

Acas marks 50th anniversary as new report shows nearly half of people experience conflict at work

20 November 2025

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) is celebrating 5 decades of helping millions of people resolve workplace issues and improve working relationships across Britain.

Since 1975, Acas has been the nation's trusted voice in workplace relations, evolving from addressing industrial disputes to tackling modern workplace challenges while maintaining its commitment to impartial, expert guidance.

In 1975, the Conciliation and Arbitration Service added the advisory function to its dispute services to become Acas.

To coincide with the anniversary, Acas has [published a report](#) showing that almost half (44%) of working-age adults in Britain experienced conflict at work in the past 12 months.

Niall Mackenzie, Acas Chief Executive, said:

"This year marks 50 years since we became Acas and started providing workplace advice, as well as resolving disputes.

"For 50 years, Acas has been at the heart of workplace relations, helping employers and employees navigate change and find common ground even in the most challenging circumstances.

"Our report into conflict prevalence shows that there is still a need for Acas's experts to bring their experience and cool heads to workplace disputes."

The research found that:

- capability and performance issues were the most common cause of conflict (38%), followed by personal disagreements and relationship issues (33%)
- stress, anxiety and depression were the most common impacts of conflict, affecting 57% of those involved, followed by a drop in motivation or commitment (49%)
- retail workers faced the highest levels of conflict, with half (50%) of wholesale and retail trade employees reporting conflict
- disabled people whose disability significantly affects their daily life reported the highest prevalence of conflict at 68%
- the most common person to report experiencing conflict with was another colleague in the organisation (34%) or the person's line manager (32%)
- most conflicts were resolved through informal discussion with managers (45%) or directly with the other person (30%)

Niall added:

"Disputes at work might be inevitable, but the knock-on effects can be very costly if they are not managed and resolved properly.

"It is encouraging to see that informal methods to prevent and resolve disputes are already being used by bosses.

"Part of Acas's role, as we mark 50 years of providing workplace advice, is to make sure managers and leaders have the skills to build more harmonious workplaces."

Acas continues to demonstrate its vital role in supporting the UK economy and workforce. This year alone, the organisation has:

- resolved 93% of collective conciliation disputes, helping avoid costly industrial action
- found resolutions for 9 out of 10 potential employment tribunal claims without needing a tribunal hearing
- increased the number of people reached through training and advisory services by 78%

As Acas marks this milestone anniversary, the organisation is positioning itself for the challenges and opportunities of the next 50 years and recently launched a new 5-year strategy.

Beyond supporting the Employment Rights Bill implementation, Acas continues to innovate and adapt its services to meet the evolving needs of modern workplaces, from supporting flexible working arrangements to addressing new forms of workplace conflict.

Employment Rights Minister Kate Dearden said:

"For half a century, Acas has given workers a voice and supported employers to build stronger, more productive workplaces. Its work resolving conflict and improving employment relations has delivered real benefits for organisations and significant savings for the economy.

"Early dispute resolution is vital to a modern, growing economy, and Acas will remain central to our plans to modernise industrial relations in a way that works for both workers and businesses."

[Read a full copy of the report](#)

Media enquiries

[Contact the Acas press office](#)

Background notes

1. Acas became a statutory service under the Employment Protection Act 1975. The service can trace its roots to 1896, when the Conciliation Act 1896 launched the first Conciliation and Arbitration Service.
2. Its title changed to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) in January 1975 to reflect its full functions, and Acas became a statutory service under the Employment Protection Act 1975, which received royal assent on 12 November 1975.
3. According to Acas's 1975 annual report, Acas conciliated in 2017 collective cases in 1975 and 81% of these cases resulted in settlement or progress towards a settlement. In the most recent 2024 to 25 Acas annual report, Acas was involved in 522 collective conciliation cases and 93% of these cases resulted in settlement or progress towards a settlement.
4. Acas is the leading authority on workplace relations and dispute resolution in Great Britain. We provide free, impartial advice to employers and employees on workplace rights, rules and best practice. We also provide training and tailored support for businesses that can help them succeed. Acas is a non-departmental public body that is governed by an independent Council made up of employers, employee representatives and independent members.
5. [Read the latest annual report \(2024 to 2025\)](#). Please get in touch with the press office if you want to receive a copy of Acas's 1975 annual report.