DPS FRAMEWORK SCHEDULE 4: LETTER OF APPOINTMENT AND CONTRACT TERMS

Part 1: Letter of Appointment

To whom it may concern,

Letter of Appointment

This letter of Appointment dated Thursday 25th February 2021, is issued in accordance with the provisions of the DPS Agreement (RM6018) between CCS and the Supplier.

Capitalised terms and expressions used in this letter have the same meanings as in the Contract Terms unless the context otherwise requires.

Order Number:	CR20151 - ACAS Digital Advice Evaluation 2021
From:	**Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS).** 8th Floor Windsor House, 50 Victoria Street, London, SW10 0TL
To:	**IFF Research Ltd,** Floor 5, St Magnus House, 3 Lower Thames Street, London, EC3R 6HD ("Supplier")

Effective Date:	Monday 1st March 2021
Expiry Date:	Monday 9th August 2021

Services required:	Set out in Section 2, Part B (Specification) of the DPS Agreement and refined by:
	the Customer's Project Specification attached at Appendix A and the Supplier's Proposal attached at Appendix B;

Key Individuals:	

Contract Charges (including any applicable discount(s), but excluding VAT):	The Customer shall pay the Supplier the sum of £59,380.00 excluding VAT for delivery of these Services. For the avoidance of doubt, the Contract Charges shall be inclusive of all third-party costs. **Payment Milestones** ███████████████████████
Insurance Requirements	**Insurance** (Clause 19 of the Contract Terms)
Liability Requirements	**Suppliers limitation of Liability** (Clause 18.2 of the Contract Terms);
Customer billing address for invoicing:	All invoices should be sent to should be sent **by email:** To: ████████████ CC: ████████████ Preference is for email above, but they can be sent by post to: Research, Analysis and Insight Team, 8th Floor Windsor House, 50 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0TL

GDPR	Please see Contract Terms Schedule 7 (Processing, Personal Data and Data Subjects).

FORMATION OF CONTRACT

BY SIGNING AND RETURNING THIS LETTER OF APPOINTMENT (which may be done by electronic means) the Supplier agrees to enter a Contract with the Customer to provide the Services in accordance with the terms of this letter and the Contract Terms.

The Parties hereby acknowledge and agree that they have read this letter and the Contract Terms.

The Parties hereby acknowledge and agree that this Contract shall be formed when the Customer acknowledges (which may be done by electronic means) the receipt of the signed copy of this letter from the Supplier within two (2) Working Days from such receipt
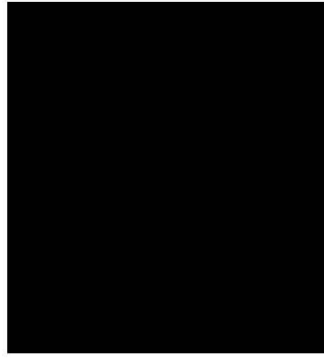
For and on behalf of the Supplier: **For and on behalf of the Customer:**

Name and Title: Name and Title:

Customer Project Specification

1. Background

1.1 Organisation & policy background

An independent body funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) was established formally by statute in 1976. Acas aims to improve organisations and working life through better employment relationships, and the services it provides are independent, impartial and confidential. These services include individual and collective dispute resolution services, workplace projects, telephone advice via the helpline, and online advice services.

Alongside the telephone helpline, Acas' website is its principle medium for offering employment-related guidance for employers, employees and their representatives on employment issues such as resolving problems at work, understanding employment rights and how better employment relations contributes to a high performing organisation.

The website began a process of complete redesign in 2018, which has been mainly completed. The majority of our advice and guidance can now be found on the newly designed website[1], although the remainder is currently linked to either an archived version of the old website or to the National Archives. The old website is due to be decommissioned in March 2021. For the purposes of this evaluation, the advice and guidance solely available on the newly designed website is in scope for this evaluation.

Advice and guidance takes two forms, mainly comprising '*short-form*' advice which provides an overview of a particular employment-related area, presented via HTML on the relevant webpage and which can be downloaded. '*Chapters*' provide guidance on certain, often more complex, subjects such as disciplinary and grievance procedures, in a detailed step by step guide that people can follow. Both are in-scope for this evaluation. The online advice and guidance Acas offers on its website is in the 'Advice' section (https://www.acas.org.uk/advice).

Figure 1: Acas Advice page screenshot (please not this screenshot does not show all available categories)

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[1] Statistics presented in subsequent sections of this document all pertain to the new website

Advice

Workplace advice for employees and employers.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for employers and employees

Our latest coronavirus advice for workplaces.

