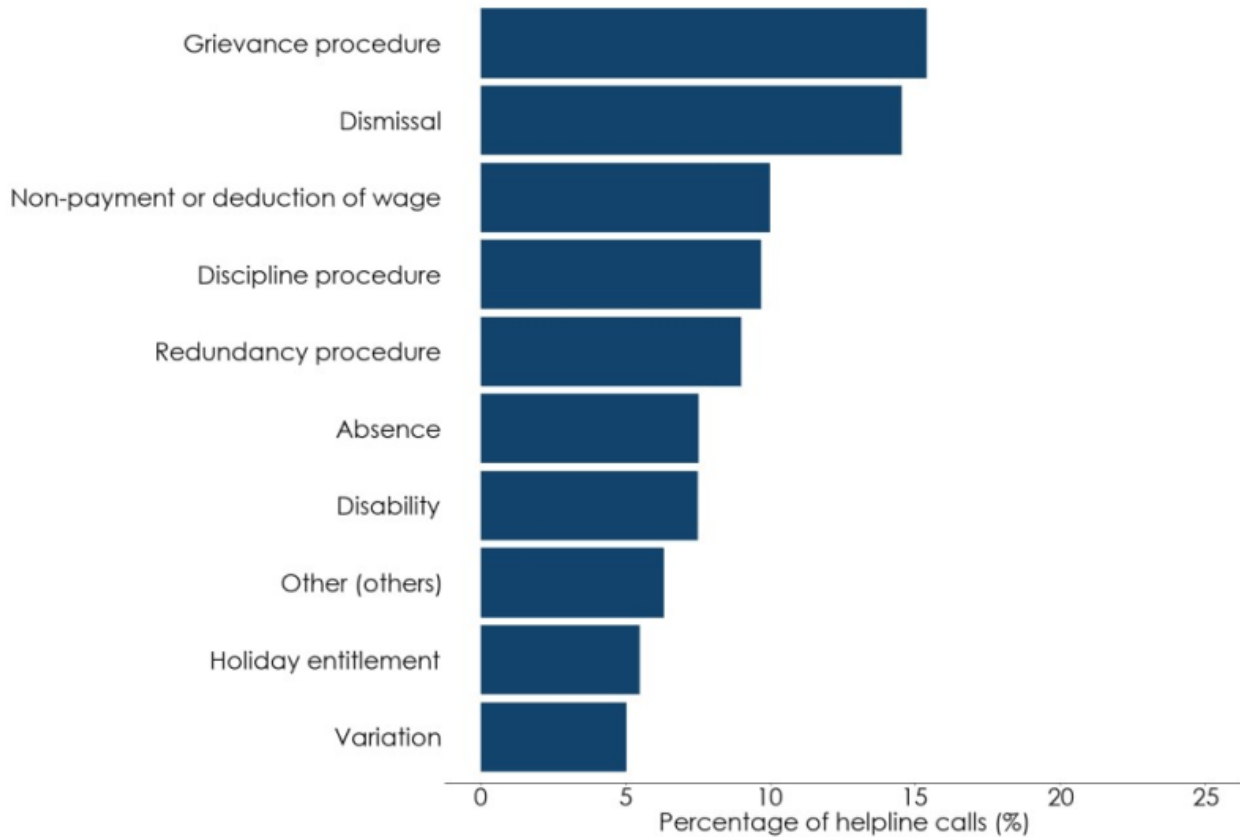


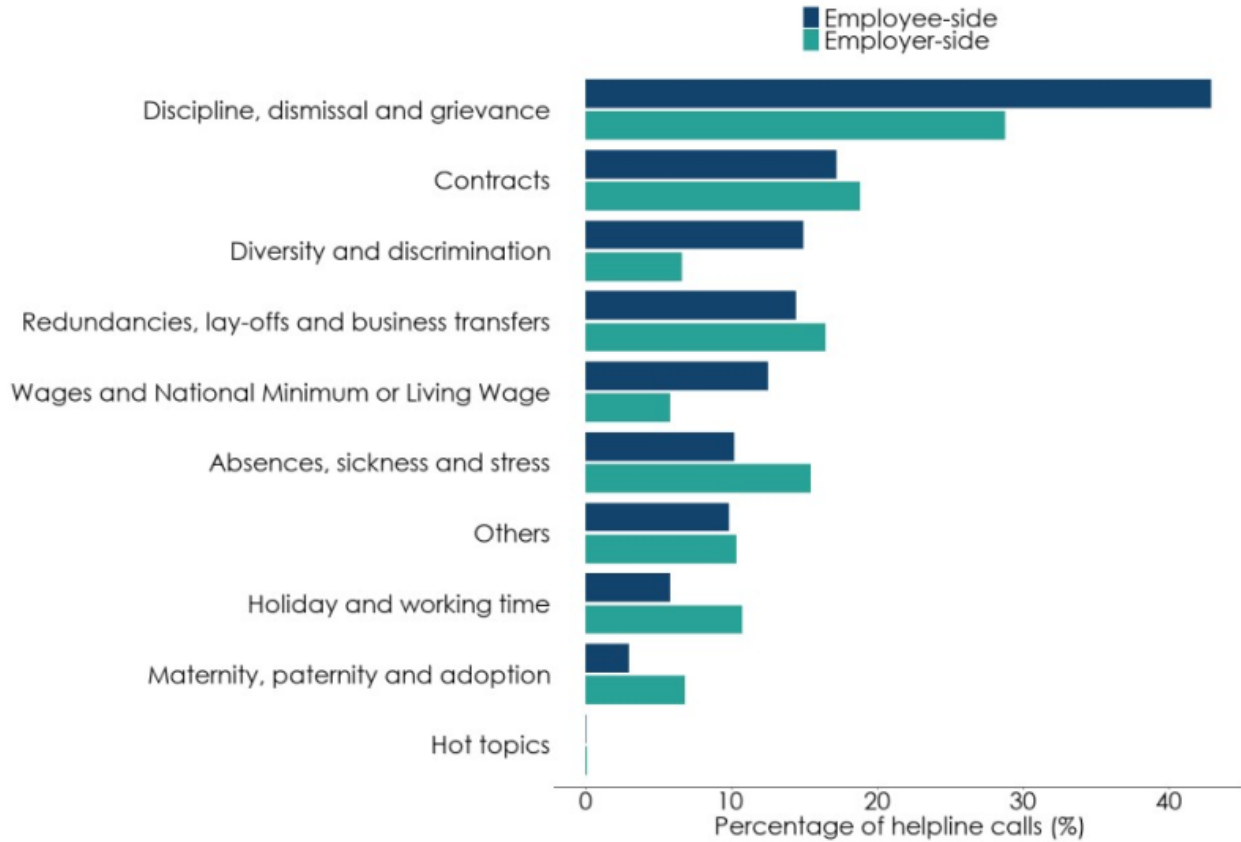
Table of data: 10 most common helpline subtopics for January to March 2024

Call subtopic	Percentage of helpline calls
Grievance procedure	15.4%
Dismissal	14.5%
Non-payment or deduction of wage	10.0%
Discipline procedure	9.7%
Redundancy procedure	9.0%
Absence	7.5%
Disability	7.5%
Other (others)	6.3%
Holiday entitlement	5.5%
Variation	5.0%

4. What differences are there between employees and employers?

Employees and employers may call the Acas helpline for differing reasons. The figures below show the most common call topics and subtopics when employees call the helpline, compared with when employers call the helpline.

Edit mediaFigure 7: Helpline call topics by caller type for January to March 2025



Data capture system records can be assigned up to 5 call topics, therefore percentages may not add up to 100%. The legend order reflects the order of the categories across the bars.

