Research Paper

Acas Workplace Training Evaluation 2013

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Acas Workplace Training Evaluation 2013

Cat York, Sam Fettiplace and Dougal Jamieson (ORC International) on behalf of Acas Research and Evaluation Section

ORC International

2014
About the contractor

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ORC International is a leading global market research firm uniquely able to integrate our people, methods, technology and insights to address our clients’ strategic issues, challenges and opportunities. Since our founding in 1938, we’ve maintained a passion to drive our clients’ success through innovative, integrated research solutions.

Acknowledgements

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Disclaimer

This report contains the views of the authors and does not represent the views of the Acas Council. Any errors or inaccuracies are the responsibility of the authors alone.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction and methodology

ORC International was commissioned by Acas in February 2013 to undertake an evaluation of their Workplace Training service. The overarching aim of the research was to provide a reliable picture of the short, medium and long-term impacts of Acas Workplace Training, and where possible to provide a comparison to previous research on Acas Workplace Training completed in 2008. The research programme included three primary means of data collection:

- Four hundred and four computer aided telephone interviews (CATI) with training commissioners within organisations who had received Acas Workplace Training;
- Ten face to face case studies with organisations who had commissioned training, including interviews with the training commissioners, and additional interviews with employees, managers, or trade union representatives who had attended the training as delegates, or helped to tailor it to their organisation; and
- Five qualitative longitudinal telephone follow up interviews were also completed with training commissioners in five of these ten organisations six to seven months after the initial case study interviews.

1.2 Respondent profile

Half of the organisations interviewed (55 per cent) who had commissioned training were large (defined as having over 250 employees), and just over two fifths were SMEs (43 per cent). Most training was commissioned by respondents who worked in Human Resources or Personnel (61 per cent); the majority (87 per cent) of organisations had used other Acas services in the last 12 months.

Over half of Workplace Training courses focussed on HR and People Management (52 per cent), with the remainder evenly split between Employment Relations (24 per cent) and Fair Treatment at Work (24 per cent).

1.3 Workplace Training Objectives and Choosing Acas

The main reasons reported for commissioning training was to help with an organisational problem or to improve in a topic area (59 per cent). Respondents were asked to rate the importance of eight potential objectives in relation to their Workplace Training course. These included:

- Improving staff knowledge
- Improving employment relations
- Improving adherence to policies or procedures

1 The remainder did not know how many staff their organisation employed (one per cent).
- Improving the organisation’s performance
- Promoting equality or diversity
- Improving employee health or well-being
- Reducing staff turnover
- Reducing absenteeism

For nearly all of the eight potential training objectives, a greater proportion of commissioners rated the objective as important compared with in 2008 (Figure 1.1). The most notable increase related to reducing absenteeism (up by 17 percentage points, from 34 per cent in 2008 to 51 per cent in 2013).

When respondents were asked to focus in on the single most important objective for their Workplace Training course, three in ten (31 per cent) reported this as increasing staff knowledge.

The most widely cited reason for choosing Acas was due to its good reputation as a training provider (56 per cent, up from 33 per cent in 2008). Nearly half of respondents (47 per cent) mentioned a positive previous experience with Acas, as did many case study respondents.

1.4 Workplace Training Preparation and Delivery

Around four in five organisations (82 per cent) reported that management were involved in tailoring their Workplace Training. Nearly one in five organisations (18 per cent each) reported that their trade union and/or non-union staff representatives were involved in tailoring the training. Where organisations had Trade Union representatives, in around half of cases (49 per cent) these representatives attended the training. This was most likely to occur where the main objective was improving employment relations (73 per cent), and/or if they had been involved in tailoring the training (67 per cent). Nearly three in five respondents (57 per cent) reported that the training was compulsory for staff to attend.

Acas trainers were found to play a key role in fostering goodwill and through case study interviews they were largely praised for their conduct, knowledge and delivery of Workplace Training courses. Positive reviews were also provided by case study respondents on the process of tailoring the training.

1.5 Workplace Training Evaluation

The vast majority of respondents (98 per cent) reported that their Workplace Training event was evaluated in some form, the most popular evaluation method being Acas’ feedback forms for delegates (used by 80 per cent). The proportion of respondents who evaluated the Workplace Training event by analysing related outcomes in the topic area had more than tripled since 2008 (up by 26 percentage points; from 10 per cent in 2008, to 36 per cent in 2013).
1.6 Impact of Workplace Training

A variety of short term (immediate) impacts were reported by training commissioners in the case studies. Most of these impacts related to delegates completing a follow up action (such as making changes to their working or management practices), and organisational changes (such as amending or updating company policy) based on information acquired during the training.

Respondents rated the Workplace Training as having a very positive impact on participants, especially in terms of their awareness of their responsibilities (98 per cent noted a positive impact), and their ability to deal effectively with the topic (96 per cent reported a positive impact).

Some respondents were able to trace impacts on their organisational efficiencies back to their Workplace Training. Medium to long term impacts were detected and focussed on increased productivity (26 per cent, for which 83 per cent rated as all or in part due to the workplace training), and a decrease in employee grievances (13 per cent, for which 76 per cent rated as all or in part due to the Workplace Training). Significant impacts were also supported in some of the qualitative case studies: one case study respondent reported an impact in terms of financial savings, and a further respondent noted a saving in organisational time.

At an organisational practice level, almost four fifths (78%) said they had completed at least one of the following actions:

- Introduced one or more new policy
- Reviewed one or more policy or practice
- Revised one or more policy or practice
- Planned to introduce one or more new policy or practice
- Revised any area of practice relating to the issues addressed in the training

Just over half of all organisations (56 per cent) reported that they had revised an area of practice relating to the issues addressed in the training. Changes to policies were also noted in the case studies, and one organisation reported introducing a new policy as a direct action of their Workplace Training course.

Respondents were very positive about the wider impact of their Workplace Training course. The most notable increase related to the fair treatment of employees (up by 34 percentage points, from 43 per cent in 2008 to 77 per cent in 2013). Case study respondents typically highlighted improved communication as a result of the Workplace Training.
1.7 Overall Views on Workplace Training

Overall satisfaction with the Workplace Training was very high with nearly all respondents (96 per cent) reporting that they were satisfied to some extent, and three quarters (76 per cent) rating themselves as very satisfied. Further statistical analysis (binary logistic regression) of the survey dataset demonstrates that the achievement of objectives and value for money has a high impact on satisfaction. Two new significant relationships were discovered as part of the overall satisfaction model. Firstly, where the wider impact of the training had a positive impact on the fair treatment of employees, respondents were nearly twice as likely to provide a very satisfied rating as those who perceived the training to have a negative or no impact on the fair treatment of employees. Secondly, non-private sector organisations (public or third sector), were found to be twice as likely as those who worked at a private sector organisation to provide a very satisfied rating.

Seven in ten respondents (70 per cent) reported that their objectives for the training were completely achieved. Binary logistic regression shows that those who reported that their main objective was completely achieved were found to be more than six times more likely to rate themselves as very satisfied overall.

Nearly nine in ten respondents (87 per cent) rated Acas Workplace Training as good or very good value for money. Nearly all respondents (95 per cent) would recommend Acas to other organisations. Just over half of respondents (55 per cent) used other training providers in addition to Acas.

1.8 Future Use and Improvements

The vast majority of respondents (96 per cent) reported that they would be likely to use Acas again, if there was a further need at their organisation for training. In line with the high satisfaction reported for Acas Workplace Training, only three in ten respondents (30 per cent) suggested improvements. Most of these improvements focussed on increasing the amount of tailoring of Workplace Training to recipient organisations.

1.9 Conclusions

The overarching objective for this research project was to provide a reliable picture of the short, medium and long-term impacts of Acas Workplace Training.

Overall the Workplace Training has been found to be extremely well received by both commissioners and delegates, evident through the high levels of satisfaction and willingness to recommend. Some varying trends have been depicted since 2008, indicating a changing profile of businesses partaking in Workplace Training events, but also, a greater degree of wider impacts being felt across organisations as a result of the training. To that end, impacts on organisational efficiencies have been identified, with increases in productivity and declines in the number of grievances recorded, with some seemingly high levels of attribution to the Acas Workplace Training.
Limitations as to the extent that improvements could be attributed to Acas alone have, however, arisen. This is in part due to the fact that organisations who had made changes particularly at an organisational practice level, were more likely to have indicated that the Acas Workplace Training fell under a broader organisational-wide programme of training.

Nonetheless, the qualitative impacts should not be overlooked and a number of positive examples were more clearly relayed where Acas Workplace Training has helped enhance awareness and improve delegates’ ability to deal with certain topics. The fact that first hand examples were given where training has been put into practice is a clear endorsement of the current effectiveness of Acas’ Workplace Training and its importance in providing real-world, practical support to using approaches and techniques that could be applied within workplaces.

1.10 Recommendations

Five recommendations have been made:

1. **Maintain high satisfaction, and positive views of Acas** to continue to successfully support organisations in managing their employment relations, fair treatment at work and any HR and people management issues.

2. **Promote positive views of Workplace Training** to raise awareness and increase utilisation of Acas Workplace Training.

3. **Encourage increased customer interaction with Acas across a range of services.** Just as Open Access Training could be seen as an entry-level service to Workplace Training, further training can be used as a mechanism to build up longer term relationships with customers.

4. **Facilitate a support network beyond the training between Acas trainers, commissioners and delegates** as an additional service enhancement to help secure increased loyalty and re-usage of Workplace Training services.

5. **Where possible, allow for further tailoring to Workplace Training** to help ensure that the content and delivery of the Workplace Training is as relevant as possible to each organisation.
2 INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the findings from research carried out by ORC International on behalf of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) to evaluate its Workplace Training service.

2.1 Background

2.1.1 Workplace Training

As part of its activity in improving workplace relations, Acas run practical training courses to equip managers, supervisors and HR professionals with the necessary skills to deal with employment relations issues and to create more productive workplace environments. As part of this service, they offer a bespoke, face-to-face, in-company Workplace Training service. This fee-paying service is provided nationwide and covers various specific subjects which can be broadly grouped into three areas:

1. Employment Relations.
2. Fair Treatment at Work.
3. HR and People Management.

Under these broad headings, a range of courses can be offered including topics like Absence and Stress Management; Bullying and Harassment; and Discipline and Grievance.

Drawing on generic training material and a national framework, Workplace Training events provide tailored training courses where organisations have specific training needs. The service aims to involve both management and employees wherever possible, although this is ultimately down to the organisation’s discretion. Staff and Union representatives may also be involved in the development of training materials.

Acas’ Workplace Training service is distinguishable from its other training product, ‘open access training’ which is an advertised programme of publicly available training courses which individuals can attend. The key distinction between the two training services is that content of a workplace training event can be tailored to the particular organisation involved and delivered at their workplace.

2.1.2 Previous evaluations of Workplace Training

A stand-alone ‘impact survey’ evaluation of Workplace Training was completed by the Institute of Employment Studies (IES)\(^2\) in 2008. The project was a census of organisations that had completed Workplace Training over a 12 month period; with a few exceptions, interviews took place between three and 15 months after the training event. In total 418 telephone interviews were conducted between November 2007 and January 2008, giving a response rate of the sample of 57 per cent.

At most Workplace Training events, Acas trainers hand out Training Delegate Feedback Survey questionnaires to gauge immediate views (anonymously) of the event delegates attended. Results have fed into what Acas refers to as its ‘Training Delegate Feedback Survey’ – a rolling evaluation which provides an initial ‘snapshot’ of how individual delegates feel about the training on the day. This data was made available to ORC International and is referenced in Section 8 of this report.

2.2 Research Objectives

The principal aim of this research was to provide a reliable picture of short, medium and long-term impacts of Acas Workplace Training. Within that the research aimed to:

- Track changes in the key impact measures since the Workplace Training impact survey was last run in 2008, in order to assess service improvement (or otherwise).
- Clarify the characteristics of organisations (and individuals) that commission Workplace Training e.g. sector, industry, organisation size and job role, in order to potentially undertake deeper analysis.
- Examine the topic and nature of Workplace Training, the reasons why organisations commissioned the training and why they chose Acas.
- Explore and examine organisations’ experiences of Workplace Training including who attended and why, the tailoring of the training and their satisfaction with the trainer.
- Establish if the Workplace Training met the training objectives and the expectations of commissioners.
- Establish if organisations have experienced any medium to long-term impacts (including economic impacts) of undertaking Workplace Training and the nature and perceived strength of such impacts.
- Examine satisfaction with Workplace Training, including if organisations thought it was value for money, if they thought training outcomes were achieved and if they would use it again.
- Identify any service limitations or relative weak points with regard to the impact of Workplace Training, to enable Acas to pinpoint areas where there is room for improvement and highlight how deficiencies (however slight) might best be addressed.

What follows in this report is an evaluation of Acas’ Workplace Training against these objectives.
2.3 Methodology

This evaluation study was conducted in compliance with ISO 20252\(^3\) and comprised two interlinking strands, blending quantitative and qualitative research methods. The three primary means of data collection took place through:

- Four hundred and four computer aided telephone interviews (CATI) with commissioners of Workplace Training across the UK, achieving a 57% response rate (the questionnaire in 2013 remained largely consistent with that of the 2008 survey to allow for trend comparability);
- Ten face to face case studies with organisations who had received Workplace Training; and
- Five telephone longitudinal follow up case studies with organisations who had received Workplace Training.

An outline of both the quantitative and qualitative elements of research follows. Further information is available in Appendix 1.

**Telephone Interviews**

Telephone interviews were completed with training commissioners who had commissioned one or more Workplace Training event(s) from Acas to be delivered between May 2012 and May 2013 (three to fifteen months before fieldwork). All sample was provided by Acas from its management information system (EARS).

Fieldwork took place between Monday 3 June and Friday 19 July 2013.

Analysis of the quantitative data from the telephone interviews included two bivariate logistic regression models to help to explore the impact of other variables on overall satisfaction, and whether the main objective of the training was achieved. Further detail is available on these models in both Chapter 8 on overall views of Workplace Training, and in the Appendix (Appendix 1, Section 3).

**Qualitative case studies**

Face to face case study interviews were completed with respondents at 10 different organisations who had commissioned Workplace Training.

Nine of the case studies included an interview with the training commissioner, and an interview with a colleague who had attended the training, or helped to tailor the training to the organisation. The tenth case study included an interview with the training commissioner.

These case studies have been written up individually in Section 10, and findings have also been interspersed throughout the quantitative findings in Sections three to nine to provide illustrative examples of Acas Workplace Training in practice.

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\(^3\) ISO 20252 is the international market research specific standard, which covers ORC International for data collection, interviewer quality, data processing and research and project management activities.
Where qualitative findings have been incorporated into Sections three to nine, they are shown in boxed text, as illustrated.

Where longitudinal case study interviews took place, these have been written up and appended to the original case study write up (all of which are included in Section 12).

**Reporting conventions**

Differences in findings are only noted where they are significant at the 95 per cent confidence level. A ‘significant’ difference is statistically valid, and so likely to be due to real differences in the population and not due to chance. The measure used means we can be 95 per cent confident that significant differences reported are not due to chance.

Respondents who failed to provide a response to a certain question have been included in the analysis in most cases, apart from when a comparison is made to 2008 data. To ensure a like for like comparison, where “don’t know” responses were excluded in 2008 reporting, they have also been excluded in 2013.

The report focuses on the main findings from the 2013 Acas Workplace Training telephone survey, and includes sub group analysis by:

- Training characteristics, including topic aggregate, time since training, and the main objective of the training.
- Organisational characteristics, including size, sector, and use of other Acas services.
- Organisational response to the training, including whether actions were taken as a result of the training, and views on satisfaction, value for money and whether the main objective was achieved.

Where relevant, comparisons are drawn to 2008 data, and the 2013 quantitative results are further illustrated by examples drawn from the qualitative case studies.

Where sub group analysis has been provided in relation to the size of the organisation, this is based on the number of employees. Large organisations are defined as those with 250 or more employees, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as those with 1 to 249 employees. For the purposes of this report, this definition does not include financial turnover or sector.

As explored further in the Respondent Profile (Section 3), Workplace Training topics have been aggregated into three larger groups. These groups are:

- HR and People Management.
- Employment Relations.
- Fair Treatment at Work.
Where trend data is shown in relation to the previous 2008 evaluation of the Acas Workplace Training Service, it has been taken from the 2008 survey carried out by The Institute for Employment Studies.

Further detail on the methodology, research materials and response rates are provided in Appendix 1.
3 RESPONDENT PROFILE

Summary

- **Most training was commissioned by respondents who worked in Human Resources or Personnel (61 per cent).** Over half (55 per cent) of the organisations which commissioned training were large (defined as having 250 or more employees), and just over two fifths were SMEs (43 per cent).

- **Organisations who had commissioned Acas Workplace Training were mostly in the private sector (45 per cent).**

- **The majority (87 per cent) of organisations had used other Acas services in the last 12 months.**

- **Over half of Workplace Training courses focussed on HR and People Management (52 per cent),** with the remainder evenly split between Employment Relations and Fair Treatment at Work (both 24 per cent). In line with 2008, around three in ten courses (28 per cent) specifically related to Discipline and Grievance.

This section focuses firstly on a profile of the respondents who completed the survey, then profiles the organisations these respondents work for, and finally profiles the Workplace Training courses commissioned.

3.1 Profile of Respondents

**Job title**

Six in ten respondents who commissioned training (61 per cent) worked in Human Resources or Personnel (Figure 3.14), a further one in ten (11 per cent) worked in Learning and Development, and six per cent in training. The remainder were split across a variety of different roles and departments, including administration, operations, and finance.

Focusing on the respondents who worked in Human Resources and personnel, as a proportion of all respondents, most (39 per cent) worked as managers, with the remainder working as Business Partners (nine per cent), Assistants (seven per cent), and HR Directors (six per cent).

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4 This figure for the proportion of respondents working in Human Resources or Personnel has been calculated by combining the responses for the following categories: HR/Personnel Manager, HR/Personnel Business Partner, HR/Personnel Assistant and HR/Personnel Director.
Figure 3.1 Job title of respondents

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q37. What is your job title/position? Base: 404 – All respondents. Please note that the ‘Any HR/Personnel role’ is a combined sub total of HR/personnel categories.

3.2 Profile of Businesses

Region

As in 2008, the region of each organisation was defined by the Acas Area Office which provided their Workplace Training. The breakdown of achieved sample by Acas office can be seen in Figure 3.2 overleaf. It must be noted that this breakdown illustrates the achieved final sample by Acas office (which could include multiple use of the service), rather than the quantity of training delivered by each Acas Area office.

Organisations responding to the survey were found to be dispersed across the country, with the greatest proportion, nearly one in five organisations (18 per cent), receiving Workplace training delivered by the South East England office.  

5 Data for the “South East England” office in 2013 has been created by combining data for the Fleet and Paddock Wood offices, as in 2008.
The fewest respondents were from organisations which received training from the Acas regional office in Newcastle (three per cent of organisations).

These results are broadly in line with 2008 with the only notable differences being an increase in the proportion of interviews carried out with organisations receiving Workplace Training provided by the South East England and Bury St Edmunds offices and a fall in the proportion of interviews completed with organisations receiving Workplace Training by the Newcastle and Nottingham offices.

**Figure 3.2 Workplace Training Delivery by Region**

![Diagram showing workplace training delivery by region.](image)


**Industry**

In the 2013 survey, respondents were asked which industry their business operated in. Previously, in 2008 this information was taken from Acas management information, collected in line with the UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (2003), known as SIC (2003). During a review of the sample as part of the design phase for the 2013 survey, it was noted that nearly one in five records (19 per cent) within the sample were categorised as “other industries”. In order to collect more accurate data, respondents in 2013 were therefore asked to identify which industry their

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6 Data for the “North West” office in 2013 has been created by combining data for the Manchester and Liverpool offices, as in 2008.
business operated in as part of the survey. The list used to form the classification for this survey was the latest version of the UK Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities, revised in 2007.

One in three businesses (32 per cent) were in Arts, entertainment or recreation, and other service activities (Groups R and S). A further 14 per cent worked in human health and social work activities (Group Q), 13 per cent in manufacturing (Group C), and nine per cent in education (Group P). The remaining third of businesses (32 per cent) were split across other industries.
## Figure 3.3 Industry

### 2013 data, collected in line with SIC (2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Mining and quarrying</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Manufacturing</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Construction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Wholesale, Retail, Repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Accommodation and food service activities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Transport and storage</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Information and communication</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Financial and insurance activities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Real Estate Activities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Professional, scientific and technical activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. Administrative and support service activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. Public administration and defence, compulsory social security</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Education</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Human health and social work activities</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Arts, entertainment or recreation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Other service activities</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. Activities of householders as employers, undifferentiated goods and services producing activities of households for own use</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U. Activities of extraterrestrial organisations and bodies</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Don’t know/ Not Specified</td>
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Organisational Size

Organisational size was calculated by directly asking respondents how many staff worked at their organisation in the UK.

Figure 3.4 Organisational Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Number of staff according to definition</th>
<th>2013 data (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>Under 10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>10 – 49</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>50 – 249</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)</td>
<td>1 – 249</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>250+</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q38 Approximately how many staff are employed in your organisation in the UK? Base: All respondents (404).

Whilst there is not a single universally agreed definition as to what constitutes an SME, for the purposes of this report we are considering all organisations employing fewer than 250 employees to be an SME. Using this definition, figure 3.4 shows that four in ten (43 per cent) of organisations participating in the survey were SMEs and more than half (55 per cent) were large organisations (with 250 or more staff). If the definition of an SME was restricted to just consider private sector organisations with fewer than 250 employees then this percentage falls to 20 per cent.

Whilst size was reported on in 2008, and a skew towards larger organisations was noted, these results are not comparable, due to the groupings used in 2008.7

Sector

Respondents were asked which sector their organisation operated in. As outlined in Figure 3.5, nearly half of the organisations surveyed operated in the private sector (45 per cent), whilst the remainder was evenly split between the public and not for profit sectors (27 per cent each).

No comparison is available to 2008 data by sector.

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7 The groupings used in 2008 were: 0-49 staff, 50-99 staff, 100-199 staff, 200-499 staff, and 500+ staff.
Business turnover and growth

Private sector organisations were asked for the approximate financial turnover of their organisation in the last 12 months. The results here were mixed, as half of all private sector respondents (48 per cent) reported that they either did not know their organisation's financial turnover, or did know, but would rather not divulge this figure. Of the remaining private sector respondents who did provide this information, nearly three in five (57 per cent), reported a turnover of £10 million or more in the past 12 months.

In order to help gauge the impact of wider economic conditions on survey respondents, those who worked in the private sector were also asked whether their organisation had grown, stayed the same, or contracted in terms of financial turnover in the last five years (since 2008, when the last Workplace Training evaluation was conducted). The results are outlined overleaf in Figure 3.6, and show that half of all private sector organisations (49 per cent) reported growth in the past five years, compared to 22 per cent who reported that their organisation had stayed the same, and 17 per cent who had contracted.

Whilst the proportion of organisations who reported growth is perhaps surprising given the economic climate during the fieldwork period, it is important to remember that the organisations who responded to this survey may not be typical or representative of all organisations across the UK, given this is not a representative sample of all UK businesses, rather a census sample of those receiving Workplace Training from Acas.

Respondents in all sectors were also asked whether their employee numbers had grown, stayed the same, or decreased in the past five years. The results were mixed, also illustrated in Figure 3.6: four in ten (42 per cent) reported growth, three in ten (32 per cent) reported contraction, and two in ten (22 per cent) reported stability.
Figure 3.6 Financial turnover and employee numbers over the last five years

![Financial turnover and employee numbers over the last five years](image)

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q45a Please can you tell me whether your business has grown, stayed the same or contracted in the following areas in the last 5 years?: Financial turnover. Base: Private sector respondents (180). Q45b Please can you tell me whether your business has grown, stayed the same or contracted in the following areas in the last 5 years?: Employee numbers. Base: All respondents (404).

**Trade Union Representatives**

In order to provide further context on their Workplace Training, respondents were asked whether they had trade union representatives, non-union staff representatives and trade union full time officials in their organisation.

The results were mixed, with four in ten respondents (43 per cent) reporting that they had trade union representatives in their organisation, half of respondents (50 per cent) stated that they had non-union staff representatives, and nearly two in ten respondents (16 per cent) that they had trade union full time officials.

Organisations which reported having representatives and/or officials were more likely to be large organisations, with 250 or more staff. Of these large organisations, three in five (59 per cent) reported having Trade Union representatives, and/or non union staff representatives. One in four (25 per cent) reported having full time Trade union officials. In comparison, amongst SME-sized organisations, with 1 to 249 employees, one in five (21 per cent) reported having Trade Union representatives, two in five (38 per cent) reported having non union staff representatives, and four per cent reported having full time trade union officials. It could reasonably be expected that larger organisations would have more of a need for representatives or officials to act on behalf of larger numbers of staff.

Trade unions were also more closely linked with public sector organisations – both in terms of trade union representatives (78 per cent, compared to 33 per cent third sector, and 27 per cent private sector), and trade union officials (37 per cent compared to nine percent private sector, and six per cent third sector). In contrast, organisations with non-union staff representatives (50 per cent) were more likely to operate in the third sector (59 per cent), rather than the private sector (43 per cent).
Organisations with non-union staff representatives were more likely to have commissioned training on Employment Relations (66 per cent), or HR and People Management (48 per cent), rather than Fair Treatment at Work (36 per cent). It could reasonably be expected that organisations with staff representatives would put more emphasis on Employment Relations within their organisation, and perhaps look to commission more training in this area. Organisations with non-union staff representatives were also more likely to have reported that the main objective of the training related to improving organisational performance (63 per cent), rather than improving adherence to policies and procedures (40 per cent).

**Previous use of Acas**

The vast majority of respondents (87 per cent) had used Acas services in addition to Workplace Training in the last twelve months. The most popular Acas services used were the Acas website, which had been visited by four in five respondents (81 per cent), and the Acas employment rights helpline, which had been telephoned by almost half of respondents (46 per cent). Used to a lesser extent were Acas for conciliation in an Employment Tribunal case (16 per cent) and using an Acas mediator to help resolve a dispute between individual workers (11 per cent). A fifth of respondents (21 per cent) had used three or more Acas services in the last twelve months.

**Use of competitors**

Just over half of all respondents (55 per cent) used other providers for training on employment issues. The most popular alternatives to Acas were consultancies, or freelance HR professionals (23 per cent), solicitors (13 per cent), or the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD; 10 per cent).
3.3 Profile of Training

Recency

As outlined below in Figure 3.7, the recency of the training was spread relatively evenly across the 3-15 month fieldwork period. Two notable exceptions are the decrease in training delivered at 10 months (in August 2012), and training delivered at 3 months in March 2013\(^8\). At the start of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to confirm that the date and topic of the training held on the sample were correct. Eight respondents reported that the date of their training held on the sample was incorrect, and three of these respondents then provided the correct date as April 2013 (shown below as one per cent of all responses).

Figure 3.7 Recency of Training

![Figure 3.7 Recency of Training](image)

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Sample information, and Q3b. Please can you clarify when this training course took place? Base: All respondents (404).

In line with 2008, for analysis purposes, the recency of training was grouped into three aggregates: one to five months, six to eleven months and 12-15 months. These aggregates reveal that two in ten training courses (19 per cent) took place within the last one to five months, five in ten (50 per cent) in the last six to eleven months, and three in ten (29 per cent) in the last 12-15 months.

Training Topic

Workplace Training events covering a large number of individual training topics were grouped into three broad topic areas to ease analysis (see Figure 3.8): HR and People Management, Employment Relations and Fair Treatment at Work. When recoded into the broader topic areas, half of respondents (52 per cent) reported that their course related to HR and People Management, whilst a quarter described their training as more focused on Employment Relations (24 per cent), or Fair Treatment at Work (24 per cent).

\(^8\) Fieldwork commenced in June 2013 and therefore March 2013 was three months prior to this. Sample provided identified training courses undertaken up to and including February 2013.
At an individual topic subject level, Discipline and Grievance accounted for nearly three in ten courses (28 per cent), followed by Information and Consultation (17 per cent), Equality and Diversity and Supervision / First Line Management (both nine per cent).

At a broader topic area level, the 2013 results are in line with the results of the 2008 study. However, increases in courses in Information and Consultation (up from 11 per cent in 2008 to 17 per cent in 2013), and Supervision/First Line Management (up from four per cent in 2008 to nine per cent in 2013) are evident.

Looking at these results together could indicate a slight change in the type of courses commissioned in 2013, to focus more on issues surrounding employees’ relationship with their employer. This could partially be explained by the challenging economic conditions prevailing at the time of fieldwork, where organisations have needed to become more efficient, and tackle difficult issues like pay and recruitment freezes and changes to employee benefits packages.
### Figure 3.8 Topic and Subject of Training 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Area</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Topic Subject</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR and People Management</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Attendance/Absence Management</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Change Management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline and Grievance</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Equal Pay</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Payment and Grading Arrangements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Performance Management</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recruiting, Contracting and Employing People</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stress Management</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supervision/First Line Management</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment))</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Relations</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Employment Law</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information and Consultation</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiation and Collective Bargaining</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Redundancy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Treatment at Work</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Bullying and Harassment</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CIWM Mediation Training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conflict/Mediation/Relationship Issues</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Equality and Diversity</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Sample information and Q3a. Please can you clarify what the main area of training was? Base: All respondents (404).
Qualitative Overview

Face to face qualitative case studies were completed with a mix of organisations by sector, size, training topic, recency of training, and location.

Further detail of the profile of the qualitative case studies is available in the Appendix.
4 WORKPLACE TRAINING OBJECTIVES AND CHOOSING ACAS

Summary

- The most popular reason for commissioning training was to help with an organisational problem, or improve in the topic area (59 per cent).

- More than nine in ten respondents considered improving staff knowledge (98 per cent), improving employment relations (95 per cent) and improving adherence to policies and procedures (93 per cent) as important objectives for the training. When asked to select the single most important objective, the most common objective was increasing staff knowledge (31 per cent).

- The most widely cited reason for choosing Acas was due to its good reputation as a training provider (56 per cent, up from 33 per cent in 2008). There was also an increase in respondents who chose Acas due to its value for money (up from 10 per cent in 2008 to 18 per cent in 2013).

- Case study respondents revealed that one of the main drivers behind commissioning training was organisational change, and also noted several “softer” training objectives, including increasing delegate confidence around how to act in certain circumstances. Qualitative respondents also provided very positive feedback about Acas Workplace Training, and reported that most courses were commissioned with Acas due to a positive previous experience of Acas.

To help understand the context in which Workplace Training was commissioned, survey respondents were asked why they commissioned the training, what the main objectives of the training were, and why they chose Acas to deliver this training. These aspects were also discussed during the case study interviews, and findings follow below.

4.1 Reasons for commissioning training

When respondents were asked why they commissioned Workplace Training, most cited multiple reasons. As shown overleaf in Figure 4.1, the most popular reasons were to help with an organisational problem, or improve in the topic area (59 per cent), to support the implementation of and adherence to company policies (39 per cent), and to inform and help develop policies (36 per cent).

Figure 4.1 also illustrates a marked change in the reasons for commissioning training since 2008. There have been large increases in commissioning training to support implementation of, and adherence to company policies (up from seven
per cent in 2008 to 39 per cent in 2013), and to inform and help develop policies (up from 10 per cent in 2008, to 36 per cent in 2013)\(^9\).

Whilst commissioning training to help with an organisational problem or improve in the topic area was the most common reason both in 2008 and 2013, this figure has declined from 67 per cent in 2008 to 59 per cent in 2013. A further decline was evident in training being commissioned to meet legislative requirements, from 19 per cent in 2008 to nine per cent in 2013 (when the wording was also clarified to read: in response to legislation).

**Figure 4.1 Reasons for commissioning training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Commissioning Training</th>
<th>2013 All Mentions</th>
<th>2008 All Mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To help with an organisational problem/improve in TOPIC area</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To support implementation of/adherence to company policies</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To inform and help develop policies</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be seen to be following good practice'</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As part of a wider initiative/programme of change in the organisation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In response to legislation</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting requirements of parent organisation</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q4. For what reasons did (organisation) decide to commission training on (topic)? Base: 404 – All respondents. Note: Multiple responses were allowed therefore responses may sum to more than 100 per cent. Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2008) Base: 418 – All respondents. Note: Multiple responses were allowed therefore responses may sum to more than 100 per cent.

All respondents who cited more than one reason for commissioning training in 2013 were next asked to identify which one reason they thought was the main reason for the training. Where respondents had only given one reason for commissioning training, this was assumed to be the main reason.

As illustrated in Figure 4.2, help with an organisational problem or improvements in the topic area was rated as the main reason to commission training by two in five respondents (43 per cent). Respondents who selected this as the main reason why they decided to commission training were more likely to be large

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\(^9\) The average number of responses cited per respondent has increased from 1.3 in 2008 to 1.8 in 2013. In both surveys respondents were prompted for additional reasons.
organisations (47 per cent), rather than small organisations (23 per cent); and/or had made a change to their organisation as a result of the training (47 per cent) rather than not (29 per cent).

**Figure 4.2 Main reason for commissioning training**

- To help with an organisational problem / improve in TOPIC area: 43%
- To support implementation of / adherence to company policies: 19%
- To inform and help develop policies: 19%
- To be seen to be following good practice: 3%
- As part of a wider initiative / programme of change in the organisation: 3%
- Meeting requirements of parent organisation: 3%
- In response to legislation: 2%
- Other: 8%

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q5. And which of these do you think was the main reason for the training? Base: 398 – all respondents who provided reasons for commissioning training at Q4.

### Qualitative Overview

Case study respondents were easily able to explain the reasons for commissioning training. Generally, the reason for commissioning training across all organisations related to providing necessary support for a current organisational issue, such as the organisational re-structure outlined in Case Study One, or a proactive step to resolve future issues such as the personal development strategy explored in Case Study Seven.

As outlined by the training commissioner in Case Study Six, previous experience also helped him to know when it was appropriate to commission training. As a result of a previous re-structure in 2012, several employees went through a grievance procedure. When, later that year, the organisation had to go through a "major restructure" due to loss of funding, the respondent noted:

"I was conscious that a lot of my staff had never been involved in that and so the solution to me was to train them, so we engaged ACAS to deal with the staff representative and the manager representatives. The course was about how to run an effective consultation and the laws and background".
4.2 Training objectives

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of eight potential objectives of their training course, which included organisational improvements and metrics. When the 2013 results were compared to the 2008 results, all eight objectives either remained as important as they were in 2008, or increased in importance.

In line with 2008, the most important objective overall in 2013 was found to be improving staff knowledge (98% of respondents rated this as important). The second most important objective was improving employment relations (95%) and the third improving adherence to policies or procedures (93%).

Whilst the results for improving staff knowledge and employee health or well-being were in line with 2008, as shown in Figure 4.3, when compared to 2008, the remaining six objectives were all rated as important by a greater proportion of respondents. The most pronounced increases were found in terms of reducing absenteeism (an increase of 17 per cent; up from 34 per cent in 2008 to 51 per cent in 2013), reducing staff turnover (an increase of 16 per cent; up from 35 per cent in 2008 to 51 per cent in 2013), and improving the organisation’s performance (an increase of fifteen per cent; up from 72 per cent in 2008 to 87 per cent in 2013).

Figure 4.3 Importance of training objectives

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q7. Thinking about the specific objectives of the training, how important were the following? Base: 388 - 403- All respondents, excluding don’t know. Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2008) Base: 405-418 – All respondents, excluding don’t know. Note: Multiple responses were allowed therefore responses may sum to more than 100 per cent
At an overall level, the increase in importance of the objectives could indicate that organisations had higher expectations from their training courses across the board in 2013 than they were in 2008. The most pronounced increases from 2008 in improving organisational performance and reducing staff turnover and absenteeism also indicate a greater emphasis on more tangible objectives which can be more easily quantified and linked to organisational efficiencies.

After rating the importance of the eight potential objectives, respondents were then asked to select the one most important objective for their training course.

In line with the findings outlined above, the most important objective in 2013 was deemed to be improving staff knowledge. Three in ten respondents (31 per cent) rated this as the most important objective, followed by just over two in ten who rated improving employment relations or improving adherence to policies and procedures as most important (both 24 per cent).

Although these results are in line with 2008 results, where improving staff knowledge was rated as the most important objective, followed by improving adherence to policies and procedures and improving employment relations, they are not directly comparable due to changes in the question wording. In 2008, respondents were asked for the “one or two” most important objectives, whilst in 2013, respondents were asked for the most important (one) objective. This question text was changed in order to help focus respondents in on the most important objective, so that later on in the telephone survey, they could be asked whether or not this objective was completely, partly, or not at all achieved.

Figure 4.4 below compares respondents’ perceptions of the importance of objectives to their perception of the most important objective for their training course. Although there were significant increases in the importance of improving the organisation’s performance, and reducing absenteeism and staff turnover since 2008, as also shown previously in Figure 4.3, these were rarely viewed as the most important objective for training courses.

**Figure 4.4 Importance of training objectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Very/Fairly Important (%)</th>
<th>Most important (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving staff knowledge</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving employment relations</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving adherence to policies or procedures</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving the organisation’s performance</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting equality or diversity</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving employee health or well-being</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing absenteeism</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing staff turnover</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q7. Thinking about the specific objectives of the training, how important were the following? Base: as above - All respondents, excluding don’t know responses. Note: Multiple responses were allowed in rating objectives as very or fairly important, therefore responses may sum to more than 100 per cent. Q8. Of the objectives you said were important in the last question, which one would you see as being the most important objective of the training? Base: as above – All respondents, excluding don’t know responses.
Qualitative Overview

In line with the quantitative survey, several case study respondents referred to the main objective of the training as improving staff knowledge, in terms of their awareness and understanding of the topic area. One respondent also reported that one of the main objectives for her organisation’s Stress Management training was to reduce absenteeism.

