

# Acas helpline data July to September 2024

20 December 2024

## 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 July to September 2024 (quarter 2).

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

### Main points

- the helpline service handled around 143,400 this quarter, which was roughly an 11% increase on the previous quarter
- about 85% of calls handled were employee-side calls, while around 11% were employer-side calls
- the most common call topic this quarter was discipline, dismissal and grievance, with around 38% of calls related to this topic
- the most common call subtopics this quarter were grievance procedure (15%), dismissal (15%), and non-payment or deduction of wage (15%)
- 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, and holiday and working time

## 2. Who is calling the helpline?

### Call volumes

The helpline handled around 143,400 calls in July to September 2024. This is roughly an 11% increase on the previous quarter and around an 8% decrease on quarter 2 last year. Values in Figure 1 have been rounded to 4 significant figures.

Figure 1: Helpline call volumes in the 5 latest quarters

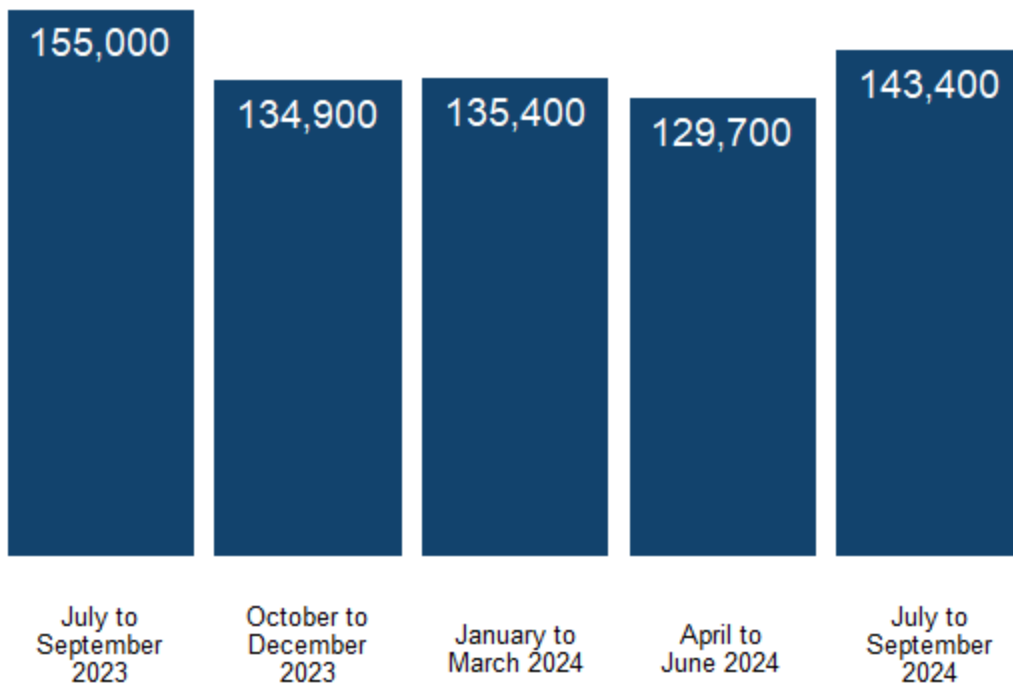


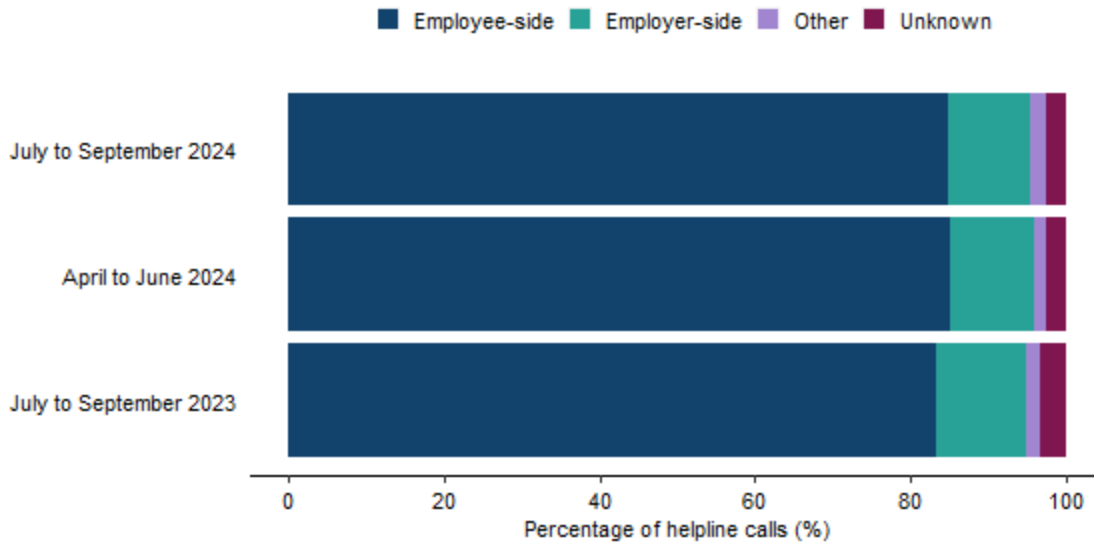
Table of data: Helpline call volumes in the 5 latest quarters