Table of data: Helpline call topics by caller type for January to March 2025

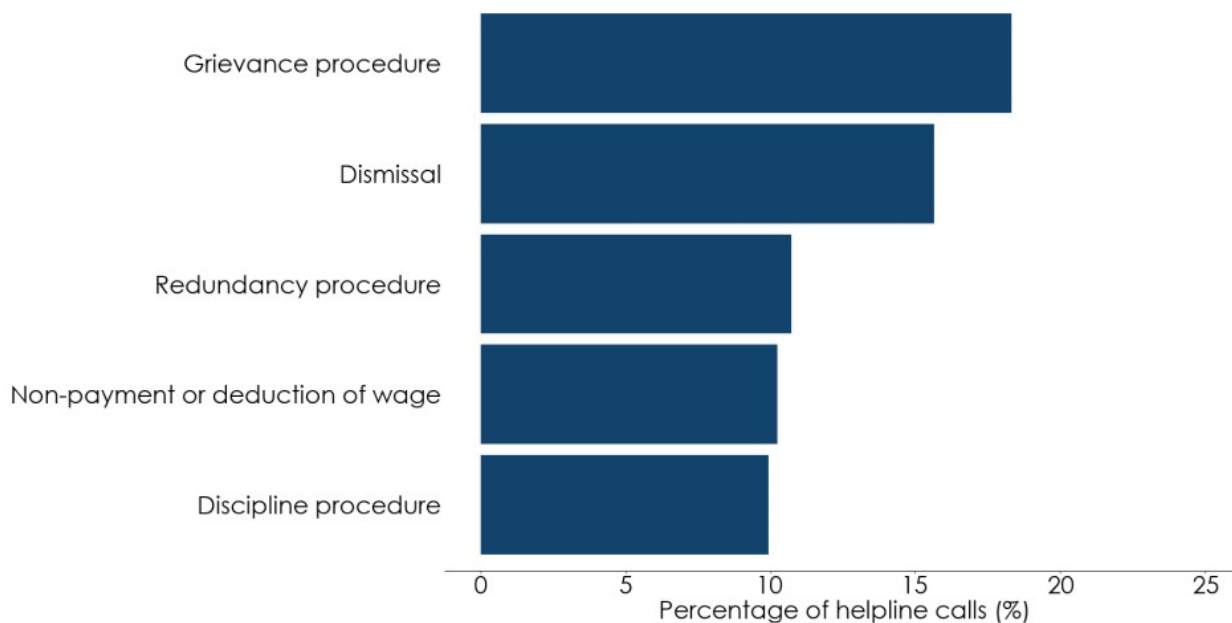
Topics	Employee-side	Employer-side
Discipline, dismissal and grievance	42.9%	28.8%
Contracts	17.2%	18.9%
Diversity and discrimination	15.0%	6.7%
Redundancies, lay-offs and business transfers	14.4%	16.5%
Wages and National Minimum or Living Wage	12.6%	5.8%
Absences, sickness and stress	10.2%	15.5%
Others	9.9%	10.4%
Holiday and working time	5.8%	10.8%

Topics	Employee-side	Employer-side
Maternity, paternity and adoption	3.0%	6.8%
Hot topics	0.1%	0.1%

Figure 7 shows that in this quarter employees were more likely to call the helpline with queries relating to discipline, dismissal and grievance, diversity and discrimination, and wages and National Minimum or Living Wage. Employers were more likely to call the helpline with queries relating to absences, sickness and stress, contracts, holiday and working time, maternity, paternity and adoption, and redundancies, lay-offs and business transfers.

Figures 8 and 9 highlight how dismissal, redundancy procedure, and discipline procedure were amongst the common subtopics for both employees and employers in January to March 2025.

Edit mediaFigure 8: Most common helpline subtopics for employees in January to March 2025