When given the opportunity to describe the objectives of the training in their own words, respondents generally referred to slightly softer objectives than the objectives referenced in the quantitative survey. These respondents typically explained their objectives in terms of raising confidence amongst delegates to act in certain situations, or helping them to be independent in a new role, and reduce a pressure point on a central resource.

An example of this is provided by the training commissioner at Case Study Ten, who described the main objective of the organisation’s Workplace Training on Performance Management as:

“Just that line managers can look after their teams and take on responsibility for their team. The idea was that we have these line managers so let’s use them, and they can start managing their own departments, with HR support.”

4.3 Choosing Acas

Respondents were next asked, at an unprompted level, why they chose Acas as their training provider. Encouragingly, the most popular reason provided, by just over half of respondents (56 per cent), was Acas’ good reputation as a training provider. This is a very positive result for Acas, as this figure has risen from a third of respondents (33 per cent) citing this as a reason for choosing Acas in 2008 (Figure 4.5)\(^\text{10}\).

There were no significant differences amongst those who chose Acas as their training provider due to their good reputation in 2013, indicating that this consensus was shared across organisations.

The second most popular reason for choosing Acas as a training provider was a good experience of Acas in the past. In line with 2008, nearly half of respondents (47 per cent) expressed this view. Those who had a positive experience of Acas in the past were more likely to be large organisations (51 per cent) than small and medium enterprises (SMEs, 41 per cent).

Where respondents reported a positive experience of Acas, they were asked to specify which service they had been using at the time. Responses were received across multiple different services, illustrating the breadth of different positive experiences respondents had with Acas. The most popular service was Acas

\(^{10}\) It should be borne in mind when reviewing comparisons with 2008 that on average per respondent, a greater volume of responses for why respondents chose Acas were received in 2013.
training\textsuperscript{11}, specifically in relation to discipline and grievance (17 per cent), information and consultation (eight per cent), and essential skills for line managers (seven percent). Seven per cent of respondents also reported a positive experience of Acas employment law updates. Nearly a third of respondents (31 per cent) either could not remember which service they used, or were only able to provide a generic response, for example that they recalled a positive experience of Acas “training” without being able to specify the subject.

Other notable changes from 2008 included:

- An increase in respondents who chose Acas because they offered value for money (up from 10 per cent to 18 per cent).

- An increase in respondents who chose Acas due to its expertise in a specific topic (up from 26 per cent in 2008 to 40 per cent in 2013). In 2013, there were no significant differences by aggregated training topics.

- A slight decrease in those choosing Acas due to its perceived independence from management and trade unions (down from 11 per cent in 2008, to 7 per cent in 2013).

\textsuperscript{11} Where respondents reported a positive experience of Acas training, it was not clear whether their positive feedback related to Acas’ Workplace Training service, or Acas’ Open Access Training service.
Figure 4.5 Why respondents chose Acas as their training provider

Qualitative Overview

Reasons for choosing Acas emanating from the qualitative case studies echo the quantitative findings above – several respondents made reference to choosing Acas for their training due to a positive previous experience in the past, and for their known neutrality and expertise.

The training commissioner in Case Study Eight also described looking at Acas training before training offered by other organisations due to their knowledge, and competitive pricing:

“I generally look at Acas first ... because they’re so good. The training is good: you know they have done the research into the training, the instructors all know their stuff, they are very approachable. I always go to Acas first and it’s reasonable: they’re not expensive.”
The training commissioner for Case Study Seven expanded on this further to reveal that an additional reason for commissioning Acas was their credibility amongst delegates:

"The other reason is that not only are they experts, it gives credibility to the training. Our staff can access training through the TUC, clearly that has a degree of credibility, but for this sort of thing Acas is where you would think of going."
5 WORKPLACE TRAINING PREPERATION AND DELIVERY

Summary

- Management were involved in the tailoring of training in over four in five organisations (82 per cent).
- The involvement of trade unions in tailoring training had increased from 12 per cent in 2008, to 18 per cent in 2013.
- Nearly three in five respondents (57 per cent) reported that the Acas Workplace Training event was compulsory for staff to attend.
- Feedback from the qualitative interviews revealed that tailoring the training to the organisation was viewed positively by most respondents. The majority reported that the training had been tailored to their organisation, and were positive about the impact that this had. In contrast to the quantitative findings, the case studies revealed that where the training was tailored to the organisation, this was mostly organised by the training commissioner, with little involvement from management.
- Positive feedback was received from most qualitative respondents in relation to the Acas trainer and the delivery of the course.

This section focuses on the tailoring and actual delivery of Acas Workplace Training amongst respondent organisations. Tailoring training to individual organisations is an important feature of Acas Workplace Training. In order to explore this area, respondents in the telephone survey were asked who was involved in tailoring the training, and who attended the training. Tailoring and delivery of the training commissioned were explored further during the case study interviews, to assess how these processes worked in practice.

5.1 Tailoring training

Respondents were asked about who was involved in tailoring the training to their organisation. Only those with trade union representatives and/or full time officials were prompted about the involvement of the trade union, and likewise, only those with non-union staff representatives were prompted about the involvement of any other staff representatives.

Figure 5.1 below shows that management were involved in tailoring training at four in five organisations (82 per cent), trade unions at nearly one in five organisations (18 per cent)\(^{12}\), and other staff representatives in one in five organisations.

\(^{12}\) In order for the trade union figure to be comparable to 2008 data, the 2013 figure for organisations where trade unions were involved in tailoring the training has been expressed as a proportion of all organisations, rather than as a proportion of those who had trade unions at their organisation. Where respondents had a trade union at their organisation, the involvement of the trade union was reported as part of the involvement of the trade union at their organisation.
organisations (18 per cent). As outlined overleaf, two in five respondents (38 per cent) also noted that others in their organisation were involved in tailoring the training. In line with 2008, the most popular other group of staff to be involved in tailoring training was HR (25 per cent).

**Figure 5.1 Who was involved in tailoring training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your management</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anyone else at your organisation</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other staff representatives</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trade union</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When looking at changes since 2008, trade unions were more likely to be involved in tailoring the training in 2013 than they were in 2008 (an increase of six per cent; up from 12 per cent in 2008 to 18 per cent in 2013.14)

As noted previously, in 2013, only respondents who noted that their organisation had trade union representatives and/or full time officials were asked whether the trade union was involved in tailoring the training to the organisation. Amongst these respondents, trade union involvement was more common amongst large organisations with 250 or more employees where almost half (47 per cent) involved their trade union in tailoring the training, compared to just under a quarter (22 per cent) of SMEs.

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13 In order for the other staff representatives figure to be comparable to 2008 data, the 2013 figure for organisations where other staff representatives were involved in tailoring the training has been expressed as a proportion of all organisations, rather than as a proportion of those who had other staff representatives at their organisation. Where respondents had a trade union at their organisation, nearly two in five (36 per cent) reported that the other staff representative(s) had been involved in tailoring the training.

14 This could be linked to organisational size, although due to differing aggregations used in 2008, direct comparisons cannot be drawn here.
Looking at further changes since 2008, perhaps due to the larger involvement of trade unions in tailoring training, less involvement was noted for both other staff representatives (18 per cent, down from 26 per cent in 2008), and anyone else at the organisation (38 per cent, down from 46 per cent in 2008).

Management involvement remained in line with that recorded in 2008.

### Qualitative Overview

When asked about tailoring training, most respondents were very positive about their contact with Acas before the Workplace Training event, and any contact with the trainer to discuss how the training content may be tailored to their organisation. Indeed, this prior contact with Acas before the training event reassured one respondent in particular (Case Study Five) that both the trainer and the training would be a “good fit” for the organisation.

Where Workplace Training was tailored to each organisation, for the most part only the training commissioner at each organisation was involved, and occasionally supported by colleagues.

The training commissioner in Case Study Five described tailoring the training as a joint process between Acas and her organisation:

“We were able to look through the elements of one course that were useful and the elements of the other and merge the two together. This was really great as part of the courses wouldn’t have been relevant, and there is nothing worse than when you are having training thinking this doesn’t apply to me.”

Only one organisation provided negative comments about the tailoring training. The training commissioner in Case Study Three explained that she had commissioned the same Workplace Training course to be delivered on Redundancy in January 2013, as was delivered two years previously. As the trainer was the same for both courses, and the material had been tailored to the organisation for the first training course, the course content was not re-tailored to the organisation again in January 2013 – the previous slides were used. Despite this, the training commissioner provided very positive feedback about the trainer. The feedback received from the delegate in the same organisation was more mixed, as:

“I get the impression that it was kind of a generic thing [i.e. the training was not tailored to the organisation]. I think the slides covered the area well, what probably we needed was more insight to what can happen and things to watch out for and practical type of things.”
5.2 Training attendance

All respondents were asked about who from their organisation attended the training. Training was most likely to be attended by non-union-staff representatives (65 per cent), followed by trade union representatives (49 per cent) and finally full time trade union staff representatives (25 per cent).

**Non-union staff representatives** were more likely to attend the training when the topic was related to Employment Relations (78 per cent) rather than HR and People Management (57 per cent).

Unsurprisingly, **trade union representatives** were more likely to attend the training when the main objective was improving employment relations (73 per cent) than improving adherence to policies and procedures (42 per cent), or improving staff knowledge (41 per cent). Trade union representatives were also more likely to attend the training in larger organisations than SMEs (55 per cent compared to 31 per cent), potentially due to the higher prevalence of trade union representatives in larger organisations, as noted in Section three of this report. Trade union representatives were also more likely to attend if they had been involved in tailoring the training (67 per cent, compared to 42 per cent for non-union staff representatives).

When asked whether the training was compulsory for staff to attend or not, nearly three in five respondents (57 per cent) reported that it was compulsory, and two in five (42 per cent) that it was optional for staff to attend. Differences across types of businesses were however evident here, with the training being more likely to be optional for staff to attend in:

- Larger organisations (51 per cent, compared to 31 per cent for SMEs), which could be connected to the increased cost of running multiple courses in larger organisations, and the challenging logistics of ensuring that everyone can and does attend.

- Public sector (53 per cent), compared to the private sector (37 per cent).
5.3 Training delivery

Feedback on training delivery was not included in the quantitative questionnaire. The feedback provided below is gleaned from the case study interviews.

Qualitative Overview

Training commissioners and delegates provided very positive feedback about both the Workplace Training courses delivered and the Acas trainers delivering the training during the qualitative interviews. This is best illustrated from the complementary feedback from Case Study Four, where the training commissioner perceived that “everyone walked away saying 'I've learnt something from that.'”, and the delegate reported that:

“Everyone participated – there were no quiet people. Everyone felt that they could say whatever, with no fear of saying something stupid.”

Some more mixed feedback about the Acas trainer was provided by the delegate interviewed for Case Study Six:

“If I had a negative thought and it is to do with the trainer it became rushed in some areas... he seemed to have the understanding that we knew a lot of what he was talking about.”

This delegate also reported that he was very impressed that he had the option to be able to re-contact the trainer to clarify any issues after the training.
6 WORKPLACE TRAINING EVALUATION

Summary

- The vast majority of respondents (98 per cent) reported that the Workplace Training event was evaluated in some form. The most popular evaluation methods related to learner satisfaction (the first stage of the Kirkpatrick model), and included using Acas’ feedback forms for delegates (80 per cent), and informal evaluation (70 per cent).

- The proportion of respondents who evaluated the Workplace Training event by analysing related outcomes in the topic area had more than tripled since 2008 (up by 26 percentage points; from 10 per cent in 2008, to 36 per cent in 2013).

- In line with the quantitative results, the case study interviews revealed that the use of feedback forms was popular amongst respondents, whether they were provided by Acas, or created by the organisation on paper or online. A further evaluation approach involved the use of informal meetings to evaluate the training, share best practice, and help to embed the learnings from the training.

- Internal evaluations revealed that Workplace Training was generally perceived to have a positive impact in terms of developing skills and knowledge (26 per cent). At more than half of organisations (57 per cent), all staff attended the event, so there was no need or opportunity to share any learnings with staff who did not attend.

This section explores the different evaluation methods that organisations deployed with regard to the Acas Workplace Training they commissioned. Respondents in both the quantitative and qualitative strands of the research were asked whether they completed their own evaluation of the Workplace Training course, and if so, which methods they used. The case study interviews also allowed for further exploration of these evaluation methods.

6.1 Evaluation Methods

Respondents were firstly asked whether their organisation evaluated the Workplace Training event. The vast majority of respondents (98 per cent) reported that the Workplace Training event was evaluated in some form. As outlined below in Figure 6.1, the most popular evaluation methods were using Acas’ feedback forms for delegates (80 per cent), and informal evaluation at meetings or in group discussions (70 per cent). Smaller proportions of respondents completed evaluations which included analysing related outcomes in the topic area (36 per cent), using their own feedback forms (33 per cent), or conducting a before and after survey of delegates (19 per cent).
It is not overtly surprising that delegate feedback forms and informal evaluation were the most popular evaluation methods cited, as these relate to learner satisfaction - the first, and most tangible, level of the Kirkpatrick model, which looks to assess the impact of training.\textsuperscript{15} They can also be viewed as relatively light touch evaluation methods, which require less involvement and management time than, for example, a before and after survey of delegates, or analysing related outcomes in the topic area.

These figures are broadly in line with 2008, apart from notable increases in respondents analysing related outcomes in the topic area (which has increased by 26 percentage points; up from 10 per cent in 2008 to 36 per cent in 2013), respondents using their own feedback forms on the day (which has increased by seven percentage points; up from 26 per cent to 33 per cent), and respondents conducting a before and after survey of delegates (which has increased by six percent points; up from 13 per cent to 19 per cent).

The increase in analysing related outcomes in the topic area could be related to the reason why training was commissioned, and/or a need for the training to prove it was worth the investment of money and time from the organisation. Of the respondents who analysed related outcomes in the topic area, most reported that improving organisational performance was the main objective of the training (58 per cent).

\textsuperscript{15} Kirkpatrick, D (1994), \textit{Evaluating training programs: The four levels} (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler). The Kirkpatrick model provides a four-level approach to assessing the impact of training. Level one focuses on the reaction of participants to the learning event. Level two focuses on the learning achieved, level three on any changes in behaviour as a result of the learning event, and finally level four focuses on the results (to what extent targeted outcomes occur, as a result of the learning event, and subsequent reinforcement).
Figure 6.1 Evaluation methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Method</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using Acas’ feedback forms for delegates</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informally, at meetings or in group discussions</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By analysing related outcomes in the area of [TOPIC]</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using your own feedback forms on the day</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting a before-and-after survey of delegates</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting a survey of delegates’ line managers</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q15. Did your organisation evaluate the training in any of the following ways? Base: 404 – All respondents. Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2008) Base: 418 – All respondents. Note: Multiple responses were allowed therefore responses may sum to more than 100 per cent

Other evaluation methods spontaneously cited by respondents included verbal feedback, team meetings and appraisals.

Qualitative Overview

In line with the quantitative findings, use of Acas’ feedback forms for delegates was popular amongst case study respondents. Other methods of evaluation included organisations using their own feedback forms (either paper based forms, or a short online form on the survey monkey website).

The organisation in Case Study Three deliberately chose not to evaluate their Workplace Training, as they wanted to ensure that their employee representatives who were being trained in how to support others through redundancy derived the maximum benefit from the training. The training commissioner at this organisation perceived that as the employee representatives “did a really good job throughout the consultation process, and people went through the change with a positive view of how it was handled”, there was no need to “impose” an evaluation on these representatives.
6.2 Impact based on internal evaluation

When asked about the impact of their internal evaluations, respondents were positive about Acas, and cited improvements in relation to developing skills and knowledge (26 per cent), gaining an understanding or raising awareness (25 per cent), or provided further positive comments about the training being “helpful” (24 per cent). Only two per cent mentioned that there was “no real impact” of the Workplace Training. Feedback provided as a result of internal evaluations is illustrated overleaf in Figure 6.2.

A couple of examples of this verbatim feedback from the quantitative survey are outlined below:

“In a positive way it has given our new trustees the knowledge they needed to listen to appeals and conduct investigations.”

“I think it helped the success of consultation process. The training helped the interaction between both sides in terms of legality and also the sorts of language we used, to avoid any language that seems ambiguous or leading and unhelpful. We had another course for other consultants, and rolled one out three months afterwards for management. If we had another restructure we would do the same.”
Figure 6.2 Workplace Training impact based on internal evaluations

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q17 Based on the results of your evaluation, how would you say the training has impacted on ORGANISATION? Base: 397 – All respondents who evaluated their Workplace Training. Note: Multiple responses were allowed therefore responses may sum to more than 100 per cent

Respondents were also asked whether learnings were shared with staff who did not attend the event. In response to this question, nearly six in ten respondents (57 per cent) reported that all staff attended the event, and so there was no need to share learnings with staff who did not attend. A further one in ten respondents (13 per cent) reported that learnings were not shared with staff who did not attend the event.

Methods for other respondents to share learnings with those who did not attend the training included dissemination via line managers (19 per cent), further in house training (13 per cent), their organisation’s intranet, or employee handbooks (both ten per cent).
7 IMPACT OF WORKPLACE TRAINING

Summary

Short term impacts

- Training commissioners who participated in the qualitative strand of the research reported a variety of short term impacts as a result of the Workplace Training received. Most of these impacts related to delegates using their training to then carry out follow up actions, for example completing an appraisal. Others included procedural changes implemented by the organisation based on knowledge and feedback acquired through the training.

Participant level impact

- Respondents rated the Workplace Training as having a very positive impact on participants, especially in terms of their awareness of their responsibilities (98 per cent noted a positive impact), and their ability to deal effectively with the topic (96 per cent reported a positive impact).

  - Qualitative feedback from managers, delegates and trade union representatives who had received Workplace Training revealed a positive impact for most on their ability and confidence to deal effectively with the topic.

Impact on organisational efficiencies

- Of the respondents who had noted changes in their organisational metrics relating to efficiency since their Acas Workplace Training, several were able to tie these back to the Workplace Training received. Positive impacts were particularly noted for productivity (where 83 per cent of the increase in productivity was all or in part related to the Workplace Training), and the number of employee grievances (where 76 per cent of the decrease in employee grievances was all or in part related to the Workplace Training).

  - Qualitative feedback provided two strong examples of a reduction in employee absence as a result of stress management training, where the organisation had made “significant savings”, and a reduction in employee grievances as a result of redundancy training, which had saved the organisation a considerable amount of time.

Organisational practice level impact (changes to policies and procedures)

- Looking at changes made to organisational policies and practices, just over half of all organisations (56 per cent) reported that they had revised an area of practice relating to the issues addressed in the training. Respondents working in
organisations which made organisational changes as a result of the training were more likely to note that the training was part of an overall programme, and that the main objective of the training was improving organisational performance.

- Several organisations who participated in qualitative interviews noted that changes had been made to policies and practices. As outlined in Case Study Six, one organisation reported introducing a new policy which was directly related to their Workplace Training course and the issues that were covered.

**Wider impact**

- **Respondents were very positive about the wider impact of the Workplace Training course – all indicators had significantly increased since 2008.** The most notable increases related to the fair treatment of employees (up by 34 per cent, from 43 per cent in 2008 to 77 per cent in 2013) and the ability to manage change in staff or HR (up by 26 per cent from 40 per cent in 2008 to 66 per cent in 2013).

- The wider benefits noted by qualitative respondents generally related to improved communication at organisations as a result of the Workplace Training.

This section of the report assesses the impact, both immediate and longer-term, that Acas Workplace Training has had on the organisations involved. Respondents were asked about the impact of the Workplace Training event at participant level, at an organisational practice level, at an organisational efficiency level and at a wider level, to reveal any impacts on key organisational metrics. These results are now discussed with reference to both the quantitative and qualitative strands of the evaluation.
7.1 Short term impact

As part of the case study interviews, training commissioners were asked whether they had noticed any short term impacts as a result of the training. These impacts are described in the text box below. As training commissioners in the quantitative survey were not asked about any short term impacts, this analysis is solely focussed on case study feedback.

The participant-level impacts reported by delegates, managers and trade union representatives are explored later on in Section 7.3.

Qualitative Overview

When asked whether there had been any discernible short term impacts in response to the Workplace Training, training commissioners outlined several changes, including, but not limited to:

- **Case Study One** reported that by providing managers across the country with a better awareness and understanding of Equality Impact Assessments, and setting an expectation that this new knowledge would be disseminated in their geographical “cluster”, the number of centralised queries received stopped:

  “Whereas before I was getting three calls a day, these phone calls stopped [as a result of the training]. I knew people were getting support out of the clusters.”

- **Case Study Two** illustrates the immediate qualitative impact they took away from the Workplace Training on Bullying and Harassment:

  “…harassment is very much about how people feel about it… it’s not a list of things that are harassment and a list of things that are not, it’s very much how it feels to be you in that situation… it raises awareness much more, makes people more self conscience about what they hear and say in the workplace and I think people have taken that from it.”

- **Case Study Four** noted that one of the first actions after the organisation’s discipline and grievance training was to provide managers with access to the Sage HR support system so that they could make contact, and ask for advice directly rather than via the training commissioner. She noted that this was a positive development, as it "separated" her from these requests.

- **Case Study Six** reported that a short term impact of the Redundancy Workplace Training provided by Acas was that staff had requested a voluntary early retirement package. The organisation needed to reduce their staffing levels by approximately 30 per cent, and as 20 per cent accepted the offer of voluntary early retirement, this represented a big success for this organisation.
7.2 Participant level impact

Respondents in the telephone survey were asked about the impact of Workplace Training on participants. The results were very positive, as nearly all respondents rated the training as having had a positive impact on participants’ awareness of their responsibilities (98 per cent, up from 95 per cent in 2008), and/or their ability to deal effectively with the topic (96 per cent). These results are outlined overleaf in Figure 7.1. High scores were also received for participants’ adherence to their organisation’s policies (89 per cent, up from 84 per cent in 2008), and participants’ awareness of their rights (86 per cent).

![Figure 7.1 Positive Impact on Participants](image)

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q21 Now I'd like to turn to the impact you think the training has had on participants? Base: 389–395 – All respondents, excluding don’t know. Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2008) Base: 366 – 376 – All respondents, excluding don’t know.

Focussing in on participants’ adherence to their organisation’s policies, which was the most pronounced increase from 2008, higher positive impacts were noted in relation to training where organisations did not plan to introduce one or more new policies or procedures (93 per cent, compared to 80 per cent for organisations who did). This suggests that where organisations sought adherence to their policies, they were looking for this in relation to existing policies, rather than policies they had yet to bring in.

Where there was a positive impact on participant adherence to their organisation’s policies, respondents also tended to exhibit more positive views overall. These respondents were more likely to be very satisfied (91 per cent), rather than fairly satisfied (82 per cent) with the Workplace Training overall, viewed their main objective as completely (91 per cent) rather than partially achieved (83 per cent), and/or viewed the value for money of the training as very good (94 per cent).
Where respondents reported a positive increase in participants’ adherence to their organisation’s policies, training was also more likely to have been commissioned on Fair Treatment at Work (97 per cent), or HR and People Management (93 per cent), rather than Employment Relations (74 per cent). Although there have been positive increases noted in the 2013 figures compared to 2008, this pattern was also evident in 2008.

As outlined overleaf in Figure 7.2, the positive values for participant based impacts did fluctuate depending on the topic of the training.

Further notable differences included a higher impact in terms of participants’ awareness of their responsibilities in relation to Fair Treatment at Work training than Employment Relations training (100 per cent compared to 96 per cent). Furthermore, a higher positive impact was noted for participants’ ability to deal effectively with the topic in relation to HR and People Management training (99 per cent) compared to Employment Relations training (91 per cent).

**Figure 7.2 Participant level impacts by topic**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall (% Positive Impact)</th>
<th>Employment Relations (% Positive Impact)</th>
<th>Fair Treatment at Work (% Positive Impact)</th>
<th>HR and People Management (% Positive Impact)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ awareness of their responsibilities</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ awareness of their rights</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ adherence to your organisation’s policies</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ ability to deal effectively with (TOPIC)</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>389-395</td>
<td>92-95</td>
<td>91-93</td>
<td>202-210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q21 Now I’d like to turn to the impact you think the training has had on participants. Base: As above - All respondents, excluding don’t know.

Where respondents reported a negative impact for their Workplace Training event on individuals, they were asked to provide further details. Across these four statements, only three individual comments were received in relation to the Workplace Training having had a negative impact. Each of these comments was in relation to a different area. One comment in relation to participants’ awareness of
their rights noted that the delegates misunderstood some of the training, which was not their fault. Two comments received in relation to participants’ ability to deal effectively with the topic, and adherence to organisational policies illustrates either end of a spectrum. The former comment revealed that further training was needed, and the latter comment revealed that participants had been too empowered by the Workplace Training, and were now “making decisions because they think they know the answers”. The organisation in question reported “having to pull (these employees) back, and ask them to think about the impact (of these decisions)".

Qualitative Overview

Acas Workplace Training delegates interviewed as part of the case studies were asked about the impact of the Workplace Training on their working lives. Rather than being prompted on awareness of rights and responsibilities, adherence to policies, and ability to deal with the topic, respondents were encouraged to highlight any changes that they had personally made as a result of the training.

All of the changes noted by delegates were positive, and most related to their ability to deal with the training topic, as a direct result of the Workplace Training. Select examples included:

- **Case Study One:** the Manager recalled “getting a lot out of the training, and enjoying working with other people from other HR departments”. The training received by this manager specifically related to awareness of Equality Impact Assessments, and the manager also reported that his "general awareness of issues had been enhanced", including his "feel for the potential areas where there may be an impact.”

- **Case Study Two:** the Manager received training on Bullying and Harassment, and was very complimentary about the “broader understanding” of the topic provided by the training. Shortly after the training, the manager had an opportunity to put her learning into practice, in resolving a dispute in her workplace, and attributed the skills she had used back to the Acas Workplace Training:

  “Yes, appreciating other people’s feelings... a lot of the things we talked about, respect, understanding each other’s point of view I think, I did use a lot of that in this process of getting these members of staff back talking together and getting them understanding each other.”

- **Case Study Four:** the Manager received training on Discipline and Grievance, and described the training as key to helping her confidence in and awareness of the topic area to increase:

  “It was really nice to have someone talking you through it in layman’s terms. That’s what I got out of, making me question myself so that if I was doing an investigation I was covering everything and asking all the right questions and not making assumptions. I was more aware.”
When asked about the impact of the training, this respondent also re-iterated that:

“I think that you don’t actually realise that you’re actually doing it. After having the course and feeling assured that I was doing right, I’m more sure in myself so when I do come to do the investigation that I had to do I was dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s and making sure I was reasonable to the employee.”

- **Case Study Six:** the employee had received training on Redundancy, and reported that he had found it very helpful:

“It helped me immensely personally, it helped me to be able to if I had to speak to a colleague that had been affected like myself it gave me an understanding... I took a great belief that I could help manage people’s outcomes.”

- **Case Study Eight:** the manager had received Stress Management training, and reported that the Workplace Training had given her practical help which she could apply to her day to day job:

“Yes because what that did, was help [identify] ... what are the trigger points were, what I should be looking out for so that if anything did rear its head it was easy. It’s always easier to manage it at step one than step five. So I got in at step one: if there were individuals that did feel particularly stressed, I just sat down and spoke to them.”

The training had also led this manager to modify her management approach slightly:

“I’ve made certain changes with the staff ... We have a weekly meeting instead of me just going ‘Can we have a look at this now’ so that they get that chance to be able to get things into place, etc. And we have more staff meetings, I’m not necessarily involved in them all but there are more staff meetings to keep staff informed on what’s going on ... and to make sure that staff are aware of what’s happening.”

### 7.3 Impact on organisational efficiencies

All respondents were also asked whether they had noted any changes to six key metrics relating to organisational efficiencies impacts in the period since the training. The changes to these organisational efficiencies and impacts are outlined in Figure 7.3. Due to changes in the question text, only productivity can be compared back to 2008.

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16 In the interests of clarity, several changes were made to update the question text, and make the question as easy as possible for respondents to answer.
As illustrated above in Figure 7.3, and in line with 2008, all impacts included a high level of don’t know responses, suggesting that some respondents may have struggled to answer this question accurately. Beyond this, the pattern was that most metrics relating to organisational efficiencies had stayed the same since the Acas Workplace Training. However, there were several positive exceptions, most notably productivity, where a quarter (26 per cent) of respondents reported an increase, the number of work days lost due to absence, where 15 per cent reported a decrease, and the number of employee grievances, where 13 per cent reported a decrease.

Two differences were also noted by the topic of the training. Firstly, in relation to the number of work days lost due to absence, organisations who had received Employment Relations training were more likely to report that this metric had stayed the same (59 per cent) than organisations who had received HR and People Management training (44 per cent). This is not surprising, given that courses within the HR and People Management grouping include those on related topics, including Attendance and Absence Management, Stress Management, and Supervision and First Line Management. The second difference noted by topic was in relation to the number of employee grievances. Here, organisations who had received Fair Treatment at Work training were more likely to report a decrease in employee grievances (20 per cent) than those who had received Employment
Relations training (six per cent). This could be because Fair Treatment at Work includes courses on Mediation, and Conflict, Mediation and Relationship Issues which are aimed at the successful resolution of issues before they escalate into an employee grievance.

Where respondents had noted either an increase or a decrease in their metrics relating to organisational efficiencies, they were then asked whether this change was due to changes made in their organisation as a result of the Acas Workplace Training. The results can be observed in Figure 7.4 and Figure 7.5. The final column of these figures shows a "NET" figure, which includes all responses which attribute the change in metric to be all or in part due to the training (including to some extent, to a large extent, and completely).

Figure 7.4 shows that of the quarter (26 per cent) who reported that productivity had increased at their organisation since they completed the Workplace Training, more than four in five (83 per cent) reported that this was at least in part as a result of the training. Thus, 22 per cent of organisations undertaking Acas’ workplace training reported an increase in productivity which they attributed directly to the training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increased since Acas Workplace Training</th>
<th>Not at all (%)</th>
<th>To some extent (%)</th>
<th>To a large extent (%)</th>
<th>Completely (%)</th>
<th>Don't know (%)</th>
<th>All or in part due to training (NET %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q20 To what extent was this change due to changes made in your organisation as a result of the Acas training?: Base: 104 - All respondents who noted an increase in relation to productivity.

Figure 7.5 below shows that of the one in seven respondents (15 per cent) who reported that the number of work days lost due to absence had decreased at their organisation since they completed the Workplace Training, nearly two in three (65 per cent) reported that this was at least in part as a result of the training. Thus, 10 per cent of organisations undertaking Acas’ Workplace Training reported a decrease in days lost due to absence which they attribute directly to the training.

Figure 7.5 also illustrates that of the one in eight respondents (13 per cent) who reported a reduction in employee grievances since they completed the Workplace Training, three quarters (76 per cent) reported that this was at least in part as a result of the training. Thus 10 per cent of organisations undertaking Acas’

Please note that due to small base numbers, these figures only include the metrics where the base numbers are above 30, and so large enough for analysis. Further textual commentary in relation to the number of staff that resigned, and the number of employment tribunal claims and hearings is provided in Appendix 2. Furthermore, it is important to state that whilst for most of these metrics, a decrease (for example in the number of work days lost due to absence) would be a positive finding, for productivity, the opposite is true, and an increase would be a positive finding.
Workplace Training reported a reduction in employee grievances which they attribute directly to the training.

**Figure 7.5 Decreases in impacts relating to organisational efficiencies as a result of Acas Workplace Training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decreases since Acas Workplace Training</th>
<th>Not at all (%)</th>
<th>To some extent (%)</th>
<th>To a large extent (%)</th>
<th>Completely (%)</th>
<th>Don’t know (%)</th>
<th>All or in part due to training (NET %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of work days lost due to absence</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of employee grievances</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q20 To what extent was this change due to changes made in your organisation as a result of the Acas training? Base: 62 – All respondents who noted a decrease in relation to work days lost due to absence. Base: 51 – All respondents who noted a decrease in relation to employee grievances.

Encouragingly, it is therefore clear to see that respondents perceive there to have been some positive impact on metrics relating to organisational efficiencies that can be attributed to Acas Workplace Training. This is a positive result for Acas. These results are particularly impressive in relation to productivity, the number of employee grievances, and the number of working days lost due to absence. Whilst these respondents did not attribute all of this change specifically to the Acas Workplace Training, and so Acas cannot claim all of this impact, it is clear that the Acas Workplace Training received has been able to provide a positive influence, albeit in some cases as part of an overall programme of organisational improvements.

**Qualitative Overview**

Training commissioners interviewed as part of the qualitative strand of the research were asked to further explain any changes in metrics relating to organisational efficiencies highlighted as part of their initial telephone interview. Three case studies provided clear examples of how the Workplace Training provided had impacted on these metrics relating to organisational efficiencies:

- **Case Study Six reported that the Redundancy training received was thought to have had an effect on the number of employee grievances received.** During a previous restructure where Acas training had not been commissioned, the organisation had received five grievances from the six affected employees. Although none of these grievances were upheld, the organisation had to ensure that due process was carried out. In comparison, during the most recent restructure, where 60 employees were affected, no grievances were received. As the training commissioner noted:
"In this restructure considering it involved a significant part of the organisation we had no grievances and we only had one appeal against redundancy and we showed the scoring mechanism and his particular score then he understood why he didn’t get the positions. It was very transparent."

- **Case Study Eight reported that their Stress Management training had resulted in a significant reduction in absence, which was particularly noticeable in some business areas where it had historically been an issue.** The training commissioner reported that at an overall level, absence had reduced from four per cent (directly before the training) to around 2.5 per cent (between six to nine months after the training). As an organisation, the respondent noted that absence was being managed in a more considered, and holistic, manner, and that the improvement in the absence figures showed that they had “really turned it around”.

  The respondent also reported that in one specific business area, where the manager had attended the training, the change has been particularly marked with sickness absences coming down from 10 per cent to zero per cent last month. Such improvements are having a real impact on the cost savings that they can realise in the business. Whilst the commissioner was not able to quantify specific cost savings, they noted that the organisation had made “significant savings”.

- **Case Study ten noted improved productivity in relation to their Performance Management training, as this training enabled appraisals for the organisation’s 60 staff to be delegated to departmental line managers, rather than being conducted by the organisation’s two directors.** Although the respondent was not able to quantify the cost saving here, she noted that freeing up both Directors’ time would enable them to concentrate on running the organisation more, both in terms of their existing contracts, and also bringing in a larger amount of new business to help the organisation continue to expand. The respondent also described the increase in productivity as outlined below:

  "Line managers conduct their own appraisals which opens up communication, people say things to their line manager that they wouldn’t necessarily to their director, it’s a more comfortable environment so it means issues are being addressed, training is been managed better and the majority of time that increases motivation and therefore productivity in the long term."

"
7.4 Organisational practice level impact (changes to policies and procedures)

All respondents were asked whether their organisation had revised or reviewed areas relating to the Acas Workplace Training they had commissioned, and had introduced (or planned to introduce) any new policies or practices as a result of the training.\(^{18}\)

At an overall level, just over half of all organisations (56 per cent) reported that they had revised an area of practice relating to the issues addressed in the training. As outlined overleaf in Figure 7.6, a similar figure (54 per cent) reviewed one or more policy or practice, and half (51 per cent) revised one or more policy or practice. A smaller number of organisations either planned to introduce one or more new policy or practice (29 per cent), or had introduced one or more new policy (25 per cent). Figure 7.6 also shows that nearly four in five respondents (78 per cent) said “yes” to at least one of the five actions.

Given the amount of preparatory work involved in introducing a completely new policy to an organisation, compared to reviewing or revising existing policies, it is not surprising that this appears to be the least cited action outlined below. More surprising is perhaps the figure of just over half of organisations (51 per cent) who reported they had revised a policy or an area of practice in relation to the training, especially when not all Acas Workplace Training courses are specifically tailored towards this goal. This area is explored further overleaf.

As previously mentioned, this new question is not comparable to the previous 2008 question due to a change in wording. However, taking revisions to one or more policy or practice as the closest question to the “change in policies and procedures” measured in 2008, it appears that significantly more actions were taken as a result of the training in 2013 (51 per cent) than in 2008 (33 per cent). The 2013 figures are illustrated below in Figure 7.6.

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\(^{18}\) This was a new question added in to the survey in 2013 to provide more detail on the impact of Acas Workplace training, compared to the previous question asked in 2008, which only measured whether the organisation changed their policies or procedures as a result of the training.
By focussing in on those who reported that they had revised an area of practice in relation to the issues addressed in the training (56 per cent), it is evident that respondents who made this change were also more likely to have made other changes, including introducing one or more new policy (75 per cent), and revising (72 per cent) or reviewing (69 per cent) one or more policy or practice.

Respondents who revised an area of practice were also more likely to report that the main objective of the course was improving organisational performance (71 per cent), and that the course was part of an overall programme (61 per cent, compared to 51 per cent who did not\(^\text{19}\)). This was a common pattern across all of the five indicators above. Although the question about organisational impact clearly asked respondents to relate these impacts back to being a result of the training, the fact that so many respondents perceived the course as part of an overall programme may indicate that the Workplace Training was only part of the impetus for the organisational change.

Those who had revised an area of practice were found to be more likely to work in the third sector (63 per cent), as illustrated in Figure 7.7, and have commissioned courses relating to HR and People Management (64 per cent) than either Fair Treatment at Work (52 per cent) or Employment Relations (43 per cent). Further sectoral differences were also apparent across organisations that had reviewed one or more policy or practice, with a higher prevalence detected in both the third (60 per cent) and private (57 per cent) sectors than in the public sector (45 per cent).

