

Early conciliation

You must tell Acas first before making a claim to an employment tribunal about a workplace dispute.

When you tell us you want to make a claim to an employment tribunal you're 'the claimant'.

The other person in the dispute who will respond to the claim, for example your employer, is 'the respondent'.

When you tell us you want to make a claim, we'll offer you 'early conciliation'. This is when we talk to both you and the respondent about your dispute. It gives you the chance to come to an agreement without having to go to tribunal.

Acas is not part of the tribunal service and we will not discuss any matter with the tribunal.

The benefits of using early conciliation are:

- it's free
- it's confidential
- it's quicker than going to tribunal
- it's easier – there's a lot of paperwork to prepare for a tribunal
- it's voluntary – you or the respondent can refuse talks
- you can agree outcomes – including outcomes that you cannot get from a tribunal, for example a job reference

During early conciliation, if you agree, we'll contact the respondent. Our conversations are confidential and you decide what we can and cannot share with them.

Talks take place over the phone for up to one month. That period can be extended by 2 weeks if you're close to an agreement.

[Tell Acas you intend to make an employment tribunal claim.](#)

Most of the time you must tell us you intend to make a tribunal claim. You do not need to tell us if you're part of a group claim or if the respondent has already contacted us to ask for early conciliation.