

Research Paper

Evaluation of pay and work rights calls to the Acas Helpline

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Helpline

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Executive Summary

This survey measures satisfaction and call outcomes among callers to the Acas Helpline with queries on pay and work rights (PWR) issues. While Acas regularly evaluates the performance of its Helpline, this survey differs in that it focuses specifically on callers seeking advice from Acas on PWR issues, following the integration of the Pay and Work Rights Helpline (PWRH) into the Acas Helpline in 2015.

Findings from this survey show that satisfaction with the Acas Helpline among PWR callers is very high and provides evidence that the integration of the PWRH into the Acas Helpline has, in terms of caller experience, been a success. Furthermore, results from this survey are generally either in line with or compare favourably to those from the 2014 survey of Helpline callers.

More than nine in ten (95 per cent) callers seeking advice on PWR issues were satisfied with the service they received from the Acas Helpline and more than four in ten were extremely satisfied (43 per cent). The majority (95 per cent) said they would recommend the Acas Helpline to a friend or work colleague, with four fifths (80 per cent) stating that they were very likely to do so.

Overall, satisfaction with the Acas Helpline adviser was also high. More than nine out of ten of this group of callers agreed that the adviser *was knowledgeable*, that they *presented the information to them in an impartial way* and in *a way that was easily understood*, that they *understood their query* and *listened carefully to what they had to say*. Just over eight out of ten (83 per cent) agreed that the adviser *explained the pros and cons of the options* available to them.

Callers seeking advice on PWR issues were very positive about the information provided to them with around nine out of ten agreeing that the information was *valuable to them*, *answered their enquiry in full* and *helped them to decide what to do next* (92 and 90 and 88 per cent respectively). *A similar proportion* (85 per cent) agreed that the advice *gave them the confidence to deal with similar issues in the future*.

Eight out of ten callers surveyed (80 per cent) got through to the Helpline on their first attempt. For those callers who did not get through on their first attempt it took an average (mean) of 2.95 calls to get through (compared to 3.41 call attempts reported in the 2014 survey of all callers). The vast majority (95 per cent) of PWR callers are satisfied with the length of time it took to get through to the Helpline, with 31 per cent saying they are extremely satisfied. Furthermore, over nine out of ten callers (96 per cent) felt the length of their conversation with the adviser was 'about right'.

Nearly a third of callers seeking advice on PWR issues (32 per cent) became aware of the Helpline through the Acas website, while one in five callers (20 per cent) became aware following a recommendation to the Helpline by a work colleague / friend.

Four in ten (42 per cent) PWR callers said that they tried to find the answers to their enquiry on the Acas website before calling the Helpline.

The survey explored what steps employee-side callers seeking advice on PWR issues had taken following their call to the Acas Helpline. Nearly one in ten (9 per cent) indicated they had made a complaint to one of the Government enforcement bodies, the EAS Inspectorate, HSE, GLA, HMRC or RPA¹, either before or after their call. Just over one in ten callers (12 per cent) had not yet made a complaint but were planning to do so, while around eight in ten (79 per cent) said they had not made an enforcement complaint and had no plans to do this.

Employee-side callers were also asked whether they had made an Employment Tribunal (ET) claim or an Early Conciliation (EC) notification, either before or after their call to the Acas Helpline. One in six (16 per cent) callers had done this, the vast majority of whom did so after the call, while a further 23 per cent had plans to do this. As with complaints to one of the enforcement bodies, the largest group, 61 per cent, had not made an ET claim or EC notification and had no plans to.

Those callers seeking advice on PWR issues who were either 'an employer or manager calling about your organisation and/or its staff' were asked whether any changes had been implemented in the workplace as a result of their call to the Acas Helpline. Four out of ten callers (40 per cent) reported that existing policies at the workplace had been updated or improved as a result of the call, whilst a quarter said new policies had been implemented as a result of the call (26 per cent).

Callers seeking advice on PWR issues were also asked what other actions had been taken as a result of the call. Four in ten (42 per cent) had discussed the problem with management, employees or HR. Almost three in ten (28 per cent) of employee-side callers had submitted a grievance to their employer while a fifth of callers (21 per cent) had implemented changes recommended to them as part of their call to Acas.

One in five (21 per cent) callers had contacted Acas again in the time between the call in which they were asked to take part in the survey and completing the questionnaire (between four and ten weeks), whilst a similar proportion (19 per cent) had sought advice from another body, such as their trade union, a solicitor or the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB).

The survey also found some notable differences in the profile of PWR callers in comparison to other callers to the Acas Helpline. Whilst employee-side callers make up the largest group of all Helpline callers, those seeking advice on PWR issues are even more inclined to be employees. PWR callers also tend on average to be younger; are more likely to work in *caring, leisure and other occupations* and in *elementary occupations*; and are less likely to be *managers, directors and senior officials*.

¹ Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate, Health and Safety Executive, Gangmasters Licencing Authority, HM Revenue and Customs, Rural Payments Agency.

1. Introduction, aims, objectives

1.1 Acas Helpline and pay and work rights (PWR) calls

Acas (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) seeks to support good workplace relations between employers and employees by means of a range of services. This includes its telephone Helpline, which provides practical guidance for employers, employees and their representatives on employment issues such as resolving problems at work and understanding employment rights. The Acas Helpline handles approximately 925,000 calls each year giving free and impartial advice to callers on a confidential basis.

The Pay and Works Rights Helpline (PWRH) was established in 2009. Its aim was to advise employers, employees and others on the government-enforced employment rights. There were five 'rights' established by the Government, each with its own agency responsible for its enforcement².

From April 2015 Acas assumed responsibility for handling calls previously received by the PWRH, integrating the service into its own Helpline³. From this time, with the exception of those submitting complaints directly online, all callers who previously contacted the PWRH, whether asking a question or wishing to complain to an enforcement body, have been directed to dial the main Acas Helpline telephone number. These calls on PWR topics are handled alongside all other Acas Helpline calls with advisers explaining the different options available to callers and, if the customer wants to make a complaint to an enforcement body, transferring the caller directly to the relevant body.

1.2 Background to the survey

Acas regularly evaluates its services. The most recent Acas Helpline survey took place in 2014 with the findings published in 2015⁴. This was a quantitative survey of around 2,000 callers made up of employees, employers and third parties seeking advice on employment relations issues. This evaluation however, focuses just on those people calling the Acas Helpline with a query on a PWR issue⁵, rather than all call subjects, in order to ascertain how well the PWRH has been integrated into Acas' Helpline offering.

² National Minimum Wage (HM Revenue and Customs), Agricultural Minimum Wage (Defra), Working time - 48 hour average working week (Health and Safety Executive), Employment Agency Standards (BIS), and Gang Master Licensing (Gangmaster's Licensing Authority).

³ This change notwithstanding, it should be borne in mind that even prior to April 2015 the Acas Helpline handled queries on PWR issues. For instance, 12.1 per cent of calls answered by the Acas Helpline in 2014/15 were on the subject of 'Wages and National Minimum Wage' (see Acas annual report 2014/15).

⁴ Acas Helpline Evaluation 2014, Carrie Harding and Sarah Hingley (TNS BMRB).

⁵ See appendix 2 for a list of the Acas Helpline subjects which are classed as PWR topics and hence were scope for this evaluation.

1.3 Aims and objectives

There are two key aims for this study:

- To establish the caller experiences and call outcomes of those seeking advice from the Acas Helpline on PWR issues; and
- To compare caller experiences and call outcomes of those seeking advice on PWR issues with those of all Helpline callers in the most recent evaluation in 2014, in order to evaluate how well the PWRH has been integrated into Acas' overall support.

Following on from these overall aims, the specific objectives of the study are to:

- Measure satisfaction among those calling the Acas Helpline with PWR-related queries.
- Gather satisfaction ratings of Acas Helpline advisers among those calling with PWR-related queries.
- Establish the outcomes and impacts arising from PWR-related queries to the Acas Helpline.
- Explore the differences in experiences and outcomes between different PWR caller types.
- Gather profiling data of those calling the Acas Helpline with PWR-related queries.
- Establish how callers with PWR-related queries are made aware of the Acas Helpline.

1.4 Terminology and reporting conventions

Throughout this report the pay and work rights helpline, which has now been subsumed into the Acas Helpline, will be referred to by the acronym PWRH. Similarly, calls handled by the Acas Helpline on pay and work rights topics⁶ will be referred to as PWR calls.

This report makes reference to a number of bodies which callers with PWR queries may be referred to in order to make an enforcement complaint. The full name of the agencies and the abbreviations used in this report are listed in the table below.

Table 1.1 Enforcement agency abbreviations

<i>Enforcement agency</i>	<i>Abbreviation</i>
HM Revenue and Customs	HMRC
Employment Agencies Standards Inspectorate	EAS Inspectorate
Health and Safety Executive	HSE
Gangmasters Licencing Authority	GLA
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Defra
Rural Payments Agency	RPA

⁶ See appendix 2 for a full list of the Acas Helpline subjects considered as PWR topics and so in scope for this evaluation.

For the purposes of analysis callers to the Acas Helpline have been categorised into the following sub-groups:

Employer-side callers: respondents who identified themselves as calling either as 'an employer or manager, calling about their organisation and/or its staff' or as an 'outside representative calling on behalf of an employer'.

Employee-side callers: respondents who have identified themselves as calling either as an 'employee / worker', 'a former employee / worker', or 'on behalf of an employee / worker'.

Small organisations: organisations with fewer than 50 employees across all sites.

Medium organisations: organisations with 50 to 249 employees across all sites.

Large organisations: organisations with 250 or more employees across all sites.

SME: organisations with fewer than 250 employees across all sites.

All results have been analysed using significance testing and T-tests. Significance testing is used to analyse the margin of error for each subgroup to help determine the degree of confidence with which one can assert that any differences are genuine and not due to chance. Throughout the report, where differences in findings between sub-groups are reported, these are statistically significant at the 95 per cent confidence level unless otherwise stated.

It should be noted that whilst the current survey focuses exclusively on PWR calls, the 2014 and all previous Helpline surveys made no such subject distinction, being based on representative samples of *all* callers, across the full possible range of subjects. As such, any comparisons between the findings from this survey and the 2014 survey of all Acas Helpline callers should be treated as indicative only.

All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Where the sum of percentages exceeds 100 per cent on any single response questions, it will be due to rounding.

Where there is missing data (due to paper questionnaires allowing respondents to skip questions) this has been removed from the base. With the exception of questions which gave respondents the option not to answer (e.g. demographic questions) the findings for each question are based just on those who provided an answer.