\(^{19}\) Those who reported that the training was part of an overall programme when prompted at Q6.
Interestingly, those who planned to introduce one or more new policy or practice were more likely to report that they had received training on Employment Relations (40 per cent) than HR and People Management (28 per cent) or Fair Treatment at Work (22 per cent). There was no significant pattern in course topic by those who had revised, reviewed or introduced one or more new policy or practice.

**Figure 7.7 Organisation practice level changes by sector**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall (% Yes)</th>
<th>Public Sector (% Yes)</th>
<th>Private Sector (% Yes)</th>
<th>Third Sector (% Yes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduced one or more new policy</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewed one or more policy or practice</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised one or more policy or practice</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned to introduce one or more new policy or practice</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised any area of practice relating to the issues addressed in the training</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes to at least one of the five actions (NET)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q25 As a result of the training, have you or anyone working with you: Base: 404 - All respondents.
Qualitative Overview

When asked about longer term organisational impacts as a result of the training, training commissioners provided several examples of how the training had been used to make changes at their organisation.

- **Case Study One** noted that the immediate impact noted after the organisation’s Equality and Diversity training, was also a longer term trend, and consistently fewer queries were being received by their central team in relation to Equality Impact Assessments (EIA). The commissioner also recalled a review of the EIA document itself, which:

  “*Led us to review our structure and governance around equality a bit like a chain reaction really.*”

  The training commissioner directly linked the review of the EIA document with the Acas Workplace Training received.

- **Case Study Two** revealed that as a small organisation, their Bullying and Harassment training had encouraged them to reflect on their other policies, and seek to update their flexible and home working policy so that it was consistent across the organisation. The respondent reported that this was directly triggered by the Acas Workplace Training, as:

  “*We realised that we needed a really consistent approach across a range of things across the college.*”

  The training commissioner also illustrated how the organisation was trying to embed learnings from the training:

  “*What we are trying to do is learn and experience from each other to build our capacity to deal with things ourselves otherwise everyone is at a standing start every time something happens.*”

- **Case Study Five** reported that the organisation’s guidelines and terms of reference were updated as a result of their Information and Consultation training.

- **Case Study Six** reported that they had decided to write a new policy related to dealing with restructures specifically caused by funding cuts as a result of their Redundancy training. This new policy was described as going into “significant depth” in the process in order to provide a future framework for successful restructures.
7.5 Wider organisational impact

In addition to the impact metrics relating to organisational efficiencies, respondents were also asked about the wider organisational impact of the Workplace Training in order for them to provide details of any additional or “extra benefits” received from the training. Figure 7.8 below shows the positive impact (very and slightly positive impact combined) for all of these wider impacts compared to 2008. As is evident, all of these impacts have significantly increased, including most notably: the fair treatment of employees (up by 34 percentage points, from 43 per cent in 2008 to 77 per cent in 2013) and the ability to manage change in staff or HR (up by 26 percentage points from 40 per cent in 2008 to 66 per cent in 2013).20

Figure 7.8 Wider level organisational impact


Focusing in on these areas of greatest change, those who reported a positive increase in the fair treatment of employees tended to have commissioned Fair Treatment at Work training (91 per cent). Action was also generally taken on the back of the training course to revise an area of practice in relation to the training (83 per cent), and the respondents were typically both very satisfied with Acas (81 per cent), and rated the value for money of the training as very good (85 per cent).

20 There were no changes to this question on wider level organisational impact between 2008 and 2013.
Although these results are very encouraging, it is also important to review the individual comments provided by respondents when they noted a negative wider impact in order to provide a full picture of respondents’ views of the training.

In total, eleven negative comments were received; four in relation to staff morale, three in relation to levels of trust, two about dealing with employment relations issues in a timely way, and one each about the ability to manage changes in staff or HR and the ability to prevent industrial action. All of these comments were made in relation to the difficulty of the circumstances that the organisations found themselves in, rather than being any negative reflection on the Workplace Training offered by Acas.

Some respondents in the telephone survey noted that wider issues about the topic of the training, or economic circumstances could make training more difficult:

“Because of the contract, we had to make everyone redundant and then we had to take them back again. It was really hard to keep staff morale up during this process. We thought that we had lost our contract.”

“Just because of the current climate in that we are in partnership with the local council and we get a lot funding. Some of this funding has been withdrawn over the last three years...”

## Qualitative Overview

When respondents were asked about the wider impact of the Workplace Training, several training commissioners and delegates mentioned improved working relationships as a result of the training.

- **Case Study Three** revealed that as there were no tribunals as a result of the consultations after the redundancy training received, the training was viewed as a “trusted process”, and:

  “People left as happy leavers at the end and people who remained were still positive. We came out with a forward look attitude like a rebirth, an excitement about going into new markets and new roles which were all positive in terms of morale.”
8  OVERALL VIEWS ON WORKPLACE TRAINING

Summary

- **Satisfaction with Workplace Training remains very high** with the vast majority (96 per cent) satisfied overall and over three quarters of respondents (76 per cent) providing the highest rating of ‘very satisfied’. Further statistical (binary logistic) regression shows that the achievement of objectives and perceived value for money have a high impact on satisfaction. Satisfaction was found to be highest when respondents have taken action as a result of the training, and satisfaction starts to decline slightly as more time passes after a training event.

- **At an overall level, seven in ten respondents (70 per cent) reported that their main objective was completely achieved.** Achievement of objectives varied by objective, with those who cited their main objective as improving adherence to policies or procedures or increasing staff knowledge most likely to rate this objective as completely achieved.

- **Nearly all respondents (95 per cent) reported that they would recommend Acas training to other organisations.** Willingness to recommend was highest when organisations made changes to their organisational policies or procedures as a result of the training, and/or had used other Acas services over the last 12 months (both 97 per cent).

- **Nearly nine in ten respondents (87 per cent) rated Acas Workplace Training as good or very good value for money.**
  - Qualitative respondents generally viewed Acas Workplace Training as good value for money. As well as the cost of the course for each delegate, these respondents also noted that there was a distinct value in receiving training from Acas due to its reputation and impartial nature.

- **Just over half of respondents (55 per cent) used other training providers in addition to Acas.** Organisations using other training providers tended to be large in size, operate across multiple sites, and had also reported increases in both financial turnover and numbers of employees over the past five years.
  - Two qualitative respondents mentioned considering using the CIPD for training. Both respondents preferred to use Acas Workplace Training as opposed to the CIPD alternative, as it was perceived that Acas training provided the right depth of knowledge for delegates, offered better value for money, was better suited for small organisations, and was also more practical.
Respondents were finally asked to summarise their overall views of the training in several different ways. These overall views are explored in this section, which focuses on overall satisfaction, achievement of objectives, willingness to recommend and value for money.

In order to further explore overall satisfaction and the achievement of objectives, this section also includes binary logistic regression. Additional detail on the exact methodology used, and data analysis completed can be found in Appendix 1.

8.1 Overall satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with the Workplace Training was very high – nearly all respondents (96 per cent) reported that they were satisfied to some level, and three quarters (76 per cent) rated themselves as very satisfied. Just three per cent of respondents reported dissatisfaction.

As the vast majority of respondents described themselves as satisfied to some degree, further analysis has been focused on those who described themselves as very satisfied. As outlined below in Figure 8.1, the proportion of respondents who described themselves as very satisfied has increased significantly from 67 per cent in 2008 to 76 per cent in 2013. This increase in the proportion of respondents who rated themselves as very satisfied has been driven by a substantial increase in those who rated themselves as very satisfied with training on Fair Treatment at Work (83 per cent were very satisfied, up from 64 per cent in 2008, as outlined overleaf in Figure 8.2).

Figure 8.1 Overall satisfaction

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q26 Taking everything into account, now that some time has passed since you received the training from Acas, would you say you were.... Base: 402 – All respondents, excluding don’t know. Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2008) Base: 411 – All respondents, excluding don’t know.

Figure 8.2 shows a breakdown of satisfaction across by topic, and also provides a comparison to 2008.
As could be expected, satisfaction is closely connected with the achievement of objectives, and perceptions of value for money; those who were very satisfied also tended to hold positive views on the achievement of objectives (86 per cent reported the main objective was completely achieved, compared to 52 per cent who reported it was partially achieved) and value for money (88 per cent reported very good value for money, compared to 62 per cent who reported fairly good value for money).

This analysis is further supported by binary logistic regression analysis, which was carried out to assess the relationship between dependent variables (satisfaction with the training and achievement of objectives) and independent variables (including attitudinal and demographic variables).
Binary logistic regression analysis is a form of regression which is used when the dependent is a dichotomy (i.e. binary) and the independents are of any type (for example different scales, including interval or categorical variables). This technique can also incorporate different scales, and therefore include multiple different independent variables, whether they are attitudinal, or demographic.

The results prove, as shown below in Figure 8.3, that where the main training objective was completely achieved, respondents were more than six times more likely to rate themselves as very satisfied than those who reported the main objective had not been completely achieved. Furthermore, when the training was rated as being very good value for money, respondents were nearly five times more likely to provide a very satisfied rating than those who did not rate the training as very good value for money. Both of these relationships are in line with relationships discovered in the 2008 study.

In 2013, two new significant relationships were discovered as part of the overall satisfaction model. Firstly, where the wider impact of the training had a positive impact on the fair treatment of employees, respondents were nearly twice as likely to provide a very satisfied rating (than those who perceived the training to have a negative or no impact on the fair treatment of employees). Secondly, where respondents worked at a non-private sector organisation (i.e. a public or third sector organisation), they were nearly twice as likely as those who worked at a private sector organisation to provide a very satisfied rating. Sector was a new variable added to the model this year, and was not tested for inclusion in the model in 2008.

**Figure 8.3 Binary logistic regression – satisfaction with Workplace Training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Odds ratios</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training objectives completely achieved</td>
<td>6.312</td>
<td>p&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good value for money</td>
<td>4.940</td>
<td>p&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive impact on the fair treatment of employees</td>
<td>2.165</td>
<td>p&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-private organisation</td>
<td>1.856</td>
<td>p&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: -2 Log Likelihood=318.545; N=371 Source: ORC International, 2013

Further detail on the binary logistic regression exploring satisfaction with the Workplace Training is available in Appendix 1.

Those who were very satisfied at an overall level tended to be those who had maximised the impact of their training by taking further actions in relation to organisational policies and procedures as a result of the training; four in five (80 per cent) had done this, whilst 66 per cent had not. Amongst those who were very satisfied, the most popular action to take in relation to the training was to

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21 The model in Figure 8.3 only includes variables with a significant impact on satisfaction. Detail of other variables tested for their relationship with the satisfaction is available in Appendix 1.
revise an area of practice in relation to the issues discussed – again, four in five (81 per cent) reported that they had done this, compared to 70 per cent who had not.

Positively for Acas, respondents who showed higher satisfaction levels also reported use of other Acas services in the last 12 months (78 per cent of those very satisfied, compared to 62 per cent of those who did not use other Acas services in the last 12 months). It is unclear whether this usage of other Acas services has contributed to higher satisfaction levels with Workplace Training, or has taken place as a result of the high satisfaction levels with Workplace Training.

Satisfaction was also notably higher within the first year after the training – around eight in ten (82 per cent between one to five months, and 79 per cent between six to eleven months) reported themselves as very satisfied compared to seven in ten (68 per cent) between 12 to 15 months after the training. This could be due to immediate benefits after the event being less apparent as time has elapsed since the training.

**Delegate feedback**

To add further insight into overall satisfaction with Workplace Training, Acas provided aggregated delegate feedback for organisations in the sample, derived from delegate feedback forms received on the day of the training. As outlined below in Figure 8.4, delegate feedback is equally positive to feedback from training commissioners, with three quarters of both groups (76 per cent) reporting that they were very satisfied. Notably, none of the delegates reported dissatisfaction at an overall level.

**Figure 8.4 Training Commissioner Feedback Compared to Delegate Feedback**

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Training commissioners: Q26 Taking everything into account, now that some time has passed since you received the training from Acas, would you say you were.... Base: 402 – All respondents, excluding don’t know. Delegates: Q.6/7 Overall, how satisfied are you with this event? (from Acas delegate feedback form) Base: 245 – All delegates who provided a response.
Qualitative Overview

Case study respondents reported high satisfaction with Acas Workplace Training overall – most training commissioners and delegates reported that they were “very satisfied” with Acas, and all would look to use them again.

As the training commissioner in Case Study Four reported:

“I thought it was really informative. It was really good, and gave me the certainty that I needed regarding disciplinary, and I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the day long training, and it was quite nice being in a room with other managers away from the work arena.”

8.2 Achievement of objectives

After being asked to rate their satisfaction with the training, respondents were then asked whether the main objective of the training was achieved. Results were very positive, as seven in ten respondents (70 per cent) reported that their main objective was completely achieved, and three in ten (29 per cent) that it was partially achieved. Six respondents (two per cent) did not know whether their main objective was achieved or not, and just one respondent reported that their main objective was not at all achieved. These results are not directly comparable to 2008 results due to a change in the question wording.

As outlined overleaf in Figure 8.5, respondents’ views on whether their main objective was achieved differed, depending on the objective. Whilst eight in ten reported that the main objective was completely achieved in terms of improving adherence to policies and procedures (82 per cent), and improving staff knowledge (79 per cent), this figure was notably lower for improving employment relations (63 per cent), and improving the organisation’s performance (47 per cent). Reasons for this could include the context of the Workplace Training intervention, and any issues in measuring or attributing the completion of objectives. For example, as Workplace Training may be the sole method used to improve staff knowledge, this would make any impacts easy to isolate in order to review whether the objective was completely achieved or not. In contrast, due to the complexity of an objective such as improving the organisation’s performance, Workplace Training may only form part of the intervention. This would make it more difficult for respondents to trace any impacts from the Workplace Training through to organisational performance, and isolate them from any other factors to be able to take a view on whether the main objective was completely achieved or not.

22 In 2008, respondents were asked to consider whether the main one or two objectives of the training were achieved, whereas in 2013, a decision was taken to simplify the question, and only refer to the (one) main objective.
Figure 8.5 Achievement of main objective

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q27 You said that the main objective in doing the training was (OBJECTIVE). Overall, would you say the main objective of the training was:

Base: 402 - All respondents (Improving adherence to policies or procedures: 96, Improving employment relations: 97, Improving the organisation’s performance: 38, Improving staff knowledge: 122). Due to low base sizes, although the following responses have been included in the overall figures above, they have not been shown individually: Improving employee health and wellbeing: 17, Reducing absenteeism: 4, Promoting equality and diversity: 24.

The relationship between the main objective, and whether respondents deemed this objective to be completely achieved was also explored by binary logistic regression, and the results can be observed in Figure 8.6. This logistic regression analysis revealed that where the main reason for commissioning the training was to inform and help develop policies, respondents were nearly three and a half times more likely than those for whom this was not the main reason to rate their main objective as completely rather than partially or not at all achieved. A possible reason for this is that half of respondents who reported informing and helping to develop policies as their main reason for commissioning the training also selected improving staff knowledge (27 per cent), or improving adherence to policies and procedures (20 per cent) as their main objective. In this way, the particular reason for commissioning training could be acting as a proxy for these two objectives which have a very high impact on respondents rating their training objectives as completely achieved.

The logistic regression analysis also revealed that where the main objective was improving adherence to policies or procedures, respondents were three times more likely than those for whom this was not the main objective to rate this objective as completely achieved. Respondents who selected improving staff knowledge as their main objective were twice as likely as those for whom this was not the main objective to report that this main objective was completely achieved than they were to relate it as partially or not at all achieved.
Figure 8.6 Binary logistic regression – achievement of training objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Odds ratios</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main reason for commissioning the training: To inform and help develop policies</td>
<td>3.416</td>
<td>p&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main objective: Improving adherence to policies or procedures</td>
<td>3.240</td>
<td>p&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main objective: Improving staff knowledge</td>
<td>2.359</td>
<td>p&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further detail on the binary logistic regression exploring achievement of objectives post Workplace Training is available in Appendix 1.

As discussed previously, the completion of objectives is closely related to both overall satisfaction and perceptions of the value for money of the training. Respondents who rated their main objective as completely achieved were more likely to be very satisfied (80 per cent, compared to 43 per cent who were fairly satisfied), and/or to rate the Workplace Training as very good value for money (75 per cent, compared to 64 per cent who rated it as fairly good value for money).

8.3 Willingness to recommend

Nearly all respondents (95 per cent) reported that they would recommend Acas training on the topic of their training undertaken to other organisations. Only three per cent reported that they would not recommend Acas training, and two per cent did not know.

This high level of willingness to recommend expressed by respondents is in line with the high satisfaction ratings (97 per cent were very satisfied), and high levels of praise for the value for money of the training (87 per cent viewed the training as very or fairly good value for money, further explored in Section 8.4). Respondents who were more likely to recommend Acas training also tended to be those who had used other Acas services in the last 12 months (97 per cent), and so potentially had other reasons (beside Workplace Training) for recommending Acas, and/or organisations who reported that their turnover had contracted over the past five years (100 per cent).

Encouragingly, those who were more likely to recommend Acas were also more likely to have made a change to policies and/or practices as a result of the training (97 per cent had, 86 per cent had not), and so have more to actively discuss when recommending Acas.

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Note: -2 Log Likelihood=426.575; N=381 Source: ORC International, 2013

23 The model in Figure 8.6 only includes variables with a significant impact on the achievement of objectives. Detail of other variables tested for their relationship with the achievement of objectives is available in Appendix 1.
8.4 Value for money and pricing

All respondents were asked to rate the value for money of the Workplace Training received from Acas. The results were positive, with nearly nine in ten respondents (87 per cent) reporting that Acas provided either good, or very good value for money. As outlined below in Figure 8.7, these results are in line with 2008, apart from a slight (yet significant) increase in respondents who rated Acas Workplace Training as very poor value for money (up from two per cent in 2008 to five per cent in 2013).

Figure 8.7 Perceptions of value for money

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q29 How would you rate the value for money of the training? Would you say it was...Base: 397 – All respondents, excluding don’t know.
Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2008) Base: 389 – All respondents, excluding don’t know.

As discussed earlier in this section, there is a clear relationship between positive perceptions of satisfaction, value for money, and whether the objectives were completely achieved. Just over half of all respondents (56 per cent) rated Acas Workplace Training as very good value for money. These respondents were also more likely to be very satisfied with Acas overall (65 per cent, compared to 27 per cent who were fairly satisfied) and/or more likely to state that the objectives of the training had been completely achieved (59 per cent, compared to 48 per cent who rated them as partially achieved).

The main other reason for variation in the perception of value for money was course topic. Those who rated Acas Workplace Training as very good value for money were more likely to have commissioned courses on Fair Treatment at Work (62 per cent) or HR and People Management (61 per cent) than Employment Relations (41 per cent). Conversely, focusing in on the experiences of the seven per cent of respondents (28 individuals) who rated Acas Workplace Training as either very or fairly poor value for money, these respondents were more likely to have commissioned training on Employment Relations (rated by 15 per cent as poor value for money) or Fair Treatment at Work (rated by nine per cent as poor value for money). This is illustrated below in Figure 8.8.
### Figure 8.8 Value for Money of training by topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value for money</th>
<th>Overall (%)</th>
<th>Employment Relations (%)</th>
<th>Fair Treatment at Work (%)</th>
<th>HR and People Management (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good value for money</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly good value for money</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average value for money</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly poor value for money</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor value for money</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good (NET)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor (NET)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q29 How would you rate the value for money of the training? Would you say it was...Base: 397 - All respondents, excluding don't know.

In 2013, to understand more about respondents’ attitudes to pricing, respondents were asked to provide two training costs in relation to the cost per person for a one day in-company Acas training course for 15 people, excluding VAT. The first cost related to a price point that the respondent considered to be so expensive that they would not consider purchasing the training. The second cost related to a price point that the respondent considered to be priced so low that they would consider that the quality could not be very good. Respondents struggled to answer these questions; just over a quarter (27 per cent) provided a don’t know response in relation to the most expensive price point, and nearly two in five (38 per cent) provided a don’t know response in relation to the cheapest price point.

For those who provided price points for each scenario, Figure 8.9 overleaf shows the mean average highest and lowest price points respondents would be prepared to pay at an overall level, per person, based on a one day Acas in-company training course for 15 people excluding VAT. Figure 8.9 also shows these figures split by course topic.
Figure 8.9 Training Price Points (per person, based on a one day Acas in-company training course for 15 people, excluding VAT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Highest price point</th>
<th>Lowest price point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>£107.85</td>
<td>£24.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Relations</td>
<td>£95.02</td>
<td>£20.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Treatment at Work</td>
<td>£78.57</td>
<td>£23.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR and People Management</td>
<td>£126.84</td>
<td>£26.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q30 At what price per person would you consider one day of Acas in-company training to be so expensive that you would not consider buying it? Please give a price that excludes VAT. Base: 295 – all respondents, excluding don’t know. Q30b At what price per person would you consider one day of Acas in-company training to be priced so low that you would feel that the quality could not be very good? Please give a price that excludes VAT. Base: 251 – all responses excluding don’t know.

Focusing first on the highest price point, at an overall level respondents determined £107.85 per person to be the threshold where a one day in-company Acas training course for 15 people became so expensive that they would not consider purchasing it. As could be expected, this threshold differed by course topic – the threshold set for HR and People Management training (£126.84) was significantly higher than that for Fair Treatment at Work training (£78.57).

Two further key differences impacted on the highest price point for respondents. Firstly, for those for whom the main objective of their recent training was improving organisational performance, the highest price point increased to £140.24 per person. Respondents seemingly may have been prepared to pay more for training in this case, as they expected clear benefits in improved organisational performance to come from the training. Secondly, the highest price point was also raised for those who rated Acas Workplace Training as offering very good value for money. These respondents set the highest threshold of the training as £129, compared to £83.33 for those who rated Acas Workplace Training as fairly good value for money. These respondents may have been prepared to pay more, as they saw that they were getting more value for their money. There were no differences in mean score by sector or recent organisational performance.

Now focusing on the lowest price point, at an overall level, respondents determined £24.27 per person as the threshold where a one day in-company Acas training course for 15 people was priced so low that it was perceived the quality could not be very good. Although this value fluctuated slightly by topic, as outlined in Figure 8.9, these variations were not large enough to be significant. Again, there were also no significant differences in mean scores by sector, or recent organisational performance.
Qualitative Overview

The training commissioners who participated in the case study interviews generally expressed positive views in relation to the value for money of Acas training courses. As the training commissioner in Case Study Two noted:

“I think they (Acas) are better value for money. It’s what people feel about it. Everyone has heard of Acas. When you say to someone you’ve organised a training session by Acas, they feel really special, and that they’ve been singled out for something that is of value. The reputational value of Acas means that people feel they have really had something their employer has thought about, and valued them enough to provide.”

As another respondent reported, it could be seen as insensitive to source courses on some topic areas which did not provide good value for money:

“It would be difficult when we are making people redundant to then spend thousands on employment lawyers to come in for a few hours. So the value for money is much better and more importantly it’s the impartiality of Acas, anyone can go on their website it’s for employers and an employee so they see it’s impartial.”

Whilst consistently positive views were received overall, there was some variance in whether Acas was perceived to be cheaper or more expensive than competitors. For example, one described Acas training as “significantly cheaper” than competitors, whilst another referred to Acas “providing good value for money, but not a cheap deal”.

A different training commissioner was also able to offer a further perspective on the value for money of Acas Workplace Training compared to other organisations:

“Yes definitely. I think it has become a more competitive market and costs have dropped significantly over the last five years what with the financial situation...a lot of consultancies have sprung up as well but it was really good value for money considering we could have 10 people on the course”.

Two training commissioners noted that in terms of value for money, they "did not really look at others, as Acas are going to have good quality, and meet our needs.”

8.5 Use of other providers

To add further context to the evaluation, in 2013, respondents were asked whether they also used other training providers to receive training on employment issues. Just over half (55 per cent) of all respondents reported that they did use other training providers to receive training. A further 38 per cent only used Acas, and six per cent were unsure.
Respondents who were most likely to only use Acas tended to work at SME-sized organisations (48 per cent, compared to 32 per cent for large organisations), and generally be based at one site (51 per cent). They also reported stability in turnover over the past five years (65 per cent), but a reduction of employee numbers over the same period (44 per cent, compared to 32 per cent where employee numbers had increased).

In terms of topics, those who were most likely only to use Acas were more likely to commission courses on Equality and Diversity (47 per cent) than Information and Consultation (28 per cent). Further to this, these respondents tended to commission courses focussed on improving adherence to policies and procedures (45 per cent, rather than improving employment relations, 31 per cent), and were also likely to report a positive previous experience with Acas, where their main objective had been completely achieved (41 per cent, compared to 30 per cent partially achieved).

In contrast, respondents who were most likely to use other providers were larger organisations (59 per cent) compared to smaller organisations (40 per cent), and often had multiple sites (59 per cent). These organisations reported growth in both financial turnover (64 per cent) and/or employee numbers (62 per cent) over the past five years. Whilst there was no significant pattern in the courses commissioned, the main reason for commissioning training was most likely to be to make improvements in the topic area (62 per cent). Therefore respondents who used other providers had different organisational contexts, budgets, and needs.

Amongst those who used other providers, the most popular types of organisation used for training included consultancies and freelance HR professionals (23 per cent), and solicitors (13 per cent). Ten per cent also used the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

Those who used other providers were asked whether they found Acas training to be generally cheaper, about the same, or generally more expensive than other providers. As outlined below in Figure 8.10, these results were mixed. Two in five (43 per cent) reported that the cost was “about the same”, and just over one in five (26 per cent) that Acas Workplace Training events were generally cheaper.

**Figure 8.10 Cost of Acas Workplace Training compared to other providers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The cost of Acas workplace training events compared to other providers you have experienced</th>
<th>26%</th>
<th>43%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>11%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generally cheaper</td>
<td>About the same</td>
<td>More expensive</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q36 How does Acas compare in terms of the cost of their Workplace Training events compared to other providers you have experienced? Would you say they are... Base: 225 – all respondents who had used other providers to receive training on employment issues.
Those who viewed Acas as cheaper than other providers tended to also rate the value for money of Acas training courses as very good (37 per cent, compared to 15 per cent who rated it as fairly good). No significant differences were detected by topic.

Qualitative Overview

Several training commissioners made reference to also using other providers. The most frequently mentioned other provider was the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). In comparison to Acas Workplace Training, training from the CIPD was characterised by one respondent as “less suited for smaller organisations” and “quite text booky”. A further respondent noted that in relation to CIPD training:

“If you look at CIPD for example you’d be looking at a lot more money and I’ve found in the past that ACAS can deliver. Certainly at line manager stage you don’t need to necessarily need to go into the depth that CIPD might take them, it’s more the overview.”
FUTURE USE AND IMPROVEMENTS

Summary

- The vast majority of respondents (96 per cent) reported that they would be likely to use Acas again if there was a need for further training at their organisation, either in relation to the training already received, or another area of employment relations. In line with the most common courses delivered over the period, the course most respondents were “likely” to need to commission focused on Discipline and Grievance (26 per cent).

- In line with the high satisfaction reported for Acas Workplace Training, only three in ten respondents (30 per cent) suggested improvements to Workplace Training which could be made by Acas. These suggestions focussed on increasing the amount of tailoring to each organisation, improving the training materials, and making the training more interactive.
  - In line with the quantitative findings, few improvements were requested during case study interviews. The most common improvement requested was to increase the tailoring of Acas Workplace Training to individual organisations, and some specific suggestions were put forward, such as developing a small workplace package specifically aimed at small organisations.

9.1 Future use of Acas

Towards the end of the telephone survey, respondents were asked whether they would use Acas Workplace Training again, if a need arose at their organisation, either in relation to the training already received, or another area of employment relations. The feedback received was very positive as nearly all respondents who provided a response (96 per cent) reported that they were either very (71 per cent) or fairly (24 per cent) likely to use Acas training again.

As could be expected, those who were most likely to report that they would use Acas training again exhibited high overall satisfaction (98 per cent very satisfied), and were positive about the value for money of the training received (99 per cent rated value for money as very good). Furthermore, respondents who were more likely to use Acas training again were also those who reported that they had taken action as a result of the training, and specifically revised an area of practice in relation to the issues addressed (98 per cent, compared to 94 per cent who had not).

Interestingly, respondents working at organisations where the Workplace Training event was held longer ago (12 to 15 months) were more likely to report that they would use Acas training again (99 per cent) than those where the Workplace Training event was held 6 to 11 months ago (93 per cent). One possible reason

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24 Excluding don’t know responses.
for this is the nature of the question – although the question was phrased in the context of ‘if’ respondents needed more training in the future, this need may be more apparent the further respondents are from their last Acas training intervention.

These results are in line with results reported in 2008, when seven in ten (68 per cent) reported they were very likely to use Acas training again, and 25 per cent that they were fairly likely to do so. Also in line with 2008, and illustrated below in Figure 9.1, the topic area where respondents had the highest likelihood to re-use Acas was Fair Treatment at Work.

Figure 9.1 Likelihood of using Acas training again

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>2013 Topic Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008 (%)</td>
<td>2013 (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment Relations (%)</td>
<td>Fair Treatment at Work (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly likely</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither likely nor unlikely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly unlikely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unlikely</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely (NET)</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely (NET)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q31 If in the future you need more training on TOPIC, or another area of employment relations, how likely would you be to use Acas training again? Would you be... Base: 391 - All respondents, excluding don’t know. Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2008) Base: 414 – All respondents, excluding don’t know.

Respondents who reported that they were either very or fairly likely to use Acas training again, were asked to specify which topic areas they would be most likely to need. As illustrated overleaf in Figure 9.2, the most popular individual courses requested were on Discipline and Grievance (26 per cent), Conflict, Mediation and Relationship Issues (22 per cent), and Performance Management (16 per cent).

It appears that the demand for future courses follows a similar pattern to the Workplace Training courses delivered to respondents over the past 15 months. As outlined in Section three on the profile of the Workplace Training courses received by respondents, the most popular individual Workplace Training course received related to Discipline and Grievance (28 per cent). Conflict, Mediation and
Relationship issues was the fifth most popular course (eight per cent), and Performance Management was the seventh (five per cent).

There is a clear pattern of respondents reporting that if they were likely to commission further training from Acas, they would be more likely to re-commission the same course, rather than a different course. As an example, at an overall level, a quarter of respondents (26 per cent) reported that they would be likely to need training in Discipline and Grievance. This figure almost doubled to 46 per cent when focusing solely on training commissioners who had previously commissioned Workplace Training courses on Discipline and Grievance. More than one in five respondents (22 per cent) reported that although they were “likely” to use Acas training again in the future, they did not know which area of training this was likely to be in relation to.

**Figure 9.2 Likely Future Training Needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline and Grievance</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict, Mediation, Relationship Issues</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Management</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Law</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/ Absence Management</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision/First Line Management</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality and Diversity</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Management</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and Consultation</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying and Harassment</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIWM Mediation Training</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Management</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting, Contracting and Employing People</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Families/Parental Rights</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundancy</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation and Collective Bargaining</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Discrimination</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q32 Which areas of training would you be likely to need training on in the future? Base: 374 - All respondents who would be likely to use Acas training in the future. Note: Multiple responses were allowed therefore responses may sum to more than 100 per cent

At an aggregate topic level, just over half (52 per cent) of future courses requested were on HR and People Management, 36 per cent were on Fair Treatment at Work, and 22 per cent were on Employment Relations.
Qualitative Overview

In line with the high future use of Acas highlighted in the quantitative survey, all case study respondents reported that they would use Acas again if the need arose.

Positively, one training commissioner who commissioned equality and diversity training reported that she would also look to use Acas training in other areas:

“Yes I would. On other topics as well”, adding: “I have always, whenever I have approached ACAS, I have always found them exceptionally flexible and willing to work with me to help me find a solution to whatever the problem is.”

9.2 Improvements to Acas Workplace Training

Respondents were asked which one factor they thought Acas could improve about their Workplace Training service. Positively, nearly six in ten respondents (57 per cent) thought there was nothing that Acas could improve; a further one in ten respondents (13 per cent) did not know, or chose not to specify an improvement. Given the high satisfaction, willingness to recommend and likelihood to re-use results discussed earlier, these results are to some extent not surprising. Indeed, as expected, those who reported that there was “nothing” Acas could improve tended to be very satisfied at an overall level (62 per cent) reported that the objectives of the training were “completely achieved” (65 per cent) and/or also rated the value for money of Acas training as very good (63 per cent).

Of those who did suggest areas for improvement for Acas, the most popular are outlined below in Figure 9.3. The top five of these improvements were also incorporated into the qualitative case study interviews with training commissioners, where feedback was sought on which of these improvements was the most important for Acas to prioritise.

The most popular improvements from the quantitative survey included increasing the amount of tailoring of Workplace Training events to organisations, updating the training materials used, and making the training more interactive. As this was a new question added to the 2013 survey, no comparison is possible to previous data.
Figure 9.3 Areas for improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvements</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase tailoring/ make it more relevant to our organisation/ less talk about Acas</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve, update and increase training materials</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make training more interactive</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Acas' understanding of our organisation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Acas organisation and administration</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include more case studies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve quality of the trainer/ show more enthusiasm</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased contact before the course/ meet the trainer beforehand</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013) Q33 And finally, what one thing do you think Acas could improve about their Workplace Training? Base: All respondents. Note: Multiple responses were allowed.

Qualitative Overview

In line with the quantitative survey, qualitative respondents struggled to articulate improvements to Acas Workplace Training, perhaps due to their high satisfaction levels. All training commissioners were shown a show card, which included the top five improvements emanating from the quantitative research as outlined above in Figure 9.3.

The most important improvement suggested was to increase the amount of tailoring of the Workplace Training to the organisation, as “one size does not fit all”. Further specific suggested improvements included:

- Developing a small workplace package specifically aimed at small organisations.
- The possibility of being able to ask the trainer follow-up questions a couple of days later (although a different organisation reported that the trainer had provided contact details so that this was a possibility).

“Should a question pop onto their heads two days later if there is a way they can go back to the trainers with a question instead of it all being done and dusted on one single day; allow an ongoing interaction or at least an availability and it’s up to the participants to use it if they need to.”

- Submitting an email request to enquire about Workplace Training, rather than needing to make an initial phone call.
- Improvements to the training materials.
10 CONCLUSIONS

The overarching objective for this research project was to provide a reliable picture of the short, medium and long-term impacts of Acas Workplace Training. We also aimed to explore satisfaction and experiences regarding Workplace Training; attitudes towards the value for money of Acas training; to report of any key trends apparent since the last evaluation survey was conducted in 2008, and to identify any service limitations and hence areas for improvement. Here we share a synopsis of these findings.

Satisfaction with Acas Workplace Training remains high, helped by the high achievement of objectives

Nearly all respondents (96 per cent) reported that they were satisfied with the Workplace Training they received, and three quarters (76 per cent) rated themselves as very satisfied, notably higher than in 2008. Non-private sector organisations (public or third sector), were found to be twice as likely as those who worked at a private sector organisation to provide a very satisfied rating.

Organisations typically showed high satisfaction with the trainer, and the tailoring and delivery of the training, as outlined in the qualitative case studies. Furthermore, nearly all respondents (95 per cent) reported that they would recommend Acas training to other organisations. Insight from the case studies highlighted that commissioners felt reassured by being able to speak to the trainer before the course, and arrange for the training to be tailored to their organisation. Indeed for one commissioner, an initial meeting with the proposed trainer was the influential factor for commissioning the training in the first instance. The tailoring of training also appeared to set Acas apart from other suppliers, with a perception voiced by some that such a level of tailoring would not be available to the same extent from elsewhere or would be charged at extra cost.

Positively, the vast majority (98 per cent) of respondents also reported that their main objective was completely (70 per cent), or partially (29 per cent) achieved.

The achievement of objectives varied by objective, with high achievement rates found where the main objective was improving adherence to policies or procedures or increasing staff knowledge. This was seen to align with the finding that where the main objective was improving adherence to policies or procedures, respondents were nearly three times more likely to rate this objective as completely achieved. Achievement of objectives was also found to link back to the initial reason for commissioning the training in the first instance; where the main reason for commissioning the training was to inform and help develop policies, respondents were nearly three and a half times more likely to rate their main objective as completely rather than partially or not at all achieved.

As expected, and consistent with findings in 2008, a close relationship was also discovered between the achievement of objectives and overall satisfaction. Indeed, those who reported that their main objective was completely achieved were found to be more than six times more likely to rate themselves as very satisfied, emphasising the importance of realising prior objectives, and tailoring the training to ensure the objectives are met.
Organisations perceive Acas’ Workplace Training offering to represent good value for money and the vast majority would use this service again

Nearly nine in ten respondents (87 per cent) rated Acas Workplace Training as good, or very good, value for money. A strong relationship was also detected between value for money, and high satisfaction. Where respondents rated the training as being very good value for money, they were found to be nearly five times more likely to provide a very satisfied rating, highlighting the importance of maintaining this positive perception of value for money. Furthermore, almost all respondents agreed they would use Acas training again (96%).

A key reason found to be influential in the decision making process when commissioning training through Acas was its reputation, and this sentiment has increased since 2008. This was echoed through case study interviews, where it was also emphasized that Acas was known and highly regarded by delegates as well as training commissioners, which was seen to enable initial positive delegate engagement ahead of training events.

Positive impacts were evident with some attribution to Acas Workplace Training

Impacts evident

Positive impacts of Acas Workplace Training were identified at various different levels: participant, organisational efficiencies level, organisational practice level and at a wider organisational level. Key impacts derived from the Acas Workplace Training on each were found to include:

- **Participant level**: Workplace Training was found to have had a very positive effect on participants, particularly enhancing their awareness of responsibilities, and ability to deal effectively with the topic area going forwards.