Quarter	Call volume
July to September 2023	155,000
October to December 2023	134,900
January to March 2024	135,400
April to June 2024	129,700
July to September 2024	143,400

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, 85% were employee-side calls and 11% were employer-side calls. This is similar to the previous quarter, where 83% of calls were employee-side and 12% of calls were employer-side. In quarter 2 last year, 85% of calls were employee-side, while 11% of calls were employer-side.

Figure 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	July to September 2023	April to June 2024	July to September 2024
Employee-side	83%	85%	85%
Employer-side	12%	11%	11%
Other	2%	2%	2%
Unknown	3%	2%	2%

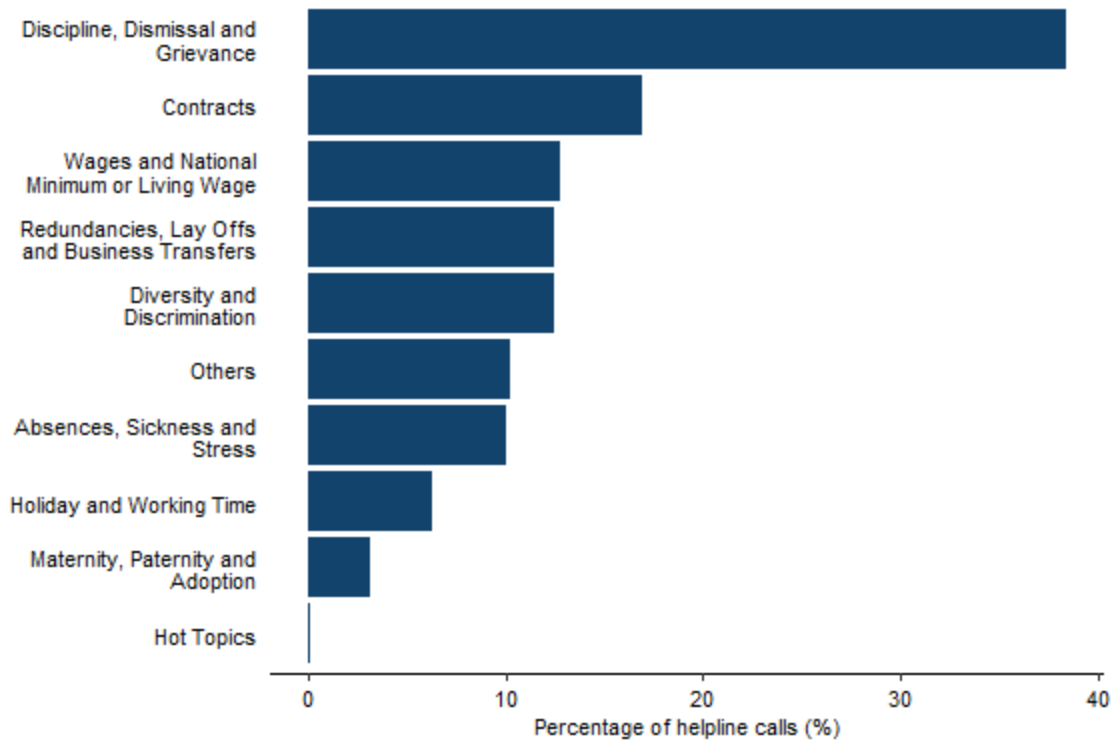
### 3. What are people calling about?