2 Methodology

As the Acas Helpline handled calls on PWR topics prior to the integration of the PWRH with Acas, it is not possible to identify with certainty which calls answered since April 2015 would previously have been made to the PWRH rather than the Acas Helpline. However, as call subject is recorded in Acas' management information (MI) system, it is possible to identify the *types* of call which would previously have been in scope for the PWRH and it was from these calls that a sample frame was constructed. A random selection of callers who contacted the Acas Helpline between 25th January and 6th February 2016 with a query about a PWR subject (see appendix 2 for full list of call subjects covered) were invited to take part in this survey. If they agreed and gave their contact details, they were added to the sample frame. In total, 2,453 records were added to the sample frame.

In order to facilitate sub-group analysis, sample from less common PWR call subjects, employer-side callers and calls where there was potential for a future enforcement complaint⁷ were prioritised at the point of sample selection. In total, 1,400 callers were selected to be in the sample with data later weighted back to be representative of PWR calls in terms of call subject, caller type and potential for future enforcement.

Everyone in the sample was initially posted a paper questionnaire to complete and return to IFF Research and also given the option to complete the survey online as an alternative. Towards the end of fieldwork, those callers who had provided a phone number at the point of generating the sample were called and offered the opportunity to participate over the phone, so as to maximise response.

Surveys were completed between 22nd February 2016 and 6th April 2016, which was four to ten weeks after the initial calls to the Acas Helpline. A total of 433 responses were received; the majority of which were completed on paper (272) with the remainder completed online or over the phone. This represents an overall response rate of 31 per cent.

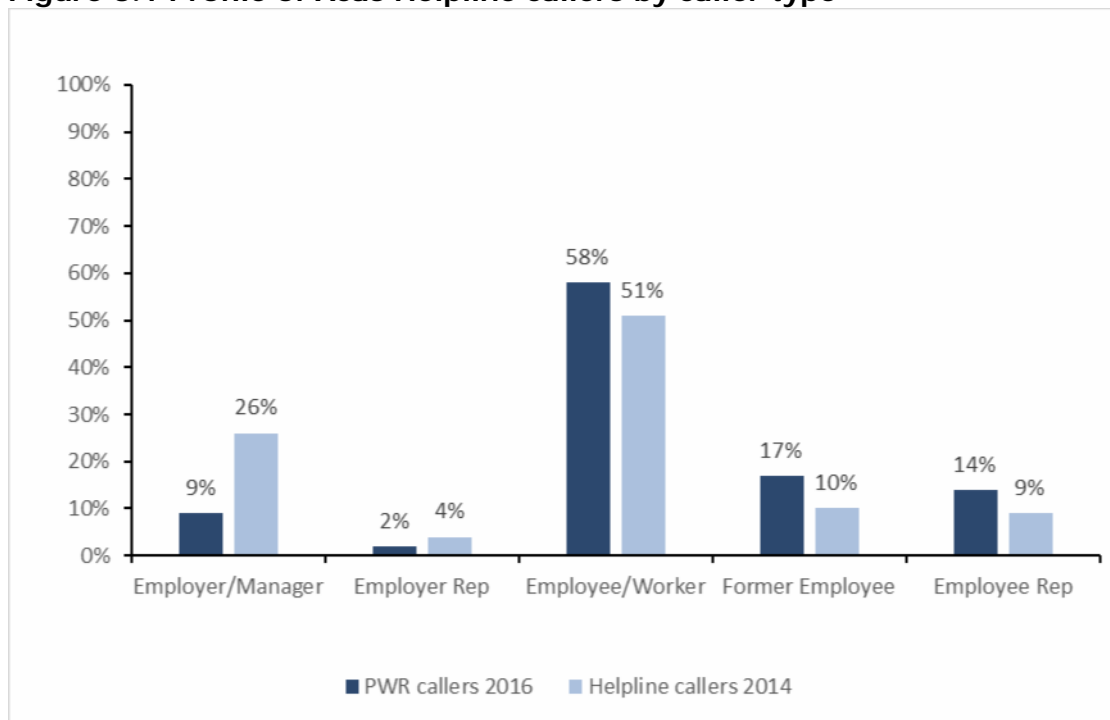
⁷ During the course of generating the sample frame for this research Helpline advisers were required for every call which covered one of the PWR call subjects to select either 'yes' or 'no' in the MI system to indicate whether (in their opinion) there was potential for a future enforcement complaint.

3 Profile of pay and work rights callers to the Acas Helpline

3.1 Caller type

The majority of callers seeking advice on PWR issues identified themselves as an employee or worker (58 per cent). Considering also former employees and those calling on behalf of an employee, it follows that 89 per cent of PWR calls are employee-side, and 11 per cent employer-side. Figure 3.1 shows a breakdown of the type of callers that took part in this 2016 survey of PWR calls compared with the profile reported in the 2014 survey of *all* Helpline callers (i.e. those calling about all manner of subjects).

Figure 3.1 Profile of Acas Helpline callers by caller type



Q: When you rang the Acas Helpline, were you calling as...? Base: all survey respondents; 433 (2016), 1,641 (2014)

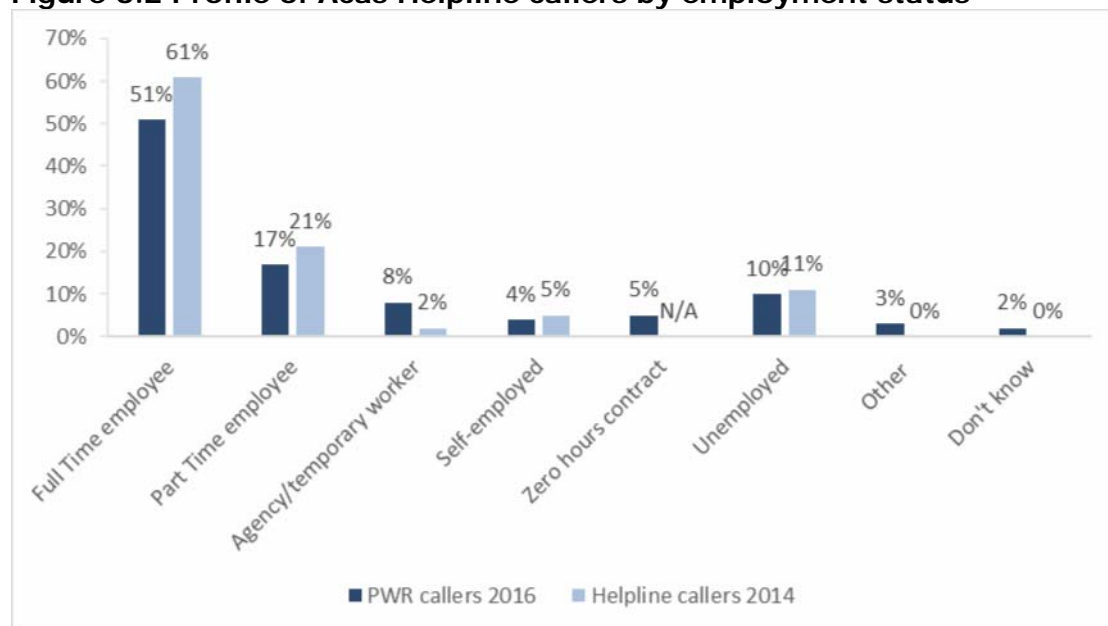
As shown in figure 3.1, the profile of PWR callers differs from that of all Helpline callers with a higher proportion from the employee-side and a lower proportion from the employer-side.

3.2 Employment status

A large proportion (85 per cent) of PWR topic callers were in current employment, with just over half (51 per cent) employed full-time, and 17 per cent employed part-time. Eight per cent were an agency or temporary worker, 5 per cent on a zero-hours contract, 4 per cent self-employed and 1 per cent an apprentice. One in ten (10 per cent) were not employed, whilst 3 per cent answered 'other' and 2 per cent were unsure of their employment status. These proportions are broadly in line with the employment status of all callers according to the 2014 Helpline

survey where 61 per cent were employed full-time, 21 per cent employed part-time and around one in ten not employed (11 per cent)⁸.

Figure 3.2 Profile of Acas Helpline callers by employment status



Q: When you rang the Acas Helpline, were you...? Base: all survey respondents; 425 (2016), 1,641 (2014)⁹

3.3 Call subject

Respondents were presented with a list of sixteen possible call subjects, grouped logically into seven overarching sets. They were asked to indicate which subjects were covered by their call and also identify the single *main* issue.

Issues around 'wages'¹⁰ were the most commonly mentioned subjects covered by these calls. More than eight in ten callers (82 per cent) picked a subject under 'wages' as one of the topics covered during their call and over half (56 per cent) named wages as the main subject. Issues around 'contractual arrangements'¹¹ were covered in 46 per cent of calls (and as the main subject in 13 per cent of calls) and 'working time, holidays and absence'¹² in 39 per cent of calls (and as the main subject in 13 per cent of calls). A full breakdown of call subjects is shown in Figure 3.3.

⁸ Despite a greater proportion of callers being in full-time employment in the 2014 survey than is the case for PWR callers in this survey, the overall proportion of callers being in any employment across the two surveys is very similar.

