

Acas Reports Increase In Those Seeking To Avoid Employment Tribunal Claims



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Acas, the employment relations service, has released new figures that reveal the number of businesses and employees which are trying to avoid employment tribunal claims continues to rise in recent months.

Monthly calls to the Acas helpline which, have resulted in being referred to the early conciliation service - [pre-claim conciliation](#) (PCC), have almost doubled since September. The free service aims to settle workplace issues which could escalate to an expensive tribunal.

By the end of February 2010, 8,304 PCC referrals had been made from the Acas helpline since the service was launched to accompany changes to the Employment Act in April 2009. Acas estimates that over 5,000 [employment tribunal](#) claims have been avoided already.

Rising demand for the service has resulted in a steady increase in referrals culminating in over 2,700 in the last quarter of 2009. The first quarter of 2010 is on track to exceed this figure by at least 20%. At the moment around 300 referrals are being received every week on average, and Acas expects this number to rise to about 400 during 2010.

Commenting on the figures, Ed Sweeney, Acas Chair said: "This data indicates that workers and employers are increasingly taking steps to avoid employment tribunals. The current economic climate has created difficult workplace challenges for managers, HR professionals and

employees. The earlier issues can be sorted out, the more likely people will remain in productive employment in the workplace.

"The service is quick. Over half of all resolved cases are completed in around three weeks instead of the six to nine months that most tribunal claims take. We have a responsibility to support the economic recovery by resolving [workplace disputes](#) early on and in doing so, avoiding costly, stressful and time consuming employment tribunals."

The PCC service was launched in April 2009 alongside the new Acas Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures following the Government's Dispute Resolution Review in 2007.

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About

Acas:

Acas' aim is to improve organisations and working life through better employment relations. It provides information, advice, training and a range of services working with employers and employees to prevent or resolve problems and improve performance. It is an independent statutory body governed by a Council consisting of the Acas Chair and employer, trade union and independent members.

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