#### 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 (38% of data capture system records)
2. Contracts (17%)
3. Wages and the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage (13%)

Figure 3: Helpline call topics in July to September 2024



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

Table 1 highlights the change in the percentage of data capture system records with each call topic 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: Change in the percentage of helpline calls with each call topics

Call topics	Percentage of helpline calls in July to September 2024	Percentage point change versus April to June 2024	Percentage point change versus July to September 2023
Discipline, dismissal and grievance	38.4%	-0.8	0.8
Contracts	16.9%	0.2	0.4
Wages and the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage	12.7%	0.0	-0.4
Redundancies, lay offs and business transfers	12.5%	0.0	1.4
Diversity and discrimination	12.5%	0.5	1.6
Others	10.2%	0.6	-1.3

Call topics	Percentage of helpline calls in July toSeptember 2024	Percentage pointchange versus April toJune 2024	Percentage point change versus July to September 2023
Absences, sickness and stress	10.1%	0.3	0.3
Holiday and working time	6.3%	-0.3	-0.1
Maternity, paternity and adoption	3.1%	0.0	0.3
Hot topics	0.1%	0.0	0.0

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%.

Figure 4: 10 most common helpline subtopics for July to September 2024

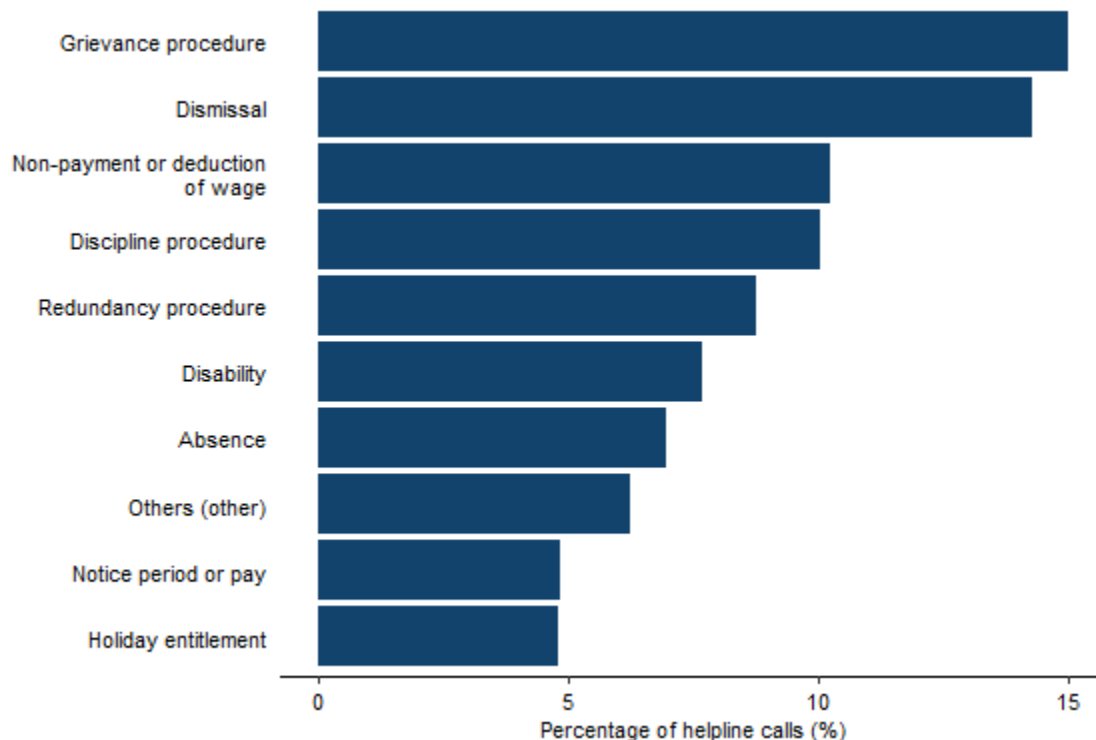


Table of data: 10 most common helpline subtopics for July to September 2024

Call subtopic	Percentage of calls
Grievance procedure	15%
Dismissal	14%
Non-payment or deduction of wage	10%
Discipline procedure	10%
Redundancy procedure	9%
Disability	8%
Absence	7%
Other	6%
Notice period or pay	5%
Holiday entitlement	5%