- **Organisational efficiencies**: Medium to long term impacts were detected, most notably increased productivity (26 per cent, for which 83 per cent rated as all or in part due to the Workplace Training) and a decrease in employee grievances (13 per cent, for which 76 per cent rated as all or in part due to the Workplace Training).

- **Organisational practice level**: Just over half of all organisations (56 per cent) reported that they had revised an area of practice relating to the issues addressed in the training. Organisational changes were found to be more likely where the Acas Workplace Training was part of an overall training programme.

- **Wider organisational impacts**: Encouragingly wider impacts were found to be more prolific than in 2008, particularly with regard to an improvement to both the fair treatment of employees (from 43 per cent in 2008 to 77 per cent in 2013) and the ability to manage change in staff or HR (from 40 per cent in 2008 to 66 per cent in 2013).
Logistic regression analysis of the survey dataset also revealed that where the wider impact of the training had a positive impact on the fair treatment of employees, respondents were nearly twice as likely to provide a very satisfied rating with the Workplace Training overall. This reinforces the importance, and interlinking nature of impacts on the organisation and satisfaction with the Workplace Training.

Case study interviews did, however, reveal more examples of softer rather than more measurable impacts of the Workplace Training. Whilst some commissioners were able to partly quantify the impacts pre and post Acas Workplace Training event for certain organisational metrics, the majority struggled to do so, with some not deeming the proposed metrics to be relevant to their situation or the initial objectives that they had for the training. The nature of the training course also seemed to affect the ability and/ or relevance of quantifying longer term impacts, for example, whilst one commissioner could quantify the numbers of grievances before and after Workplace Training on redundancy and grievances, others who received training on consultancy and information, and bullying and harassment could not.

This is not to allay the positive findings unearthed through two particular case studies highlighting potential longer term impacts which were attributed to the Acas Workplace Training: one reported a “significant saving” due to a reduction in employee absences as a result of stress management training, and another identified a reduction in employee grievances as a result of redundancy training, which had led to substantial time and cost savings within the organisation.

Some specific improvements suggested, but only when prompted...

Given the high satisfaction levels and levels of willingness to recommend recorded, areas for improvement were limited. Where suggestions were made they focused on increasing the amount of tailoring of the Workplace Training event to organisations, updating the training materials used, and making the training more interactive.

It was in fact through case study interviews where, when prompted, commissioners and delegates proffered more varied suggested improvement areas, such as:

- Developing a small workplace package specifically aimed at small organisations.

- The possibility of being able to ask the trainer follow-up questions (and keep this support channel open).

- Facilitating the initial enquiry process by moving this online with the ability to email a trainer from the outset.

- Improvements to the training materials, particularly the slides presented.
Overall Synopsis

Overall the Workplace Training has been found to be extremely well received by both commissioners and delegates, evident through the high satisfaction level and level of willingness to recommend recorded. Some varying trends have been depicted since 2008, indicating a changing profile of businesses partaking in Workplace Training events, but also, a greater degree of wider impacts being felt across organisations as a result of the training. To that end, impacts on organisational efficiencies have been identified, with increases in productivity and declines in the number of grievances recorded, with some seemingly high levels of attribution to the Acas Workplace Training. Indeed some case studies have supported such impacts, and experiences relayed where the knowledge acquired through the Acas Workplace Training has led to substantial time and cost savings further down the line.

Limitations as to the extent that improvements could be attributed to Acas alone have, however, arisen. This is in part due to the fact that organisations who had made changes particularly at an organisational practice level, were more likely to have indicated that the Acas Workplace Training fell under a broader organisational-wide programme of training. In addition, changes made as a result of the training would still need to be implemented by a number of staff through the application of a range of practices and techniques that were not solely acquired via the Workplace Training.

Nonetheless, the qualitative impacts should not be overlooked and a number of positive examples were more clearly relayed where Acas Workplace Training has helped enhance awareness and improve delegates’ ability to deal with certain topics. The fact that first hand examples were given where training has been put into practice is a clear endorsement of the current effectiveness of Acas’ Workplace Training and its importance in providing real-world, practical support to using approaches and techniques that could be applied within workplaces.
11 RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Maintain high satisfaction, and positive views of Acas

As identified throughout this report, satisfaction with Acas Workplace Training remains very high, with three quarters (76 per cent) of respondents being very satisfied with the service received. Respondents also reported very positive views on Workplace Training achieving their main objective, providing good value for money, and the vast majority noted that they would re-use, and/or recommend Acas training to others.

The challenge for Acas now is to maintain these high levels of satisfaction. We have seen how achievement of objectives and value for money perceptions are closely linked to overall satisfaction and thus should performance dip in any one area, one would expect to see this reflected on overall satisfaction levels. By maintaining these positive views, Acas Workplace Training can continue to successfully support organisations in managing their employment relations, fair treatment at work and any HR and people management issues.

2) Promote positive views of Workplace Training

The general endorsement of Workplace Training by Acas’ customers should be promoted, both internally and externally, in attempts to raise awareness and increase utilisation of Acas Workplace Training.

These results could be disseminated via a presentation to Acas colleagues to share the successes of Acas Workplace Training; we would also advise circulating the publication of this report, and associated case studies. Furthermore, we would recommend that this feedback is shared with Acas colleagues working on the Acas Helpline, as this may assist them to suggest Workplace Training where it may be beneficial for organisations. Acas could also look to promote awareness of Workplace Training via the Acas website (upon publication of this report) or via external communications.

3) Encourage increased customer interaction with Acas across a range of services

The importance of prior positive experiences of Acas services was evident in influencing organisations to choose Acas to deliver Workplace Training. Given the vast majority of respondents had used other Acas services in the last 12 months, Acas should look to increase customer take-up on other Acas services to enhance awareness of the different support options available. In practice, this could mean improving the signposting between Acas services or (where appropriate) introducing customers to new services which they could use for support. We envisage that this would encourage Workplace Training customers to also use other Acas services, and non-Workplace Training customers to consider Workplace Training, further helping to raise awareness of this service.
4) Facilitate a support network beyond the training between Acas trainers, commissioners and delegates

Acas trainers were found to play a key role in fostering goodwill and through case study interviews they were largely praised for their conduct, knowledge and delivery of Workplace Training courses.

There did however appear to be some inconsistency with follow up contact: one delegate reported having been given the trainer's email address which he could contact at any subsequent point with any further questions, whilst others requested this service but noted it was not included as part of their training course. This would appear to be a useful functionality, and additional service enhancement; through developing further a support network, and increased interaction, Acas could look to secure increased loyalty and re-usage of their Workplace Training services. This continued contact would also help Acas monitor further longer-term trends and impacts as a result of Acas Workplace Training.

5) Where possible, allow for further tailoring to Workplace Training

Whilst positive feedback has been collated, when asked what Acas could improve, a small proportion of respondents requested an increase in the amount of tailoring provided to help ensure that the content and delivery of the Workplace Training was as relevant as possible to each organisation. In practice, for Acas, this may mean reviewing the existing process of tailoring training, and looking at how further amendments could be made to support different organisations. This was noted specifically at an industry level (for example, one case study requested training be further tailored so that it is more relevant to the Recreation (Sports) Industry) and this was also voiced based on organisational size (specifically ensuring training is tailored to SMEs, who for example, may not have HR departments).

There were also incidents through the case studies, of delegates who attended the training not realising that it had in fact been tailored to their organisation.

Thus whilst the extent of tailoring was praised by some, there appeared to be some room for improvement across other organisations. A consistent checklist detailing the degree of tailoring could therefore be introduced which could act as both an aide memoire for trainers, and a confirmation for commissioners about how the training has been tailored to their organisation.
12 QUALITATIVE CASE STUDIES

12.1 Case Study One

Anonymous organisation, Equality and Diversity Workplace Training, Autumn 2012

1. Background

The organisation is a public sector organisation based in the north of England, employing around 9,000 employees in total. Two respondents were interviewed as part of this case study: the commissioner of the Workplace Training (WPT) course (referred to throughout as ‘the commissioner’), and a manager who attended the training (referred to throughout as ‘the manager’). Both respondents work within the corporate HR team, where they are responsible for strategic policy matters.

The organisation commissioned training on Equality and Diversity in Autumn 2012 which specifically focused on Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).

2. Workplace Training Objectives

2.1 Commissioner

Reasons for commissioning Workplace Training

The principal trigger for commissioning Workplace Training through Acas was an organisational restructure, a part of which included the disbandment of their previously standalone diversity unit, which previously employed 12 members of staff and dealt with equality and diversity matters. These functions were subsequently split across the HR team and a clear training need was identified in response to a notable increase in enquiry calls from staff:

“It made us realise [that] we never received so many calls about when to do things: ‘I don’t know how to do that’, etc because as we’ve changed we are expecting our managers to do things that they haven’t had to do, so it identified a training need.”

The intention of commissioning a single Workplace Training course was therefore to train the HR managers (dispersed at different divisions), given a new line of enquiry had been opened up and they were receiving queries from managers in this area:

“..managers who have never had to do it before without support they are going to the HR managers so we needed the HR managers to understand the principles and what good equality and diversity set up looked like to give support to divisions.”

The aim was for the local HR managers to assess their own divisional needs and then decide what needed to be looked at.
The training was also commissioned to review the organisation’s Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process, described as previously being “12 pages of A4 long” and in need of updating post the Equality Act (2010). They wanted to implement a streamlined process to ensure they were getting quality information. EIA’s are written every time the organisation reviews a policy, or implements a new project or process.

**Objective(s) of the training**

The main objective cited by the commissioner was:

“To create a better awareness and understanding of Equality Impact Assessments and that they were being used to make informed decision making.”

**Why the organisation chose Acas**

The commissioner had previously attended another Acas training course herself off site (at Acas offices), and discussed this training need in person during this visit. The reason she chose Acas to deliver the training was said to be due to their reputation and heritage:

“They are seen as experts in their field. What is really good is they come with a certain neutrality that people have respect for and the trust I have from [having] been on other Acas training...I knew they were friendly and approachable which was why I asked them about this training when I was there on a different course.”

Positive feedback was also given on other Acas services used, particularly with materials available on the Acas website.

**2.2 Manager**

The manager who attended the Workplace Training did not think he had attended training on the topic before. He did however have some prior knowledge of, and experience of writing, Equality Impact Assessments. For him, the main objective was to understand the perceptions Acas had about the EIAs from a best practice point of view, and “to get their thought on how they interpreted legislation around equality around the Equality Act”.

**3. Workplace Training Preparation and Delivery**

**3.1 Commissioner**

**Tailoring the training**

The WPT was said to have been “heavily tailored”. The process was seen to be collaborative: the commissioner got in touch with Acas, following which Acas visited them for an initial meeting where they discussed the commissioner’s requirements and concerns. As voiced by the commissioner, tailoring the training facilitated employees’ ability to resonate with the topic:
“The training is much better if we can use examples that people can relate to. So they wanted to use one case study but I said ‘no instead of that let’s make it as real as possible, so a closure of a [type of organisation] or something’. So we did. They put it all together, I provided them some case studies and then we put them together.”

The commissioner was the main person involved in tailoring the training, and she subsequently updated their management team.

**Delivery of the training**

The Workplace Training ran as two sessions, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Roughly 15 employees attended in each. Trade union representatives did not attend because they had already been provided with the equivalent training from trade unions and capacity was limited:

“There were other people who were in greater need... around the time of this training we had a team set up which was called [name of Operation] and they were the people who were managing the change of projects that were going on and numerous [employees] had been brought in to work on these projects and they had no, zero, previous experience of equality and impact assessments, so the places were limited…”

A positive point of the Workplace Training was raised on the use of relevant examples:

“Some of the really useful things Acas were teaching them about how to collect data and how you work out at what point it becomes an impact, there were things I’d not come across before they were able to use as little examples and get them to do it so we know they’ve got it.”

**3.2 Manager**

The Manager was not involved in tailoring the training, although he did acknowledge and recall the relevant case studies and handouts that were tailored to the organisation. When asked what part(s) of the training the Manager found most useful he replied:

“It’s the interaction with people...bouncing things off people or the trainer, the opportunity for discussion. There are one or two parts where perhaps they would clarify where I’d been a bit unsure before. The case studies were good.”

Further positives included the trainer and the "style and pace of delivery”, the time spent on data analysis and the case study element.

When prompted with what didn’t work so well, the manager highlighted that there was not sufficient time to actually create an EIA, which would have been useful.
4. Workplace Training Evaluation

4.1 Commissioner

Evaluation methods used

The commissioner used Acas feedback forms to evaluate the training. The overall consensus was said to be that “generally it was very positive” and deemed to be more straightforward than anticipated:

“... people were afraid that it would be extremely complicated and complex... and I think they were really surprised that the training was straightforward, easy to follow and easy to understand... Anything around equality is a daunting subject...”

It was noted by the commissioner that the type of training evaluation depends on the training course undertaken.

5. Workplace Training Impact

5.1 Commissioner

Short term (immediate) impacts

When asked if there were any immediate actions noted after the Workplace Training, the commissioner responded positively:

“Yes that was definitely the case and the reason I knew that had been successful was those phone calls stopped! I might get the odd one, but whereas before I was getting sometimes three a day, so I knew people were getting the support...”

It was thus perceived that knowledge was being shared more widely and effectively after the Workplace Training.

Longer term impacts

In terms of longer-term impacts, the commissioner noted they continue to have fewer queries on the topic. The organisation has also revised the EIA document itself, a process which the commissioner noted “led us to review our structure and governance around equality a bit like a chain reaction really”.

When asked if this change could be directly attributable to the Acas Workplace Training undertaken, the commissioner replied positively:

“Certainly in terms of reviewing how we do them, and reducing, making more efficient what we’re asking people to do.”

Given the organisational change, attributing specific impacts to the Workplace Training rather than wider change was deemed difficult. For example, as part of the organisational change, they have experienced increased grievances.
Productivity was the only organisational metric thought to have increased due to the training, measured in terms of the number of calls the corporate HR team were receiving but this could not be quantified.

5.2 Manager

When asked if his objective of the training was met the manager agreed this to be the case:

“Yes I think so, I got a lot out of it. I enjoyed it. The trainer was good, he was knowledgeable. It was good working with other people from other HR departments.”

He further agreed he was still now utilising what he had learnt and what was covered on the day of the Workplace Training, adding:

“I have done EIA’s before so I was coming at it with the background from someone who is pretty experienced ... but I do feel that I benefited from the session. In terms of actually things I do differently as a result of having been on it, my general awareness of issues has enhanced as a result of being on the training, and my feel for the potential areas of where there may be impact...because when we’re revising and writing policy we’re having to think about how this might potentially impact and sometimes the potential impact isn’t obvious when we’re revising something so it’s helped maybe in having a broader and deeper understanding of Equality Assessment matters.”

6 Value for Money and pricing

6.1 Commissioner

The HR team also use, to a limited extent, ‘Expert HR’, a licence product which provides a range of HR tools including case law, a facility to email lawyers to ask questions, and lots of best practice guidance.

When asked how Acas compares price-wise, the commissioner noted back to a Mediator training course run by Acas she attended, where there was a “significant price difference” between Acas (who were significantly cheaper) and another supplier that they have used previously, for a similar requirement.

The commissioner also acknowledged that training has reduced over the last five years, and whilst there is still "some training going on, the number of courses is reduced…“

7 Improvements

7.1 Commissioner

From the commissioner’s perspective, any improvements would be based around making the training relevant to her organisation, emphasizing that "It’s not one size fits all".
8 Overall views

8.1 Commissioner

The commissioner agreed the Workplace Training had “definitely” met her expectations. When asked if she would use Acas Workplace Training again, she replied:

“Yes I would. On other topics as well”, adding: “... whenever I have approached Acas I have always found them exceptionally flexible and willing to work with me to help me find a solution to whatever the problem is.”

8.2 Manager

The Manager rated his overall satisfaction with the Workplace Training as “very satisfied” and this was seemingly influenced by the trainer of the course:

“The person who delivered it had a lot of experience with equality issues. Some of the things we were coming up with were not really run of the mill things...we were already pretty experienced so for him to be there and deal with more advance questioning was good…”

The manager also agreed he would recommend Acas’ Workplace Training to others.

Longitudinal Case Study

The Manager was re-interviewed six months later (March 2014). The programme of change and restructure noted in the previous interview had been ongoing over the last six months. An ongoing review and reduction of staff across operational and administrative staff also continues to take place. No further contact with Acas had been made in the last six months, and no further Workplace Training had been commissioned.

Longer Term Impacts – changes to policies

Post the Acas Workplace Training, as relayed in the initial interview, the organisation had revised the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) document itself. EIA’s are written every time the organisation reviews a policy, or implements a new project or process. No further amendments had been made to the document in the last six months. The only change that was identified concerned on the introduction of a new stage in the process of completing EIAs, where they now send completed EIAs through to their Improvement Unit once completed. However this change was seen to “not be a major change” to the previous process. No further changes have been made to the form itself since the last interview.

Longer Term Impacts – changes to organisational metrics

The only metric identified previously as having changed since the Acas Workplace Training was in relation to productivity. This was seen to have increased in the
last interview due to a reduction in telephone queries reaching the corporate HR team on EIAs.

When asked if there had been any further change in this area, the Manager commented that he had not noticed a change in the level of queries about EIAs in the last six months but did note:

"We get very few queries about EIAs ... so that means in itself people are feeling they know how to complete them ... looking back at the training again, they've [Acas] helped us definitely to complete EIAs with more confidence, people have got a better understanding why and how to complete EIAs ... they're now more ingrained I would say than perhaps they were across the organisation in terms of making sure they're done consistently ... and being made before rather than after a decision being made ... more are being completed successfully. I think it's been a positive impact definitely."

**Longer Term Impacts – Wider Impacts**

No wider impacts had been identified in the last six months.

**Overall views on Acas Workplace Training**

When first interviewed six months previously, the commissioner rated Acas as 'very good value for money’ and was ‘very satisfied’ with the service received. The Manager maintained these ratings in the follow-up interview.
12.2 Case Study Two

Case Study 2: University College Oxford (UNIV), bullying and harassment WPT, September 2012

1. Background

University College Oxford (UNIV) is the oldest of the constituent colleges of the University of Oxford. There are around 600 students, 38% of whom are postgraduates. UNIV employs roughly 300 members of staff: some of whom work solely for the college, with others who are joint employees with the University. Within UNIV there are two big employing fellows: the Senior Tutor and the Domestic Bursar. The main respondent, who commissioned the training (referred to as the commissioner) is the Domestic Bursar and is responsible for the non-academic management of the colleges’ resources, which includes people, physical premises and remote premises. The college does not have a human resources managing unit so the commissioner also advises fellow employees at UNIV on human resources issues, and is responsible for policy making in this area. The University has a large HR division, but the colleges are “completely separate” from the University. The commissioner had worked at the college for 27 years.

The manager who attended the training is the Operations Manager within the Domestic Bursary. The main areas she oversees are housekeepers and caretakers, and in total she manages 22 people. She had worked at UNIV for three years.

UNIV commissioned training on bullying and harassment in September 2012.

2. WPT Training Objectives

2.1 Commissioner

Reasons for commissioning training

There were said to be two drivers for commissioning the Workplace Training (WPT) on bullying and harassment from Acas: the first involved UNIV’s code of harassment, which differed from that of the University’s, meaning some employees who worked across both the college and university (joint appointments) were covered under two separate codes of harassment; a particular incident of harassment prompted this review. The second trigger was that UNIV were revising their Equality Action Plan, of which the commissioner was the sponsor, and under this plan a need for training in harassment and bullying was identified as they were “conscious that there was a deficit of understanding and training required”.

Objectives of the training

The key objective of the training was to increase understanding and awareness surrounding bullying and harassment, as articulated by the commissioner:
“[the main objective was] to get everybody up to the same level of understanding about the issues surrounding harassment and bullying and what our own policy said about managing it...our objective was to have everyone on the same page to understand exactly what we needed.”

Why the organisation chose Acas

The commissioner chose Acas to deliver the training primarily due to its reputation. However, a positive previous experience attending an Acas training course on Workplace Mediation training showcased their ability to tailor training and was influential in the decision making process:

“... I had myself experienced this quite intensive training for the Workplace mediation course which made me realise that Acas is not just people who work to the brief that says this is a training course for workplace harassment and bullying, its people with a wealth of experience and pragmatic ideas of how workplaces really are not how they are in a text book.”

The commissioner also uses other Acas services, including the helpline and website and gave high praise to both:

“I think [Acas] is a great organisation, really helpful. They have a great website and fantastic materials on their website and if you ring up somebody they can answer the question which I think is super as you’re not waiting in a queue waiting to talk to somebody and you usually get a definitive response which I think is great.”

No formal funding process was required to secure funding for this training, although funding must be agreed by the college’s governing body.

2.2 Manager

The manager had previously attended an Acas training course on discipline and grievances at work, which was said to have been “very useful”. She had not, however, received any prior training on bullying and harassment.

In terms of expectations of the bullying and harassment WPT, these included covering issues around bullying in the Workplace and harassment and how this could be identified, monitored, and resolved. The manager’s main objective was thus said to be:

“... finding out more and how to get things resolved happily for everybody.”

3. Workplace Training Preparation and Delivery

3.1 Commissioner

Tailoring the training

The commissioner was principally involved, together with an Equality Officer within UNIV, in tailoring the training. This process involved telephone discussions with the Acas trainer beforehand to review UNIV’s previous harassment policy,
following which the Acas trainer tailored the course to their requirements. When asked how exactly the training was tailored the commissioner replied:

“... by allowing people to articulate their own scenarios and then he’d comment on them in a way that would achieve a compliant response to them, in line with our policy and in line with what Acas would consider good practice.”

**Delivery of the WPT**

The training was delivered during an afternoon and attendees included a mix of seniority: from fellows of the college, to those in their early/ mid stage career, a junior dean and a graduate student. There were 12 to 13 attendees in total.

**3.2 Manager**

The manager was not involved in the tailoring of the Acas training, and although she acknowledged that the organisation was referenced, and that the training was relevant, it was not overtly clear for the manager whether the training had been pre-tailored around the organisation.

When asked to recall the actual style and format of the training, it was noted that there were no activities as such, although attendees did have discussions in groups about hypothetical issues. It was also deemed a positive that there was a range of seniority levels present at the training, given everyone came to the training with different issues, and different opinions:

"We talked generally, so there was a bit about people’s behaviour and what is acceptable and what’s not but of course what is acceptable and what’s not differs across departments and so some people were sort of challenging that and there was quite a bit of discussion about that which was very interesting."

When asked about the actual delivery of the training, the trainer was praised:

"I remember the trainer being very good. [It was] a very engaging session."

Whilst the manager still had and referenced the handout slides, they were said to be quite wordy, although it was recognised that the slides were more of a prompt for the trainer, and discussion followed around the slides.

**4. Workplace Training Evaluation**

**4.1 Commissioner**

Post the WPT attendees completed Acas’ feedback forms. No further evaluations were carried out internally, but informal meetings were arranged to foster further discussions and wider thinking on the topic of harassment and bullying, including how future cases could be handled in order to share learnings and experiences:

“... so that what we are trying to do is learn and experience from each other to build our capacity to deal with things ourselves. Otherwise everyone is at a standing start every time something happens.”
5. Workplace Training Impact

5.1 Commissioner

When asked about impacts of the training, the commissioner acknowledged that due to the topic of the training, quantifying impacts would be "difficult to say", and that impacts were in fact more qualitative in nature:

"... harassment is very much about how people feel about it ... it’s not a list of things that are harassment and a list of things that are not, it’s very much how it feels to be you in that situation ... it raises awareness much more, makes people more self conscious about what they hear and say in the Workplace and I think people have taken that from it."

In terms of whether any policies had been reviewed or revised, the commissioner noted that they are now set to introduce a new revised policy post the Acas training and complete an audit of any harassment cases brought to any of their harassment advisors at the end of this year.

One of the issues flagged throughout was that UNIV was a small organisation, and was embarking on establishing new policies that according to the commissioner, larger companies would likely already have in place. One example is a flexible and home working policy, acknowledged to be part of the bullying and harassment continuum in a way. The issue UNIV had was that flexible working agreements were not consistent across the college, which raised an equality issue. The commissioner has therefore written new policies in areas such as this. When asked if that had been triggered by the Acas training the respondent replied positively:

"Yes it was... as we realised was that we needed a really consistent approach across a range of things across the college to save people from themselves really."

When looking at organisational metrics, the only one perceived to have changed was that of number of days lost due to absence. However that was not reported to be at all related to Acas training. The reason behind this organisational change was thought to be due to the introduction of an electronic system for sickness absence or holidays, which identifies and highlights on a dial, staff who exhibit high absence or sickness levels and thus increased awareness had encouraged a decline in absence.

5.2 Manager

The manager said her objectives of the training had "definitely" been achieved, adding:

"I think it gave me a much broader understanding of bullying and harassment, the forms it can take. And sometimes you think bullying is just one-on-one and it will be quite obvious, but sometimes it’s not: it can be done quite underhand and can affect people in different ways so it did sort of open my eyes up to a lot of issues."
Sharing of knowledge from the training took place subsequently, informally, in one to ones.

Since the training, the manager had encountered a dispute between employees requiring mediation, and had the opportunity to put into practice learnings from the training. The manager agreed that the skills she used to resolve the dispute could be attributed to the Acas training:

“Yes, appreciating other people’s feelings ... a lot of the things we talked about, respect, understanding each other’s point of view I think, I did use a lot of that in this process of getting these members of staff back talking together and getting them understanding each other.”

Ultimately the dispute had a successful outcome.

The training also resonated with the manager and identified the fact that she was interested in HR and taking it forward as a career: at the time of interview the manager was pursuing this interest and was working towards her CIPD qualification.

6. Value for Money and pricing

6.1 Commissioner

The commissioner works with three to four other training providers, dependent on the requirement. It was noted that post the implementation of the Equality Act (2010), an increasing number of people had appeared "wanting to give you advice on all sorts of things". For this particular WPT, the commissioner noted she did look around, but given it wasn't price sensitive, she was looking for "good value for money, but not a cheap deal". Whilst the commissioner did look on a CIPD website to see if there was anything they could offer for this WPT, the offering was said to be less suited for smaller organisation and quite "text booky".

Expanding on her views of Acas being good value for money, the commissioner went on to add that extra value was also derived from their reputational value:

“I think they are better value for money, not only, the bottom line on the invoice is possibly a little bit higher but it’s what people feel about it, everyone has heard of Acas and everyone knows it’s an organisation of some reputation nationally and when you say to someone you’ve organised a training session by Acas they feel really special that they’ve been singled out for something that is of value and they perceive it of being of value and I think that’s really important because the reputational value of Acas means that people feel they have really had something their employer has thought about and valued them enough to give them.”

The commissioner strives to invest in training as much as possible and is always looking for opportunities for professional development for staff at UNIV.
7. Improvements

7.1 Commissioner

None of the top five coded suggested improvement areas from the telephone survey chimed with the respondent’s view on areas to improve. In her experience, “they have good materials and they are very interactive”. Instead, the commissioner suggested that Acas develop a small workplace package which is specifically aimed at small organisations.

7.2 Manager

The only criticism relayed when prompted was that they “could have done with a little more time” given the quantity of information to cover. Also, in comparison to another Acas training course run off site, there were fewer group activities and case studies, deemed in the other course to be “really helpful”, although again this was acknowledged to link back to time constraints.

8. Overall views

8.1 Commissioner

The commissioner was ‘very satisfied’ with the training overall, and the only area identified for improvement for Acas was that of having more of a focus on small organisations (many of whom, as with UNIV for example, do not have HR functions in house).

She would use Acas again for future training needs.

8.2 Manager

The manager was also very satisfied and would also recommend Acas training to others.

Longitudinal Case Study

The commissioner was re-interviewed six months later (February 2014). There had been no changes in personnel over the last six months or to the commissioner’s job role. No further Workplace Training had been commissioned from Acas within the last six months, although the commissioner did book to go on an Acas training day on ‘Developing the role of Mediation in the Workplace’ but could not attend in the end. This was not a new topic of training (the commissioner had previously attended an ‘Acas mediation training’ course), but seemingly a follow up course. Should this be run again, the commissioner will “definitely attend it”.

Longer Term Impacts – changes to policies

As planned and noted in the initial interview, UNIV conducted an end of year audit on harassment cases post the Acas Workplace training in December 2013. They did have a harassment policy in place before then which required annual monitoring, but the policy was re-reviewed and rewritten as part of the Acas Workplace training:
"We wrote our policy based on the Acas policy, and then they came and did the training for us. So the policy was essentially introduced as part of the training."

The policy is due to be reviewed next year (2015), and depending on what the monitoring informs them, they may seek advice of external expertise and/or training.

The impact of the new policy was evident in the latest annual audit, which was refined slightly from the one used in previous years. The audit was carried out by the Welfare Team, via a short email survey which was emailed out to all line managers and the three harassment advisors. The audit included questions on whether they had experienced any harassment cases, and if so whether they had been resolved, and whether it involved students or staff.

Whereas in all previous audits no cases had been identified, in this first audit since the implementation of the new policy, four cases were identified:

"The monitoring that we did last time certainly threw up more cases ironically than there had been in previous [years]...we’d done a sort of monitoring in previous years and the return was nil, and this time round the return was something like four...my conclusion from that was that because people were more aware of the policy, they were more aware of where they could go to if there was an issue of harassment or bullying in the workplace – that led to more cases coming to light...the combination of the new policy and Acas training raised consciousness amongst a larger group of people, and that meant that we actually started to tackle issues that had hitherto been hidden from us."

Therefore, this increase in the number of cases, which could be construed as an issue, was seen as a successful outcome by the commissioner, who interpreted this rise in numbers as follows:

"We succeeded in making people aware of recourse that was available to them, if they felt they were harassed or bullied in the workplace."

The raising of awareness was thought to be due to the good representation of departments at the Acas Workplace Training in the first place. UNIV also developed a new intranet and whilst developing this they made all staff "widely aware" of what was being put on the intranet:

"Therefore people could easily access policies that previously they probably had to fish around for...now all our policies are clearly visible to all our staff via the intranet."

The organisation now plans to complete the revised audit on an annual basis going forward.

**Longer Term Impacts – changes to organisational metrics**

The only metric identified previously as having changed since the Acas Workplace Training was in relation to the number of work days lost due to absence. However, that was not reported to be related to Acas training but rather the
result of the introduction of a new electronic system for logging and monitoring sickness absence or holidays. UNIV was thought by the commissioner to be well below the average in terms of days lost due to absence when compared to other organisations and this was thought to be low due to the small size of the organisation, and the implementation of a new electronic system (which acts as a ‘visual aid’ when reporting back to employees).

**Longer Term Impacts – Wider Impacts**

The next “logical follow up” for the commissioner has involved organising an equality workshop, which is taking place in the next month. Twenty five staff, including Administration and Management personnel will be attending. This is being run by an external consultant. The commissioner added:

“It’s going to touch on all sorts of issues such as workplace atmosphere, and unconscious bias ...that [the workshop initiative] could be traced absolutely back to the impact of the bullying and harassment [Acas Workplace] training.”

**Overall views on Acas Workplace Training**

When first interviewed six months previously, the commissioner rated Acas as ‘very good value for money’ and was ‘very satisfied’ with the service received. The commissioner maintained these ratings in the follow-up interview.
12.3 Case Study Three

Anonymous organisation, Redundancy Workplace Training, Spring 2013

1. Background

The organisation is a global biopharmaceutical company whose head office is based in the United States. The company’s UK operation is based over several sites, employing around 600 employees. The nature of work comprised in the UK offices includes Research & Development, Support Functions and Sales and Marketing (the UK head office is in London where both interviewees were based).

The Global company has been through a series of mergers and acquisitions and their main focus is on developing treatments for unmet medical needs (i.e. Cancer, HIV, diabetes etc). Key customers include health care professionals i.e. GPs, nurses, hospitals and specialist treatment centres. Due to recent changes in the NHS structure that occurred around the time of the interviews, more interactions are required with policy makers and not just necessarily medical professionals.

The nature of the company’s business is quite cyclical in terms of employee numbers, particularly in terms of the sales force. When a new patent drug is launched and is first to market the company employ additional staff to help drive it forward. Over time this drug will not require as much resource, as generic drugs come to market so numbers here would contract, however there may be other launch drugs at the same time which need driving, which require the workforce to be flexible to switch therapy areas. The economy indirectly affects the company, for example if NHS cuts are made in particular therapy areas the company may need to delay the launch of these services.

Two respondents were interviewed as part of this case study: the commissioner of the Workplace Training course (referred to throughout as ‘the commissioner’) and a manager who attended the training (referred to throughout as ‘the manager’). The commissioner has worked at the organisation since June 2010. The commissioner works within the HR division and is responsible for the general employment lifecycle from recruitment to termination. This is her third position within the company’s HR division. There are two HR Generalists based at their London site and another covering their other UK sites.

The Workplace Training which was evaluated with these respondents took place in Spring 2013 in the area of Redundancy.

2. Workplace Training Objectives

2.1 Commissioner

Reasons for commissioning Workplace Training

The main driver for commissioning the training was due to the fact the company does not have a recognised trade union, therefore, in order for the company to go through a collective consultation process there was a need to establish an employee representative group that understood what their role would involve. The HR division understood out of best practice that there was a need for these
employee representatives to be trained and to be effective in this area. In addition there was a redundancy programme coming up shortly for which this group would need to be trained.

**Objective(s) of the training**

The main objective of the training was to educate the employee representative group about their roles and remits so they would be able to do the best job they could for their constituents.

The key to an effective consultation process was to ensure that everyone felt they were treated fairly and had a voice and this was a result of how effective the employee representative group was. The training was therefore intended to have a big input into achieving this objective.

**Why the organisation chose Acas**

The commissioner explained that the same course was conducted by Acas two years previously which received positive feedback, and this was fundamentally the main reason why Acas were commissioned again. The company appreciated they could have commissioned their employment lawyers to conduct the training or conducted it in-house but Acas were perceived as being neutral:

"It is a known body by employees. We have employment lawyers we could have used but Acas has that heritage and persona that it is established, it's [Acas] neutral.....using our employment lawyers, we pay them, we have an ongoing relationship with them so it might come across like they are saying whatever we want them to say and that’s not what we want. We want this training to be open and trustful."

**How funding was determined**

The commissioner has input in the decision to commission training but the company’s training is determined at a European and global level and they have preferred suppliers they work with. The commissioner noted she would put forward recommendations for training, which would then be decided at a European level, in line with other budgetary and funding decisions. Where training was very particular to a specific profession or to the UK then they may look to source outside of the company’s preferred supplier list. For technical training or medical knowledge the company have a dedicated training team who deliver in-house as well as look at what other training companies offer.

Funding for this particular training did not require sign off at the European level and was decided locally. The company had to request funding through the global funding process for the whole redundancy programme including redundancy payments thus an estimate was put together. Once the total funding was agreed it was up to the HR division to allocate the required budget for the training course.

The commissioner mentioned that the Workplace Training could have well been covered in-house but it was decided that it would be more beneficial if conducted by Acas as it held credibility and neutrality.
2.2 Manager

The manager did not recall receiving training in the area of redundancy previously. Also this was the first Acas training course he had attended. The Workplace Training was put in place for a group of managers who would be representatives during the consultation process.

The main objective of the Workplace Training was to find out what the manager’s role during the consultation would be, what would or would not be allowed and what the impact would be on the people involved.

3. Workplace Training Preparation and Delivery

3.1 Commissioner

Tailoring the training

The commissioner confirmed the standard Acas presentation was used for the course and there was no tailoring involved. She explained:

“I gave him [the trainer] some background to why we were doing it. The same trainer had been on the course two years ago so he knew some background so it was tailored in that sense, in terms of the slides, the training, the delivery itself hadn’t changed.”

Delivery of the training

There were four employee representatives who attended the training.

Should the company require the same training course to be run again in the future then Acas would be asked to deliver it, preferably with the same trainer:

“The anecdotal feedback I had about the training was very positive. If I had to run the course myself the content of the decks that Acas produced, would be exactly what I would produce. He [the trainer] gave them [the participants] enough time to discuss what the content meant for them, how they should start planning. He allowed it to be real. It wasn’t all theoretical.”

3.2 Manager

The manager was asked if he felt the Workplace Training had been tailored. He responded “I get the impression that it was kind of a generic thing”.

The Workplace Training was focused and conducted only for those managers who were going to be representatives during the consultation process. The manager explained that during the time the Workplace Training took place he had also attended a number of other courses so could not recall the actual specifics of the course but he mentioned the key learning was understanding the meaning of consultation:
“It was the fact that we could take on suggestions but that didn’t mean we could change things, it would need to be agreed and all that, and again it was to make the process fair.”

In terms of the delivery of the Workplace Training, the course was said to have met the manager’s objectives although he felt there could have been “more meat on the bones” to give more detail and insights in addition to the slides provided.

“I think the slides covered the area well, what probably we needed was more insight to what can happen and things to watch out for and practical type of things.”

The manager could not recall if any follow up materials were provided or if feedback was requested.

4. Workplace Training Evaluation

4.1 Commissioner

Evaluation methods used

To ensure the key objective of the Workplace Training was achieved, the company surveyed all of their employees who were impacted in the consultation process – and they received very positive feedback. Employees felt they were listened to thus the employee representatives drove the objective as a result of the training.

The commissioner felt if they formerly evaluated the training with the representatives who attended the Workplace Training using “happy sheets” it may have come across that the training was being imposed on them. The company have a standard evaluation process in place for all the leadership training conducted where they can see a clear benefit to the job or workplace which they gather feedback from. Technical training which is conducted in house is typically evaluated by either a pass or fail for each attendee.

5. Workplace Training Impact

5.1 Commissioner

Short term (immediate) impacts

When asked if there were any immediate actions noted after the Workplace Training the commissioner responded:

“Immediately after we pretty much went straight into collective consultation so they were putting into practice what they had learnt.”