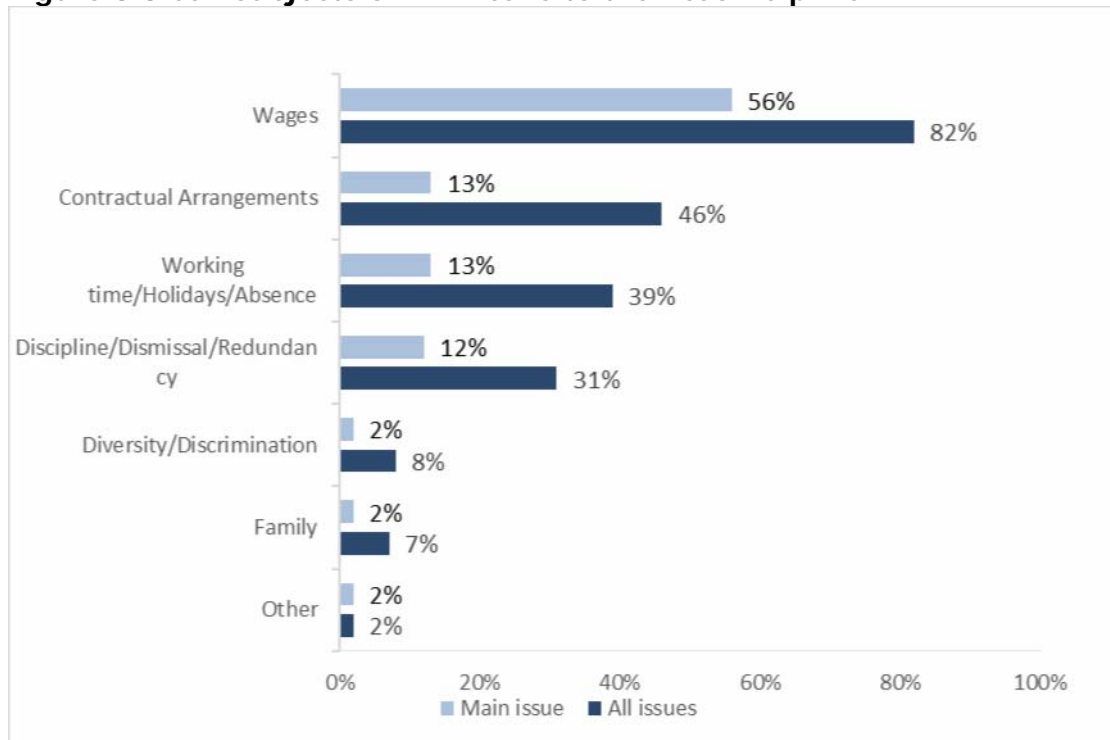
⁹ The answer categories on employment status differed in this 2016 survey of PWR callers and the 2014 survey of all Helpline callers.

¹⁰ The category of 'wages' includes the following sub-categories: 'National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage', 'Non-payment / deductions from wages', 'agricultural wage' and 'other issues relating to wages'.

¹¹ The category of 'contractual arrangements' includes the following sub-categories: 'Working for an employment agency / employment business', 'working for a gangmaster / provision of workers for agriculture, forestry, food packaging or shellfish gathering' and 'contracts'.

¹² The category of 'working time, holidays and absence' includes the following sub-categories: 'maximum working time limits', 'holiday and working time' and 'absence, sickness and stress'.

Figure 3.3 Call subjects of PWR calls to the Acas Helpline



Q: Which of the following subjects were covered by your call? Which of the subjects covered by your call was the main issue covered? Base: all survey respondents; 433

Both when looking at the main subject of the call and all issues raised, employee-side callers were more likely than employer-side callers to report a subject under 'wages' as having been discussed (58 per cent as the main subject compared to 44 per cent, and 84 per cent as one of the subjects raised compared to 68 per cent). This pattern was followed too for calls about 'contractual arrangements' with employee-side callers more likely to report this as one of the subjects raised (47 per cent compared to 35 per cent).

Part-time workers were less likely than those with other employment statuses to state that 'wages' were the main topic of their call (45 per cent compared with 59 per cent of all other groups).

Looking more closely at differences by all subjects covered during the call, there were differences in terms of issues raised when comparing calls made by people working for an organisation with a HR department and those without: 'wages' and 'discipline / dismissal / redundancy' were less likely to be covered in calls made by those working somewhere with a HR department (74 per cent and 25 per cent respectively, compared with 84 per cent and 37 per cent of those without).

Interestingly, callers seeking advice on PWR issues selected an average of 2.8 specific subjects from the list presented as part of this question, highlighting the multi-jurisdictional nature of these calls. Using this list, the most commonly selected subject among PWR callers was 'non-payment/deduction of wages' (covered in 56 per cent of calls and as the single main topic in 33 per cent of instances).

Table 3.1 Call subjects definition of PWR calls to the Acas Helpline

<i>Call subject definition</i>	<i>All issues</i>	<i>Main issue</i>
WAGES:	82%	56%
National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage (including non-payment)	25%	13%
Non-payment / Deductions from wages	56%	33%
Agricultural wages	2%	1%
Other issues relating to wages	38%	9%
WORKING TIME / HOLIDAYS / ABSENCE:	39%	13%
Maximum working time limits	12%	5%
Holidays and working time: (e.g. Holiday entitlement, Bank/public holidays)	22%	5%
Absence, sickness and stress: (e.g. Absence, Sick pay, Stress)	16%	3%
CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS:	46%	13%
Working for an Employment agency / Employment businesses (e.g. supply of agency staff, working for a 3 rd party etc.)	13%	2%
Working for a Gangmaster / provision of workers for agriculture, forestry, food processing, food packaging or shellfish gathering (e.g. licensing etc.)	2%	0%
Contracts (e.g. Terms and conditions, Notice period/pay, Probation period, Rights of casual/temporary/fixed term workers)	37%	10%
FAMILY:	7%	2%
Maternity, paternity and adoption: (e.g. Maternity rights, Paternity rights, Shared Parental leave)	5%	1%
Family friendly policies (e.g. Flexible working regulations, Time-off for dependants)	3%	1%
DIVERSITY / DISCRIMINATION:	8%	2%
Diversity and discrimination: (e.g. Race discrimination, Sex discrimination, Disability etc.)	8%	2%
DISCIPLINE / DISMISSAL / REDUNDANCY:	31%	12%
Discipline, dismissal and grievance (e.g. Discipline procedures, Dismissal, Grievance procedures etc.)	23%	7%
Redundancy, lay-offs and business transfers: (e.g. Redundancy/redundancy pay, Lay-offs / short-time)	12%	5%
OTHERS:	2%	2%
Other subjects	2%	2%

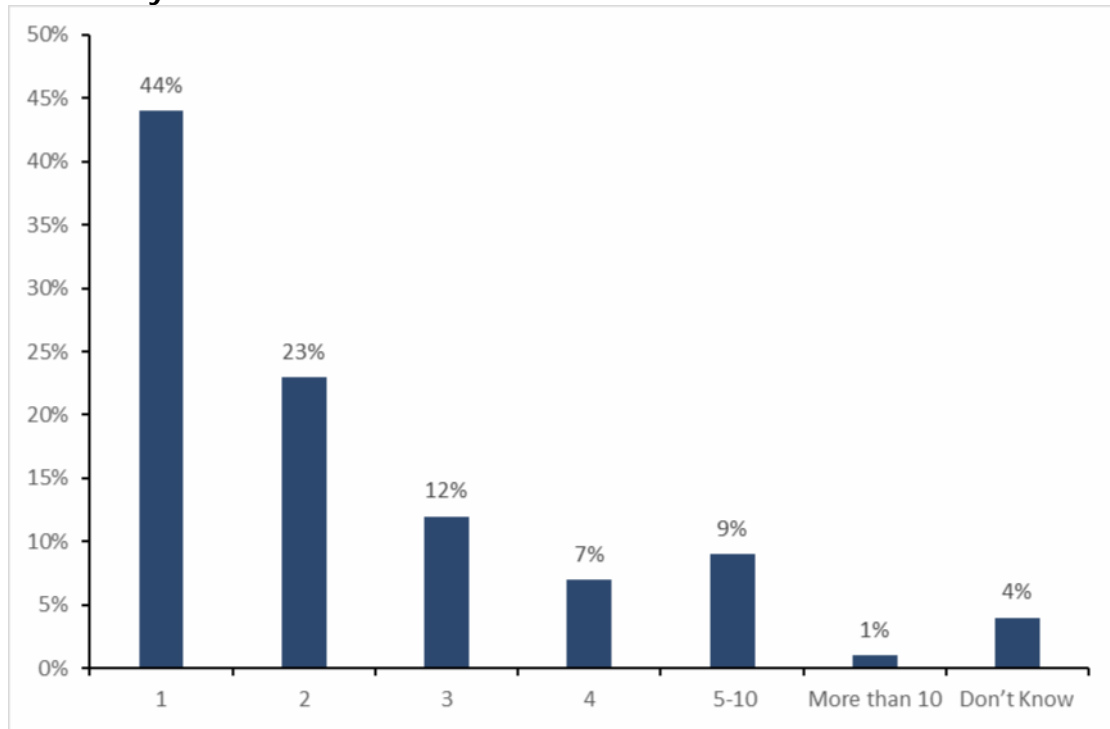
Base: all survey respondents: 433

Since PWR calls are determined by the call topic recorded by the Acas Helpline adviser (with only a subset of Acas Helpline calls based on topic being in scope for this research), there are, as would be expected, significant differences by call subject between this survey and the 2014 standard survey of *all* Helpline callers. As a comparison, the main two issues covered in calls in the 2014 Helpline survey were 'contracts' (covered in 43 per cent of calls and as the main subject in 20 per cent of calls) and 'discipline, dismissal and grievance' (covered in 42 per cent of calls and as the main subject in 25 per cent of calls).

3.4 Frequency of Helpline use

For the most part, PWR callers are not frequent users of the Helpline, having made very few calls to the Acas Helpline in the previous 12 months. The majority only called the Helpline once or twice (44 per cent and 23 per cent respectively) with a mean average of 2.34 and median of 2. Figure 3.4 shows the number of calls made to the Acas Helpline by PWR topic callers in the last 12 months.

Figure 3.4 Number of calls made to the Acas Helpline in the last 12 months by PWR callers



Q: Approximately how many times in the last 12 months have you spoken to the Acas Helpline? Base: all survey respondents; 433

Employer-side callers were more likely than employee-side callers to have made multiple calls to the Acas Helpline; just under a fifth (18 per cent) had made 5 to 10 calls to the Helpline compared with less than one in ten employee-side callers (8 per cent).

Table 3.2 Average number of calls to the Acas Helpline in the last 12 months by PWR callers

<i>Caller type</i>	<i>Average (mean)</i>
Employer-side PWR callers	3.64
Employee-side PWR callers	2.21
All PWR callers	2.36

Base: all survey respondents; 433

3.5 Potential for future enforcement

Following the call the Acas adviser records whether in their view there is the potential for a future enforcement complaint. Just over half (53 per cent) of the callers who responded to this survey had a marker for future enforcement

attached to their record, while 47 per cent did not. Further profiling information of callers is provided in chapter 7.

4. Awareness and experience of the Acas helpline

4.1 Awareness of the Helpline

Acas Helpline callers seeking advice on PWR issues were asked how they became aware of the Acas Helpline. As Table 4.1 shows, the Acas website was the most common source of awareness with nearly a third (32 per cent) of callers finding out about the Helpline in this way; this is in line with findings from the 2014 survey of all callers (33 per cent). One in five callers (20 per cent) had been recommended to the Helpline by a work colleague / friend; this is somewhat lower than the 39 per cent of callers who said this in the 2014 survey of all callers.