Figure 5: 10 most common helpline subtopics for April to June 2024

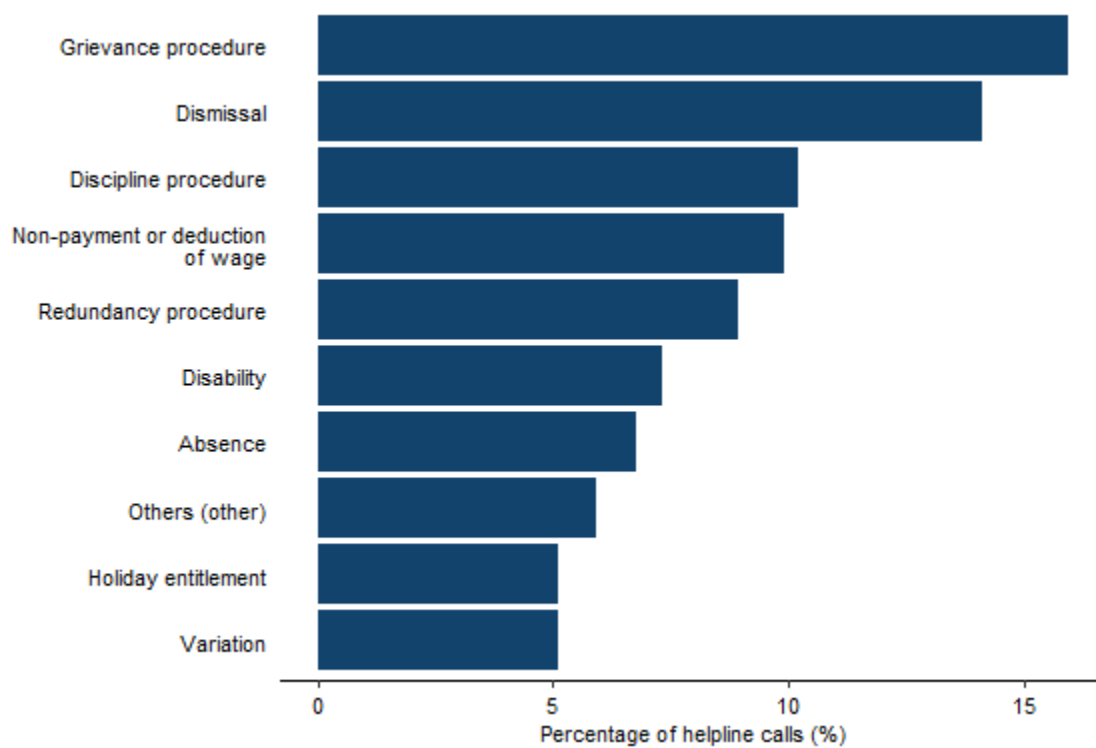


Table of data: 10 most common helpline subtopics for April to June 2024

Call subtopic	Percentage of calls
Grievance procedure	16%

Call subtopic	Percentage of calls
Dismissal	14%
Discipline procedure	10%
Non-payment or deduction of wage	10%
Redundancy procedure	9%
Disability	7%
Absence	7%
Other	6%
Holiday entitlement	5%
Variation	5%