The benefit of the training was said to have been depicted during this stage:

"It was a programme put in place so the employee representatives got the benefit. We got an indirect benefit out of it as a result that they [employee representatives] did a really good job through the consultation process,
people went through the change with a positive view of how it was handled.”

The commissioner stated that they met the consultation deadline and received good reviews from the employees involved in the process which was partly credited to the training:

“They all felt heard and felt the outcomes were positive even the ones who were leaving went as ‘happy leavers’. Some employees had been with us for quite some time and 600 people is quite small, you do get a community feel here so you want them to exit on a positive note.”

**Longer term impacts**

With regards to longer term impacts, the commissioner confirmed that no new policies were introduced nor were any of their existing policies reviewed as a result of the Workplace Training:

“We have quite good policies that are open and transparent. There weren’t any legal changes that needed to be incorporated. With regards to redundancy, since the consultation I know there has been legislative changes to time frames but that’s more a change to practice than policy.”

Prior to the Workplace Training the company had two grievances that were ongoing but these had no impact or relation to the Acas training.

The commissioner explained that productivity is not measured throughout the company due to the vastly different nature of work conducted by the workforce, but felt there were benefits which would have been indirectly attributable to the training:

“It [Workplace Training] enabled us to continue to be successful when the environment we are working in had become quite challenging. If we hadn’t have gone through that organisational change we wouldn’t be in a good place to compete with our competitors so we could lose our market position which will impact the share price.”

In terms of wider impacts of the Workplace Training, the commissioner mentioned there were no tribunals as a result of the consultations thus it was seen to be a trusted process.

“People left as happy leavers at the end and people who remained were still positive. We came out with a forward looking attitude like a rebirth, an excitement about going into new markets and new roles which were all positive in terms of morale.”
5.2 Manager

The manager confirmed the objectives of the training were met and clarified the company had the correct processes in place. However he reiterated that it would have been beneficial if the content was more applicable to real situations to gain more insight.

The key takeouts from the Workplace Training were around the clarification of what the consultation process involved and the need to demonstrate that everyone is treated fairly, where there were perceived to be some good clear examples given. He added ensuring communications were sent out in a timely fashion during the process was also a key learning.

There were no immediate actions taken following the Workplace Training but the manager recalled referring back to the slides provided before meetings, which was deemed useful. The manager was unaware of any long, widespread changes made within the company as a result of the training.

6. Value for Money and pricing

6.1 Commissioner

The commissioner could not recall the exact amount paid for the Workplace Training but commented that it did offer value for money and in terms of cost was described as “a drop in the ocean in the money we have for events”.

The company have in the past used their lawyers on employment issues, who were more expensive, compared to Acas:

“It would be difficult when we are making people redundant to then spend thousands on employment lawyers to come in for a few hours to deliver training. So the value for money is much better and more importantly it’s the impartiality of Acas, anyone can go on their website. It’s for employers and employees so they see it’s impartial.”

When asked what Acas can deliver above other suppliers, the commissioner again stressed their impartiality.

“If we had an employment tribunal about some sort of discrimination in the process or failure to consult we would be using our employment lawyers in that tribunal process. It doesn’t sit right if these are the people who delivered the training and then try to defend the company in a tribunal. Acas is a completely different organisation.”

7. Improvements

7.1 Commissioner

When prompted with suggested improvement areas, improving Acas organisation and administration was deemed most important, followed by increased tailoring of training.
From the commissioner’s perspective, updating materials would be more of an expectation than improvement:

“I would expect them [Acas] to have the most up to date information. If that didn’t happen that would be the most disappointing thing.”

Other suggestions offered included an interactive webinar for field staff and offering an option to have a sound board for those who learn in a reflective way:

“Should a question pop into their heads two days later, if there is a way they can go back to the trainer with the question instead of it all being done and dusted on one single day. This will allow an ongoing interaction or at least an availability and it’s up to the participants to use it if they need to.”

7.2 Manager

The key improvements noted by the manager were around including more anecdotal insights; “with the level of knowledge that Acas have, they should use case histories which would be good”.

The Workplace Training could be further improved by offering advice on minimising employee relation issues:

“That’s [employee relation issues] the biggest headache for managers, so [it would be good] to have ‘here are the key things to avoid’ just for some guidance. The type of training our guys really like is when we get our solicitors in with managers and they take us through case studies and the guys can relate to it or something similar.”

8. Overall views

8.1 Commissioner

The commissioner agreed she was “very satisfied” with the Workplace Training and that it met her expectations. She commented “[we have] used it twice now so will probably use it again”.

Finally, she expressed her satisfaction with the Workplace Training by stating:

“Three of the representatives went into the Workplace Training having never been in this situation before not knowing what they had to do and came out very confident to do their role well. It is a difficult role to play, they have to understand the views of their constituents and be able to replay it back and also to be able to recognise when the constituent has misinterpreted something and be able to isolate their comments. There is an element of self-management and they came out confident and delivered really well.”
8.2 Manager

Overall the manager was “fairly satisfied” with the Workplace Training delivered and would recommend it to others, but dependent on costs. The key reason for advocating Acas would be the fact that they are an organisation who are independent of the employee and employer who can offer unbiased advice.
12.4  Case Study Four  
Anonymous Organisation, Discipline and Grievance Workplace Training, Spring 2013

1. Background

The organisation is a High Court enforcement office that enforces outstanding County Court judgements for any court orders over the value of £600. The company has two offices, the head office in London where 99 per cent of the business is dealt with and the chairman’s office in the Midlands, where the business first started out.

The company has approximately 50 full time employees as well as a pool of 40 staff who are field based. The business has been running as a limited company for over six years.

Two respondents were interviewed as part of this case study: the commissioner of the Workplace Training course (referred to throughout as ‘the commissioner‘), and a manager who attended the training (referred to throughout as ‘the manager‘). The commissioner has worked at the organisation for five years, whilst the manager interviewed who attended the training has worked for the company for four and a half years.

One of the main responsibilities of the commissioner is managing the HR function. The company’s main client base comprises of solicitors, businesses, and anyone who is in charge of their own debt books. Over the last five years the company have seen an expansion in both the number of employees and financial turnover.

The Workplace Training which was evaluated with these respondents took place in Spring 2013 in the area of Discipline and Grievance.

2. Workplace Training Objectives

2.1 Commissioner

Reasons for commissioning Workplace Training

The company chose to commission training in Discipline and Grievance as it was identified that their disciplinary processes should change, in order to separate the roles of an Investigating Manager, and a Disciplinary Manager.

Objective(s) of the training

The commissioner commented that the main objective of the Workplace Training was:

“To get the group of managers to be able to conduct the investigations thoroughly and without the need for me to have to intervene and to keep that separation [between an Investigating Manager, and a Disciplinary Manager]. Also another objective was to teach everybody the impact on the business I suppose, of things like the protected characteristics so they
could understand that they can’t make comments about disability, gender etc.”

She added the most important objective was “to give the managers the tools to do the job”.

**Why the organisation chose Acas**

The company had "shopped around, spoke to a few different companies” but did not find a provider who quite fitted with their model. The commissioner had not originally thought of Acas but was forwarded an email from a colleague:

"I’ve always thought of them [Acas] as employee services as oppose to employer services.”

The reason for commissioning Acas was primarily cost, but also flexibility, and the ability to tailor the training to the company’s requirements:

"I rang them and said this is what I’m looking for but I need a bit more emphasis on the investigation side because the majority of managers aren’t disciplinary management but they need to understand what needs to happen to do the investigation correctly. So when I spoke to the trainer he said that’s fine we can tailor it to that. I have to say the cost of them in comparison other private companies out there was brilliant.”

The commissioner added: "overall the course objective was exactly what I was looking for”.

She also commented that although other providers were able to deliver the training in this area there was a sense of trustworthiness which drew her to Acas:

“So it’s almost, I learnt through the employment tribunal that they do rely on Acas information and general guidelines so it’s kind of getting the information from the horse’s mouth as it were. There’s trustworthiness there.”

**How funding was determined**

The commissioner explained she had to convince the company’s board of directors to secure funding for the Workplace Training:

"I think that because they could see the potential financial impact is of an employment tribunal if we were then to go forward and lose, that was a real sway for them.”

**2.2 Manager**

The manager does not recall receiving any specific training in the area of Discipline and Grievance previously.
The manager’s main objective was to gain confidence in the disciplinary procedure; "it was really nice to have someone talking you through it in layman’s terms". Also it was to ensure managers were acting in a fair and reasonable manner:

“That’s what I got out of, to make sure I was being reasonable, making me question myself so that if I was doing an investigation I was covering everything and asking all the right questions and not making assumptions. I was more aware.”

3. Workplace Training Preparation and Delivery

3.1 Commissioner

Tailoring the training

The commissioner was solely involved in the tailoring of the Workplace Training. The trainer had explained the aims of the course and confirmed what the company’s requirements were. It was explained that it was fine to focus on the investigation side but all the other aspects would also be covered. A copy of the company’s employee handbook and all their policies was requested by the trainer:

“[This] gave me some reassurance that he understood where we were coming from, it was a very easy process really.”

Delivery of the training

The Workplace Training was attended by around 10 managers and directors and the session was made compulsory to all invited. The commissioner was satisfied the Workplace Training covered the areas required in sufficient detail:

“Everyone walked away saying ‘yes that was good, I’ve learnt something from that’. Nobody felt that they hadn’t learnt anything so that was good.”

3.2 Manager

The manager was not involved in the tailoring of the Workplace Training and felt the course was tailored “as well as it could be” due to the company’s industry, and the examples given were said to have been relevant.

The Workplace Training was compulsory for all managers and was seen by the manager as “a big part of my role”.

In terms of the delivery of the Workplace Training, the manager recalls working through scenarios which involved making decisions which may/may not result in a tribunal which was felt to be a very beneficial exercise and ideal for the afternoon session:

“It was a really good exercise. It was in the afternoon so it was really good to break up the afternoon so you’re still thinking and you’re not falling asleep.”
The manager felt the interactive classroom style delivery of the course worked well and the materials used were effective:

"Everyone participated there was no quiet people, everyone felt they could say whatever...no fear of saying something stupid."

The trainer was praised for being personable and good at pulling the group back when digressing from the subject. The manager mentioned she had signed up to newsletters from Acas following the training which were said to be useful for finding out about future courses.

4. **Workplace Training Evaluation**

4.1 Commissioner

*Evaluation methods used*

The commissioner confirmed there were no existing processes to evaluate training at the organisation, as training was not widely used.

5. **Workplace Training Impact**

5.1 Commissioner

*Short term (immediate) impacts*

When asked if there were any immediate actions noted after the Workplace Training the commissioner mentioned that typically HR issues were dealt with by the commissioner referring to the HR Sage system or calling the helpline and then relaying back to managers, but this process was changed following the Workplace Training:

"On the back of the Acas training, managers all now have access to that Sage system so they can now all ring up and get the advice directly, keeping me separate, not blind, but separate."

*Longer term impacts*

With regards to longer term impacts, the commissioner confirmed the company plans to review all of their policies, sourcing external help for training where necessary.

When asked about organisational metrics, like the number of staff that had resigned, and the number of work days lost due to absence, the commissioner confirmed there was no change in any of the metrics mentioned which could be attributed to the Workplace Training. Typically the company measures productivity via work output and meeting Service Level Agreements which is measured both at staff and team levels.

When asked if there were any other organisational impacts which could be attributed to the Workplace Training, the commissioner commented that the training had helped enhance understanding of HR issues:
“From a positive point of view where the board directors tend to be business focused not people focussed, it has given them the realisation of what I or other managers have to go through when something doesn’t go right and an understanding of the laws.”

The commissioner also believed the Workplace Training had a positive impact on, and had helped to improve, general line management skills:

“I think it’s helped managers to explore more avenues with the staff. So instead of saying ‘you haven’t done the ten cases we wanted you to do’…..they are a little bit more, ‘so what’s stopping you from doing it’ and they break down some of the barriers and find out all the issues first and help clear the issues. They do a lot more investigation.”

5.2 Manager

The manager confirms her objectives of the Workplace Training were met and felt the course had given her the reassurance, confidence and knowledge needed when faced with situations:

“I’ve now got the pack and course notes, it helped me to realise that what I was doing was correct and got rid of my worries. It helped you with open and closed questions and how to get the best out of the individual.”

When asked if the manager had learnt anything specific from the Workplace Training which has impacted her day to day work she mentioned:

“I think that you don’t actually realise that you’re actually doing it. After having the course and feeling assured that I was doing it right, I’m more sure in myself so when I do come to do the investigation that I had to do I was dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s and making sure I was reasonable to the employee.”

The manager confirmed that as a result of the training all managers were given access to the Sage system which included a vast amount of useful information that was not previously readily available.

6. Value for Money and pricing

6.1 Commissioner

The commissioner felt the company received “good” value for money from Acas and the total cost was almost half of that quoted by other suppliers:

“So if we had 9-10 people in ours I think the cost was around £650, privately they were all looking around £1000+.”

In terms of value for money, the commissioner did not feel they would have necessarily received better value from other suppliers:
“I think initially I thought they [private supplier] would understand the business side of things more but actually having had the training and spoken to the trainer directly to ensure he had a good grasp of the business which he picked up pretty quickly - that was important to us.”

The commissioner is unable to comment on whether the price of training has changed in the last five years as the company engage in very little training. However, in the case of the company she believes it is actually easier to secure funding than it was five years ago:

“As we are a bigger company, £600 in the grand scheme of things is a lot easier to get than four years ago when £600 would have been a larger percentage of our profit.”

Costs aside and based on value the commissioner states that she would select Acas to deliver training on employment issues in the future.

7. Improvements

7.1 Commissioner

When asked with a prompted list of what Acas could do to improve their Workplace training, the commissioner disagreed with suggested improvement areas noting "I don't really think they need to do any of these things".

The one thing the commissioner would highlight would be with regards to her initial interaction with Acas where she would have preferred to, for example, submit an enquiry form online as an initial step:

“I think that having to phone up to speak to somebody, I would have preferred to send an email saying I’m looking for a training course for xxx on xxx date and got a quote back that way.”

7.2 Manager

When asked what could be improved further with the Workplace Training, the manager could not think of any specific improvements as she felt all the information required was provided.

8. Overall views

8.1 Commissioner

The commissioner agreed she was "very satisfied“ with the Workplace Training and confirmed she would use Acas’ Workplace Training again:

"It was good, very interactive, everyone came away learning something including me; I would book Acas again for further training.”
The knowledge of the trainer and style adopted was praised in particular:

"The knowledge of the subject the trainer had and his ability to command the room. There was a mixture of board directors, some who had been around the block a few times and some who had never had this sort of training before and the fact he was able to manage that group of people even with some odd comments here and there was very good."

When asked if there are any specific topics she would be particularly interested in she stated:

"Quite a few actually. If I had the budget I would get Acas to run through the whole list! One of the things I might start looking at is different ways of feeding back to employees and managing employees’ expectations and getting them to do what you want them to do. So I think that will be top of my list at the moment."

8.2 Manager

Overall the manager was "very satisfied" with the Workplace Training and would definitely recommend the course to others. She commented:

"I thought it was really informative, it was really good and gave me the certainty that I needed regarding disciplinary and I enjoyed it. I enjoyed the day long training and was quite nice being in a room with other managers away from the work arena."
12.5 Case Study Five

Benenden Health Society, Consultation and Information Workplace Training, February 2013

1. Background

Benenden Health has been in existence for over one hundred years, and began as a society of Post Office workers who wanted to provide themselves with healthcare insurance against the threat of TB from the mailrooms and mailbags. It is now a national mutual society with a hospital established in Benenden in Kent and head office in York. They also use national treatment centres all over the UK. They currently have 450 staff based in Kent and 220 staff in York (and field-based representatives) and employee numbers were said to have grown over the last five years.

The organisation remains a mutual, not for profit organisation and currently has over 900,000 members. They have developed over time and expanded new service offerings, Benenden Insurance being a prime example.

The main respondent who commissioned the Workplace Training (referred to throughout as ‘the commissioner’), is a Human Resources Consultant and has worked at the organisation for two and a half years. Organising training does not ordinarily form part of the commissioner’s job role; however, on this occasion the commissioner got involved as they are an active member of the staff consultation group for which this training was arranged.

The secondary respondent, who sits on the staff consultation group, was a Senior Member Administrator (referred to throughout as ‘the manager’), and has worked for the organisation for four years.

Benenden Health Society commissioned training on Consultation and Information in February 2013.

2. Workplace Training Objectives

2.1 Commissioner

Reasons for commissioning Workplace Training

The need for the training arose due to changes that the organisation has undergone over the last five years. As a result a group was established, known as the Staff Consultation Group, to ensure that when the organisation goes through a period of change, there is effective communication and consultation with staff. Once staff have been fully consulted regarding any changes, the consultation group can then take on board any views staff might have or ideas on how to implement the change. This initiative triggered the initial need for commissioning Acas Workplace Training:

“So bearing in mind it was a newly formed group, we all felt it was wise to get some training. I looked around - my first port of call was Acas.”
The training was part of a wider organisational programme, because all eight members of the group worked across very different parts of the business.

The organisation does have internal processes to get funding for training and the commissioner did have to prepare a business case of expected benefits prior to funding being granted, including a cost analysis per head.

**Objective(s) of the training**

The main objective of the training was said to be two-fold:

“One it was to give the newly formed group some confidence in how a consultation process would work and it was also to cover how the elements of change can affect how people react and move forward.”

**Why the organisation chose Acas**

The commissioner had not been on any Acas training before, but had undertaken several Acas accredited courses and frequently used the Acas website “when looking for best practice on policies and procedures”. For these reasons, it was “natural” for them to contact Acas, despite the commissioner also looking at other suppliers.

The Acas trainer was also an influential factor – when the organisation met the potential trainer, as noted by the commissioner “we warmed towards [the Acas trainer] and realised he would be a good fit for us and the group in terms of delivering the training”.

All liaison was subsequently conducted though the Acas trainer. Other suppliers were said not to be able tailor the training to the same extent, or in the way that Benenden wanted.

**2.2 Manager**

The manager had not attended any training courses run by Acas before, and had not received external training on information and consultation before.

In terms of their expectations of the Acas Workplace Training, the manager echoed the need to be able to handle change on a larger scale. Her main objective of the training involved:

“... mainly understanding the change of process, how people deal with change and how we can work together to help the organisation deliver the change and help members of staff who are affected.”
3. Workplace Training Preparation and Delivery

3.1 Commissioner

Tailoring the training

The commissioner was involved in tailoring the training, together with a colleague who worked within Learning and Development. Once they had scoped the outline of the course together, they met with the Acas trainer who brought with him two potential courses believed to be relevant. Herein commenced the tailoring process:

“We were able to look through the elements of one course that were useful and the elements of the other and merge the two together which was really great to be able to do that, as part of the courses would not have been relevant. We felt this really was a tailor-made approach...”

The specific exercises included within the course were not specifically tailored to the organisation but this was not criticised:

“I got the impression they were ones he’d used before but that didn’t matter as they worked really well for what we needed.”

The key benefit of tailoring the training was said to be:

“It was more relevant, we were able to pinpoint what we were looking for and also allow us to pinpoint what the legal requirements of consultation...we made sure there were group exercises rather than being talked at for a whole day and [the Acas trainer] put that in place - it was very interactive.”

Delivery of the training

The training took place at the organisation and lasted a full day. Ten employees attended – all eight from the consultation group, and two additional members of the HR team. There was a mix of seniority in the team ranging from junior members of staff up to heads of department. The training was not mandatory, but all who were invited attended. The organisation is not a member of a trade union, and no trade union representatives were included in the training.

The Acas trainer was highly praised for his delivery of the training:

“He was very good at getting the group involved; he is a very good trainer.”

3.2 Manager

The actual training session was described as having: “a good atmosphere straight away...it was really enjoyable, the trainer was good, he did some ice breakers, what he wanted to get out of it, what he was going to go through ...”

The training that followed was described as being very interactive, which was another positive feature endorsed by the manager:
“It was interesting. I think there was an exercise for every point he was trying to get out... there were a couple of individual exercises you were paired up to do....then later on there was more group activities getting us to work together...they were both good, they were both relevant for the sections he was wanting to focus on.”

The exercises and the theories behind them were both rated highly by the manager, and deemed relevant to all employees, regardless of seniority:

“The examples could relate to everyone in the business as well, no matter what level you were.”

When asked if she felt the training had been tailored sufficiently to the organisation the manager noted: "I think it was specific to the change process”.

4. Workplace Training Evaluation

4.1 Commissioner

Evaluation methods used

The organisation completed the Acas feedback forms after the training. The Staff Consultation Group also met before the training (to check they were happy with the proposed agenda) and also after the training “to make sure they were happy with it...the feedback was positive”.

When the organisation runs internal training sessions, they would normally send out feedback forms themselves afterwards. This was not done on this occasion given Acas handed out feedback forms.

5. Workplace Training Impact

5.1 Commissioner

Short term (immediate) impacts

No immediate actions were taken following the training, aside from being “ready for the next consultation”.

Longer term impacts

The organisation’s policies were already in place but their guidelines and terms of reference were updated after the training. The commissioner agreed that the actual updating of the guidelines and terms of reference could be attributed to the Acas training.

Furthermore, the commissioner articulated key learnings from the training:

“The training that they provided gave us a steer on how to manage change and consultations. And speaking from a personal perspective, the active listening skills as part of the training we’ve definitely taken on board.”
Although the number of future consultations was anticipated to be high, they have only had a couple of smaller-scale consultations to manage thus far. The skills acquired from the training have therefore not seemingly been fully put to the test, but the commissioner did note that staff who attended feel better prepared now for future consultations:

"More than anything they feel more confident when required."

5.2 Manager

The manager agreed her objectives had been met and voiced that the Acas training had “helped to understand change as a whole”, and that it was useful to look at the process from other points of view. The training further helped the Staff Consultation Group to better understand the requirements of their role and how their work could impact on the change process itself.

It was acknowledged that since the training, the manager has not had to put the consultation training into practice. However, the manager has since used the exercises they used on team building as part of a departmental team building day, to improve upon communication issues previously identified as an area for improvement. The exercise used received positive feedback:

"The team really enjoyed it and the feedback we got was brilliant."

6. Value for Money and pricing

6.1 Commissioner

The commissioner perceived Acas to offer good value for money, particularly when compared to other suppliers:

“Yes definitely. I think it has become a more competitive market and costs have dropped significantly over the last five years given the financial climate...there are many consultancies offering training but the ACAS one was really good value for money considering we could have 10 people on the course."

7. Improvements

7.1 Commissioner

The commissioner struggled to find improvement areas for Acas:

“If I had to pick one [improvement area], possibly the training materials, I mean it’s such a tiny improvement, the tailoring was superb, the training was interactive, they understood our organisation really well... just slightly more information would have been helpful. But very minor...”
8. Overall views

8.1 Commissioner

Overall the training met the commissioner’s expectations and she would “definitely” use Acas training again.

8.2 Manager

Overall the manager would rate her satisfaction with the Acas training as “very satisfied” and would “definitely” recommend Acas to others.

Longitudinal Case Study

The commissioner was re-interviewed six months later (March 2014). During the last six months there had been no changes to the commissioner’s job role, and employee numbers at Benenden Health Society had remained “fairly static”. No further Workplace Training had been commissioned from Acas within the last six months, although the Acas trainer who first delivered the initial training session on Information and Consultation (that was previously discussed) did visit the organisation in October 2013 to discuss future training needs.

Longer Term Impacts – changes to policies

As planned and noted in the initial interview, policies were already in place for staff consultations but the guidelines and terms of reference for staff consultations were updated following the Acas Workplace Training. A proforma was also created to be used when a consultation is needed. The majority of changes needed were said to have been “immediate changes”.

The only change that was relayed was regarding the members within the Staff Consultation Group as there had been two replacements: one due to a member of the team going on maternity leave, the other due to a member leaving the organisation. The commissioner subsequently went through the process of recruiting two new members. They have since been able to go through the new proforma process with the two new members.

There have been no further changes to policies or practices in the last six months.
**Longer Term Impacts – changes to organisational metrics**

No organisational metrics had changed in the last six months. As discussed in the initial interview, none of the key metrics being reviewed as part of this research exercise (covering areas such as changes in organisational productivity, absenteeism, number of employee grievances, etc) were deemed relevant to the topic of training commissioned or the objectives that Benenden Health had for the training.

**Longer Term Impacts – Wider Impacts**

The Staff Consultation Group is currently in the process of its first consultation (due to finish at the end of March 2014) since its formation. They are currently consulting staff with regard to a change to the ‘Maternity, Adoption, and Parental Leave Policy’.

The commissioner confirmed that the skills derived from the Acas Workplace Training will play a part in this process:

“The people that have attended the training will utilise the listening skills and the things that we practised on the course when they’re then talking to individuals about the policy change.”

**Overall views on Acas Workplace Training**

When first interviewed six months previously, the commissioner rated Acas as ‘very good value for money’ and was ‘very satisfied’ with the service received. The commissioner maintained these ratings in the follow-up interview.

The commissioner did add that the landscape for Workplace Training is becoming more competitive:

“It is becoming a more competitive market place and we are receiving quotes from other training providers which are probably more on a par with Acas than they have been before, but ACAS are still really good value for money.”
Case Study Six
Anonymous Organisation, Redundancy Workplace Training, Autumn 2012

1. Background

The organisation is a profit-making business working within the Sports sector, which employs around 150 direct salaried staff. Their head office is based in Yorkshire.

The main respondent (referred to throughout as ‘the commissioner’) was the Head of HR and had been in post for four years. The second respondent (referred to throughout as the ‘employee’) worked in the Logistics Team. He was a member of the staff consultation group which was created before the redundancy process and attended the Acas training.

The organisation commissioned training on redundancy in September 2012.

2. Workplace Training Objectives

2.1 Commissioner

Reasons for commissioning Workplace Training

As a result of a sizable reduction in funding from Sport England, the organisation had to go through a “major restructure” which required the loss of approximately 30 per cent of their staff. The organisation is a non union environment, and despite not being a legal requirement, the commissioner decided to set up a joint consultation prior to the process:

“I was conscious that a lot of my staff had never been involved in that and so the solution to me was to train them, so we engaged Acas to deal with the staff representative and the manager representatives. The course was about how to run an effective consultation and the laws and background.”

This consultation process commenced in October 2012, until the restructure work was completed in January 2013. The consultation team had “regular meetings to talk through the process”.

Objective(s) of the training

The main objective of the training was to ensure that both the management team and staff representative group who were involved “understood the legal requirements of the consultation...to understand best practice and understand the outcome of what should be the aim”.

The commissioner expected the training to provide:

“... a clear understanding between negotiation and consultation... an understanding of peoples’ roles and responsibilities...and also that people would work effectively in the process.”
Why the organisation chose Acas

The commissioner chose Acas because he referred to them as "the government agency responsible for helping people with these types of situations". The HR team at the organisation also use Acas services, including other courses, "quite regularly". He expanded on his reasoning for using Acas as follows:

"Definitely it’s the expertise and I’ve always been impressed with the quality of the training. Employment law is a pretty dense area...they turn a very complex issue and explain it in a sensible, structured way..."

The organisation does have a network of other HR specialists but the respondent decided on this occasion that they wanted the "structured approach that Acas by default were”.

2.2 Employee

Prior to the Acas training the manager had been voted into the staff consultation group, which became a group of 12 staff members, each elected in by their own department to represent them during the redundancy consultation process.

The employee had not received training on the topic of redundancy before, nor had he received training from Acas before. Indeed, up until five years ago the employee was sceptical towards Acas, perceiving them to be a union, rather than an impartial government department. The Workplace Training completely changed this preconception on who Acas were and what they do, and he was very positive about the experience overall.

3. Workplace Training Preparation and Delivery

3.1 Commissioner

Tailoring the training

The commissioner was the only person involved in tailoring the training and this process involved one face-to-face meeting and two telephone calls with the Acas trainer.

Delivery of the training

The training course was held off site and spanned a day each for both management and staff representatives (the consultation team). Whilst the courses were held separately, the course content was said to be "almost the same". Six to seven of the management team attended, and eight to nine on the staff-side. The training was optional but all those invited attended.
3.2 Employee

Overall the employee found the training "very informative." However, at the start the employee had "mixed thoughts" on the session ahead, due to the "environment" and potential time constraints.

"If I had a negative thought and it is to do with the trainer it became rushed in some areas... he seemed to have the understanding that we knew a lot of what he was talking about...for the first hour we could have been sat in a Formula One car!"

However, he found the training very useful and he praised the fact that many of his questions were answered during the training:

"I found a lot of answers...I found a lot of understanding of certain areas that intrigued me; one of them being what the [organisation] could actually do legally."

During the training, one delegate volunteered to become ‘chairman’ of the representative group and agreed to head up all contact with the affected group (circa 80 employees). The employee thought Acas helped with this process noting:

"I felt that the Acas set us up as a group."

4. Workplace Training Evaluation

4.1 Commissioner

Evaluation methods used

The organisation used an in-house online survey (via survey monkey which they use "extensively"), to evaluate the training. Results from the internal evaluation were said to be positive.

5. Workplace Training Impact

5.1 Commissioner

Short term (immediate) impacts

One immediate impact of the training was that shortly afterwards staff requested that the organisation create a voluntary early retirement package. Twenty percent of their staff went on to leave the organisation on that basis.

Following the training, the organisation also scheduled in initial staff meetings ahead of the main redundancy consultation to allow staff to ask questions and to allow the organisation to have the answers ready where possible, adding an extra process into the consultation phase.
The knowledge acquired from the training also fed into the redundancy consultation process that ran from September 2012 to January 2013.

**Longer term impacts**

The key organisational metric thought to have changed pre and post the training were the number of employee grievances. This was in comparison to the number of employee grievances received during a previous restructure in 2012, where Acas training had not been commissioned. The previous restructure was on a much smaller scale, again caused by a reduction of funding from Sport England. They ended up with grievances from five out of six employees affected and even though the grievances weren’t proved valid, they still had to go through the process, which had substantial time and, hence cost, implications.

In comparison, during this restructure that took place post the Acas training, the organisation received no employee grievances (out of a total of 80 employees affected).

As noted by the commissioner:

“In this restructure, considering it involved a significant part of the organisation, we had no grievances and we only had one appeal against redundancy and we showed the scoring mechanism and his particular score then he understood why he didn’t get the positions. It was very transparent.”

The organisation also decided to write a new policy just for dealing with restructures due to funding. Whilst they had a policy for restructure, it was said to be “quite generic”. The new policy goes into “significant depth” in terms of the process and provides a future framework.

The organisation recently had an investor’s audit which resulted in them moving up to a bronze standard in Investors in People, supporting the whole handling of the process which was in part attributed to Acas’ training course:

“I think the best feedback we had was staff felt that attending was helpful and allowed them to be more engaged in the process than they were before... out of the investors audit I was quite impressed that we came out of that and maintained the values we have. And I attribute some of that to that course…”

**5.2 Employee**

The employee confided that the training had helped him to a great extent to cope with the situation:

“It helped me immensely personally: it helped me to be able to if I had to speak to a colleague that had been affected like myself [and] it gave me an understanding... I took a great belief that I could help manage people’s outcomes.”

There was an option to go back and re-contact the Acas trainer. Although the need did not arise, the option be able to do so was praised by the employee.
6. Improvements

6.1 Employee

Two areas for improvement were raised by the employee concerning the length of the course (due to the “rushed” start and the fact that the trainer perceived delegates to have prior understanding on the topic area) and the possibility of making the training more specific to sports organisations:

“I just think about that course that for me it was pitched to Joe Average and that Joe Average whether you were a sports office or a banker or a school dinner lady...I would like to personally, in hindsight I would like to see something that is sports specific ...”

7. Overall views

7.1 Commissioner

The commissioner was very satisfied with the training and would “definitely” use Acas training again noting with regard to redundancy training specifically it helped build relationships with staff during a difficult time: “you don’t get the partnership if you don’t have some learning first”.

7.2 Employee

Overall the employee said he was fairly satisfied with the training received from Acas. When asked if he would recommend Acas, he agreed, adding:

“I think people shy away from it as they think it’s confrontational [Acas training on redundancy] but in fact I think it should be recommended to a lot of people.”

Longitudinal Case Study

The commissioner was re-interviewed in March 2014 (seven months after the first interview) to follow-up on the discussions above.

There had been no change to the organisational management in the last seven months, but new premises had been taken on in Manchester. Whilst this did not indicate an immediate relocation for staff based in the Yorkshire Head Office, nor a change in employee numbers, some departments and new staff are being placed in the new office. The commissioner noted he had been through a consultation process with staff where he discussed what the longer-term plan involved regarding the new premises, where he drew upon previous learnings from the consultation process conducted during the restructure, which had been informed in part by the Acas Workplace training:

“We did still follow what we learnt from the restructure... I’ve asked for representatives to discuss with management any issues they have ...”
There had been no changes reported to the respondent’s role, and he had not commissioned further training (in an HR capacity) from Acas, or any other supplier in the last seven months. One of his colleagues had however very recently attended an Acas training course on ‘Interviewing’.

**Longer Term Impacts – changes to policies**

After the initial Acas Workplace training, the organisation wrote a new policy specifically aimed at dealing with restructures due to funding reductions, which is still in place. Recently another sports organisation has sought advice from them to share what they had done in this area and visited their offices to understand approaches to conducting an effective consultation process. Whilst the restructuring policy is still in place, there have been no further restructures in the last seven months, and therefore the policy has not been put into practice.

**Longer Term Impacts – changes to organisational metrics**

The only metric identified during the previous interview as having changed as a result of Acas Workplace Training concerned the number of employee grievances (0/80 reported during the previous restructure). There had been no further update in this area given the fact that that restructure was completed in January 2013 and no further restructuring has been necessary.

**Longer Term Impacts – Wider Impacts**

No wider impacts were reported in the last seven months, aside from the fact that the current team were seen to be performing very well following the restructure, and targets have been met to secure further sector funding.

When asked how productivity now compared to before the restructure (and before the Acas Workplace Training), the respondent noted:

“I think the general observation is we are achieving the same if not more with less people.”

It was acknowledged however that it was difficult to obtain a “like for like measure” given the change in funding across different projects over time.

**Overall views on Acas Workplace Training**

When first interviewed six months previously, the commissioner rated Acas as ‘very good value for money’ and was ‘very satisfied’ with the service received. The commissioner noted he would “definitely” maintain these ratings and continued to be very positive about Acas as an organisation.
12.7 Case Study Seven

Anonymous Organisation, Discipline and Grievance Workplace Training, Spring 2013

1. Background

The organisation is a not for profit organisation employing 185 staff that has grown in the last nine years, partly through natural expansion and partly as a result of a merger in 2011.

Two respondents were interviewed as part of this case study: the commissioner of the Workplace Training course (known throughout as the ‘commissioner’), and a trade union representative who attended the training (known throughout as the ‘trade union representative’).

The commissioner works within the HR division which consists of four employees. The HR team has the main responsibility for developing and rolling out the training programme in conjunction with the commissioner. The trade union representative’s role involves advising on new legislation, organising training and campaigning with external organisations.

The Workplace training which was evaluated with these respondents took place in Spring 2013 in the area of Discipline and Grievance.

2. Workplace Training Objectives

2.1 Commissioner

Reasons for commissioning Workplace Training

This course commissioned features as part of the organisation’s leadership development training, which encompasses a wider development strategy; all managers are expected at some point to do this training, and the organisation has been running this leadership development training for the last three years. Around four years ago the organisation looked to commission courses which were specifically aimed at up-skilling their managers and making sure they have the confidence to deal with issues they may be faced with. The decision was made to commission some of the Workplace Training courses provided by Acas such as Discipline and Grievance, Handling Difficult Conversations and Absence Management.

As part of a wider development strategy all managers (including some potential managers) are expected at some point to undertake the Workplace Training. Managers self select the course but they are expected to do one to two courses a year and will eventually complete all three Workplace Training courses outlined above.

Although the organisation offers shadowing and coaching it was not felt this would be a suitable approach for the specific target audience.
**Objective(s) of the training**

The objective of the training was to enable managers to have the confidence and knowledge to be able to respond to issues of discipline and grievances within their departments.

The overall objective was “to make them good managers”:

“We consider ourselves to be a good employer, part of that is having managers that can do a good job not just for the organisation but also for the individual. A lot of staff who become managers might have worked as trade union representatives on behalf of employees in other organisations, when they become managers they have to be able to handle a grievance or disciplinary case from the other side.”

**Why the organisation chose Acas**

Acas were selected due to their expertise and credibility in the training area thus it was seen as a “logical” choice. The Workplace Training courses were originally trialled to ensure they would suit the organisation.

“The other reason is that not only are they experts but it gives credibility to the training. Our staff can access training through the TUC clearly that has a degree of credibility but for this sort of thing Acas is where you would think of going.”

The commissioner added that initially Acas were known as experts on mediation and arbitration and she was not aware they delivered training:

“But then we discovered they did good quality training it made sense to use them.”

In terms of other suppliers used, the commissioner commented:

“Yes I mean there are other training organisations that provide similar things, [name of provider] provides similar stuff and some legal firms do similar training but I don’t know if it would have been as well focused or as appropriate.”

**How funding was determined**

Initially an annual training programme would be developed which the commissioner would share with the Senior Management Team. However the commissioner is in control of the budget so would not need further approval.

**2.2 Trade union representative**

The representative had not formally received training in this area before but was aware of some of the issues from previous roles.

The main objective was to get a full legal briefing in the area and also to learn from the trainer’s experience:
“It’s not just about learning about the legal requirements but about knowing the practicalities and what is likely to happen that may be of use for us to know.”