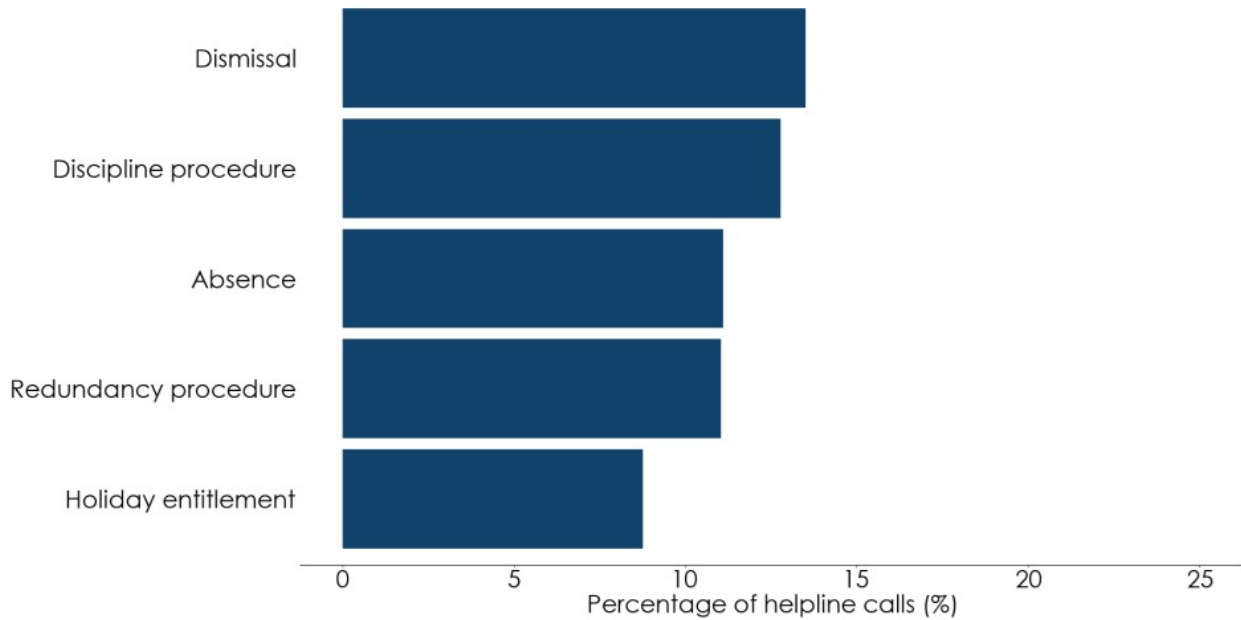


Data capture system records can be assigned up to 10 call subtopics, therefore percentages may not add up to 100%.

Table of data: Most common helpline subtopics for employees in January to March 2025

Subtopic	Percentage of helpline calls
Grievance procedure	18.3%
Dismissal	15.6%
Redundancy procedure	10.7%
Non-payment or deduction of wage	10.2%
Discipline procedure	9.9%

Edit mediaFigure 9: Most common helpline subtopics for employers in January to March 2025



Data capture system records can be assigned up to 10 call subtopics, therefore proportions may not add up to 100%.

Table of data: Most common helpline subtopics for employers in January to March 2025

Subtopic	Percentage of helpline calls
Dismissal	13.5%
Discipline procedure	12.8%
Absence	11.1%
Redundancy procedure	11.0%
Holiday entitlement	8.8%

5. Glossary

Call volume

The number of inbound calls answered by helpline advisers within a specified time period.

Data capture system

The helpline data capture system (DCS) is used by helpline advisers to capture information on a call such as:

- time and date of the call
- certain characteristics of a caller
- the subjects discussed during a call
- any follow up actions from the call

Around 95% of helpline calls have associated data capture system records.

Employee-side calls

Calls answered by the helpline that were made by those who were employees, third parties on behalf of employees, agency workers, apprentices, and interns.

Employer-side calls

Calls answered by the helpline that were made by those who were employers, managers or third parties on behalf of employers and managers.

Call topics

High level subjects discussed during a call. Call topics are manually assigned to a call by advisers using the data capture system and each call can have up to 5 call topics assigned.

Call subtopics

More specific subjects discussed during a call. Each call topic has a number of associated subtopics advisers can assign to a call and each call can be assigned up to 10 call subtopics. A list of call topics and associated subtopics can be found in the background quality report for this data.

6. Quality

You can find more information in the [background quality report](#) on:

- strengths in the data
- limitations of the data
- appropriate uses of the data
- how the data were created

7. Related links

[Acas helpline evaluation reports](#)