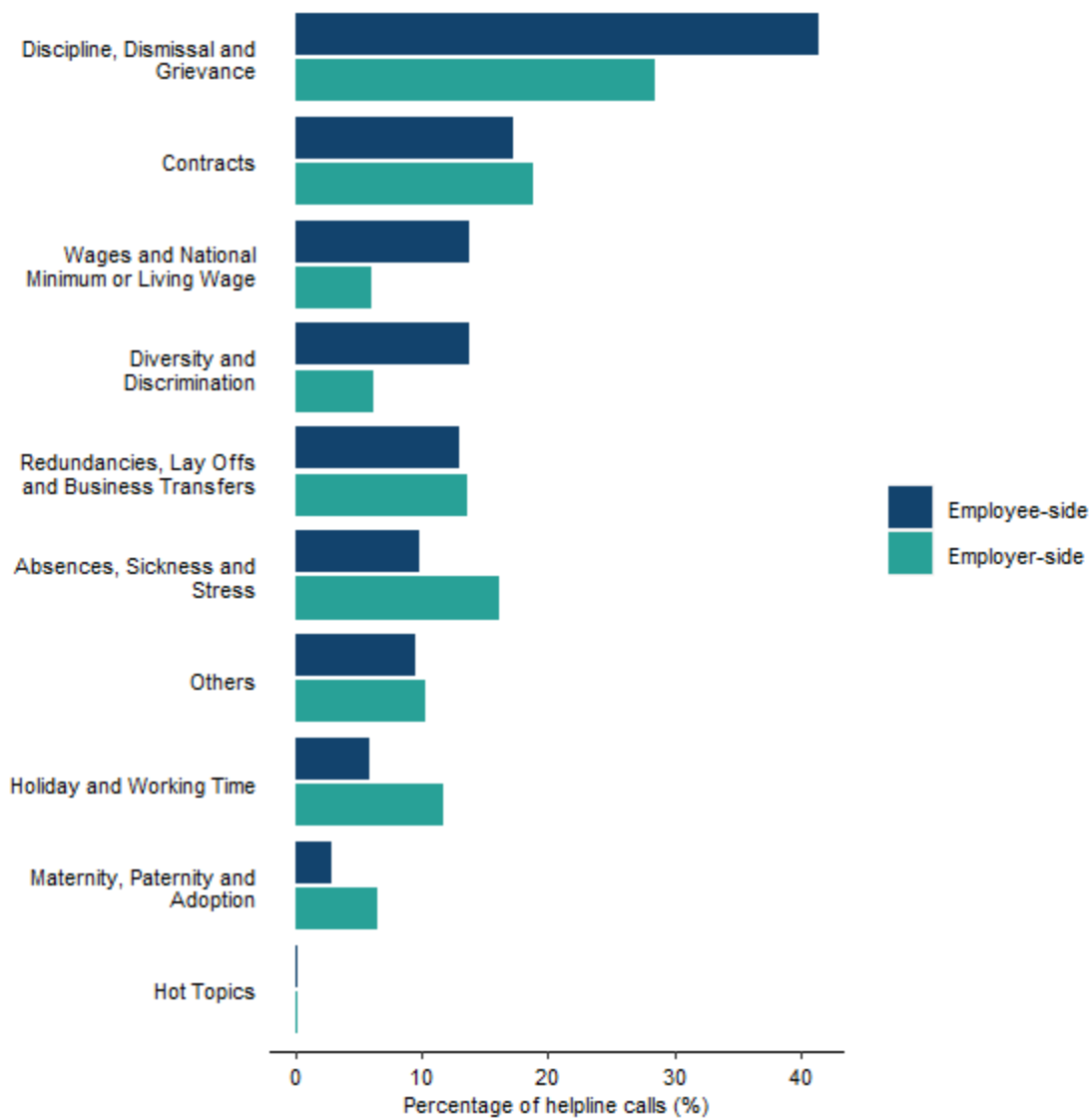
Table of data: 10 most common helpline subtopics for July to September 2023

Call subtopic	Percentage of calls
Grievance procedure	16%
Dismissal	13%
Non-payment or deduction of wage	11%
Discipline procedure	10%
Other	8%
Redundancy procedure	8%
Absence	7%
Disability	7%
Notice period or pay	5%
Holiday entitlement	5%

#### 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.

Figure 7: Helpline call topics by caller type for July to September 2024



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 July to September 2024

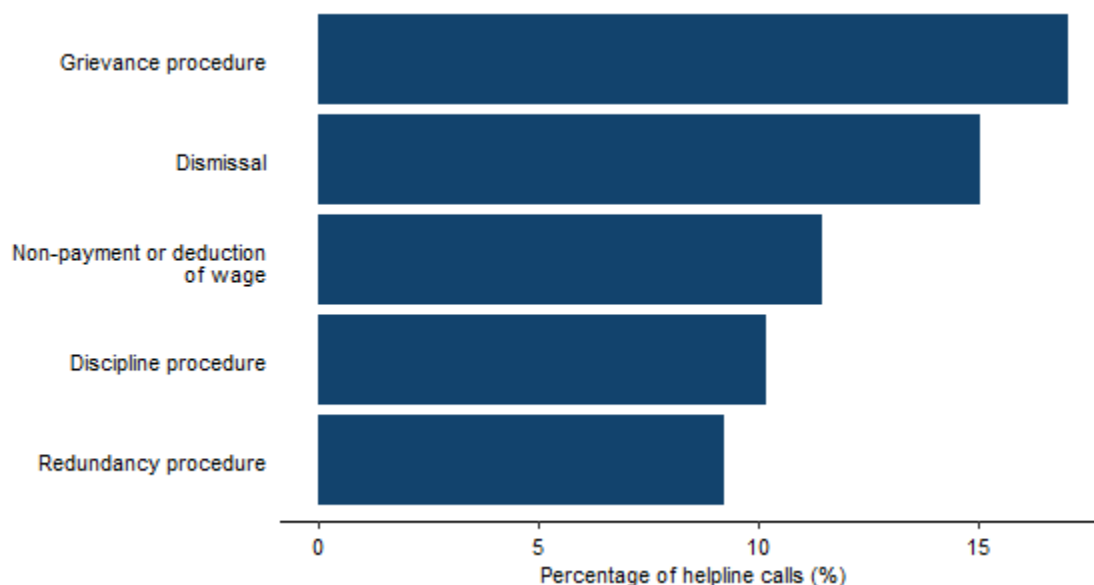
Topic	Employee-side	Employer-side
Discipline, dismissal and grievance	41%	29%
Contracts	17%	19%
Wages and the National Minimum Wage or the National Living Wage	14%	6%
Diversity and discrimination	14%	6%
Redundancies, lay-offs and business transfers	13%	14%