Table 4.1 Source of awareness of the Acas Helpline amongst PWR callers

Source	%
Acas website	32%
Recommendation (colleague/friend)	20%
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	17%
Internet/search engine	13%
Gov.uk website	8%
Word of mouth	7%
TU/TU rep	5%
HMRC	5%
Your company	4%
Previous experience	3%
Jobcentre Plus	3%
Advertisement	2%
Acas publication	1%
Government's NLW website	1%
Social Media	1%
Other	3%
Don't Know	1%

Base: all survey respondents; 433

Around one in six (17 per cent) callers had heard about the Helpline through the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). This is higher than the figure reported in the 2014 survey of all callers, which was 11 per cent. This makes intuitive sense however, since the CAB is more commonly associated with employee-side callers than employer-side callers¹³ and, as reported in Figure 3.1 earlier, a greater proportion of PWR callers are from the employee-side than is the case for Helpline callers as a whole.

¹³ For instance, the 2014 survey of Helpline callers reported that 1 per cent of employers or managers had become aware of the Acas Helpline through the CAB, compared to 13 per cent of employee callers.

Thirteen per cent reported learning about the Acas Helpline via the Internet or a search engine and a further eight per cent of callers found information about the Helpline on the GOV.UK website.

Since Acas assumed the responsibility for handling PWR calls in April 2015, those who have attempted to call the PWRH number have been directed to the Acas Helpline. PWR callers were asked whether they had first tried calling the PWRH before calling the Acas Helpline, but just four per cent of callers indicated they had done this.

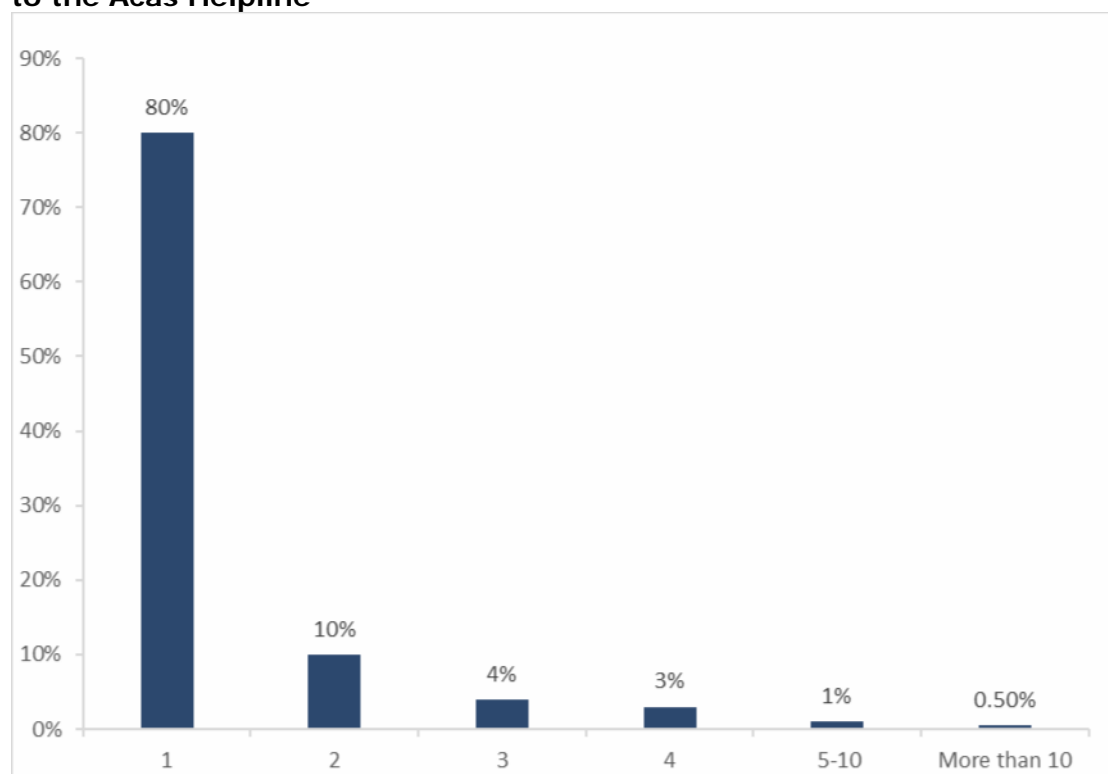
Acas offers a wide range of online information, guidance, advice and diagnostic tools on its website. Around four in ten (42 per cent) PWR callers said that they tried to find the answers to their enquiry on the Acas website before calling the Helpline, while 56 per cent had not (2 per cent answered 'don't know'). This compares to 50 per cent of callers reporting that they had done so in the 2014 survey of all Helpline callers.

Those for whom English is not their first or main language were more likely to have searched for information on the Acas website first (72 per cent compared to 40 per cent of native English speakers).

4.2 Getting through to the Helpline

The majority of callers (80 per cent) reported getting through to the Helpline on their first attempt, in line with findings from 2014. For those callers who did not get through on their first attempt it took an average of 2.95 calls to get through (compared to 3.41 call attempts reported in the 2014 survey of all callers).

Figure 4.2 Number of call attempts by PWR callers before getting through to the Acas Helpline



Q: How many times in total did you call the Helpline before getting through to someone? Base: all survey respondents; 433

Overall, 95 per cent of PWR callers are satisfied with the length of time it took to get through to the Helpline, with 31 per cent saying they are extremely satisfied. This compares favourably to the findings reported in the 2014 survey of Helpline callers where 89 per cent were satisfied with call wait times. The increase in satisfaction may reflect the reduction in the average number of attempts callers made to get through to the Helpline or perhaps the different characteristics of PWR callers.

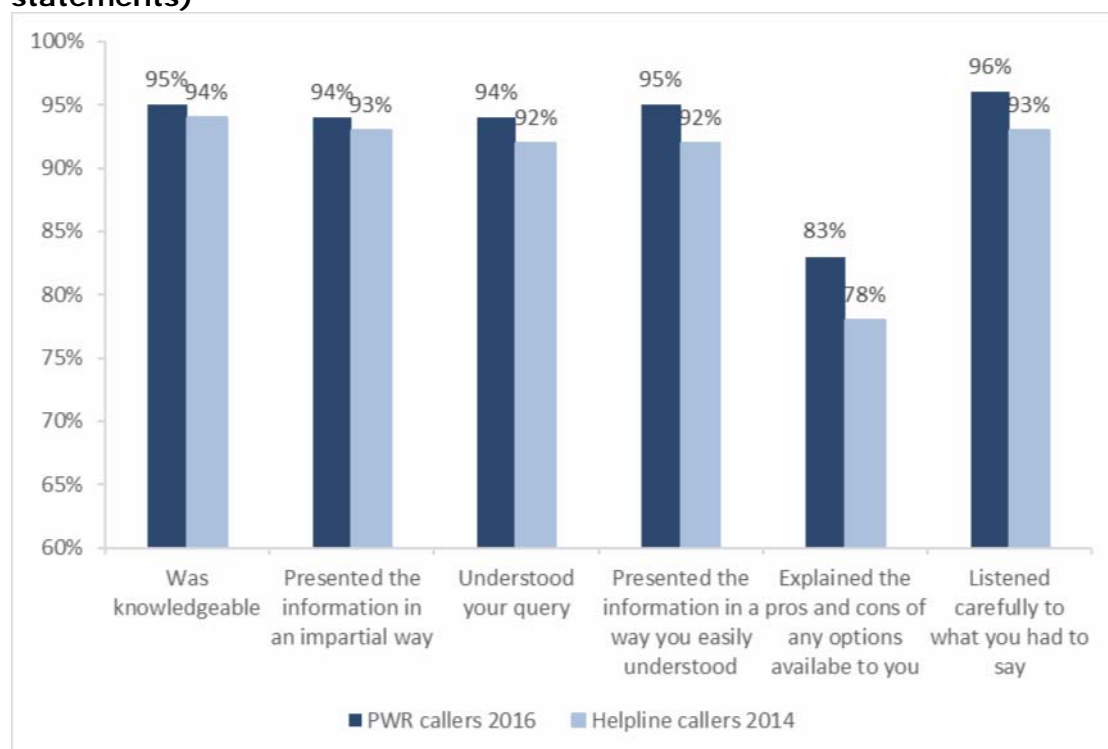
4.3 Ratings of the Acas Helpline adviser

Callers were asked to rate their experience with the Acas adviser on a variety of metrics, giving the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a list of statements (using a five point scale).

On all but one metric, more than nine in ten PWR callers agreed with the positive statements presented to them. Agreement was somewhat lower with the statement *the adviser explained the pros and cons of any option available to you*; eight out of ten callers agreed with this.

These findings are broadly in line with the 2014 survey of Helpline callers. PWR callers were, however, slightly more likely to agree that *the adviser explained the pros and cons of any option available to them* (83 per cent vs 78 per cent) and that the adviser *listened carefully to what they had to say* (96 per cent vs 93 per cent). They were also slightly more likely to agree that the adviser *presented the information in a way they easily understood* (95 per cent vs 92 per cent).

Figure 4.3 Ratings of the Acas Helpline adviser (% agreeing with statements)



Q: Please indicate how far you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: Strongly Agree, Agree. Base: all survey respondents; 429, 421, 427, 428, 428, 428 (2016), 1,641 (2014)

Those who work for larger organisations (500+ employees) were less likely to agree that the Helpline adviser *was knowledgeable* (88 per cent of callers from larger organisations vs 99 per cent of all other callers), and that *the adviser explained the pros and cons of their options to them* (73 per cent of callers from larger organisations vs 86 per cent of all other callers). Trade union members were also less likely to agree that the Helpline adviser *was knowledgeable* (86 per cent vs 96 per cent) and *explained the pros and cons* of any options available to them (68 per cent vs 84 per cent) than non-union members. This could be due to callers in larger organisations and trade union members feeling they have greater exposure to advice elsewhere.

Employee-side callers were more positive in their perception of the Helpline adviser's ability to present information in a way that was *easily understood* (96 per cent vs 90 per cent of employer-side callers) and the extent to which the adviser *listened carefully to what they had to say* (97 per cent employees vs 91 per cent employers).

Those who called with a query relating to contracts were more likely to think the adviser had *explained the pros and cons* of their options to them (93 per cent of contract callers compared to 82 per cent of non-contract callers). This pattern was also evident for enquiries relating to wages (84 per cent of wage callers stating the adviser had explained the pros and cons of their options to them, compared to 73 per cent of non-wage callers).