3. Workplace Training Preparation and Delivery

3.1 Commissioner

Tailoring the training

The Workplace Training had been tailored by the commissioner and the HR Officer to some extent but “not a great deal”:

“I’m fairly certain that we have met with the trainer to make sure each of the courses fit us. It’s quite standard for us to meet with the provider first to explain that we are a not for profit organisation so they understand us as an organisation. It’s important for our staff that when they go to a training session the trainer quite clearly understands what we’re about.”

During the tailoring process the trainer was asked to change the way in which role play or group work was handled and that was heard and acted on.

The commissioner explained in the past when trainers have referred to the organisation as a company it has had a negative effect on the training and has impacted on its effectiveness.

Delivery of the training

The Workplace Training in question was attended by 12 employees, generally managers and trade union representatives. Previously the organisation’s leadership process used to be compulsory however it is now an open programme:

“They need to self select, we do expect them all to have done everything eventually.”

3.2 Trade union representative

The trade union representative was not involved in the tailoring of the Workplace Training and was not aware the course had been tailored.

Following the Workplace Training the trade union representative recalls talking to others who attended the course and feeling there were a couple of points where they felt that what the trainer was saying was not actually correct and the group felt there were some comments made by the trainer which were “a bit inappropriate in terms of equalities issues” which some people could take offence at.

“It was clear the trainer had a lot of experience in the area but I think there were a couple of issues that we queried.”

The trainer was however praised for giving very good examples and the materials used and exercises conducted (i.e. choosing actions for scenarios) were very good; “I think that was very good so all in all it was a good day”.
It was felt the course could have been condensed down into half a day.

4. Workplace Training Evaluation

4.1 Commissioner

**Evaluation methods used**

All internal and external training is evaluated using the organisation’s own internal evaluation forms that are sent out post training:

“If the individual training organisation does an assessment sometimes we feed off that instead of sending out extra forms. We always review and the feedback for this has been that it’s very effective.”

5. Workplace Training Impact

5.1 Commissioner

**Short term (immediate) impacts**

Following the Workplace Training the commissioner received an email from one of the managers that attended with a set of comments for things that might need to be clarified about the organisation’s grievance and discipline procedures which will be looked at in due course.

**Longer term impacts**

As a result of previous year’s Workplace Training Discipline and Grievance course, the organisation has reviewed their internal policies:

“We had reviewed them [policies] a couple of years ago, we don’t review them every year. They were updated in 2012 I think or 2011. I suspect it was in response to attending this course.”

Referring to the worksheet, the commissioner confirmed there have been no changes however which could be attributed to the Workplace Training on Discipline and Grievance:

“We had two resignations and two retirements in the six months before the training in April and two resignations and one retirement from April to August so it’s very similar, no change really.”

The commissioner said that the organisation has had one grievance so far this year, from January to August which was said to be about average from them.

The Workplace Training on Discipline and Grievance was said to give managers more confidence to deal with situations; instead of allowing things to run on they are now being handled more effectively thus the training is likely to have increased productivity “because people are more willing to deal with issues”. The commissioner adds:
"I’m aware that since we’ve been doing the training managers are more willing to investigate issues with employees and if necessary take it to a disciplinary hearing."

Productivity is measured via membership numbers as the organisation is not for profit. When asked if the Workplace Training has brought any cost savings to the organisation the commissioner responded:

"I’m sure there probably is but it’s not something I would do. It’s not something as an organisation we look into and I’m not sure of the value because we’re not profit making. I’m not sure there is sufficient value in spending the amount of time I would need to bearing in mind the number of actual grievances we have is so few."

As a result of the training the commissioner believes managers are more confident which is really key. Also the Workplace Training reassures team members that where their colleagues are not performing it will be handled promptly and equally:

"Where there is a situation where they are facing either a grievance or a disciplinary hearing they can be confident that the manager involved will be dealing with that properly in a professional manner."

5.2 Trade union representative

The main objective of the Workplace Training (to learn about the legal requirements, and practicalities of discipline and grievance) was felt to have been “fully achieved”. The trade union representative reported that it was “good to recap that knowledge and go over any areas where I felt I actually needed to do more work”.

The Workplace Training was said to be useful in terms of rewriting capability procedures and other policies and that it has been helpful to reference back to the booklet and code provided. During a union committee meeting the representative referred back to the course content in response to a question raised.

The key learnings from the Workplace Training mentioned was awareness of the variety of levels of appeal for grievances or disciplinary issues e.g. the NHS may have 20 levels whereas the organisation may have one and also to be aware of who is on the appeals committee.

For the trade union representative the Workplace Training helped to realise what legal knowledge she needed to know and made a note to read over some legal aspects.

6. Value for Money and pricing

6.1 Commissioner

The commissioner believes Acas offer “good” value for money:

“We commission quite a bit of training and the cost of the courses is comparable to what we pay elsewhere for tailored training and because our
managers want to do the training and feel they get something positive out of it.”

The organisation would not feel comfortable going to another supplier for training on employment issues:

"I feel Acas is the expert in that area and if you want to do training you better go to the experts.”

7. Improvements

7.1 Commissioner

The commissioner, when prompted, ranked ‘Increase tailoring/ make it more relevant to the organisation’ as the most important improvement area for Workplace Training followed by ‘Improve, update and increase training materials’.

7.2 Trade union representative

The main improvement area for Workplace Training mentioned was around making sure trainers are completely up to date with the content and that they themselves are trained appropriately.

8. Overall views

8.1 Commissioner

The commissioner agreed she was “very satisfied” with the Workplace Training and is likely to use Acas again in the future.

Finally, she expressed her satisfaction with the Workplace Training by stating:

"I think they have focused the training in their area of expertise and they are using people who have experience, not just trainers but who have experience in the areas they are training in, which I think is absolutely vital. So these people not only deliver well but have actually lived through the experience they are training others to handle and that gives it a whole other credibility.”

8.2 Trade union representative

The trade union representative was “fairly satisfied” with the Workplace Training and when asked if Acas would be recommended to others, replied:

"I think Acas is an organisation I hold in quite high esteem, they have very good papers and very good advice on lots of issues and they do great work. I think maybe it was just unfortunate that we didn’t seem to get the best out of this particular course.”
12.8  Case Study Eight


1. Background

The company is a not-for-profit organisation funded through the NHS to provide out of hours General Practice (GP) services. They have around 400 employees, and employ a wide range of staff across medical professionals (nurses, GPs and Practice Nurses etc), administrative staff, and Practice Managers, on the Primary Care side.

Two respondents were interviewed as part of this case study: the commissioner of the Workplace Training course who was the HR Manager (known throughout as 'the commissioner'), and a senior manager who attended the training who was the Operations Manager and responsible for around 110 staff (known throughout as 'the manager'). The HR Manager joined the company in 2009 during a period of significant growth, whilst the Operations Manager had been with the organisation for around two and a half years.

The Workplace Training took place in Winter 2012 and concerned Stress Management.

2. Workplace Training Objectives

2.1 Commissioner

Reasons for commissioning Workplace Training

The typical challenges the organisation faces from an HR perspective are often connected with the fast growth of the business (over the past decade) and the fact that they can be subject to public sector contracts and NHS procurement cycles. This has meant that they experienced periods of rapid growth when they won new NHS contracts and needed to take over new practices and expand and recruit new staff very quickly. But the flipside is that it can also mean that they need to make redundancies at short notice when they lose a contract. Therefore there can be a lot of change over short time periods which can make it a stressful and challenging environment for both managers and staff.

Given some of these issues, the HR Manager believed that some of the key problems focused around the skills and abilities at a middle management level where managers might not have the requisite skills or training to handle certain issues that they are faced with.

The trigger for commissioning the initial general course was therefore recognition within the organisation that they were having issues with stress and that it was affecting middle managers in particular in terms of the way they handled staff and the amount of absences they were suffering from across the business. They wanted managers to be better equipped to recognise the signs of stress and how to support their staff in the most effective way.
The HR Manager did need to gain sign-off from the Senior Management Team and attended a meeting to make a case for the training. Once this approval had been provided, the HR Manager contacted Acas to discuss the training logistics and tailoring.

**Objective(s) of the training**

The core objectives for the training were to:

- Reduce absenteeism – understanding how issues could be prevented before they got too serious. This was the overriding objective from a business perspective and was in reality a commercial driver with the need to reduce the high costs of absences.
- Reduce confrontations between staff and management.
- Ensure for more effective relationship management between managers and employees.

**Why the organisation chose Acas**

The principal reason for commissioning Workplace Training through Acas was as a result of the HR Manager’s previous positive experience of receiving Acas training and already being an advocate of their services. These positive views were reiterated on a number of occasions throughout the interview:

> "I’ve always been very impressed with Acas. I’ve been on a number of Acas courses and they’re always excellent … I’ve never been on a bad Acas course. Training is always good, very interactive, interesting, not too long … they are very, very good."

When asked about their consideration of other suppliers of training services the respondent did mention that they use an employment law firm and have a retainer with them for some specific training on grievance and disciplinary procedures but this has been quite focused around specific processes and procedures where staff have needed more training on how to conduct a disciplinary procedure or how to run an investigation or grievance. They described the training with the law firm as more of a “tick box” exercise so that if anything is escalated they can be sure that they have followed the correct procedures. They look to Acas to deliver training around generic HR and management issues that can provide staff with more practical skills. For those types of course, Acas is really the first name they consider:

> "I generally look at Acas first … because they’re so good. The training is good, you know they have done the research into the training, the instructors all know their stuff, they are very approachable. I always go to Acas first and it’s reasonable; they’re not expensive."

However, usage of Acas services is limited to the training side of things rather than wider conciliation or advisory services.
In terms of this specific piece of Workplace Training, the HR Manager had already attended a standard training course run by Acas on Stress Management with a colleague and then asked Acas whether they could run a specific course for them:

“... it was so good, we were so impressed we asked them to come in and run a bespoke session with our managers here.”

2.2 Manager

The Operations Manager who attended the Workplace Training has used Acas training in the past but a long time ago in relation to conflict resolution. She was also aware of some of the support and guidance Acas provide and had used online resources with regard to redundancies and rights in the past to make sure she is complying with requirements and doing what she can to look after her staff. The manager spoke highly of previous Acas guidance that she had used and being able to draw on that as a resource:

“I do find it very clear. I find it very easy to use. I find it informative because on a day-to-day basis you don’t deal with complex HR issues all the time. It’s usually quite simple HR issues ... [but] when something more leftfield comes along its nice to know that you can just go there and find out what you need to know and you can get some best practice guidance because at the end of the day we’re now in a situation where people are more likely to take litigation. So therefore by making sure you’ve followed your best practice guidance, you’re in a very strong position not to have put your company at risk. Because as a manager that is something you have to be aware of.”

The manager had also attended stress management training in the past – around five to six years ago - as an internal piece of training with her last organisation. Her objectives for the training were to “brush up” on her skills and awareness of recognising signs of stress early, preventing any major issues around staff absences and supporting staff in the most effective way. Therefore, in this case, the training delegate’s objectives were very much in line with those of the wider business.

3. Workplace Training Preparation and Delivery

3.1 Commissioner

Tailoring the training

The Workplace Training was not really tailored much in the case of this organisation and that was very much in line with their requirements. The HR Manager had already attended a general training course and felt that it would translate very well for them. The only tailoring required was where the original course had been aimed at employers in general, the Workplace Training was more tailored towards middle managers (and how to manage their staff) who were the delegates targeted to attend from the organisation.

There was no consultation ahead of the training day with the delegates; however, it was mentioned to practice managers. The HR Manager felt that there was widespread agreement and understanding that the training was necessary.
**Delivery of the training**

The Workplace Training was run as a one day course and was mandatory to attend for all Practice Managers. They had 14 attendees and all those invited attended on the day.

### 3.2 Manager

The Manager was not involved in tailoring the training to any extent but recognised the training as relevant to her role and something she should attend.

She described the actual training format as a "standard course" involving a mix of activities with the initial aims and objectives being outlined by attendees at the start, followed by interactive work and group discussion along with wider question and answer sessions. The interactivity was useful in being able to tailor the day around individual needs and relevant scenarios that managers might face on a day-to-day basis. She also mentioned that the need to understand individual perspectives is very important when discussing stress (as one person’s stress might be another’s "motivator").

The manager felt that the length of the training was “just right” and remembered that they were also supplied with some useful handouts and links to articles for further reading.

### 4. Workplace Training Evaluation

#### 4.1 Commissioner

**Evaluation methods used**

The commissioner used Acas feedback forms to evaluate the training. No other internal evaluation was conducted. The HR Manager remembers that the feedback was good and the training was received well by staff that attended. This was underlined by the feedback from the training attendee as below.

### 5. Workplace Training Impact

#### 5.1 Commissioner

**Short term (immediate) impacts**

In the immediate term, as a result of the training, the organisation updated their Stress at Work Policy and published the revised document on the intranet.

The commissioner did mention that at an individual level she felt that the training had had mixed success in changing the attitudes and behaviour of some managers but put this down to the intransigence of certain people rather than a fault of the training itself.
Longer term impacts

The key impacts have revolved around a real, measureable reduction in absenteeism across the business and this has been particularly noticeable within some specific practices where historically staff absence was a significant problem.

In percentage terms, absences across the organisation (measured on a monthly basis) have come down from four per cent (just prior to the training) to around two and a half per cent (six to nine months afterwards). They feel they have “really turned it around” in terms of the way that they managed individuals and managed absences in a more considered, holistic way.

In the case of one specific practice (whose manager attended the training) the change has been particularly marked with sickness absences coming down from 10 per cent (in the winter of 2012) to zero per cent in July 2013. Such improvements are having a real impact on the cost savings that they can realise in the business. Following the Acas training, the business “worked very closely with that service to turn it around …”.

The commissioner was not able to quantify specific cost savings relating to the reduction in absenteeism but did say that it would be substantial over the course of a year they have made “significant savings”. There were a host of activities that contributed to the reduction in absence levels but the Acas Workplace Training had an important role in providing Practice Managers with the necessary skills to support that objective.

They were no real changes across other possible measures such as reducing the number of employee grievances or Employment Tribunal claims; however, this was of limited concern to the commissioner as the key objective for the Workplace Training was to support a reduction in absenteeism and it achieved that aim.

5.2 Manager

The manager felt that the training had met her objectives and had given her practical help that she had been able to apply in her job since the training:

“Yes because what that did, was help [identify] … what are the trigger points… what I should be looking out for so that if anything did rear its head it was easy. It’s always easier to manage it at step one than step five. So I got in at step one: if there were individuals that did feel particularly stressed, I just sat down and spoke to them.”

In a practical sense this has led to a slight change in her management approach:

“I’ve made certain changes with the staff … We have a weekly meeting instead of me just going ‘Can we have a look at this now’ so that they get that chance to be able to get things into place, etc. And we have more staff meetings, I’m not necessarily involved in them all but there are more staff meetings to keep staff informed on what’s going on …. and to make sure that staff are aware of what’s happening.”
6. Value for Money and pricing

6.1 Commissioner

When asked about the value for money of Acas training the HR Manager was extremely positive stating:

“Yes very good value. It’s a full day course, excellent value for money. All reasonably priced.”

Although she admitted that she did not really consider other providers when looking for this type of training and therefore had a limited sense of any comparative pricing:

“I don’t really look at others to be honest. I only really look at Acas. I know they are going to have good quality. It meets our needs.”

7. Improvements

7.1 Commissioner

The commissioner did not highlight any improvements that might be made but did emphasise the importance of tailored, relevant and interactive training supported with up to date training materials.

7.2 Manager

The only suggestion from the manager who attended the training was not directly about the training itself but whether they could receive news updates around the topic and any developments following the course so that they could be kept up to date in the future.

8. Overall views

8.1 Commissioner

The commissioner agreed the Workplace Training had met her expectations and was very satisfied with the training overall.

8.2 Manager

The Manager rated her overall satisfaction with the Workplace Training as “very satisfied” and said that they would recommend Acas training to others.

“It was really helpful, which I’m sure they will be pleased to hear.”

They described the training as “informative”, “practical” and “insightful”.

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Longitudinal Case Study

The commissioner was re-interviewed in February 2014 (six months after the first interview) to follow-up on the discussions above. The business is still operating in much the same way as before with no notable changes in management or structure. However, there has been some significant expansion as the organisation has taken on further GP practices and health services in the area. This has led to an increase in the number of staff from around 400 at the time of the last interview, to somewhere between 450 and 500 staff in February 2014.

There has been no further need for specific Acas training as the commissioner has not had time to consider additional training as she has been occupied with other activities and the pressures of taking on new staff. Therefore training requirements have been focused around meeting the mandatory training needs of new joiners and getting them up to speed, concerning issues such as fire, health and safety and equality and diversity issues.

Longer Term Impacts – changes to policies

Since the last interview was conducted, there have been some further changes to the organisation’s internal policies. Following an update to their Stress at Work Policy as discussed previously, they have made some further changes in the intervening six months to their Sickness Policy to include “sickness capability” to account for stress related illness (as a lot of longer-term illnesses within the organisation appear to be related to stress) and to provide more guidance to managers in that area. This further change can be attributed to the Acas Workplace Training to some extent as it represents a further “tidying-up” of their policies and bringing them further into line with best practice.

Longer Term Impacts – changes to organisational metrics

The only metric identified during the previous interview as having changed as a result of Acas Workplace Training concerned a reduction in the number of work days lost due to absence. The follow-up interview was used as an opportunity to explore this issue in more depth and understand where the significant savings stated were derived from.

The commissioner reiterated that the original figures of a drop in absenteeism from four per cent (before the training) to two and a half per cent after the training were still valid and that the reduced level of absences had been maintained over the previous six months.

“The managers are much better now at managing sickness across the board ... [in terms of] being on top of it, managing it, being more proactive ...”
Longer Term Impacts – Wider Impacts

The financial savings were also revisited and the commissioner confirmed that the costs savings, should the reduced absence levels be maintained, would be very substantial. This is because they have a “very generous sickness policy” so for example:

“If a GP is off sick, you’re paying them their full salary, plus you’re paying for a locum to come in ... so it’s an absolute cost ... it can break a service.”

Overall views on Acas Workplace Training

When first interviewed six months ago, the commissioner rated Acas as ‘very good value for money’ and was ‘very satisfied’ with the service received. The commissioner maintained these ratings in the follow-up interview and continued to be very positive about Acas as an organisation.

Wider views on Acas in general

The commissioner continues to be a strong advocate of Acas. She mentioned that Acas was also extremely well regarded across the business amongst other managers and mentioned that in general conversations with colleagues they talk about “how great Acas is: we’re always on the Acas website”. In terms of wider support, she was particularly positive about the advice and guidance available on the Acas website, stating:

“... the information on the website is fantastic ... I think we were looking yesterday about Trade Union representation and what training the representative of a Trade Union should have ... I think the website and the advice on it is brilliant ... it’s where we go.”
12.9 Case Study Nine

Anonymous Organisation, Discipline and Grievance Workplace Training, Spring 2012

1. Background

This case study was carried out with a Government Agency who commissioned Acas to conduct Workplace Training sessions with their internal investigation team.

The commissioner for the training is a Senior Investigating Officer in this Government Agency (known throughout as 'the commissioner'), and manages a team of officers who investigate allegations of serious misconduct within the agency. His Unit is responsible for investigating all allegations of serious misconduct whether from members of the public to "serious staff on staff issues". This can involve a wide variety of cases from external customer complaints to serious internal staff issues such as bullying and harassment.

The Unit incorporates around 35 staff in total, with a team of 24 investigators who were the focus for this training. The commissioner is directly responsible for a team of four investigators and is charged with leading on any specific training requirements across the Unit. The second respondent who was interviewed as part of this case study (referred to throughout as 'the employee') attended the training as an investigating officer working within their team but had no line management responsibilities. The employee was very new to the investigator role (although they had worked within the same agency for seven years) and had only been in post for two to three months. The training formed part of her induction training with two days of Workplace Training being run at the end of a wider programme of two weeks of training involving a range of different providers.

The Unit often look to engage with specialist organisations to train staff in key areas relevant to their job role: for example they have used police training to help support the development of investigatory skills in the past. In the case of this Workplace Training, they were interested in developing the skills of their investigators in areas around HR grievances, discipline, bullying and so on. Therefore, they turned to Acas as their requirement was in relation to dealing with HR/employee relations work and they felt that Acas would be best placed to support their objectives.

The Workplace Training took place in Spring 2012 and focussed on Discipline and Grievance.

2. Workplace Training Objectives

2.1 Commissioner

Reasons for Commissioning Workplace Training

As a Government agency, the organisation is subject to strict oversight from a number of bodies and has robust procedures covering how they conduct their investigatory work. The team members typically have a background in investigatory work (including some with previous roles carrying out criminal
investigations, police work, etc) but it was felt that the team needed to develop their understanding and experience of investigating staff issues. They recognised that there was a “gap” around dealing with bullying, harassment and discrimination allegations and the need to “professionalise” what they did.

"... What we were looking at was trying to source someone to provide that training for us...and we identified that we thought that the best people to go to were Acas because obviously of their role in employee/employer relationships and also the ownership for the equality legislation.”

Objective(s) of the training

The core reason for commissioning the training was that they had identified a specific need where their investigation teams needed to develop a better understanding of HR investigations to ensure they were complying and acting in line with best practice when dealing with internal employment relations issues. They wanted to draw on the experience of an organisation that could advise them around how to conduct professional HR investigations.

The Workplace Training was part of a wider programme of training that the Unit provide to staff. The delegate who attended the Workplace Training and was interviewed for this case study attended the two days of Acas training at the end of two weeks wider training across a range of areas.

The key objective was to give their staff a foundation in conducting HR investigations and provide staff with a “bolt on” to the other investigative skills that they already had: effectively a further module of training as part of a wider roadmap.

Why the organisation chose Acas

When they were considering training providers in the area of HR investigations, Acas was the first name on their list as they recognised them as the “leading light” when it comes to training and expertise around employment relations. The commissioner did mention that they also used a range of private and public sector organisations for training but in the case of this requirement and the focus on understanding employer-employee relations in the context of an investigation, Acas was very much their first choice.

They were also conscious that in their line of work, when investigating staff-on-staff issues, they need to be mindful of the relationship between the employer and the Trade Union. Therefore by involving Acas in the training to develop the skills of their professional investigators, they were able to demonstrate that they were actively trying to improve the quality and impartiality of their own work.

In addition, in the current environment of shared services within government, the Unit could be contracted to conduct wider investigatory work by other parts of Government. Therefore, they were keen to demonstrate that their investigators are expert and have received the appropriate and necessary training and the Unit needed to find the best training organisation to meet that requirement.

When investigating staff-on-staff issues, members of the Unit are required to gather evidence and provide findings that could impact people’s careers and
possibly lead to further repercussions in terms of Employment Tribunal (ET) claims and hearings. Therefore investigators need to ensure that that they are following a professional, proportionate process and comply with any specific requirements in regard to agency policies and legislation.

They had not worked with Acas prior to commissioning the Workplace Training but made an initial enquiry and then had a series of positive discussions with the Acas trainer (both over the phone and face-to-face) that convinced them to proceed with the training sessions.

2.2 Employee

For the employee, HR investigations were a new area for them and they had not had any experience of dealing or working with Acas in the past. She explained that Acas was a name that she was aware of but she had no further in-depth knowledge regarding the range of services that they provided and had no preconceptions about the Workplace Training. Her core objective was really focused around getting a strong foundation before she would need to deal with any relevant HR cases.

She was particularly interested in the legal aspects of the training to ensure that she could she was conducting her duties in the most appropriate way and would adhere to the relevant rules and regulations.

3. Workplace Training Preparation and Delivery

3.1 Commissioner

Tailoring the training

In the case of this Workplace Training, the tailoring process was quite involved and the amount of time invested in this process by the Acas trainer to understand their business from the outset was an area of significant satisfaction to the commissioner and directly resulted in their positive views regarding the value for money of the training. There were at least two face-to-face meetings when they discussed needs and the commissioner also provided redacted documents, case materials and other information to the Acas trainer to give them a clear idea of what the Unit did.

Staff were not involved in the tailoring of the Workplace Training. Trade Unions were informed that training was going to be taking place but not involved directly. The employee that attended the training did say that they felt the training was effectively tailored to their role and their requirements. There was a particular emphasis on report writing at the end of the course (which is the "mainstay" of an investigator's job) and therefore that element was felt to be particularly useful and relevant.

Delivery of the training

The training was not a compulsory requirement but the commissioner would have expected all investigators invited to attend as it was designed to provide them with core skills necessary to doing their job effectively.
The course was designed as a two-day course for all attendees and involved a total of 24 staff over two separate courses, with 12 attendees in each group.

The focus of the training was around the responsibilities of the investigating officer, covering how to structure an effective investigation. Areas covered included:

- Legal background.
- Dealing with issues fairly.
- Disciplinary procedures.
- Stages of an investigation.
- Decision-making and legal considerations.
- Criminal proceedings.
- Reasons for dismissal.
- Discrimination.
- Investigation process (including writing reports).

According to the delegates who attended (the commissioner and the employee interviewed both attended the sessions), the training involved a series of activities including presentations, group discussions, scenario-setting, handouts and role plays. The commissioner stated that he was particularly pleased that it was an interactive training session and did not involve too much "death by PowerPoint". The practical elements where delegates were given handouts and asked to work through scenarios, discuss options and make a decision on the best way forward were considered the most useful elements of the training by the employee given their need for hands-on examples of how to carry out their role. The commissioner also added that the real benefit was in being able to “talk through” issues and discuss options in a number of hypothetical cases.

The trainer came in for particular praise in their efforts to make the training interesting. He was described as "very good", "animated" and someone who "really knew his stuff".

The employee commented that for them the training was delivered at the end of a week of training sessions and the trainer did “very well” in keeping everyone engaged and involved.
4. Workplace Training Evaluation

4.1 Commissioner

Evaluation methods used

The commissioning organisation did not conduct any formal feedback but did have staff meetings and managerial discussions following the training and the "general consensus was that the training was very good".

The commissioner was aware that the trainer appeared to have their own evaluation/feedback forms at the end of the Workplace Training event. The commissioner did not receive any Workplace Training feedback from Acas as a result of these forms, as far as they were aware. If any feedback had been available, the commissioner would have been interested to see this.

From his perspective, the commissioner felt that the training had been “very positively received” and staff had requested further Acas training following the initial sessions.

5. Workplace Training Impact

5.1 Commissioner

Short term (immediate) impacts

In line with the feedback received from the quantitative survey that the commissioner participated in (and preceded the case study interviews), there were no real impacts noted around the core areas of interest in terms of reducing absenteeism or reducing employee grievances. This was largely down to the fact that the organisational objectives for the training were not concerned with these matters but really about just building the skill set for members of the investigation team.

When asked whether any changes had been made as result of the training, the commissioner did not feel that any issues had been highlighted where they would have been required to change current investigatory policy or practice; however, it provided strong validation that they were doing things properly. Overall, the commissioner was very happy with the training but, ultimately, the impacts that Acas wanted to measure within this research exercise did not align to the objectives for the training that the commissioner had. The Unit’s training objectives were to bring in external understanding and validate that when they conduct an HR investigation, they are “dotting the ‘i’s and crossing the ‘t’s” from a best practice point of view. The training reinforced a number of core areas, such as the need for investigating officers to follow a clear, fair process, keep their file notes up to date, weigh up the evidence (in HR issues this can be very difficult but also vitally important), and that they can justify their actions and decisions further down the line (when they may be involved in an ET).

They felt that the training helped their investigators understand that they were on safer ground and could ensure that their investigations were “proportionate ... and if challenged would stand up [at a Tribunal]” and not leave them open to criticism in the way that that they have conducted their investigations.
“It was reinforcing what we were doing...bearing in mind that we weren’t suddenly new to investigative processes...so it was actually looking at what we do...were we actually doing it correctly and is there anything that we can add to it.”

Long term impacts

No longer-term impacts were noted for similar reasons as provided above. As the employee delegate was new to their role, it was necessary to conduct the training to get up to speed with the requirements of her job. However, the Workplace Training did give her a clear grounding in the area and provided her with background material so that she would not be going in “blind” when one of these cases should crop up.

6. Value for Money and pricing

6.1 Commissioner only

The commissioner would agree that the training represented very good value for money: if that had not been the case, they would not have commissioned them for some further follow-up training that is scheduled to take place later. They have stopped using certain other providers as they felt that they did not offer sufficient value for money.

In part, the commissioner’s perception of good value for money here was driven by the fact that the trainer’s fee for the delivery of the training also covered the costs for any set up and tailoring work that was undertaken over a series of two to three meetings. Other training suppliers charge them preparation on top of delivery so that made the Acas offer more competitive.

“I think the daily rate for the training included all the development work as well, so I think, yes, it was good value for money...and if I hadn’t thought it was good value for money I wouldn’t have been commissioning them to do the refresher training....I have no compunction about not using other organisations again.”

On a general comment regarding their use of other training providers, the commissioner did not feel that there was necessarily a marked difference between private and public sector training providers. Their approach is all about using the best training to meet their needs. The Unit establish their overall training needs and budgets as part of their business planning around February/March each year. At this point they have a reasonably clear sense of what their requirements will be and also what the costs might be. Now that they have an established relationship with Acas, they have had a number of open discussions with them about the indicative costs for what they are planning to do and have built those costs into their training plans for this year.

Generally speaking they have noted that training costs (across all suppliers) have come down and become more competitive over the past five years, possibly in response to a wider appreciation of the budgetary constraints that all Government organisations are subject to at the moment. The commissioner commented that he felt that Acas rates are “reasonable”.

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The relationship with the individual trainer has been really important and given them the "consistency" and "stability" of working with someone who knows their business and their requirements and it continues to evolve over time as they work together.

7. Improvements

7.1 Commissioner

The commissioner did not have any major improvements to highlight but commented again that the tailoring of the course was very important to them in this area. When asked to review the list of core areas for improvement for Acas Workplace Training from the earlier telephone survey, he emphasized the importance of keeping training materials up to date as the need to stay up to date on current legislation and best practice is very important in their role.

7.2 Employee

The employee had no comments to make regarding improving the training. However, they did comment that the Acas Workplace Training compared very favourably with all the other training that they had received as part of their induction process.

8. Overall views

8.1 Commissioner

The commissioner described themselves as "very satisfied at the moment" with the Workplace Training overall and that they had already commissioned further "refresher" sessions on the same topic for the same group of staff for later in the year.

They were particularly pleased with the quality of the discussion and general relationship with the trainer who had run all the sessions and with whom they had had most dealings. This has worked well with them: fostering a clear understanding of their requirements, quick turnaround on costs and efficient interactions throughout.

"[We are] … very, very content with the adviser we are dealing with … I wanted the consistency of the same trainer because I think it’s important that they understand our business and what we’re about and how we work."

8.2. Employee

The employee who attended the training also described themselves as very satisfied with the Workplace Training that was delivered by Acas and would recommend Acas in the future.
12.10 Case Study Ten


1. Background

The organisation is based in London, and has approximately 60 employees. The organisation comprises two work streams: “charter” boats which deal with weddings, corporate events, and a restaurant on the river and smaller marine vessels which work on bespoke civil engineering and filming projects. Although these work streams operate separately, the organisation has acted as the holding company for both since a buy out in 2011.

The commissioner of the Workplace Training course is the HR Manager (known throughout as ‘the commissioner’), at the organisation, and her role is to support the two company directors and work with line managers. She has worked in her current role for five years. This case study is based on the views of the commissioner, and does not include an interview with a further employee who attended or helped to tailor the training to the organisation.

The Workplace Training took place in Autumn 2012, and was focussed on Performance Management and appraisals.

2. Workplace Training Objectives

2:1 Commissioner

Reasons for Commissioning Workplace Training

The main reason for commissioning the training was company growth. Whilst traditionally, all annual reviews and performance management had been completed by the company’s two directors, as the organisation had grown, this was now no longer possible. As the respondent explained, the organisation viewed this as an opportunity to pass on further responsibility to line managers:

"The idea was that we have these line managers, so let’s use them, and they can start managing their own departments, with HR support."

The rationale for the training was therefore to train line managers to complete appraisals in order to directly reduce the time the organisation’s directors spent on appraisals. A further reason for commissioning external training was the background of the line managers; whilst two had prior line management experience, and some had “less of an administrative background”, and the commissioner felt the group would benefit in receiving formal training from an external provider.

The Workplace Training also included a short section on bullying at the end of the training, as the commissioner noted that the environment at the organisation, and on the boats, could be “quite traditional”. She felt that it was important for managers to be aware of both the best ways, and unreasonable ways, to talk to their colleagues.
Objective(s) of the training

The main objective was:

“Just to initiate the line managers managing their teams, and taking on responsibility for their team.”

Why the organisation chose Acas

The commissioner had used various Acas services previously, and noted that this helped in her decision to use Acas for this training:

“It seemed like an obvious choice really. Apart from receiving the mailings, I’ve used Acas in different ways. We have sent people on courses in the past and I’ve used the website and the helpline.”

The commissioner added that she felt Acas were “competitive” in terms of the value for money of the training that she wanted to offer, and made a direct comparison between Acas, and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD):

“If you look at CIPD for example, you would be looking at a lot more money. I’ve found in the past that Acas can deliver, and certainly at line manager stage you don’t need to necessarily need to go into the depth that CIPD might take them. It’s more the overview.”

3. Workplace Training Preparation and Delivery

3:1 Commissioner

Tailoring the training

Tailoring was said to have been largely initiated by Acas. The trainer contacted the commissioner by telephone to discuss the organisation’s tailoring requirements before he provided a first draft of the training materials for discussion. The commissioner recalled that whilst she told the trainer that the main objective of the training was to ensure that line managers were comfortable with conducting appraisals, the trainer led the discussion:

“They [Acas] came up with suggestions, asked questions about the company and then tailored the training to our needs. So the tailoring was probably more initiated by them.”

When prompted for more detail about exactly how the training was tailored to the organisation, the commissioner reported that the training materials were “tweaked” to incorporate a section on bullying, and also to be relevant to the organisation’s size and structure. She summarised that:

“The tailoring wasn’t anything major - it just made sense to our company.”
Delivery of the training

Five delegates attended the Workplace Training course including the training commissioner, who chose to attend to help her to support the learning provided by the trainer after the training. The course was conducted over one day, and lasted between four and six hours. The training was not compulsory for delegates to attend, although the commissioner noted that:

“It [non attendance] would have raised questions as to why they [delegates] were in the [line management] role they were in, and whether they really wanted it.”

4. Workplace Training Evaluation

4:1 Commissioner

Evaluation of methods used

The commissioner did not recall Acas mentioning their own delegate feedback forms, so developed her own evaluation form for delegates to complete after the training. The feedback received was broadly positive:

“A couple of people did say it [the training] gave them confidence and they appreciated that side of things, and understood what was required of them. They knew the content of an appraisal and what should be and shouldn’t be included.”

5. Workplace Training Impact

5:1 Commissioner

Short term (immediate) impacts

The main short term impact after the Workplace Training was that:

“One of the line managers did appraisals almost straight away because of where the work load was.”

Knowledge was shared with one potential delegate who had been unable to attend the training, by providing the slides presented by the Acas trainer during the Workplace Training.

Long term impacts

When asked about the longer term impacts of the Workplace Training, the commissioner described how the course had empowered the line managers who attended to take part in a “dummy run” of appraisals in early 2013. Whilst these appraisals contained “real content”, line managers were encouraged to make the appraisals “a little bit more relaxed and less formal” in order to help to ease them into their new roles.
The commissioner noted that since the training productivity had improved. When asked further about this improvement, the commissioner noted that it would be difficult to provide figures to quantify this, but was able to relate it to her Director being able to spend more time on new business rather than appraisals:

“One of the Directors is our new business person so he goes out and about networking and mingling. If he is in the right place at the right time he’ll pick up [new] work. If he is stuck in the office [conducting appraisals] he has less time to do that.”

The commissioner also noted that communication between internal departments had improved, which had had an impact on productivity:

“Line managers conducting their own appraisals opens up communication. People say things to their line manager that they wouldn’t necessarily say to their Director, and it’s a more comfortable environment. It means that issues are being addressed, training is been managed better and the majority of time that increases motivation and therefore productivity in the long term.”

When asked whether this was a direct result of the Workplace Training, the respondent provided further context, and noted that it was also due to the wider environment at the organisation:

“The company is doing better than a couple of years ago. During the recession the business went a bit quiet, but this summer has proved we are right back on track. Pay increases have started again, after being frozen a while, so that is always a contributing factor. We are trying to do more for the staff in terms of rewards.”

6. Value for Money and pricing

**Commissioner**

The commissioner felt that Acas offered “good” value for money, and recalled that despite paying for the course for five delegates, Acas told her that up to 15 delegates could attend the training course for the same price. This enabled the commissioner to attend the training as well as the line managers, in order to help support their learning, and answer any further questions after the course.

Whilst there was no budget for the training, the commissioner noted that there would be a cut off point where the organisation may have to consider alternatives other than training. She also reported that over the five years she’d been at the organisation, the overall price of training had increased.

7. Improvements

**Commissioner**

When the commissioner was asked about potential improvements to Workplace Training, she recalled that the delegates thought that more literature could have
been provided for them to take away, so that they could refer to it after the training. The commissioner described this additional request as:

“A little summary overview would be nice for them to take away for themselves.”

The commissioner envisaged that this overview would be provided in addition to the slides used by the trainer on the day.

8. Overall views

Commissioner

When asked to summarise her thoughts on the Workplace Training, the commissioner described herself as “fairly satisfied” with the training received.
APPENDIX 1: TECHNICAL APPENDIX

Detailed Methodology

A mixed method approach was deployed for this evaluation in order to quantify and track changes since the 2008 Workplace Training evaluation conducted by the Institute of Employment Studies (IES), and also to provide some fresh qualitative insight on the impact of Workplace Training at individual organisations. This section outlines the methodological background to these approaches, and also provides further detail on the logistic regression used to quantify influences on respondent perceptions of satisfaction and the achievement of objectives.

