

[News story: Government announces appointment of 2 Acas Council members](#)

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has today (30 June 2017) announced the appointment of 2 new members to the [Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service \(Acas\)](#) Council.

Acas is an independent non-departmental public body and the Acas Council is the overarching governance body for Acas. The Council consists of 12 members, including the Chair, and membership is drawn from employer, trade union and independent backgrounds.

Ben Summerskill joins the Council as an independent member and Christina McAnea as an employee representative.

Sir Brendan Barber, Acas chair, said:

I am delighted to welcome Ben Summerskill and Christina McAnea to the Acas Council. Their diverse knowledge and experience within employment relations will be invaluable in our role as independent, impartial and trusted workplace experts.

The Council sets out Acas' strategic direction, policies and priorities. I look forward to working with Ben and Christina to maintain our reputation as Britain's leading advisory service on workplace relations.

Ben Summerskill

Ben Summerskill is the director of the Criminal Justice Alliance, a coalition of 120 organisations committed to improving the criminal justice system. Previously he was chief executive at Stonewall from 2003 to 2014, which campaigns for the equality of lesbian, gay and bisexual people across Britain. Before that Ben Summerskill worked as a journalist at titles including The Observer, Express and London Evening Standard.

Christina McAnea

Christina McAnea is Unison's National Secretary for Health and is the lead negotiator on behalf of NHS workers across the UK. Christina has held various positions at the union since 1987, including Head of Education. Before that she worked at the GMB trade union.

Role of Acas

Acas aims to improve organisations and working life through better employment relations. It provides 3 main services:

- advice on workplace matters through a helpline which received 943,500 calls in 2015 to 2016 and a website with around 10 million visitors annually
- conciliation services which help resolve disputes between employers and individual employees or groups of employees – last year Acas received 92,172 notifications of individual disputes and was involved in 970 collective disputes
- tailored training and advice for individual organisations – in 2015 to 2016, Acas trained over 34,000 delegates

Acas is independent of ministers, but is one of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's key partners. Acas' services contribute to delivering a competitive, efficient and effective labour market which supports economic growth and employment.