Callers who had made a complaint to an enforcement body or planned to do so (see chapter 6) were more likely to think the adviser had *explained the pros and*

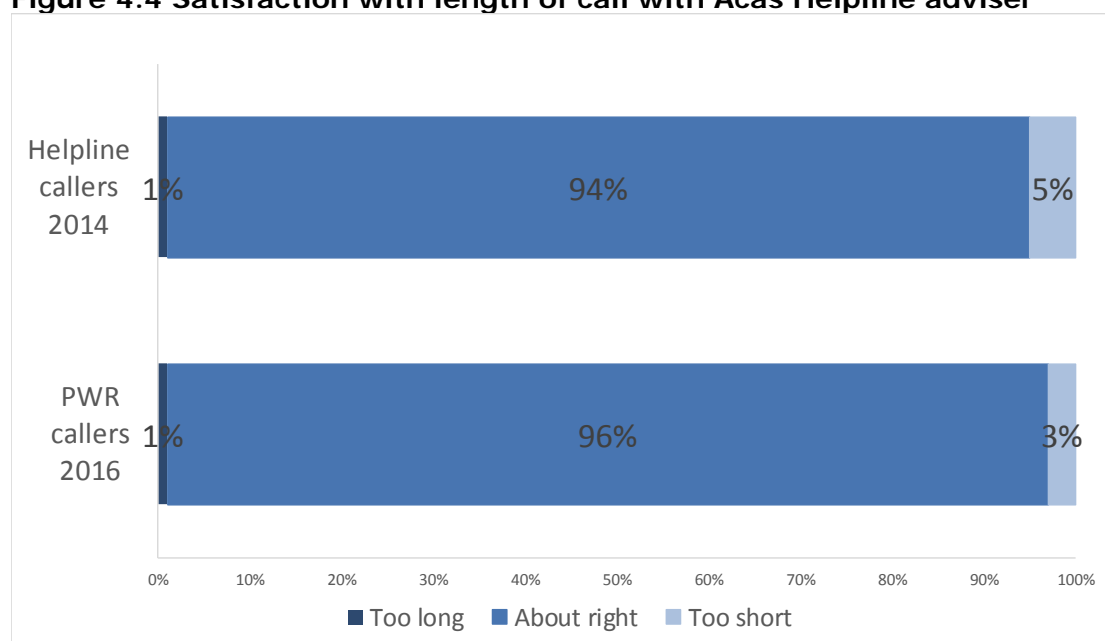
cons of any options available to them (93 per cent vs 82 per cent of those not intending to make a complaint).

4.4 Satisfaction with length of call

Almost all callers surveyed felt the length of their conversation with the adviser was 'about right' (96 per cent). This is in line with the 2014 survey of Helpline callers in which 94 per cent of callers said the length of their conversation was 'about right'.

Only one per cent felt the conversation was too long and three per cent felt it was too short.

Figure 4.4 Satisfaction with length of call with Acas Helpline adviser



Q: Would you say that your conversation with the Helpline adviser was...? Base: all survey respondents; 431 (2016), 1,641 (2014)

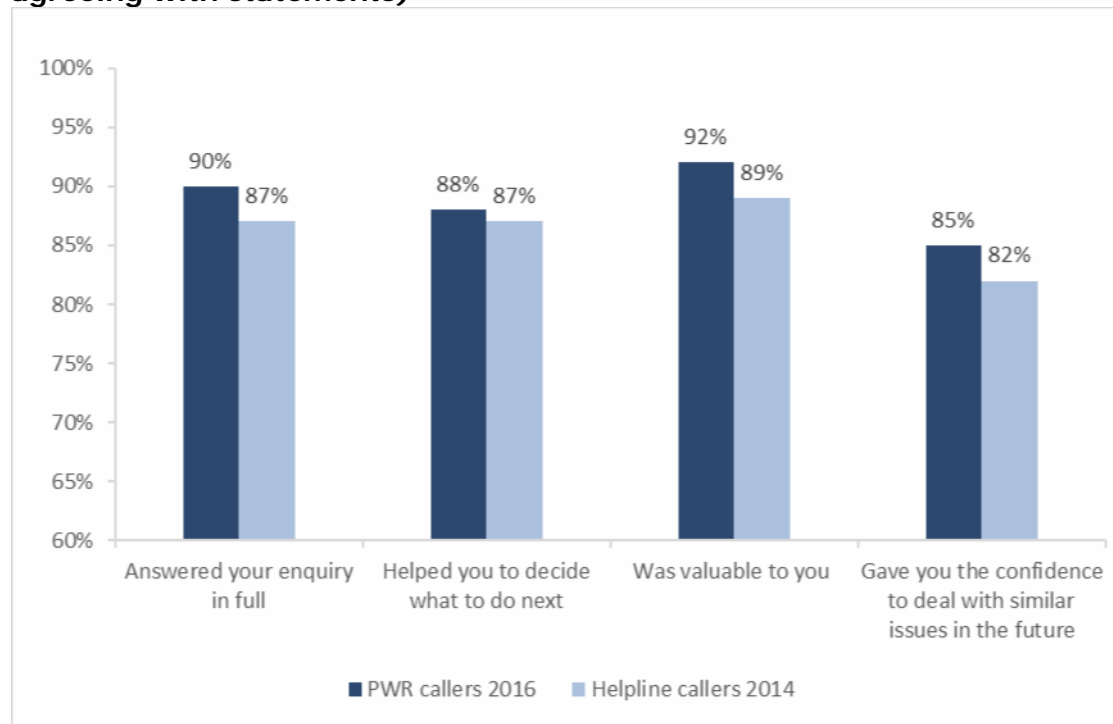
4.5 Satisfaction with information and advice provided

PWR callers were asked to rate various aspects of the information given to them by the Helpline adviser using a five point agreement scale. Overall, PWR callers were very positive about the information provided to them with nine out of ten callers agreeing that the information was *valuable to them* (92 per cent) and *answered their enquiry in full* (90 per cent).

More than eight out of ten callers agreed that the information *helped them to decide what to do next* (88 per cent) and that it *gave them the confidence to deal with similar issues in the future* (85 per cent).

These findings compare favourably to those from the 2014 survey of Helpline callers as is shown in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5 Satisfaction with advice provided by the Acas Helpline (% agreeing with statements)



Please indicate how far you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Thinking about your call, the information provided... Strongly Agree, Agree. Base: all survey respondents: 426, 419, 422, 418 (2016), 1,614, 1,590, 1,586, 1,566 (2014)

Mirroring the findings for some aspects of the Helpline adviser ratings, trade union members were less positive about the information received than non-members. This group was less likely to feel the information given to them *answered their enquiry in full* (81 per cent vs 91 per cent of non-members) and that it *helped them decide what to do next* (76 per cent vs 90 per cent of non-members). They were also less likely to agree that the *information was valuable to them* (82 per cent vs 93 per cent of non-members). This could perhaps be explained by the fact that trade union members have access to other resources, such as a local TU representative, to offer information, advice and support in respect of the issue they contacted the Acas Helpline about.

There were no significant differences in respect of these measures between employee-side and employer-side callers or by call subject.

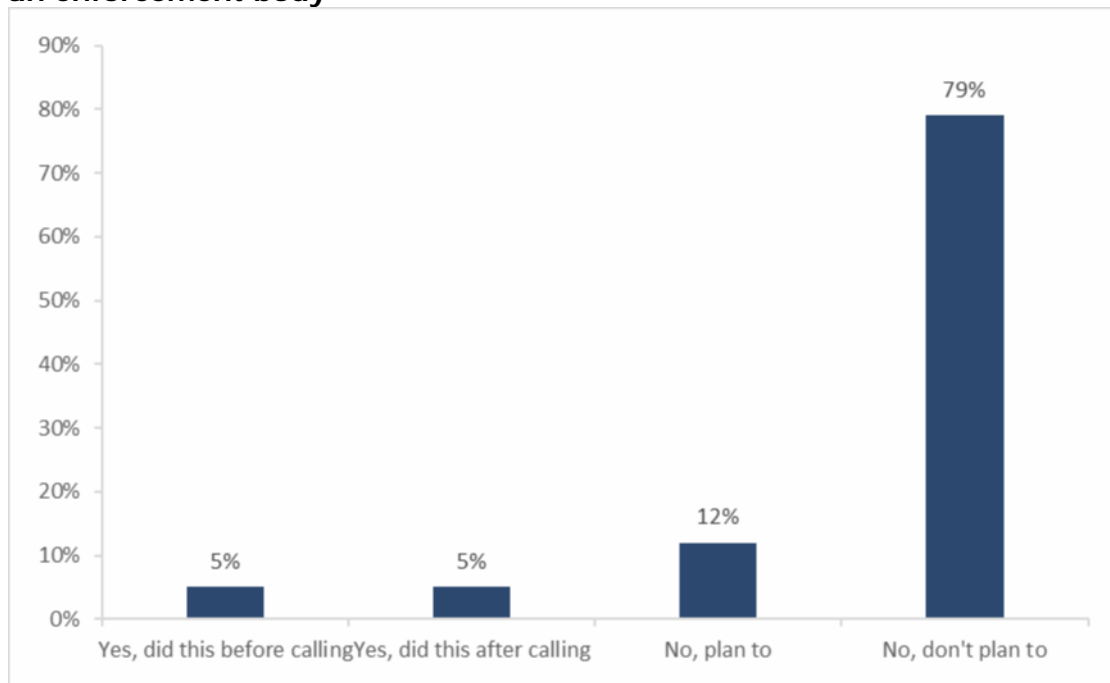
5 Following the call to the Acas helpline

As part of the survey, callers seeking advice on PWR issues were asked what options they had pursued relative to their call to the Acas Helpline.

5.1 Enforcement complaints

Employee-side PWR callers were asked whether they have made a complaint to one of the following enforcement bodies: the EAS Inspectorate, HSE, GLA, HMRC or RPA¹⁴. Nearly one in ten employee-side callers had done this (nine per cent); half of these callers having done so before calling Acas while the other half had done this after the call. An additional 12 per cent had not yet made a complaint to one of these bodies but were planning to do so, while around eight in ten (79 per cent) said they had not made an enforcement complaint and had no plans to do this.