A1.1 Quantitative Telephone Survey

To ensure as much backwards comparability to the 2008 evaluation as possible (where a telephone survey methodology was used), a computer assisted telephone survey (CATI) was again used to gain feedback from a wide variety of training commissioners about the Workplace Training delivered to their organisations. The following parts of this Section set out how the questionnaire design, sampling approach, communication prior to fieldwork, pilot, and fieldwork stages were managed.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire remained largely similar to that used in 2008 for comparability purposes. To allow for new insight to be captured and to help meet Acas’ objectives for the project, several new question areas were included in 2013 (other sections were streamlined to allow for these inclusions):

- **Profile of business** – including number of employees, size, structure and recent financial performance.
- **Pricing and use of other suppliers** – value for money of Acas Workplace Training and usage of competitors.
- **Future training needs**
  - A re-contact question was also included to allow for recruitment for the case studies.

The final questionnaire is included in Appendix 3.

Sampling

The sample used for this evaluation was gathered from Acas’ management information system (EARS). When training commissioners at each of the organisations booked their Workplace Training event, their contact details were entered onto EARS, as the ‘Lead Customer Manager’ for that organisation.

In line with the 2008 evaluation, Acas securely provided sample containing the contact details for all training commissioners at organisations that had received one or more Workplace Training event between three and fifteen months prior to
the original fieldwork dates scheduled for May 2013. This enabled the impact of Workplace Training to be tracked over time.

A number of organisations were represented in the sample multiple times where they had commissioned more than one Workplace Training course from Acas. Where this was the case, the sampling frame outlined below in Figure A1.1 was deployed. The topic variable relates to the topic of the Workplace Training as commissioned by each organisation, and the contact variable relates to the training commissioner within each organisation.

As shown in Figure A1.1, where one training commissioner in an organisation commissioned multiple Workplace Training courses on the same topic, this was deemed to be an overall training programme. Where this was the case, the most recent course was selected to be part of the sample to help maximise the chance of the training commissioner recalling the training.

Where organisations had commissioned multiple courses via different training commissioners, or across multiple topics, one course per organisation was randomly selected to be part of the sample. This ensured that each organisation was only included in the sample once, and minimised any potential burden to respondents or organisations.

**Figure A1.1 Sampling Frame**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Variable (within organisation)</th>
<th>Contact Variable (within organisation)</th>
<th>Sampling Approach</th>
<th>Action Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identical</td>
<td>Identical</td>
<td>Most recent contact</td>
<td>ORC International to select <strong>most recent contact</strong>. These contacts will then be asked about all training courses in the overall training programme in line with the 2008 approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identical</td>
<td>Different</td>
<td>Randomly select</td>
<td>ORC International to <strong>randomly select</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different</td>
<td>Identical</td>
<td>Randomly select</td>
<td>ORC International to <strong>randomly select</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different</td>
<td>Different</td>
<td>Randomly select</td>
<td>ORC International to <strong>randomly select</strong>. Each organisation will only be contacted once to minimise respondent burden.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013)
The original sample file provided by Acas contained 943 records. Once the sampling was complete, and duplicates were removed, 706 records remained to be taken into fieldwork.

**Advanced Communications**

In line with 2008, to raise awareness of the research, a hard copy advanced communication letter was sent to all respondents on the revised sample database on behalf of Acas.

A copy of this letter is included in the following Section (Appendix 3, Section 2). The purpose of this letter was for Acas to be able to introduce the research to respondents before they received a phone call, and outline the benefits of their participation in the Workplace Training evaluation. The letter also served to provide contact details for ORC International and Acas should respondents have any questions about the evaluation, and to allow respondents to update their contact details, and/or use ORC International's proprietary online Appointment Booking Tool (ABT) to book an appointment if they wanted to participate in the research.

These advanced communication letters were sent out by second class mail on 17 May 2013. Once respondents received this letter, they could choose to update their contact details by email, telephone, fax, post, or online using ORC International's Appointment Booking Tool (which could also be used to book an appointment to participate in the research). Fifty respondents made contact with ORC International.

The most popular mode of contact with ORC International was via the Appointment Booking Tool, which was used by 31 respondents to book an appointment (fifteen of these respondents also updated their contact details). Thirteen respondents made contact via post and six by telephone.

Two of these 50 respondents indicated that they did not wish to participate in the research. These two respondents were not contacted during fieldwork, but were included in the final response rate calculations.

**Fieldwork Pilot**

Although the changes to the questionnaire since 2008 were limited, a pilot of 20 interviews was agreed to check the flow of the questionnaire, including new questions, and the length of the revised questionnaire. The pilot ran from Monday 3 June to Thursday 6 June 2013.

Feedback from the pilot revealed that respondents were generally happy to participate in the evaluation, and that contact details provided on the sample from Acas were generally correct.

The average interview length after 20 interviews was 23 minutes during the pilot, and a subsequent review of the questionnaire was completed and further open questions were removed on evaluating training courses.

Furthermore, it was noted that, in line with 2008, high levels of don't know responses were being received for some of the questions about the impact of the
Workplace Training. It was agreed that these questions would be able to be explored more fully in the qualitative strand of the research, so no changes were made here.

As the changes made as a result of the pilot were minimal, all 20 pilot interviews were included in the final quantitative analysis.

**Interviews achieved and final sample disposition**

The main fieldwork period ran for six weeks from Monday 10 June until Friday 19 July 2013. Including the pilot interviews, in total 404 completed interviews were achieved.

Figure A1.2 shows the final sample disposition, and also provides a comparison back to the 2008 evaluation. As can be observed, the final response rate received in 2013 is broadly similar to 2008, and the same proportion of the sample (57 per cent) was converted into completed interviews. As outlined in the “repeatedly unavailable” section of the sample disposition, in an effort to maximise the number of interviews achieved from the sample, in 2013, respondents were called a maximum of 10 times, compared to the maximum call threshold of eight calls in 2008. The increase in the amount of sample in this repeatedly unavailable code in 2013, compared to 2008, perhaps indicates that although respondents may have wanted to participate in the research (as they did not provide a refusal during earlier call attempts), they struggled to find a time to do this.
### Figure A1.2 Final Sample Disposition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Reason no interview</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Company policy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Already interviewed by Acas</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No time</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No reason given (in 2013, coded as refusal by respondent)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repeatedly unavailable (up to eight times in 2008, and 10 times in 2013)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal</td>
<td>Duplicate organisation</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third party organising training for other organisations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dead telephone number, or fax number</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td>Could not establish telephone contact (Live telephone line, but no answer or only an answer phone, or a reception who could offer no assistance)</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not contacted</td>
<td>No one able to discuss training (Target respondents had left the organisation, or had moved within the organisation, and were not contactable)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reason unclear</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>734</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013)

**Weighting**

No weighting was applied to the data given a census approach had been adopted. This was again consistent with the approach used in 2008.
A1.2 Qualitative Case Studies

Ten face to face case studies were carried out to help explore further the perceptions of Workplace Training from commissioners and delegates within a range of organisations.

Scope

Each case study aimed to include two interviews from each organisation in order to gain a holistic understanding of their experience of Acas Workplace Training. The first was to be conducted with the training commissioner, and the second with an employee, manager or trade union representative who had attended the training, or helped to tailor the training to the organisation.

Both interviews helped to provide more background, and contextual information in relation to the training commissioned by each organisation. Beyond this, the training commissioner interviews focussed on the reasons for the training, tailoring the training, the impact of the training, and views on the value for money and pricing of the training. The interviews with delegates, managers and trade union representatives who attended or helped to tailor the training to the organisation were more streamlined, and focussed more on the delivery and personal impact of the training. Topic guides for both interviews, together with show cards used are included in Appendix 3.

Recruitment

Respondents were recruited via a re-contact question at the end of the CATI questionnaire; nearly half (47 per cent) of all respondents agreed to be re-contacted to take part in this qualitative work.

Training commissioners were then re-contacted by telephone, and asked whether they would be willing to participate in a face to face depth interview, and whether they could also recruit another colleague who attended or helped to tailor the training to take place in a further interview. Once respondents had agreed to take part, they were then sent an email confirming the details of their interview.

To thank respondents for their time, each organisation that participated was offered a £75 charitable incentive to be provided to the charity of their choice upon completion of fieldwork.

Specification

A range of organisations, in terms of size and sector, time since their Workplace Training and topic of training were recruited for case study interviews.

The specification outlined below in Figure A1.3 was agreed with Acas for the case study interviews. The final “Achieved” column on the right hand side compares the initial specification to the final interviews achieved.
Figure A1.3 Case Study Recruitment Specification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Numerical Split</th>
<th>Achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Time since training</td>
<td>1-5 months x3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6-11 months x4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12-15 months x3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Size of business</td>
<td>Small (under 49 employees) x1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium (50-249 employees) x4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Large (250+ employees) x5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Topic aggregate</td>
<td>Employment Relations x3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fair Treatment at Work x3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HR and People Management x4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sector</td>
<td>Private x4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Public x3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not for profit x3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013)

**Completed interviews**

Upon completion of fieldwork, 10 interviews had been completed with training commissioners, and nine interviews with those who attended or helped to tailor the training to their organisation. The training commissioner for the final organisation was unable to provide contact details for a colleague who had attended the training due to a mix of the small number of delegates who attended the course, and high workloads.

All of the 10 training commissioner interviews were completed face to face. Seven of the nine interviews with respondents who had attended, or helped to tailor the training were also completed face to face. The remaining two interviews were completed via telephone due to respondent availability.

All qualitative interviews were completed between Tuesday 27 August, and Thursday 19 September 2013. The face to face interviews were completed across a broad geographical area covering London, Yorkshire, Oxfordshire, Middlesex and Greater Manchester.
**Longitudinal interviews**

At the initial case study interview, all training commissioners were asked whether they would be willing to participate in a longitudinal telephone follow up interview several months later.

Where this permission was provided, five organisations were selected, based on the impacts noted in the original case studies. The telephone interviews took place in February and March 2014, and focussed on any further changes since the initial case study interview.

No further incentive was provided for this follow up interview.

The topic guide for this interview has been included in Appendix 3.
A1.3 Statistical Analysis

In line with 2008, binary logistic regression was carried out on data from the quantitative survey to assess the relationship between dependent variables (satisfaction with the training and achievement of objectives used previously) and independent variables (including attitudinal and demographic variables).

Binomial (or binary) logistic regression is a form of regression which is used when the dependent is a dichotomy (i.e. binary) and the independents are of any type (for example different scales, including interval or categorical variables).

In order to carry out logistic regression, the current five response types ('Very Satisfied', 'Satisfied', etc...) were re-coded to reflect two categories of response ('Very Satisfied' and 'Not Very Satisfied'). This gave us dichotomous variables (variables with two response types) which could take the value 1 (with probability of success) or 0 (with probability of failure). This approach was consistent with the analysis undertaken in 2008.

Two separate models were run to explore both satisfaction with the Workplace Training and achievement of objectives as per that conducted in 2008.

Variables included

The variables used to build both models are outlined in Figure A1.4, which also highlights any difference from the 2008 variables used.

For each binary logistic model all independent variables which were not significant at the five per cent level were removed from the equation one by one, with the least significant variable being removed first.

Two further tables (Figure A1.5 and Figure A1.6) highlight two new variables which were incorporated into both models, and several variables which were only used in the satisfaction model, and not the achievement of objectives model.

Satisfaction model

Binary logistic regression was carried out with the dependent variable of respondents being “very satisfied” with their Workplace Training. In this variable, 0 was coded as “not very satisfied”, and 1 was coded as “very satisfied”. This provided a reasonable split between both groups, as three quarters of respondents (76 per cent) were very satisfied, and the remaining quarter (24 per cent) were not very satisfied.

Achievement of main objective model

Binary logistic regression was carried out with the dependent variable of whether respondents rated their main objective as being “completely achieved”. In this variable, 0 was coded as “not completely achieved”, and 1 was coded as “completely achieved”. This provided a reasonable split between both groups, as seven in ten respondents (71 per cent) reported that their main objective had been completely achieved, and the remainder (29 per cent) reported that their main objective had not been completely achieved.
### Figure A1.4 Variables included in Binary Logistic Regression – both models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Differences from 2008</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The main objective of training (Q8)</td>
<td>In 2008, the variable used was the main (one or two) objectives of the training. As this question has been updated to refer to the (one) main objective, this will now be used.</td>
<td>The following objectives were not included in the model due to low base sizes: Promoting equality or diversity (24 responses), Improving employee health or well-being (17 responses), and reducing absenteeism (four responses).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic (from sample and Q3A)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>In line with 2008, Topic will be grouped into Employment Relations, Fair Treatment at Work and HR and People Management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those involved in tailoring the training (Q11 and Q12)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>In line with 2008, the individual groups included were Managers, Trade Union Representatives, Non Union Staff Representatives, and HR staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether training was compulsory or not (Q14)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Don’t know was coded as missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance by Trade Union, or Non-Union Representatives (Q13)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Due to low base sizes, Trade Union full time official and Trade Union Representative were grouped to create one Trade Union Representative category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The main reason for commissioning training (Q5)</td>
<td>The 2008 binary logistic regression referred to the drivers of commissioning training. It has been assumed that this relates to the main reason for commissioning training, as included in 2013.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A1.5 New Variables included in Binary Logistic Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational size (Q38)</td>
<td>Coded as 0-49 employees (micro, small), 50-249 employees (medium), and 250+ employees (large). Don’t know was coded as missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time since training (from sample and Q3B)</td>
<td>Grouped as 1-5 months (training delivered between January and May 2013), 6-11 months (training delivered between July and December 2013), and 12-15 months (training delivered between March and June 2012). All other values were coded as missing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013)

Whilst whether or not the organisation had had an Acas Workplace Project was included in the 2008 model, it was excluded from the 2013 model, as it was deemed to be of limited interest. Two new variables were added to both 2013 models as outlined below in Figure A1.5.

Figure A1.5 New Variables included in Binary Logistic Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Previous contact with Acas in the last 12 months (Q34)</td>
<td>Contact with Acas was defined as any respondent who reported previous contact with Acas at Q34, excluding those who only reported use of the Acas website. Don’t know was coded as missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector (Q42)</td>
<td>Sector was defined as either Private Sector, or Non-Private Sector (i.e. incorporating both the Public, and Not-For-Profit sectors). Other was coded as missing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013)

Several further variables only related to the satisfaction model, as outlined in Figure A1.6:
Figure A1.6 Variables only included in the Satisfaction Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Differences from 2008</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive impacts reported (Q23)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Positive impacts being reported was defined as whether respondents noted a positive impact in Q23.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether policies and/or procedures changed as a result of training (Q25)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Change to policies and/or procedures as a result of training was defined as any respondent who answered “yes” to any part of Q25. All other responses were coded as “did not change”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training objectives completely achieved (27)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Don’t know coded as missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for money (Q29)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Very good value for money compared to all other categories.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013)

The binary logistic regression outputs are included in the main body of the report in Section eight, which focuses on overall views of Workplace Training.
## APPENDIX 2: ADDITIONAL REPORTING

### Topic and subject of training

**Figure A2.1** Respondent topic areas and subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic area</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Topic subject</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment Relations</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Employment law</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information &amp; consultation</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negotiation &amp; collective bargaining</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Redundancy/TUPE</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Treatment at Work</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Age discrimination</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bullying &amp; harassment</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Equality &amp; diversity</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other HR and People Management</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Discipline &amp; grievance (inc. investigations)</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Employing people/recruitment</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Having difficult conversations</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Managing absence &amp; attendance</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mediation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Supervision/line management</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Conflict management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ACAS model workplace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Passport to safety</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review of policies and procedures</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>418</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>418</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Acas telephone survey of training commissioners (2013)
Impacts in relation to organisational metrics

Further impacts in relation to organisational metrics were detected, albeit from smaller proportions of respondents. These are listed below, together with detail on whether the change was caused as a result of the Acas Workplace Training (Q19 and Q20):

- **The number of staff that resigned**: Twenty respondents reported that the number of staff that had resigned had increased since the Acas training. Six of these respondents (30 per cent) reported that this change was all or in part due to the Acas training. Twenty one respondents reported that the number of staff that had resigned had decreased since the training; 12 (57 per cent) attributed this change to be all or in part due to the training.

- **The number of work days lost due to absence**: Sixteen respondents reported that the number of work days lost due to absence had increased since the Acas training. One respondent (six per cent) reported that this change was all or in part due to the training.

- **The number of employee grievances**: Sixteen respondents reported that the number of employee grievances had increased since the training. Four respondents (25 per cent) reported that this was all or in part due to the training.

- **The number of employment tribunal claims**: Two respondents reported that the number of employment tribunal claims had increased since the training. Neither related this increase to the Acas training. Twenty two respondents noted that the number of employment tribunal claims had decreased since the training; 12 (55 per cent) reported that this was all or in part due to the training.

- **The number of employment tribunal claim hearings**: One respondent reported that the number of employment tribunal claim hearings had increased since the training. Upon further investigation, this was not related to the training. Fifteen respondents reported that the number of employment tribunal claim hearings had decreased since the training. Twelve (80 per cent) reported that this was all or in part due to the training.

- **Productivity**: Four respondents reported that productivity had decreased since the training. Three respondents (75 per cent) reported that this was all or in part due to the training.
APPENDIX 3: RESEARCH MATERIALS

A3.1 CATI Questionnaire

Good morning/afternoon/evening my name is _________ and I'm calling from an independent research company called ORC International. We are carrying out a study on behalf of Acas (the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service). Could I please speak to ________?

IF INDIVIDUAL NO LONGER AT COMPANY / NOT AVAILABLE: We need to speak to the person responsible for training in the organisation. Could you tell me who this is? Would you be able to put me through to them or their department?

WHEN THROUGH TO THE RIGHT PERSON:

Hello, my name is _______ from ORC International, an independent research company. We're doing some research on behalf of Acas to explore employer views of Acas' workplace training. We would like to discuss why it was commissioned and what the impact of the training was.

You should have received a letter recently regarding this survey. To do the survey, we need to speak to the person responsible for training in the organisation. Can I confirm that this is you?

IF NO: ESTABLISH WHO IS APPROPRIATE CONTACT, AND ASK TO BE PUT THROUGH (REPEAT INTRODUCTION)

IF YES: The interview will be confidential - no one outside the research team will be made aware of any information you give – and the information will be reported anonymously. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes. Are you able to do the interview now?

IF not available at current time: May I arrange a time to call you back? IF REFUSE TO TAKE PART: May I ask why not?

IF FURTHER INFORMATION REQUESTED:
- Send email verifying the research
- (If preferred) contact details are:
  - Cat York, Senior Research Executive, ORC International, 020 7875 1061, cat.york@orc.co.uk

This research study is being carried out in accordance with the Market Research Society guidelines and I can assure you that all your responses will remain totally anonymous and will not be attributed to you personally, or to your organisation.

IF WILLING TO PARTICIPATE CONTINUE WITH MAIN SURVEY
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>INSERT FROM SAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>February</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>April</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>May</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>June</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>July</td>
</tr>
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<td>August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>November</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>December</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>INSERT FROM SAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>INSERT FROM SAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes – part of an overall programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No – not part of an overall programme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASK ALL**

Q1 Can you confirm firstly that you are not a third party, organising training on behalf of another organisation?

**DO NOT READ OUT, SINGLE CODE.**

1 | CORRECT – NOT A THIRD PARTY | CONTINUE |
2 | INCORRECT - THIRD PARTY, DID NOT UNDERTAKE TRAINING | THANK AND CLOSE |
3 | Don’t know | THANK AND CLOSE |
ASK ALL
Q2 According to Acas’ records, Acas ran a course on [TOPIC] in your organisation that finished around [MONTH, YEAR – taken from END DATE VARIABLE IN SAMPLE]. Is this correct?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.
1 Yes
2 No – date incorrect
3 No – topic incorrect
4 No – both incorrect
5 Don’t know

IF Q2=3.4 (TOPIC INCORRECT)
Q3A Please can you clarify what the main area of training was?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE
1 Age Discrimination
2 Attendance/Abseence Management
3 Bullying and Harassment
4 Change Management
5 CIOWM Mediation Training
6 Conflict/Mediation/Relationship Issues
7 Disability Discrimination
8 Discipline and Grievance
9 Employment Law
10 Equal Pay
11 Equality and Diversity
12 Flexible Working, Hours and Holidays
13 Information and Consultation
14 Negotiation and Collective Bargaining
15 Payment and Grading Arrangements
16 Performance Management
17 Race Discrimination
18 Recruiting, Contracting and Employing People
19 Redundancy
20 Religion or Belief Discrimination
21 Sex Discrimination
22 Sexual Orientation Discrimination
23 Stress Management
24 Supervision/First Line Management
25 TU Recognition – Decision to recognise
26 TU Recognition – Implementation of recognition agreement
27 Working Families/Parental Rights
28 TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment))
29 Other – SPECIFY

IF Q2=2.4 (DATE INCORRECT)
Q3B Please can you clarify when this training course took place?

(If Programme=1 (Yes, part of an overall programme)) – Prompt: please think about the most recent training event held on this topic

MONTH....... YEAR ..........
IF PROGRAMME=1 (PART OF AN OVERALL PROGRAMME)
Q3C According to the information provided by Acas, you commissioned more than one course on [TOPIC].

Please can you confirm if this is the case?

SINGLE CODE. READ OUT.
1 Yes – commissioned more than one course on this topic CONTINUE (Programme =1)
2 No – only commissioned one course on this topic CONTINUE (Programme =2)
3 Don’t know CONTINUE (Programme =2)

SECTION B - WPT TRAINING OBJECTIVES AND CHOOSING ACAS

IF ASKING ABOUT ONE COURSE (Programme=2 – not part of an overall programme OR Q3C=2,3): We will begin by focussing on this particular training course, and then towards the end of the interview, we will ask you a few questions about training in general.

IF ASKING ABOUT OVERALL PROGRAMME (Q3C=1): Please answer the following questions thinking about all of the courses that you commissioned from Acas on this topic. Towards the end of the interview, we will ask you a few questions about training in general.

Now, thinking about the Acas Workplace training your organisation commissioned...

ASK ALL.
Q4 For what reasons did [ORGANISATION] decide to commission training on [TOPIC]?

Probe - What other reasons were there? REPEAT UNTIL 'NO OTHER REASON', CODE/RECORD ALL ANSWERS.

<DP, please record first, second and third choices here>

DO NOT READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY. MULTICODE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In response to legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Meeting requirements of parent organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To inform and help develop policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To support implementation of / adherence to company policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To help with an organisational problem / improve in TOPIC area (including Employment Tribunals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>As part of a wider initiative / programme of change in the organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>To be seen to be following ‘good practice’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other - SPECIFY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASK IF MORE THAN ONE REASON SPECIFIED AT Q4
(IF ONLY ONE REASON SELECTED AT Q4, PLEASE PRE-POPULATE)

Q5 And which of those do you think was the main reason for the training?

<DP, please show all reasons selected at Q4>

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In response to legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Meeting requirements of parent organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To inform and help develop policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To support implementation of / adherence to company policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To help with an organisational problem / improve in TOPIC area (including Employment Tribunals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>As part of a wider initiative / programme of change in the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>To be seen to be following ‘good practice’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Other - SPECIFY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASK IF Q4=6 NOT SELECTED

Q6 Was the training part of a wider initiative or programme of change in [organisation]?

PROMPT IF NECESSARY: Did you commission the training to fit in with a broader organisational programme that also focused on or related to [TOPIC]?

DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASK ALL

Q7 Thinking about the specific objectives of the training, how important were the following?

How important or unimportant was ... was it very important, fairly important, not very important, or not at all important?

READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Improving adherence to policies or procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Improving employee health or well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reducing absenteeism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Improving employment relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Improving the organisation’s performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Promoting equality or diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Improving staff knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Reducing staff turnover</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Very important (1), Fairly important (2), Not very important (3), Not at all important (4), Don’t know (5)

ASK IF Q7_1-8=3,4,5. (i.e. codes 1 and 2 were not selected at Q7, so no objective marked as very/fairly important.)

Q7a What was the most important objective of the training?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other – SPECIFY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASK IF MORE THAN ONE OBJECTIVE SELECTED AS IMPORTANT AT Q7 (Q7_1-8=1,2) (IF ONLY ONE OPTION AS IMPORTANT AT Q7, PRE-POPULATE)

Q8a Of the objectives you said were important in the last question, which one you would see as being the most important objective of the training?

<DP, please show all reasons selected as very/fairly important (WHERE Q7_1-8=1,2)>

READ OUT. CODE 1 ONLY.
| 1 | Improving adherence to policies or procedures | CONTINUE |
| 2 | Improving employee health or well-being | CONTINUE |
| 3 | Reducing absenteeism | CONTINUE |
| 4 | Improving employment relations | CONTINUE |
| 5 | Improving the organisation’s performance | CONTINUE |
| 6 | Promoting equality or diversity | CONTINUE |
| 7 | Improving staff knowledge | CONTINUE |
| 8 | Reducing staff turnover | CONTINUE |

**ASK ALL**

Q9 Why did you choose Acas as your training provider?

PROCMPT to clarify independence and expertise. Do you mean independence from management and the trade union, or from the Government (e.g. advice on legislation), or both? - Do you mean general expertise in employment relations or HR; or specific expertise in [TOPIC]?

PROCMPT - What other reasons were there? REPEAT UNTIL 'NO OTHER REASON'; CODE/RECORD ALL ANSWERS.

<DP, please record first, second and third choices here>

**CODE ALL THAT APPLY. DO NOT READ OUT.**

| 1 | Independence - advice was independent of management & Trade Union | CONTINUE |
| 2 | Independence - advice (e.g. on legislation) was independent of Government | CONTINUE |
| 3 | Government sponsored | CONTINUE |
| 4 | Expertise - General expertise in employment relations or HR | CONTINUE |
| 5 | Expertise in [TOPIC] | CONTINUE |
| 6 | Offered value for money | CONTINUE |
| 7 | Good experience of Acas in past – if so, which service (SPECIFY - Acas to re-code) | CONTINUE |
| 8 | Personal recommendation of Acas | CONTINUE |
| 9 | Good reputation as a training provider | CONTINUE |
| 10 | Did not know who else to use | CONTINUE |
| 11 | Acas approached us | CONTINUE |
| 12 | Not involved in decision | CONTINUE |
| 13 | Don’t Know | CONTINUE |
| 14 | Other - SPECIFY | CONTINUE |

**SECTION C - WPT PREPARATION AND DELIVERY**

The next few questions focus on how your organisation prepared for the workplace training, and the delivery of the event.

**ASK ALL**

Q10 Do you have [READ OUT FROM BELOW] in your organisation?

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE EACH OPTION.**

| 1 | Trade union representatives | Yes (1), No (2), Don’t know (3) | CONTINUE |
| 2 | Non-union staff representatives | Yes (1), No (2), Don’t know (3) | CONTINUE |
| 3 | Trade union full-time officials | Yes (1), No (2), Don’t know (3) | CONTINUE |
### ASK ALL

Q11 Thinking of how the training was tailored to your organisation, were [READ OUT FROM BELOW] involved in this process?

<DP, please do not show code 2 (Trade Union) if Q16_1=2 OR 3 (don't have Trade Union representatives, or don’t know)>
<DP, please do not show code 3 (other staff representatives) if Q10_2=2 OR 3 (don’t have other staff representatives, or don’t know)>

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE EACH OPTION.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Your management</th>
<th>Yes (1), No (2), Don’t know (3)</th>
<th>CONTINUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The trade union</td>
<td>Yes (1), No (2), Don’t know (3)</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Any other staff representatives</td>
<td>Yes (1), No (2), Don’t know (3)</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Anyone else at your organisation</td>
<td>Yes (1), No (2), Don’t know (3)</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ASK IF Q11_4=1 (OTHERS INVOLVED IN TAILORING TRAINING)

Q12 Who else was involved?

**DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Diversity champion</th>
<th>CONTINUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Occupational health professional</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Health and safety officer</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other - SPECIFY</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>HR</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Facilities Manager</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ASK ALL

Q13 Was the training attended by any of the following?

<DP, ONLY ASK Q13_1 IF Q10=1>
<DP, ONLY ASK Q13_2 IF Q10=2>
<DP, ONLY ASK Q13_3 IF Q10=3>

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE EACH OPTION.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Trade union representatives</th>
<th>Yes (1), No (2), Don’t know (3)</th>
<th>CONTINUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Non-union staff representatives</td>
<td>Yes (1), No (2), Don’t know (3)</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Trade union full-time officials</td>
<td>Yes (1), No (2), Don’t know (3)</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ASK ALL

Q14 In general, was the training compulsory or optional for staff to attend?

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Compulsory</th>
<th>CONTINUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Optional</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION D - WPT EVALUATION

Next we'll look at how your organisation evaluated the workplace training before exploring the impacts of the training.

ASK ALL:

Q15 Did your organisation evaluate the training in any of the following ways?

READ OUT. CODE ALL THAT APPLY. MULTICODE.

1. Using Acas feedback forms for delegates
2. Using your own feedback forms on the day
3. Conducting a before-and-after survey of delegates
4. Conducting a survey of delegates’ line managers
5. By analysing related outcomes in the area of [TOPIC]
6. Informally, at meetings or in group discussions

Note to interviewers – please add one method per Other – SPECIFY box

MULTICODE.

1. Other - SPECIFY
2. Other - SPECIFY
3. Other - SPECIFY
4. Other - SPECIFY
5. Don't know

Q16A and Q16B DELETED

SECTION E - IMPACT OF WPT

IF Q15=1 (YES) TO ANY, AND/OR REASONS PROVIDED AT Q16

Q17 Based on the results of your evaluation, how would you say the training has impacted on <INSERT ORGANISATION NAME FROM SAMPLE>?

PROMPT - What other impacts did your evaluation reveal? REPEAT UNTIL 'NO OTHER REASON'. RECORD ALL ANSWERS

MULTICODE

1. OPEN VERBATIM
2. Don't know

ASK ALL

Q18 In which of the following ways, if any, have learning from the training been shared with staff who did not attend the event?

READ OUT. MULTICODE.

1. Intranet
2. Booklets
3. Employee handbooks
4. Further in-house training
5. Other - SPECIFY

CONTINUE
Ask all.
Q19 To assess the impact of the Acas training on your organisation, we would be grateful if you could tell us whether the following have increased, decreased or stayed the same in the period since you completed the training?

< Note to DP - Ask Q19 and then Q20 for each question in tandem [not Q19 (1 to 6) and then Q20 (1 to 6)].>

Read out. Single code each option.

| 1 | The number of staff that resigned | 1-5, DK* | Continue |
| 2 | The number of work days lost due to absence | 1-5, DK* | Continue |
| 3 | The number of employee grievances | 1-5, DK* | Continue |
| 4 | The number of employment tribunal claims | 1-5, DK* | Continue |
| 5 | The number of employment tribunal hearings | 1-5, DK* | Continue |
| 6 | Productivity | 1-5, DK* | Continue |

* Decreased to a large extent (1), Decreased to some extent (2), Increased to some extent (3), Increased to a large extent (4) Stayed the same (5) (DON'T READ OUT), Don't know (6)

If Q19 1-9 = 1,2,3,4 (If any options have increased or decreased to some or a large extent)
Q20 For each point in Q19, if increase or decrease: To what extent was this change due to changes made in your organisation as a result of the Acas training?

< Note to DP - Ask Q19 and then Q20 for each question in tandem [not Q19 (1 to 6) and then Q20 (1 to 6)].>

Read out. Single code each option.

| 1 | The number of staff that resigned | 1-4, DK* | Continue |
| 2 | The number of work days lost due to absence | 1-4, DK* | Continue |
| 3 | The number of employee grievances | 1-4, DK* | Continue |
| 4 | The number of employment tribunal claims | 1-4, DK* | Continue |
| 5 | The number of employment tribunal hearings | 1-4, DK* | Continue |
| 6 | Productivity | 1-4, DK* | Continue |

* Not at all (1), To some extent (2), To a large extent (3), Completely (4), Don't know (5)

Ask all.
Q21 Now I'd like to turn to the impact you think the training has had on participants.

In your view, would you say the impact the training had on ... was very positive, slightly positive, slightly negative, very negative, or that there was no impact?

Read out. Single code each option.

| 1 | Participants' awareness of their responsibilities | 1-5, DK* | Continue |
| 2 | Participants' awareness of their rights | 1-5, DK* | Continue |
| 3 | Participants' adherence to your organisation's policies | 1-5, DK* | Continue |
| 4 | Participants' ability to deal effectively with [topic] | 1-5, DK* | Continue |
* Very positive impact (1), Slightly positive impact (2), Slightly negative impact (3), Very negative impact (4), No impact (5), Don’t know (6)

**IF Q21 = 1-4 (IF NEGATIVE IMPACT)**
Q22 Why was that? / Why do you say there was a (very) negative impact?

<DP, please ask once for each negative response provided at Q21. Ask Q21 and then Q22 (where relevant) for each question in tandem [not Q21 (1 to 4) and then Q22 (1 to 4)].>

**WRITE IN VERBATIM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Other – SPECIFY</th>
<th>CONTINUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASK ALL**

Q23 Thinking now about the wider impact of the training on the organisation:

In your view, would you say the impact the training had on .... was very positive, slightly positive, slightly negative, very negative, or that there was no impact?

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE EACH OPTION.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Levels of trust between senior management and employee representatives</th>
<th>1-5, DK*</th>
<th>CONTINUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Levels of trust between managers and employees</td>
<td>1-5, DK*</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dealing with employment relations issues in a timely way</td>
<td>1-5, DK*</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dealing with employment relations issues in an effective way</td>
<td>1-5, DK*</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Staff morale</td>
<td>1-5, DK*</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The fair treatment of employees</td>
<td>1-5, DK*</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The ability to manage change in staff or HR</td>
<td>1-5, DK*</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The ability to prevent industrial action</td>
<td>1-5, DK*</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The organisation’s overall ability to deal effectively with</td>
<td>1-5, DK*</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[TOPR]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Very positive impact (1), Slightly positive impact (2), Slightly negative impact (3), Very negative impact (4), No impact (5), Don’t know (6)

**IF Q23 = 3,4 (IF NEGATIVE IMPACT)**
Q24 Why was that? / Why do you say there was a (very) negative impact?

<DP, please ask once for each negative response provided at Q23. Ask Q23 and then Q24 (where relevant) for each question in tandem [not Q23 (1-8) and then Q24 (1-8)].>

**WRITE IN VERBATIM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Other – SPECIFY</th>
<th>CONTINUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASK ALL**

Q25 As a result of the training, have you or anyone working with you...

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Introduced one or more new policy</th>
<th>Yes (1), No (2), Don’t know (3)</th>
<th>CONTINUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reviewed one or more policy or practice</td>
<td>Yes (1), No (2), Don’t know (3)</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Document Title: p156a06e2v153144d57525e514411.docx
Classification: Private
Version: 0.1
Last Saved: 01.05.2013
Page 10 of 17
### SECTION F - OVERALL VIEWS ON WPT

Now thinking about your overall views of the training...

**ASK ALL**

Q26 Taking everything into account, now that some time has passed since you received the training from Acas, would you say you were...

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.**

1. Very dissatisfied  
2. Fairly dissatisfied  
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied  
4. Fairly satisfied  
5. Very satisfied  
6. Don't know

**ASK ALL**

Q27 You said that the main objective in doing the training was [INSERT OBJECTIVE FROM Q8]. Overall, would you say the main objective of the training was:

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.**

1. Not at all achieved  
2. Partly achieved  
3. Completely achieved  
4. Don't know

**ASK ALL**

Q28 Would you recommend Acas training on [TOPIC] to other organisations?

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.**

1. Yes  
2. No  
3. Don't know

**ASK ALL**

Q29 How would you rate the value for money of the training? Would you say it was...

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.**

1. Very good value for money  
2. Fairly good value for money  
3. Average value for money  
4. Fairly poor value for money  
5. Very poor value for money  
6. Don't know
Now thinking about the cost of training - specifically a 1 day in-company Acas training course for around 15 people

**ASK ALL**

Q30 At what price per person would you consider one day of Acas in-company training to be so expensive that you would not consider buying it? Please give a price that excludes VAT.

ENTER COST IN POUNDS. ALLOW DON'T KNOW.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ENTER COST IN POUNDS</th>
<th>CONTINUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASK ALL**

Q30b At what price per person would you consider one day of Acas in-company training to be priced so low that you would feel that the quality could not be very good? Please give a price that excludes VAT.

ENTER COST IN POUNDS. ALLOW DON’T KNOW.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ENTER COST IN POUNDS</th>
<th>CONTINUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I’d now like to ask you a few questions about future usage of Acas’ workplace training...

**ASK ALL**

Q31 If in the future you need more training on [TOPIC], or another area of employment relations, how likely would you be to use Acas training again? Would you be...

READ OUT, SINGLE CODE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very unlikely</th>
<th>SKIP TO Q33</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fairly unlikely</td>
<td>SKIP TO Q33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neither likely nor unlikely</td>
<td>SKIP TO Q33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fairly likely</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>SKIP TO Q33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IF Q31=4 OR 5 (LIKELY USE ACAS TRAINING AGAIN)

Q32 Which areas of training would you be likely to need training on in the future?

DO NOT READ OUT, MULTICODE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age Discrimination</th>
<th>CONTINUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Attendance/Absence Management</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bullying and Harassment</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Change Management</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>EEO Mediation Training</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Conflict/Mediation/Relationship Issues</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Disability Discrimination</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Discipline and Grievance</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Employment Law</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Equal Pay</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Equality and Diversity</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Flexible Working, Hours and Holidays</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Information and Consultation</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Negotiation and Collective Bargaining</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ASK ALL
Q33 And finally, what one thing do you think Acas could improve about their Workplace training?