Topic	Employee-side	Employer-side
Absences, sickness and stress	10%	16%
Others	10%	10%
Holiday and working time	6%	12%
Maternity, paternity and adoption	3%	7%
Hot topics	Less than 1%	Less than 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 the National Minimum Wage or the National Living Wage. Employers were more likely to call the helpline with queries relating to absences, sickness and stress, and holiday and working time.

Dismissal, discipline procedure, and redundancy procedure were amongst the common subtopics for both employees and employers in July to September 2024, as shown in Figures 8 and 9.

Figure 8: Most common helpline subtopics for employees in July to September 2024



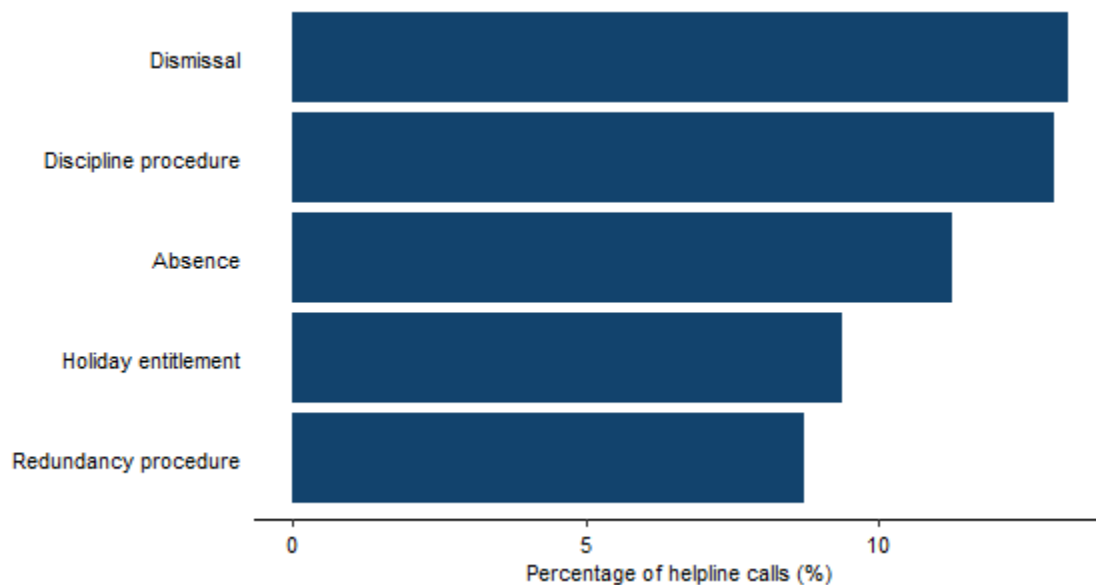
Data capture system records can be assigned up to 10 call subtopics, therefore percentages may not add up to 100%.

Table of data: Most common helpline subtopics for employees in July to September 2024

Subtopic	Percentage of helpline calls
Grievance procedure	17%
Dismissal	15%
Non-payment or deduction of wage	10%
Discipline procedure	10%

Subtopic	Percentage of helpline calls
Redundancy procedure	9%

Figure 9: Most common helpline subtopics for employers in July to September 2024



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 employers in July to September 2024

Subtopic	Percentage of helpline calls
Dismissal	13%
Discipline procedure	13%
Absence	11%
Holiday entitlement	9%
Redundancy procedure	9%

## 5. Glossary

### Call volume

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

### Data capture system (DCS)

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, and 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](#)