Figure 5.1 Whether employee-side PWR callers had made a complaint to an enforcement body



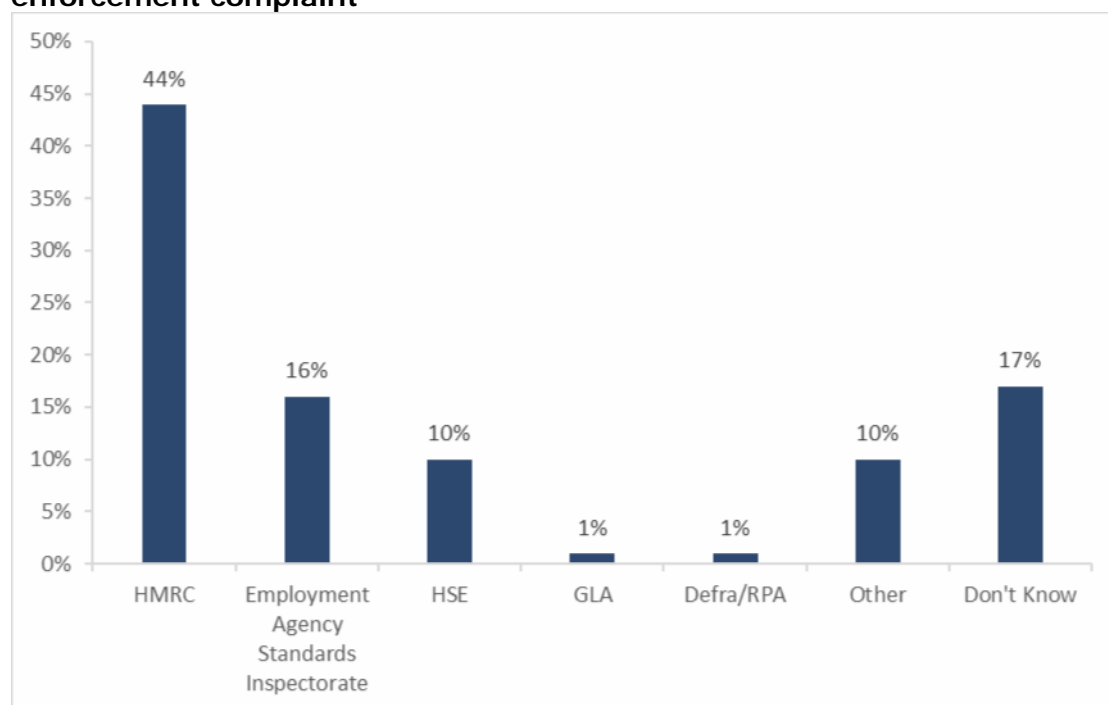
Q: Have you made a complaint to one of the following bodies, either before or after calling the Acas Helpline? Base: employee-side caller respondents: 328

Callers aged 20 to 29 years were more likely than other age groups to have made a complaint (17 per cent vs 5 per cent of all other ages).

Those who had either made or were planning to make a complaint were asked which enforcement body they made (or were planning to make) this to. HMRC was the most commonly mentioned (44 per cent) enforcement body, 16 per cent quoted the EAS Inspectorate and 10 per cent the HSE. This likely reflects the pattern of call subjects for PWR calls to the Acas Helpline previously described, with wages calls dominating.

¹⁴ Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate, Health and Safety Executive, Gangmasters Licencing Authority, HM Revenue and Customs, Rural Payments Agency.

Figure 5.2 Bodies complained to by Helpline callers who had made an enforcement complaint



Q: Which enforcement body did/will you complain to? Base: employee-side caller respondents who had made or planned to make an enforcement complaint; 69

5.2 Employment Tribunal claims and Early Conciliation

Since May 2014 anyone wishing to make an Employment Tribunal (ET) claim¹⁵ must first submit an Early Conciliation (EC) notification to Acas. Once an EC notification has been submitted, Acas then offers to conciliate in the dispute and if a resolution cannot be reached, or if the parties do not wish to take part, the claimant is able to submit an ET claim if they wish. Employee-side callers seeking advice on a PWR issue were asked whether they had made an ET claim or an EC notification, either before or after their call to the Acas Helpline. Overall, 16 per cent of employee-side callers had done this, with most having done so after the call (14 per cent). A further 23 per cent had plans to do this, while 61 per cent had not done this and had no plans to.

Mirroring the findings relating to enforcement complaints, callers aged 20 to 29 years were more likely than other age groups to have made an ET claim or an EC notification (24 per cent vs 9 per cent of all other age groups).

Compared to the pattern of all Helpline callers based on the findings of the 2014 Helpline survey, a greater proportion of employee-side PWR callers have made an ET or EC claim than employee-side callers as a whole (16 per cent vs 5 per cent)¹⁶.

¹⁵ Except those which are exempt from notification under the Employment Tribunals (Early Conciliation: Exemptions and Rules of Procedure) Regulations 2014.

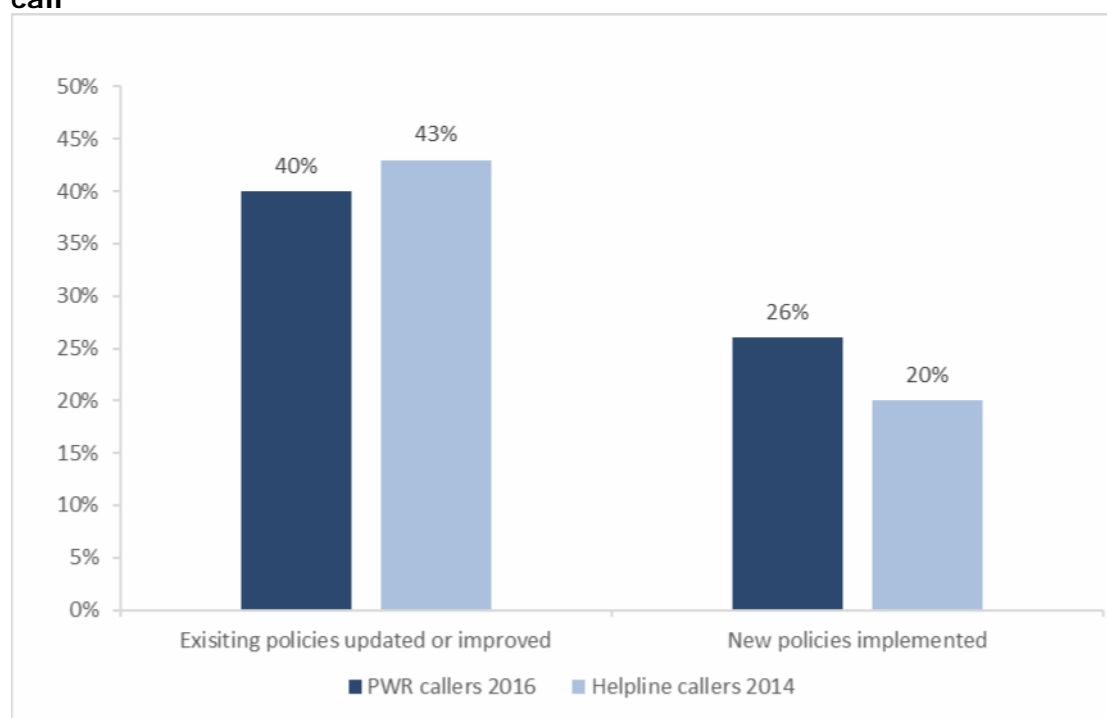
¹⁶ However, it is important to note that there were differences in the 2014 and 2016 surveys: in 2014, the question only focused on ET claims rather than including EC notifications as well.

Looking across the survey questions on subsequent enforcement complaints and making an ET claim / submitting an EC notification, 15 per cent of employee-side callers indicated that they had already taken or planned to pursue both courses of action¹⁷.

5.3 Changes to the workplace

A key impact of Acas' support across all its services is in providing expert advice to employers which helps them to improve policies or areas of practices implemented at their workplace. Callers identifying themselves as 'an employer or manager calling about [an] organisation and/or its staff' were asked whether any changes had been implemented in the workplace as a result of their call to the Acas Helpline. Four out of ten callers (40 per cent) said existing policies at the workplace *had* been updated or improved as a result of the call, in line with findings from the 2014 Helpline evaluation (43 per cent) which covered *all* call subjects.

Figure 5.3 Changes implemented by employers following Acas Helpline call



Q: Please indicate which of the following have happened at your workplace as a result of your call to the Acas Helpline. Base: employer-side caller respondents; 76 (2016), 426 (2014)

A quarter of employers and managers said new policies had been implemented as a result of the call (26 per cent). This is in line with 20 per cent of employers in the 2014 Acas Helpline evaluation who said this had happened. Employers and managers working for organisations without a HR department are more likely to say this had happened (43 per cent vs 15 per cent of organisations with a HR department). Considering across both questions, 53 per cent of employers or

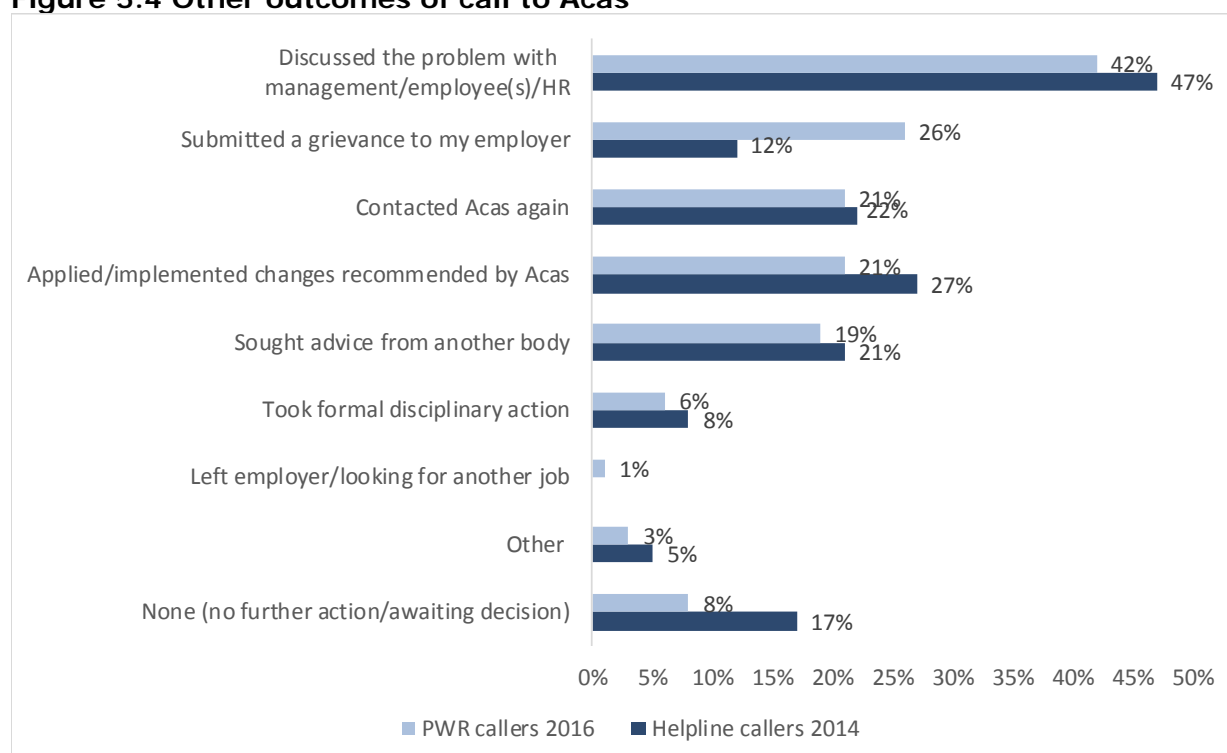
¹⁷ This is based on all employee-side callers who answered both questions about making a claim (Q8 and Q9) and is the percentage who indicated that they had either already made an ET claim / EC notification or planned to do so (in Q8) and that they had already made an enforcement complaint or planned to do so (in Q9).

managers stated that they had either updated or improved existing policies or implemented new ones.