OPEN VERBATIM
1 OPEN VERBATIM
2 Nothing
3 Don't know

SECTION G - DEMOGRAPHICS

Thank you for your answers so far – we are nearing the end of the survey.

We would now like to ask you a few background questions on the services you use, your role and organisation to help us understand your answers.

ASK ALL
Q34 Which other Acas services have you used in the last 12 months?

READ OUT. MULTICODE.
1 Used Acas for conciliating in an employment tribunal case
2 Used Acas' collective conciliation service for resolving an industrial dispute
3 Used an Acas mediator to help resolve a dispute between individual workers
4 Telephoned Acas' employment rights helpline
5 Attended or sent a member of staff to attend an open access training course delivered by Acas
6 Received an on-site joint management / employee project to improve relationships
7 Visited the Acas website
8 Used Acas in some other way
9 No other Acas services
10 Don't know / can't remember

ASK ALL
Q35 Which other providers, if any, do you use to receive training on employment issues?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE.
1 GIPD
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Collins Schofield</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hemsley Fraser</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Eversheds</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Consultancies / freelance HR professionals</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Do not use other providers – only Acas</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other (SPECIFY)</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IF USE 1 OR MORE AT Q35.**

Q36 How does Acas compare in terms of the cost of their workplace training events compared to other providers you have experienced? Would you say they are...

**INTERVIEWER: READ OUT SINGLE CODE.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Generally cheaper than other providers</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>About the same price as other providers</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>More expensive than other providers</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Now moving on to your role and your organisation...**

**ASK ALL.**

**Q37** What is your job title/position?

**DO NOT READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Administration – e.g. admin manager</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Business/strategy – e.g. head of sales</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Consultant – e.g. internal consultants</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Diversity – e.g. equality and diversity manager</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Employee relations – e.g. ER manager</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Employment law/legal – e.g. company lawyer</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Finance – e.g. finance manager/ head of finance</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>General manager</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>HR/personnel assistant</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>HR/personnel business partner</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>HR/personnel Director</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>HR/personnel manager</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Learning and development</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>MD/CEO – e.g. Managing Director or Chief Executive Officer</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Office manager</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Operations – e.g. operations manager</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Team leader</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Trade Union roles (e.g. Learning and Development officer)</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Training – e.g. training/practice manager</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Other (SPECIFY)</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASK ALL.**

**Q38** Approximately how many staff are employed in your organisation in the UK?

**READ OUT IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE.**
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 to 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 to 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>50 to 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>100 to 249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>250 to 499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>500 to 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,000 to 4,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5,000 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Continue**

**ASK ALL:**

Q39 How many sites or workplaces does your organisation have in the UK?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IF 1 SKIP TO Q42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IF GREATER THAN 1 CONTINUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>SKIP TO Q42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IF Q39 = 1**

Q40 Was the training on [TOPIC] attended by staff from a specific site or workplace, from two or more specific sites, or from across your organisation?

**SINGLE CODE**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>From one workplace or site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>From two /more specific sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>From across the whole organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other (SPECIFY)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Continue**

**IF Q40 = 1 OR 2**

Q41 Approximately how many staff are employed in total at these sites? [PROMPT IF NECESSARY]

In total, about how many people are employed at the site / sites that the training delegates came from?

**READ OUT IF NEEDED. SINGLE CODE**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 to 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10 to 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>50 to 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>100 to 249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>250 to 499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>500 to 999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,000 to 4,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5,000 or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Continue**

Thinking now about the structure of your organisation...
**ASK ALL**
Q42. Do you work in the...

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Public sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Private sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Not-for-profit voluntary sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Don't know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASK ALL**
Q43. And what industry does your business operate in?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT; list is from 2007 SIC codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIC Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Group A – Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Group B - Mining and Quarrying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Group C - Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Group D – Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Group E – Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Group F – Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Group G - Wholesale, Retail, Repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Group H – Transport and storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Group I – Accommodation and food service activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Group J – Information and communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Group K – Financial and insurance activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Group L – Real estate activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Group M – Professional, scientific and technical activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Group N – Administrative and support service activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Group O – Public administration and defence; compulsory social security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Group P – Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Group Q – Human health and social work activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Group R – Arts, entertainment and recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Group S – Other service activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Group T – Activities of householders as employers; undifferentiated goods and services producing activities of households for own use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Group U – Activities of extraterrestrial organisations and bodies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASK IF Q42=1, 4 (DO NOT ASK PUBLIC/THIRD SECTOR)**
Q44. Can you please tell me the approximate turnover of your business in the past 12 months?

<DP, DO NOT SHOW FOR PUBLIC SECTOR OR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS (Q42=1 OR3)>

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT ONLY IF NECESSARY. SINGLE CODE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Less than £500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>£500,000 – less than £1m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>£1m – less than £1.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>£1.5m – less than £2.8m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>£2.8m – less than £5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>£5m – less than £10m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>£10m or more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>DO NOT READ OUT - Don't know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>DO NOT READ OUT - Refused</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ASK Q45.1 IF Q42=1, 4 (DO NOT ASK PUBLIC/THIRD SECTOR)**

**ASK Q45.2 TO ALL**

Q45. Please can you tell me whether your business has grown, stayed the same or contracted in the following areas in the last 5 years?

<DP. DO NOT SHOW Q45.1 FOR PUBLIC SECTOR OR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS (Q42=1 OR 3). Q45.2 TO BE SHOWN TO ALL>

**INTERVIEWER: READ OUT. SINGLE CODE**

| 1 | Financial turnover | Grown, stayed the same, contracted, DK | CONTINUE |
| 2 | Employee numbers  | Grown, stayed the same, contracted, DK | CONTINUE |

**ASK ALL**

Q46. Thank you very much, that is the end of the survey. We would like to speak to some organisations further to explore the impact of workplace training in more detail. Would you be happy to help us with this? There would be an incentive and we may contact you in the next couple of weeks if you agree.

**READ OUT. SINGLE CODE.**

| 1 | Yes | CONTINUE |
| 2 | No  | CONTINUE |
A3.2 Advanced Communication Letter

Dear [Title] [Surname],

ACAS Research: Investigating the impact of Workplace Training

As part of its ongoing evaluation of its training, Acas (the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) has commissioned a survey to investigate the impact of its in-company training service (workplace training). I am writing to ask for your assistance in this important research. As an organisation that has commissioned Acas training yourself, we would be very interested in speaking to you.

This research will help us obtain a better understanding of issues surrounding workplace training and assist Acas in improving its services for employers. This research is entirely voluntary, but we would really welcome your views on the workplace training service. It is important that we gain a representative picture of how Acas workplace training has impacted on its customers.

The research is being conducted independently of Acas by the specialist research company ORC International. A member of the research team will telephone you on [Telephone number] between Monday 3 June and Friday 5 July to ask you some questions about:

- the reasons why your organisation used Acas for training on [Topic] around [Month, Year] and what the objectives of the training were; and
- the medium to long term impacts that the training has had on your organisation, such as whether HR practices have improved, or whether absence levels have increased or decreased since the training.

Interviews will take approximately 15 minutes and can be arranged at your convenience. To book an interview online, please go to www.workplaceprojectevaluation.co.uk before Monday 3 June 2013, enter this password abc123 and choose a convenient date and time. This research study is being carried out in accordance with the Market Research Society guidelines and I can assure you that your responses will be treated confidentially and will not be attributed to you as an individual or your organisation. If you would like to verify ORC International’s credentials, please contact the Market Research Society on freephone 0500 396 999.

Acas’ records list you as the person at your organisation best placed to discuss the reasons why you commissioned training and the impact that the training has had on your organisation. If this person is not you, we would be very grateful if you could direct us to her/him. You can nominate an alternative contact at your organisation to participate in this study using the website and password above (www.workplaceprojectevaluation.co.uk and abc123), by contacting Cat York at ORC International on the contact details overleaf, or by returning the reply-slip in the enclosed reply paid envelope.

You can also get in touch in any of these ways to notify ORC International if your telephone number is incorrectly listed (above), or to discuss this research further.

On behalf of Acas, I would like to thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Brian Cunningham Thornton
Senior Business Manager, Training
Acas Workplace Training Research

Nomination of Alternative Contact
I would like to nominate an alternative contact at my organisation to participate in this study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of organisation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of alternative contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notification of Alternative Telephone Number
I am the correct person at my organisation to participate in this study but you have my telephone number incorrectly listed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your name</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of organisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My correct telephone number is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please return this reply slip to Cat York at ORC International in one of the following ways:
- Scan this page, and email it to: workplaceprojectsevaluation@ORCInternational.com
- Fax this page to: 020 7675 1900
- Return this page in the enclosed reply paid envelope to:
  ORC International
  1st Floor, Pearl Studios
  6A Liverpool Road
  London
  N1 0PU
- You can also book an interview, update your contact details, or nominate an alternative contact at your organisation to participate online at www.workplaceprojectsevaluation.co.uk, using this password: abc123.

You can also contact Cat York at ORC International by telephone on 020 7675 1061 or at workplaceprojectsevaluation@ORCInternational.com, if you wish to discuss this research further.

For internal use only: 100080 - <ID_No>
A3.3 Training Commissioner Topic Guide

Background for moderator:

Research commissioned by: Acas
Conducted by: the Public Service Research Division, ORC International
Date: August-September 2013
Method: A telephone survey with organisations who had commissioned workplace training from Acas has already been completed. These 10 face to face qualitative case studies will follow up on areas of interest to explore survey feedback in more detail. Each case study will include an interview with the training commissioner (1 hour) and where possible further depth interviews (up to 45 minutes) with managers and delegates (who attended the training) and trade union representatives (who were involved in tailoring and/or attended the training).
Incentive: £75 charity donation per organisation (to be posted to the charity directly upon completion of fieldwork)

Aim/Objectives of the Workplace Training Impact Survey:

Main Objective: To provide a reliable picture of the medium to long term impacts of Acas Workplace Training.

Further Objectives:

- Track changes in the key impact measures and service changes since 2008
- Clarify the demographics of employers and commissioners of WPT
- Examine the topic and nature of WPT, and why organisations commissioned the training
- Explore organisations’ experiences of WPT
- Establish if the WPT met the training objectives and the expectations of commissioners
- Establish medium to long-term impacts of undertaking WPT
- Examine satisfaction with WPT, including value for money and future usage
- Identify any service limitations or where improvements could be made

Case studies to be conducted with:

- Organisations which have commissioned workplace training from Acas, have completed ORC International’s telephone survey, and are happy to be re-contacted.
- Case studies to be recruited according to the following parameters, where possible:

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<td>Private x4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Third x3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also need to ensure that not all case studies are in the South East.

**Resources to have to hand:**

- Topic guide.
- Audio recording equipment.
- Telephone survey responses.

**Introduction (3 minutes)**

Thank you:
E.g. Thank you very much for giving us some time today.

Introduce ourselves and mention Acas:
I'm <name> from the research company ORC International, which is independent from the people who commissioned this research, Acas (the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service).

**Anonymity, confidentiality and data protection:**
Must add that interviews will be confidential and participants will not be named, nor will the organisation unless they grant permission for their feedback to be attributed.

I would appreciate being able to record our discussions as well as taking notes. Only myself and close colleagues at ORC International will listen to them and then we destroy the recordings in compliance with the data protection act. Is this OK? Yes/no to recording.

**Confirmation of purpose:**
Paraphrase objectives/topic guide themes (as per previous page)

Explain structure of interview and wider plan for case study:

Individual case studies will be written up after each interview, and emailed to each organisation for their approval before they are provided to Acas. At this point, organisations will also be able to confirm whether or not they are willing to be identified in the case study.

**Notes to moderator:** Including references to the telephone survey, are shown in italicised text.

**Section 1. Background (5 minutes)**

To start off with, can you tell me a bit more about your organisation?

**PROMPT:**

- Size of organisation - any other offices, or parent organisation?
- Number of staff (Check figure from Q38. Probe if DK)
- What are the different types of job role?
- Geographical coverage
- Sector
- How long has the business/ organisation been in operation?
- Private/third sector only: who are your customers?
- Private/third sector only: which products/services do you provide?
**What is your role in the organisation?** (include confirmation of job title from Q37)
- Explore responsibilities around HR functions (if no responsibilities around this area, check whether they have an HR department)
- Length of time in role
- Who else in the organisation is involved in the process of commissioning training?
  - Who else is involved in identifying suitable training providers?

**Employee numbers:** Previously, you mentioned that employee numbers had 
(Q45_2: grown, 
contracted, stayed the same – probe if DK) in the last 5 years.
  - If different, how many staff did you have 5 years ago?
  - Why did this change? (probe – recession, growth, contraction, change in scope of business, merger, takeover etc)

**[IF PRIVATE SECTOR]** Please can I confirm the organisation’s turnover in the last financial year (2012-13)? (Check figure from Q44.)
- Previously, you mentioned that financial turnover had 
(Q45_1: grown, contracted, 
stayed the same – probe if DK) in the last 5 years.
  - If different, what was your financial turnover 5 years ago?
  - Why did this change? (probe – recession, growth, contraction, change in scope of business, merger, takeover etc)

**Section 2. WPT Training Objectives and Choosing Acas (10 minutes).**

We’re now going to focus on the objectives of the workplace training and the reasons why you chose Acas to conduct the training.

We understand from the survey that you commissioned Acas to carry out workplace training in relation to …… in …….

(insert course topic and date from sample. Q3a, Q3b)

- Firstly, why did you decide to commission training on this area?
  - Was there an organisational need/problem? IF YES: How was this identified? Is this a new problem, or recurring?
  - Was it part of a wider organisational programme? IF YES: What else did this involve?
  - Was it in response to legislation/outside action? IF YES: What was the nature of this legislation/outside action?
  - Do you run internal training on this topic?
  - Had you considered other approaches (i.e. not training) to addressing this need/problem?
    - If so, why did you decide on training?
    - Was the training partnered with any other approaches? (e.g. awareness raising campaigns across the organisation, ideas disseminated by email, in meetings, company publications etc)

- Length of course?

- Did you have to go through an internal process to gain approval or funding to commission the training?
  - If so, how did you describe or quantify the benefits you expected the organisation to achieve from the training?

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**Classification:** Private
**Version:** 1.0
**Last Saved:** 20/06/2013

Page 3 of 10
Who were the main decision makers in your organisation?

- Did you commission one course, or multiple courses on the same topic? IF MULTIPLE: Were these all from Acas or a range of providers?

- What were the main objectives of the training? (refer to Q7, Q8 if needed)

  - PROBE:
    - Expected organisational outputs e.g. reducing absenteeism, increasing knowledge/compliance, reducing workplace disputes etc.
    - Anticipated timeframe for improvements?
    - Was one objective more important than the others? IF YES: Why
    - Who was the course aimed at? (management, all staff, specific department etc)

- Why did you choose Acas to deliver this training? (Q9)

  - PROMPT
    - Had you commissioned Acas previously to conduct workplace training?
    - Had you used any other Acas services? IF YES:
      - Which services have you used? What was your experience of them?
      - Did you use other Acas services before finding out about workplace training or vice versa?
    - If used any Acas services before, how did you first find out about Acas and about workplace training?
    - If not used any Acas services before, how did you hear about Acas?
    - What were your perceptions of Acas before they commissioned the training?
    - Who did you make contact with at Acas to ask any questions you had about workplace training?
    - Did you consider using other organisations to deliver the training? IF YES: Who? Why did you choose Acas over these other organisations?

- Thinking about the Acas training you commissioned, would you have been able to find similar training elsewhere?

  - If YES, where?
  - If YES, how likely is it that you would have attended this alternative training if Acas had not provided the course you commissioned?
    - Probe: very/fairly likely or unlikely?
Section 3. WPT Preparation and Delivery (5 minutes)

Once you had chosen Acas to deliver the training, how did the process of tailoring the training to your organisation work? How was the training tailored to your organisation?

PROMPT

- Did Acas suggest ways for the training to be tailored to your organisation, or did you suggest this?

- Who was involved/consulted from your side? (probe decision making process)

- How did you want the training to be tailored to your organisation?
  - Training needed to be suitable for specific audience? In line with business vision/objectives?
  - What were the benefits of tailoring the training to your organisation?
  - Do you know whether you could have commissioned tailored training from any other organisations? (i.e. not Acas)

- Were Acas able to tailor the training in the way(s) you requested to your organisation?

- The last time we spoke to you, you mentioned that [Q11 and Q12: management, trade union, staff representatives, HR, add any others] were involved in tailoring the training – how did this work in practice?
  - Was anyone else involved? IF YES, Who?
  - Did those who were involved in tailoring the training attend the training?
    - If YES: what were the benefits of this?
    - If NO, why not?

- Looking at the delivery of the course, how many staff members attended?

PROMPT

- Did employees, managers and trade union representatives attend?
- If multiple courses on the same topic commissioned, how many staff members attended all courses?
- Verify training was optional/compulsory for staff – explore reasons why.

Section 4. WPT Evaluation (5 minutes)

Did your organisation evaluate the workplace training at all? If so, how? If not, why not? Refer to Q15/16

PROMPT
Why did you choose to evaluate the training in these ways?
  - What was the most useful? And the least?

Did you consider any other evaluation methods?
  - If not already covered: why did you not use the Acas training feedback forms to evaluate the training?

How would you normally evaluate training? Is this different for internally run and externally commissioned training?

Did Acas provide suggestions or support to help you evaluate the training?

Section 5. WPT Impact  (10 minutes)

A key part of this evaluation is to provide an assessment of the impacts that the Acas workplace training has had on organisations, which we’ll focus on next.

- Thinking back to immediately after the training were there any immediate actions that you took after the training course? IF YES: What were these?

- Was knowledge shared with staff who did not attend the event?
  - If so, how did this work in practice? (refer to Q18)
  - If not, have you done this before? Would you consider doing this in the future? Why did you choose not to do this on this occasion?

- Were there any immediate or short term impacts of the course?
  - IF YES: What were they?
  - IF YES: Can you attribute that change directly to the workplace training? How?

Changes as a result of the training

Now thinking about longer term changes as a result of the training, during the telephone survey you mentioned that the organisation had (list all positive responses to Q25 – introduced one or more new policy...)

- PROMPT
  - Which policy/policies or practice(s) did the organisation introduce/review/revise?
  - Please can you explain a little more about these?
  - Exactly how did the training lead to this change?
  - Was the change directly attributable to the Acas workplace training?

- Looking at the impact of the workplace training on organisational metrics now - REFER TO WORKSHEET 1 (and Q19/Q20)
Work through each metric in turn, focusing on those which have increased or decreased:

- Previously, you mentioned that x had increased/decreased – to what extent would you say that this change was a result of the Acas workplace training?
- Did your organisation commission other training courses on the same topic during this timeframe?
- Are there any other factors which may have caused this change?

**How has the change impacted on the organisation?** Probe for as much detail as possible for each metric.

**Number of work days lost to absence** – is this across the entire organisation, across your workplace only or per employee?

**How does your organisation usually measure productivity?**

- Do you usually measure this per employee, across workplaces, or across the organisation? *Probe*
- How have you measured productivity for any figures provided?
- *(Note to moderator, definition for productivity is ‘Turnover per employee’ (i.e. how much each person produces) in whatever time frame they collect data on this)*

**Are there any other organisational impacts which you would attribute to the training?**

**Could you quantify the cost savings derived from these impacts?**

- **And finally, were there any other/wider impacts from the training?** *(i.e. positive or negative outcomes which were not related to the main objective of the training? E.g. staff working better together)*

**IF YES:** Please expand on these. Were these impacts positive or negative?

---

**Section 5a. Value for Money and Pricing** *(7 minutes)*

**Value for Money**

- Do you think Acas offer good or poor value for money? *Probe why.*

- Have you ever used other providers to receive training on employment issues? *REFER TO Q35*

**IF USE OTHER SUPPLIERS**

- How do Acas compare to other suppliers?
- Would you say that Acas was generally cheaper, about the same price, or more expensive? *Probe why*
- Do other suppliers offer the same, better, or worse value for money on their training courses?
• If better, what is it that they offer that Acas don’t?
• If worse, what do Acas offer that others don’t?
• Probe for differences with VFM – e.g. if satisfied with VFM, but think Acas are more expensive, or vice versa
• Purely focussing on the quality of training, (i.e. not cost), which supplier would you choose to provide training on employment issues?

Now thinking about pricing…

• Did you have a budget for this training course?
  • If YES, what was it?
  • If NO, were there any restrictions on the supplier you could choose to deliver this training?
• How much did you pay for this training course (excluding VAT)?
  • Was this within your budget?
    • If NO – did you need to seek additional funds to cover the cost of the training? How did you quantify/explain the additional benefits that you expected to receive to justify the additional funding?

[IF WORKED IN TRAINING FOR 5 YEARS OR MORE]
• Have you seen any changes in pricing of training in the last 5 years?
• Or any changes in commissioning training?

PRoMPT
• Is it any more difficult to get training signed off internally?
• Have training budgets changed since 2008? If YES, how?
• Is more training being completed in house than in 2008?

Section 6. Improvements (5 minutes)

As part of the telephone survey conducted we asked everyone how Acas could improve their workplace training service. The top 5 most commonly suggested improvements included… READ OUT LIST BELOW

• Increase tailoring/make it more relevant to our organisation/fess talk about Acas
• Improve, update and increase training materials
• Make training more interactive
• Increase Acas’s understanding of our organisation
• Improve Acas organisation and administration

• Would you agree with all/any of these suggested improvement areas?
If you had to prioritise these improvements in order of importance, which order would you put them in? Why?

Are there any other improvements you would like Acas to make?

Section 7. Overall views on WPT (5 minutes)

How would you summarise your overall views of the workplace training provided by Acas?

- Taking everything into account, would you say that you were very dissatisfied, fairly dissatisfied, neither, fairly satisfied, or very satisfied with Acas workplace training?
  - Probe if different to satisfaction mentioned at Q26
  - Why do you say that?
  - If very satisfied - what do Acas do well?
  - If dissatisfied - what could Acas do better in the future?
- How did the training compare to your expectations?
- Would you use Acas workplace training again?
  - If YES: on which topic
  - If not, why not

Section 8. Close (5 minutes)

- Any further feedback on Acas workplace training and the service received to date?

- Thank respondent for their feedback

- Anonymity: Now that the interview is complete, are you happy for these comments to be attributed to you, and/or your organisation, or would you prefer them to be anonymous?

- Confirm £75 charity donation: which charity would they like to receive this? (Cheques will be sent directly to charities upon completion of fieldwork).

- Next steps: we will write up the case study, incorporating all interviews completed with the organisation, and email it back to the training commissioner.

- Respondent feedback: We will ask the training commissioner to feed back any comments for the organisation within one week. We will ask about attribution/anonymity again

- Final report: Acas will publish the final report in late 2013/early 2014.

- Longitudinal recruitment: we are also looking to follow up these interviews with a further short (30 minute) telephone interview in six months time (March 2014) to help us to review the impact of Acas WPT over time.
Is respondent happy to be re-contacted then?

Interviews would only be with training commissioners – not managers, delegates or Trade Union officials. There would be a further charity incentive.
A3.4 Training Commissioner Impact Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational metric</th>
<th>Soon before Acas workplace training (for example 4 months or less before the training)</th>
<th>In the period after Acas workplace training (for example 3 - 18 months after the training)</th>
<th>Increased? Decreased? (Q19 from survey data)</th>
<th>Due to changes made as a result of Acas WP? (Q20 from survey data)</th>
<th>How has this impacted your organisation?</th>
<th>Does the impact include any cost savings? If so, what?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of staff that resigned</td>
<td>Time frame?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The number of work days lost due to absence</td>
<td>Time frame?</td>
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<td>The number of employee grievances</td>
<td>Time frame?</td>
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<td>The number of tribunal claims</td>
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<td>The number of tribunal hearings</td>
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A3.5 Training Commissioner Improvements Showcard

**Improvements to Acas Workplace Training**

- **RANK**
  - Increase tailoring/make it more relevant to our organisation
  - Improve, update and increase training materials
  - Make training more interactive
  - Increase Acas's understanding of our organisation
  - Improve Acas organisation and administration
A3.6 Delegate, Manager, or Trade Union Representative

Topic Guide

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Date: August-September 2013
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Introduction (2 minutes)

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Must add that interviewees will be confidential and participants will not be named, nor will the organisation unless they grant permission for their feedback to be attributed.

I would appreciate being able to record our discussions as well as taking notes. Only myself and close colleagues at ORC International will listen to them and then we destroy the recordings in compliance with the data protection act. Is this OK? Yes/no to recording

Confirmation of purpose:
Paraphrase objective/topic guide themes (as per previous page)

Explain structure of interview and wider plan for case study:

- At the end of this interview, we will ask whether you are happy to be identified in the case study write up for your organisation, or whether you would prefer to remain anonymous.
- A case study will be written up for your organisation including your interview, the interview with the person who commissioned the training, any further interviews with employees, managers and trade union representatives. This case study will be emailed to your organisation, and will need to be approved by all interviewees before it is included in the final report to Acas.
- The training commissioner will choose whether the organisation is named, or not.

Notes to interviewer, including references to the telephone survey, are shown in italicised text

Section 1. Background (5 minutes)

- Please can you tell me a bit more about yourself, and your role in the organisation? What is your role in the organisation?
  - Which team/division/area do you work in?
  - Length of time in role?
  - Responsibilities?
EMPLOYEE – Line management responsibilities?
MANAGER – How many people do you manage?
TRADE UNION REP – Is this the first workplace you have worked as a Trade Union Representative?
  - How long have you worked as a Trade Union Representative? What does your role involve? Why did you choose to become a Trade Union Representative?
  - Have you had to accompany members of staff to disciplinary or grievance hearings with management?
  - In which areas/topics do you have most involvement/discussions with employees? E.g., Pay and Benefits, health and safety...
  - What proportion of your working time does Trade Union business comprise?

- Have you attended training courses before by Acas or any other provider? If other, probe who.
- What type of training is available at your workplace? How is training arranged?

Section 2. WPT Training Objectives (5 minutes)

We’re now going to focus in on the workplace training course on …that was delivered by Acas on …..(insert course topic and date from sample, Q3a, Q3b)

Thinking firstly about the time before the training took place…

ASK ALL
- Had you received training in this area before?
- Had you expressed an interest in receiving training in this area (for you/your team/your members) before you attended the course?
  - If so, what did you hope the training would provide?
  - If not, how did you first hear about the course? Was it compulsory for you to attend?
- Did you have any expectations for the course before you attended it? Probe
- What did you expect the course to help you achieve?
- What, in your view, was the main objective of the training course?
  - Compare with organisational view of main objective (from Q8) if different

MANAGERS/ TRADE UNION REPS
- Were you involved in tailoring the training for your organisation?
- IF YES: What did this process involve? Were you invited to be involved, or did you request involvement? Who invited you? Did you have direct contact with Acas before the training or was it just an internal discussion?
- IF NO: Did you request involvement?
- TRADE UNION REPS: (if Trade Union business is only part of their working time) Did you attend the training because of your role as a Trade Union Representative, your role as an employee, or both? Probe – different reasons and benefits for each?
Section 3. WPT Training and Delivery (10 minutes)

Thinking about the actual training course now:

EMPLOYEES

- Why did you attend the training?
  - Probe – free will, asked to by manager, optional or compulsory?

MANAGER/ TRADE UNION REP:

- Did you attend the training?
- IF YES: Did you request whether you could attend? Optional or compulsory?

ASK ALL

- Please can you describe what was involved in the training?
  - Activities
  - Style of delivery
  - Length of training
  - Who else attended (number, and mix of departments/seniority?)

- EMPLOYEES/THOSE NOT INVOLVED IN TAILORING: Do you know if the training was tailored to your organisation?
  - If so, how?

- MANAGER/ TRADE UNION REP/THOSE INVOLVED IN TAILORING: How did tailoring the training to your organisation work in practice?
  - Is there anything else that you would like to have been tailored to your organisation?
  - Probe

- To what extent do you think the training helped you with what you hoped to achieve from it?
- Would you say that the main objective of the training course was met or not?
  - If main objective for organisation (Q8) was different, do they think this was met or not? Why?

- Overall, what are your perceptions of the training?
  - What did you think about the format of the training?
  - Did it feel tailored to your organisation and requirements?
  - What worked well? And less well? Why?
Section 4. WPT Evaluation (3 minutes)

Focusing in on what happened after the training course now...

- Were you asked to provide feedback on the training course at all? IF YES:
  - How?
  - Who asked you to provide this feedback – Acas or your organisation?
  - Can you remember what your initial feedback on the course was (or would have been if not asked to evaluate)?

Section 5. WPT Impact (10 minutes)

And thinking now of the impact the training has had...

ASK ALL

- What would you say that you achieved or learnt from the course (if anything)? Probe
- Were there any immediate actions that you took after the training course? Probe
- Immediately after the course, did you create an action plan to integrate the learnings from the training in your working life? Or resolve to do anything differently?
  - If so, how/what?
- Do you know whether management/your organisation made any changes as a result of this training?
- Did the training course help you to identify any further training needs, or not?
  - If so, which? Have future courses been booked in to cover these?
- Was knowledge shared with staff who did not attend the event?
  - If so, how did this work in practice?
  - If not, have you done this before? Would you consider doing this in the future? Why did you choose not to do this on this occasion?

- Did the training meet your expectations?
• To what extent was your main objective of the training achieved?

And thinking about how you feel now...

• Now that we are speaking to you (insert number of months) after the training, would you say that the learnings from the training have had an impact on your working life/that of your team/s/employees who attended, or not?
  o If so, how?
  o If not, why do you say that?
  o If respondent resolved to do anything differently, how is this working for them? Have they found themselves slipping back into old habits? If so, how have they tried to embed the learning from the training?

• What would you say is the main learning that you have taken from the training?
  o How has this helped you in your role?

MANAGER/TRADE UNION REPS:

• To your knowledge, have there been any longer term changes as a result of the training?
  o Probe – please think about any changes which may have been made at an organisational level
  o Probe – any changes to policies or practices?
  o IF YES – please can you explain a little more about these? Do you know if the training lead to this change?
    • Is the change directly attributable to the Acas workplace training?

• And finally, are you aware of any other wider impacts from the training? (i.e. positive or negative outcomes which were not related to the main objective of the training? E.g. staff working better together)
  o IF YES: Please expand on these. Were these impacts positive or negative?
  o Softer outcomes? Do they feel that staff-management relations have improved since the training?

Section 6. Overall views on WPT (4 minutes)

How would you summarise your overall views of the workplace training provided by Acas?

• Taking everything into account, would you say that you were very dissatisfied, fairly dissatisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, fairly satisfied, or very satisfied with Acas workplace training?

• Would you recommend Acas workplace training to others?
If so, and you had to focus in on one feature of Acas workplace training that you would recommend to others, what would it be?

If not, why not?

Section 7. Improvements (3 minutes)

What one thing do you think Acas could do to improve their workplace training courses?

Section 8. Close (3 minutes)

- Any further feedback on Acas workplace training and the service received to date?
- Please can you give me three words which sum up your experience of receiving workplace training from Acas?
- Thank respondent for their feedback
- Anonymity: Now that the interview is complete, are you happy for these comments to be attributed to you, and/or your organisation, or would you prefer them to be anonymous?
- Next steps: we will write up the case study, incorporating all interviews completed with the organisation, and email it back to the training commissioner. We will also contact you directly to ask for your clearance before publication.
A3.7 Longitudinal Topic Guide

Background for moderator

Research commissioned by: Acas
Conducted by: the Public Service Research Division, ORC International
Date: February/March 2014

Method: Five follow-up case study interviews (30 minute telephone interviews) with commissioners interviewed 6 months ago within organisations who had commissioned workplace training from Acas.

Aim/Objectives of the Workplace Training Impact Survey: To provide a reliable picture of the medium to long term impacts of Acas Workplace Training.

Further Objectives:

- Track changes in the key impact measures and service changes since 2008
- Clarify the demographics of employers and commissioners of WPT
- Examine the topic and nature of WPT, and why organisations commissioned the training
- Explore organisations’ experiences of WPT
- Establish if the WPT met the training objectives and the expectations of commissioners
- Establish medium to long-term impacts of undertaking WPT
- Examine satisfaction with WPT, including value for money and future usage
- Identify any service limitations or where improvements could be made

Main Objective of longitudinal interview: To understand how things have changed in the last 6 months, focusing on longer term impacts of the original WPT and exploring whether, why and how perceptions and views may have changed since the previous interviews.

Case studies to be conducted with:

- Organisations which have commissioned workplace training from Acas, have completed ORC International’s telephone survey, and a follow up case study visit from ORC International, and are happy to be re-contacted.

  ■ Case studies to include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Case Study One</th>
<th>Anonymous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Case Study Two</td>
<td>University College Oxford (UNIV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Case Study Five</td>
<td>Benenden Health Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Case Study Six</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Case Study Eight</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources to have to hand:
Introduction (3 minutes)

Thank you very much for giving us some time today to follow up on our last discussion (6 months ago) surrounding the Workplace training your organisation commissioned through Acas (the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service).

Anonymity, confidentiality and data protection:
Refer back to prior permission to be de-anonymised or not – as before, interviews will be confidential and participants will not be named, nor will the organisation unless they grant permission for their feedback to be attributed.

I would appreciate being able to record our discussions as well as taking notes. Only myself and close colleagues at ORC International will listen to them and then we destroy the recordings in compliance with the data protection act. Is this OK? Yes/no to recording.

Confirmation of purpose:
Paraphrase objectives/topic guide themes (as per previous page)
Explain structure of interview and wider plan for case study:

After the interview, we will add an additional section to the previously agreed case study and send back for your review and sign off.

Section 1. Introductory Questions (5 minutes)

- Have there been any changes in your organisation in the last 6 months?
  - When we last spoke to you... (note the main background points from the previous case study write up – include sector, size etc) ... is this still the case?

- How about any changes in your role, and any further interaction with and/or Workplace training received from ACAS in the last 6 months?
  - Has your organisation commissioned any other training courses (not from Acas) on the in the last 6 months? IF YES: what was the topic(s) of the training and who did they commission (if external) to undertake the training? Why did they commission another organisation rather than Acas?

Section 2. Longer Term WPT Impacts (12 minutes)

Firstly, recapping on changes made to policy/policies or practice(s) that have been introduced/reviewed/revised within your organisation since the Acas Workplace Training (MODERATOR TO READ OUT PREVIOUS CHANGES NOTED IN CASE STUDY WRITE UP):

- Any further changes/ progress here?
Do you think that you would have been able to make these changes or be in a position to plan to make these changes if you had not attended the Acas Workplace training?

Next, recapping on the impacts we discussed 6 months ago from the training on (INSERT TRAINING TOPIC):

- Moderator to run through long-term changes noted within the case study, including where relevant reference to:
  - Changes to organisational metrics (as marked on former WORKSHEET 1 – Moderator to transfer to table below) – relay metrics provided, and extent to which this was attributed to Acas Workplace Training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational metrics</th>
<th>In the period after Acas workplace training - initial interview</th>
<th>6 months later (longitudinal interview)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of staff that resigned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of work days lost due to absence</td>
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<td>The number of employee grievances</td>
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<td>The number of employment tribunal claims</td>
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<td>The number of employment tribunal hearings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As I mentioned, the main objective of this discussion is to understand how things have changed since we last spoke, particularly with regards to these longer-term impacts that were identified and whether the metrics we discussed can be updated.

So, recapping back to the organisational metrics just noted (Refer back to WORKSHEET 1):

- For each metric where a change was previously recorded:
  - Have the Acas training outcomes/impacts we spoke about six months ago been sustained?
  - Has there been any further change recorded in this area?
• IF YES: Can you quantify the further change (MODERATOR: probe for approximate estimate if possible)
  o To what extent can further changes be attributed to Workplace Training specifically?
  o How has the change impacted on the organisation? Probe for as much detail as possible for each metric.
  o Are there any other organisational impacts evident in the last 6 months which you would attribute to the training? Any new impacts against metrics?

• If cost savings were quantified in case study: previously you noted cost savings in the region of xx - what would you say now the cost savings derived from these impacts was?

• Have you taken any actions as a result of the training since we last spoke which can specifically be identified as leading to an increase in productivity?

• And finally, have there been any other/ wider longer-term impacts from the training in the last six months? (i.e. positive or negative outcomes which were not related to the main objective of the training? E.g. staff working better together)
  o IF YES: Please expand on these. Were these impacts positive or negative?

Section 3. Overall views on WPT (5 minutes)

Note to moderator – add previous responses from telephone survey responses to the boxes below.

• When we spoke to you in August/ September, you rated the value for money of Acas’ Workplace training as [VERY GOOD, FAIRLY GOOD, AVERAGE, FAIRLY POOR, VERY POOR]. How would you rate them now?

  Probe if any changes: Why has their view changed? Has the Workplace training had any influence on their score?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Score</th>
<th>New Score</th>
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</table>

• Likewise, when we spoke to you in August/ September, you rated your overall satisfaction of Acas’ Workplace training as [VERY DISSATISFIED, FAIRLY DISSATISFIED, NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED, FAIRLY SATISFIED, VERY SATISFIED]. How would you rate them now?

  Probe if any changes: Why has their view changed? Has the Workplace training had any influence on their score?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Score</th>
<th>New Score</th>
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</table>
Section 4: Close (5 minutes)

- Any further feedback on Acas workplace training and the service received to date?
- Thank respondent for their feedback
- Anonymity: Now that the interview is complete, are you happy for these comments to be attributed to you, and/or your organisation, or would you prefer them to be anonymous?
- Next steps: we will update and finalise the case study and email it back to the training commissioner.
- Final report: Acas are hoping to publish the final report ASAP – end of March/ beginning of April.