Working from home

Advice for employers and employees who are working from home during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Employment contracts

Includes what should be in an employment contract, changing contracts, zero-hours contracts, and employment status and rights.

Pay and wages

Includes the National Minimum Wage, maternity pay, deductions from wages, final pay and reclaiming overpayments.

Holiday, sickness and leave

Includes holiday, absence, and sick, maternity, paternity and adoption leave.

Health and wellbeing

Includes mental health and occupational health.

N.B. It is important to note that there are several navigation routes for accessing the same Acas guidance. Bidders are positively encouraged to spend time familiarising themselves with the range of different guidance pages on the Acas website, which vary considerably in length, scope, topic, format and navigation placement.

1.2 Previous Acas research relevant this evaluation

Acas regularly evaluates its services to ensure that it is meeting its statutory obligations and customer needs. The first (and to date, only) evaluation of Acas Digital Advice was undertaken in 2018 by IFF Research, on behalf of Acas. This research evaluated the outcomes and effectiveness of Acas digital advice for its users and mapped user journeys, establishing these measures as a baseline to support future evaluation. **We intend for these baseline measures to be carried over into this next evaluation and contractors are strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with the [previous evaluation report](#)**. These baseline measures are outlined in more detail in the Aims and Objectives section of this tender but include:

- the user journey and experience
- the ease with which the user can find what they are looking for
- subsequent actions taken by the user on the basis of the information they have accessed
- success and failure measures

Prior to this, an evaluation of Acas' written guidance was conducted in 2010 when hard copy written guidance, distributed by post, still comprised the greater part of guidance requested and issued. The evaluation reflected this; participants were recruited primarily from a list of those who had requested guidance by post, and the research aims and questions dealt primarily with hard-copy material and its distribution. As such, many of the findings of the 2010 evaluation are no longer relevant, and the mention of the evaluation here is merely to acknowledge that an evaluation of this type was previously undertaken.

Table 1: Recent Acas research relevant to this project

Research published	Research undertaken	Methods used

| Acas digital advice evaluation 2018 (Ref: 02/18) | This report, the first of its kind, aimed to evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of Acas digital advice for its users, map user journeys, understand the differences between user groups and to create a series of baseline measures to support future evaluation | A 'pop-up' survey invite was set up on the advice pages of the Acas website that invited users to opt-in to the research by providing contact details.

This 'pop-up' appeared for all users that remained on the A-Z contents page or any of the in-scope guidance pages for a period of 30 seconds. The 'pop-up' briefly introduced the survey and provided a form for users to fill in their contact details. This approach was designed in order to access users of the digital advice on the Acas website while causing the minimum possible disruption to their user experience and journey. |

1.3 Stats on the current use of the website

Between January 2020 and September 2020, around 9 million devices accessed the Acas website, which resulted in around 15 million sessions. Around 50% of these sessions were accessed using a mobile device, 45% via desktop/laptop computer and 5% via a tablet. Any survey of users will need to work with all of these devices.

Around 70% of sessions on the Acas website come direct from search engines (Google, Bing, etc.), 15% from directly entering the web address and 7% were referrals from other websites. Other details on visits, such as which browser is used, can also be made available.

The top visited advice pages on the Acas website for the same period are outlined in the table below, listing pages which received more than 100,000 unique visits. Unsurprisingly, a large proportion of these visits were to pages containing information about Coronavirus.

Table 2: Top visited advice pages on the Acas website from January 2020 to September 2020 (n.b. all advice pages highlighted blue pertain to Coronavirus)

Advice Page	Unique Page Views
Coronavirus	2,680,484
Your rights during redundancy	396,153
National minimum wage entitlement	364,226
Coronavirus – using holiday	289,085
Coronavirus – furlough scheme pay	284,151
Checking holiday entitlement	274,121
Absence from work	270,767
Early conciliation	254,223
Working from home	239,420

Grievance procedure step by step	218,652
Manage staff redundancies	200,108
Disciplinary procedure step by step	197,109
Changing an employment contract	191,981
Coronavirus – self isolation and sick pay	183,306
Checking sick pay	171,567
Making a claim to an employment tribunal	160,861
Coronavirus – vulnerable people and high risk	151,218
Supporting mental health workplace	139,318
Investigations for discipline and grievance step by step	121,032
How to raise a problem at work	115,453
Checking your employment rights	114,067
Zero hours contracts	112,777
Lay offs and short time working	106,391
The maximum hours an employee can work	104,359

2. Aims and Objectives of the Project

2.1 Overarching aims and objectives

The aim of this research is to evaluate the quality and user experience of written guidance on the Acas website, and ascertain whether or not the service is meeting customer need. Despite the changes to the Acas website, and though these changes will inevitably affect the comparativity of this evaluation to the previous one, it is important that the baseline that was established from the last evaluation is preserved as much as reasonably possible.