5.4 Other outcomes of the call

All PWR callers were asked what other outcomes had resulted from the call. Four in ten (42 per cent) said they have discussed the problem with management, employees or HR. This is in line with 47 per cent of callers in the 2014 Helpline evaluation. Employer-side callers in this PWR survey are more likely to have discussed the problem with management, employees or HR (58 per cent of employer-side callers vs 40 per cent of employee-side callers) as are those with a HR department (57 per cent vs 36 per cent of those without a HR department).

Figure 5.4 Other outcomes of call to Acas



Q: Following your call to the Acas Helpline, what further options have you pursued? Base: all survey respondents; 415 (2016), 1,633 (2014)

A quarter of PWR callers (26 per cent) reported having submitted a grievance to their employer. Those in workplaces with fewer than ten employees are more likely to have done this (37 per cent vs 23 per cent of those working at workplaces with 10 or more employees). Considering just employee-side calls, the proportion who submitted a grievance against their employer increases to 28 per cent.

A fifth of callers (21 per cent) reported having implemented changes recommended to them as part of their call to Acas; employer-side callers being more likely to have done so than the employee-side (35 per cent compared to 20 per cent).

One in five (21 per cent) callers had contacted Acas again since the call in which they were invited to take part in the survey. Employee callers who have made an enforcement complaint or plan to do so are appreciably more likely to have

contacted Acas again (42 per cent compared to 14 per cent of those who have not made a complaint).

Around one in five (19 per cent) PWR callers surveyed had sought advice from another body following their call, such as their trade union, a solicitor or the CAB. Those calling with a query related to 'discipline, dismissal or redundancy' are more likely to have sought advice elsewhere (31 per cent vs 19 per cent of all other call subjects) as were trade union members (44 per cent vs 14 per cent of non-members). In the case of trade union members, this is likely a reflection of the fact that they have this additional source of advice at their disposal.

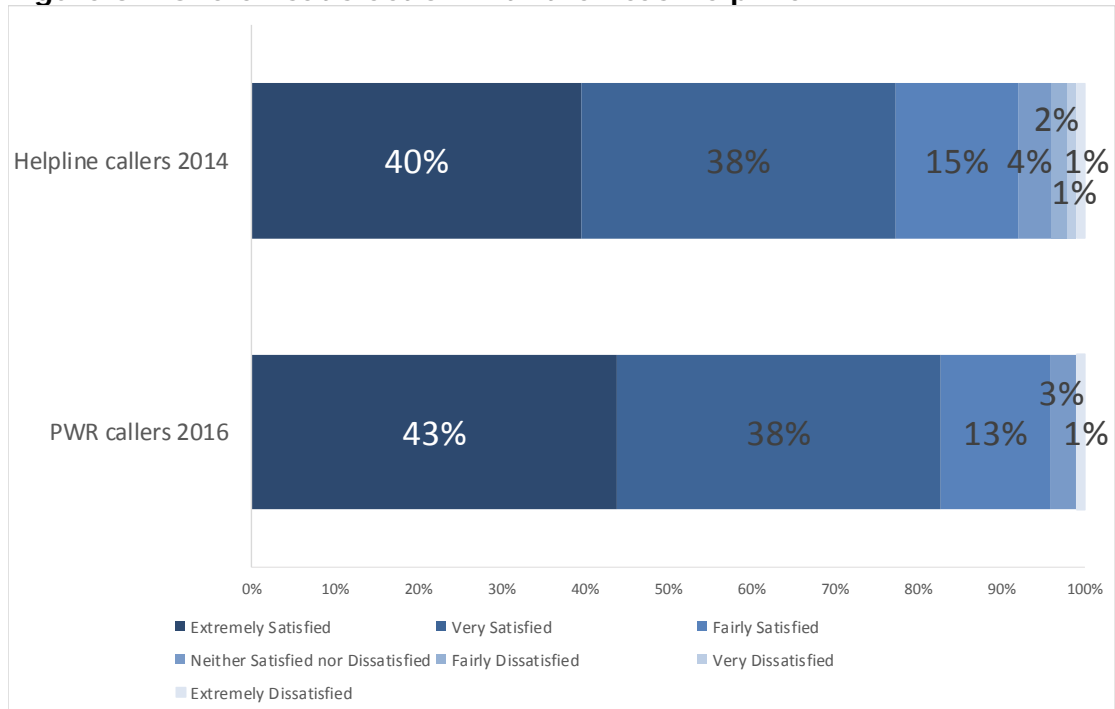
Six per cent of PWR callers have taken formal disciplinary action since calling, whilst eight per cent of PWR callers have taken no further action. This is lower than in the 2014 survey of all Helpline callers, in which 17 per cent of callers had taken no further action.

6 Overall Satisfaction

6.1 Overall satisfaction with the Acas Helpline

Taking everything into consideration, the majority of callers seeking advice on PWR issues (95 per cent) were satisfied with the service they received from the Acas Helpline. More than four in ten were extremely satisfied (43 per cent), a further 38 per cent were very satisfied and 15 per cent fairly satisfied. Only two per cent were dissatisfied with the service overall. These findings are consistent with those reported in the 2014 Helpline survey of all callers where a similar majority (93 per cent) stated that they were satisfied. Figure 6.1 shows satisfaction levels among PWR calls in this survey and all callers in 2014.

Figure 6.1 Overall satisfaction with the Acas Helpline



Q: Considering everything, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the service you received from the Acas Helpline? Base: all survey respondents; 433

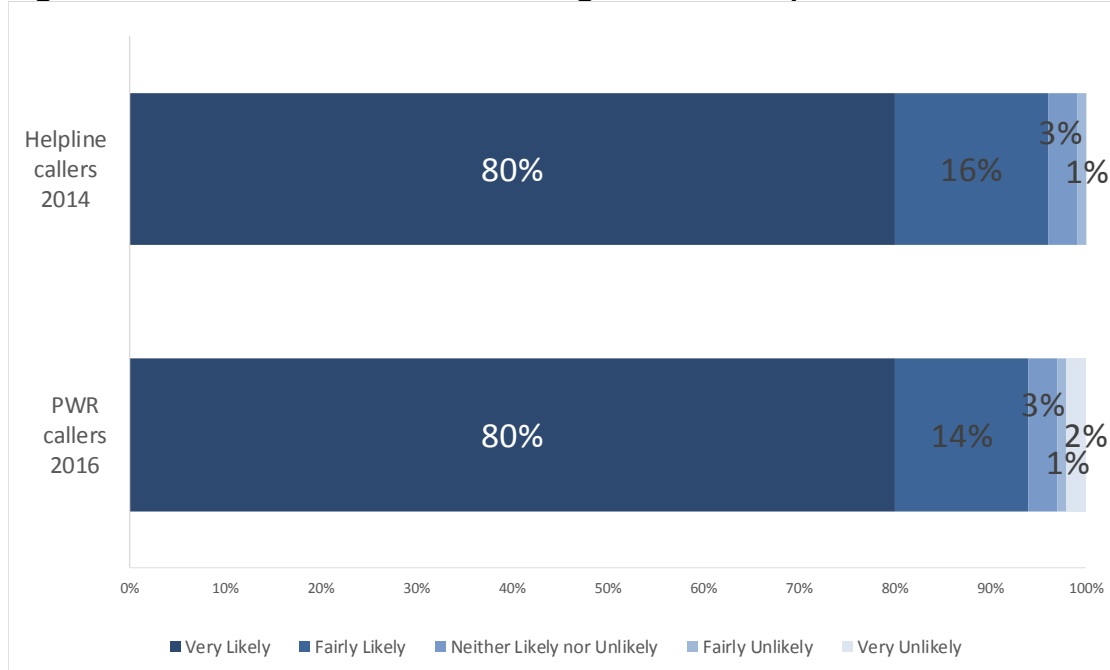
Those employed part-time were more likely than those employed full-time to be satisfied (100 per cent compared with 93 per cent of full-time employed), as were female callers (97 per cent compared with 91 per cent of male callers). Callers of a white ethnicity were more likely to be *extremely* satisfied than those from a BME background (46 per cent compared with 22 per cent), however there are no significant differences in terms of caller ethnicity when looking at net satisfaction. Similarly, those that got through to an adviser on their first call to the Helpline were more likely to be extremely satisfied than those that called at least twice (47 per cent compared with 26 per cent), though there was also no significant difference by net satisfaction.

Those working in larger organisations were less likely to be satisfied than other callers. Less than nine in ten (89 per cent) employees working for an organisation with more than 500 employees were satisfied with the overall service they received from the Acas Helpline, compared with 97 per cent of all other groups.

6.2 Likelihood of recommending the Acas Helpline

As would be expected given the high levels of satisfaction, the majority (95 per cent) of callers would recommend the Acas Helpline to a friend or work colleague, with four fifths (80 per cent) stating that they were very likely to do so. These figures are consistent with those reported in the 2014 survey of all Helpline callers.

Figure 6.2 Likelihood of recommending the Acas Helpline



Q: How likely are you to recommend the Acas Helpline to a friend or work colleague? Base: all survey respondents; 433

Survey respondents whose calls were identified by the Acas adviser as having the potential to lead to a future enforcement complaint were more likely to state that they were very likely to recommend the Acas Helpline (84 per cent compared with 76 per cent whose calls were not identified as such). This finding can be taken as indicative of the successful integration of the PWRH into Acas' Helpline offering; whilst it is not possible to identify with certainty which calls would previously have been dealt with by the PWRH rather than Acas, it is reasonable to assert that those calls identified as having the potential for future enforcement are most closely aligned to the calls previously dealt with by the PWRH.

Those working part-time were also more likely to state that they are likely to recommend the Acas Helpline (100 per cent compared with 93 per cent of those working full-time). Again in line with satisfaction, those working for an organisation with more than 500 employees were less predisposed to be 'likely' to recommend the Acas Helpline (89 per cent), as were trade union members (87 per cent compared with 95 per cent) and male callers (91 per cent compared with 97 per cent).

Also in line with satisfaction, those that got through to someone on their first call to the Helpline were more likely to be 'very likely' to recommend than those that called at least twice (84 per cent compared with 65 per cent), though there was also no difference by net likelihood.

7. Appendix 1 – Profile of Callers Surveyed

7.1 Demographic profile of callers

Almost six in ten (57 per cent) callers were female and 41 per cent male (with 2 per cent stating that they would prefer not to say). This is more of an even gender split than in the 2014 survey of Helpline callers where two thirds of callers were female (66 per cent).

The age profile of PWR callers broadly follows a 'normal' distribution, as shown in Table 7.1¹⁸. Compared to the age profile of all Helpline callers as reported in the 2014 Helpline survey, callers seeking advice on PWR issues tend on average to be younger. For instance, 24 per cent of respondents to this survey of PWR callers are aged under 30 as compared to 13 per cent of all callers in the 2014 Helpline survey, and 32 per cent of PWR callers are aged over 50 as compared to 37 per cent of all callers in the 2014 Helpline survey.

Table 7.1 Age profile of callers

<i>Age</i>	<i>%</i>
Under 20	2
20-29	22
30-39	19
40-49	25
50-59	23
60-69	9
70-79	<1
80+	0

Base: All callers that gave their age (409)

As in the 2014 survey of Helpline callers, the majority of PWR callers (90 per cent) were from a white ethnic background and just under one in ten (eight per cent) were of BME background.

¹⁸ Six per cent of callers answered 'prefer not to say' to this question. To facilitate comparisons with the results of the 2014 survey of all Helpline callers, these have been excluded from the base.

Table 7.2 Ethnicity of callers

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>%</i>
English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	83
Irish	1
Any other white background	9
White and black Caribbean	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Any other Asian background	1
African	2
Caribbean	1
Arab	1
Any other ethnic background	1
Prefer not to say	1

Base: all survey respondents; 433

Over nine in ten (92 per cent) PWR callers who answered the question stated that English was their first or main language (with 8 per cent stating that it was not).

Just over a fifth (22 per cent) of callers had a long-term illness, health problem or disability (with 77 per cent stating they do not and 2 per cent stating they prefer not to say).

The geographic distribution of callers is shown in the table below; using their postal addresses callers were allocated to regions across the UK.

Table 7.3 Geographic distribution of callers

<i>Region</i>	<i>%</i>
East Midlands	8
East of England	11
Isle of Man	<1
London	11
North East	5
North West	15
Northern Ireland	<1
Scotland	7
South East	13
South West	8
Wales	3
West Midlands	9
Yorkshire and The Humber	9
Unknown	1

Base: All survey respondents; 433

7.2 Job details of callers

As discussed earlier in the report, most of those who called the Helpline were employed (85 per cent). Table 7.4 shows the size of workplace of employed callers.

Table 7.4 Size of workplace

<i>Size of workplace</i>	<i>%</i>
1 to 4	14
5 to 9	11
10 to 49	35
50 to 99	9
100 to 249	6
250 to 499	5
500+	7
Don't know	10

Base: Callers that were employed; 366

Just under half (48 per cent) of employed PWR callers work at a workplace that is part of a larger organisation. When considering the size of the organisation as a whole – taking the whole organisation size for multi-site organisations and the workplace size for single-site entities - just over a third of employed PWR callers (37 per cent) worked in an organisation with fewer than 50 employees, 15 per cent with 50 to 249 employees, six per cent with 250 to 499 employees and 20 per cent at an organisation with over 500 employees.

Table 7.5 Size of organisation

<i>Size of whole organisation</i>	<i>%</i>
Fewer than 50	37
50 to 249	15
250 to 499	6
500+	20
Don't know / No answer	22

Base: Callers that were employed; 366

Over two thirds of PWR callers (69 per cent) worked for an organisation that had been in operation for more than 5 years, and only a small minority (two per cent) worked for a business that had been in operation for less than 12 months.

PWR callers surveyed worked in a wide range of industry sectors with the largest group, covering over a quarter (28 per cent) of all callers, being employed in the Health and Social Work sector.

Table 7.6 Profile of industry sectors worked in by callers

<i>Sector</i>	<i>%</i>
Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	1
Manufacturing	6
Electricity, gas and water supply	2
Construction	9
Wholesale and retail trade	13
Hotels and restaurants	7
Transport, storage and communications	8
Financial services	2
Real estate, renting and business activities	14
Public admin. and defence	<1
Education	3
Health and social work	28
Community, social and personal service activities	4
Don't know	2

Base: Callers that were employed and gave the sector they work in; 349

There was a wide range of job roles covered by those that called the Helpline seeking advice on a PWR issue with around a fifth (21 per cent) working in *caring, leisure and other service occupations*, 15 per cent in *elementary occupations* and just over one in ten (12 per cent) as *managers, directors and senior officials*.

Compared to the job roles of all Helpline callers as reported in the 2014 survey, a smaller proportion of PWR callers are *managers, directors or senior officials* (12 per cent, compared to 24 per cent) and in *administrative and secretarial occupations* (10 per cent, compared to 15 per cent), whilst a greater proportion

are in *caring, leisure and other occupations* (21 per cent, compared to 10 per cent) and in *elementary occupations* (15 per cent, compared to 8 per cent).

Table 7.7 Profile of occupation

<i>Sector</i>	<i>%</i>
Managers, directors and senior officials	12
Professional occupations	6
Associate professional and technical occupations	9
Administrative and secretarial occupations	10
Skilled trades occupations	10
Caring, leisure and other occupations	21
Sales and customer service occupations	6
Process, plant and machine operatives	7
Elementary occupations	15
Don't know	1

Base: Callers that were employed and gave their occupation; 352

More broadly, just over six in ten (62 per cent) worked in the private sector, two in ten in the public sector (21 per cent) and five per cent in the not for profit / voluntary sector. Twelve per cent of callers were unsure.

Compared to the reported sectors of all Helpline callers as reported in the 2014 survey, callers seeking advice on PWR issues are more likely to work for private sector organisations (62 per cent, compared to 56 per cent) and less likely to be in the public sector (21 per cent, compared to 27 per cent).

Table 7.8 Profile of sectors

<i>Sector</i>	<i>%</i>
Private sector	62
Public sector	21
Not for profit/ voluntary sector	5
Don't know	12

Base: Callers that were employed and gave the sector they worked in; 349

Around four in ten (40 per cent) worked at a workplace with a personnel or HR specialist or department and over four in ten (44 per cent) worked at a workplace that did *not* have this. One in six (16 per cent) callers were unsure if their organisation had a personnel or HR specialist or department.

A minority of callers that were employed were members of a trade union (13 per cent).

8 Appendix 2 – List of Pay and Work Rights Calls Subjects

Acas Helpline advisers record core details about the calls they answer in a MI system. Up to five (but typically just one) ‘headline call subjects’ are recorded against each call and within each at least one ‘call topic definition’ is recorded. The table below shows which of these call subjects were considered to be potentially about PWR issues and so in-scope for this evaluation.

Table 8.1 Helpline call topics

Headline call subject	Call topic definition	Potentially a PWR subject?
Absence, sickness and stress	Absence	No
	Sick Pay	No
	Stress	No
	Other (AS)	No
Contracts	Variation	No
	Written Statement	No
	Probation Period	No
	Fixed Term Contracts	No
	Notice Period / Pay	No
	Agency Worker Regulations	No
	Zero-hours contracts	No
Discipline, dismissal and grievance	Other (C)	No
	Discipline procedure	No
	Dismissal	No
	Grievance procedure	No
	Bullying/harassment	No
	Constructive dismissal	No
Diversity and discrimination	Other (DDG)	No
	Sex (inc. EQP)	No
	Race	No
	Disability	No
	Sexual orientation	No
	Religion/belief	No
	Age	No
	Gender reassignment	No
	Marriage & civil partnership	No
	Pregnancy/Maternity	No
Employment Agencies	Other (DD)	No
	Contract/Terms including non-receipt	Yes
	Advertising jobs overseas	Yes
	Contract conditional on buying goods or services	Yes
	Entertainment/Model Agencies	Yes
Family Friendly Policies	Other (EA)	Yes
	Flexible working regulation	No
	Time off for dependent	No
Holiday and working time	Other (FFP)	No
	Holiday entitlement	No
	Refusal of entitlement	No
	Bank/Public Holiday	No

	Working Time Regulation	Yes
	Other (HWT)	No
Maternity, Paternity and Adoption	Maternity entitlement	No
	Maternity detriment	No
	Paternity entitlement	No
	Paternity detriment	No
	Adoption entitlement	No
	Adoption detriment	No
	Parental leave entitlement	No
	Parental leave detriment	No
	Other (MPA)	No
Others	Retirement	No
	References	No
	Retirement (DRA)	No
	Physical/Mental Mistreatment	Yes
	Debt Bondage	Yes
	ID retained e.g. passport/bankcards	Yes
	Gangmasters (non-payment of wages)	Yes
	Other	No
	Redundancy, lay offs and business transfers	Redundancy
Redundancy payment		No
Non-payment of redundancy		No
Lay-offs short-time work		No
TUPE		No
Other (RLB)		No
Wages and NMW	National Minimum Wage (NMW) / National Living Wage (NLW)	Yes
	Non-payment of National Minimum Wage (NMW) / National Living Wage (NLW)	Yes
	Written pay statements	No
	Non-payment / deduction of wage	Yes
	Agricultural wages	Yes
	Other (WN)	No