To do this, we would like to evaluate:
- the user journey and experience
- the ease with which the user can find what they are looking for
- subsequent actions taken by the user on the basis of the information they have accessed
- success and failure measures (detailed below)

2.2 Supplementary aims – evaluating advice & guidance on the Acas website

The supplementary project aims for this evaluation are outlined below:

- User motivation for seeking guidance
- How easily was the user able to access the information required? It would be useful for the research to validate the Google Analytics measures we already have, e.g.
    - Exit rate after first search
    - Bounce rate
    - Refined (i.e. secondary) search rate
- How valuable did the user find the information?
- How often do users access online written guidance?
- How up to date do they feel the information is?
- Do they feel that the information is pitched at the right level?
- Engagement level – the amount of time spent on a page

- Do they feel that there is the correct volume of information on the subject?
- Users' degree of confidence to take action and confidence that this is the correct course of action to take, subsequent to accessing online guidance. *(This is particularly relevant as the Helpline evaluation revealed that users call the Helpline for confidence purposes after finding the relevant information on the website.)*
- What actions did users subsequently take after accessing online guidance?
  - This may include executive actions, such as holding an informal conversation with an employee or changing a workplace policy, or informative actions, such as distributing the document to colleagues – such actions are considered *success measures*, as the service has enabled the user to take the action required for the task.
  - Conversely, accessing web-based employment advice elsewhere, paid-for HR or advice services, or calling the Acas Helpline for Information Only (IO) inquiries (*not* more complicated inquiries that cannot be resolved online) would be considered *failure measures.*
- User satisfaction with the service
- Would the user use the service again or recommend it to others?
- Whether harder to reach or vulnerable users use the website. This would include gig economy workers, platform workers, young people, etc. and could be explored by looking at demographics.

The research will also collect user characteristics in terms of:

- Whether the service user is an employee or employer and, if the latter, if they have specific HR responsibility
- The service user's organisation's sector and size.
- Personal characteristics of service users such as ethnicity, disability status, etc.
- Geographic information of users.

Please also note that the focus for this evaluation is purely on online advice and guidance content described above. We are not seeking to evaluate the website as a whole, nor the plethora of other content hosted on the Acas website. In particular **Helpline Online, E-Learning** and **Tools & Templates** do not fall within the scope of this evaluation.

3. Suggested Methodology

3.1 Research method and response rates

The previous evaluation utilised a predominantly online survey design supplemented with a number of telephone interviews[2]. Users were initially invited to take part in the

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[2] The CATI element accounted for 30% of overall responses.

survey online, before being contacted over the phone one week after their initial invite to complete the survey online. Users were grouped into batches to ensure that all of the sample was contacted an equal number of times and in an even and consistent way. All email invites were sent to each user an equal number of times and no user was given priority over another.

We invite proposals from contractors regarding:

1. The method of contact and administration of the survey (online, CATI etc.)
2. The means and frequency of follow-up contact and administration attempts.

In each case, proposals should discuss a) advantages and limitations of each method; b) the cost and anticipated recruitment rate **(and achieved sample sizes)**; and c) demonstrate where the contractor has effectively employed this method previously, showing outputs and outcomes.

3.2 Sampling approach

Due to the nature of website access, we do not have a comprehensive sample frame or the means to contact potential participants other than through the website itself. Therefore, similar to the previous digital advice evaluation in 2018, we envisage that recruitment of participants will be via strategically-positioned website pop-ups on relevant guidance pages. These pop ups will invite users to opt-in and provide their contact information, allowing for follow-up contact to be established at a later time point (e.g. two weeks later, by email). This approach is preferable to using pop-ups to actually survey people during their visit to the website for three main reasons:

1. We require sufficient time to elapse after the user's interaction with the guidance in order to ask them questions relating to its medium-term impacts (e.g. whether a person took specific actions off the back of the guidance), whilst recognising that this will affect respondent recall
2. We seek to minimise the degree of interference with people's intended use of the website so as not to adversely affect their user experience
3. We seek to both maximise response rates *and* the representativeness of the achieved sample and are sceptical as to whether a conventional pop-up survey could be effective on either count.

We anticipate that this 'pop-up' will appear for all users that remain on any of the in-scope guidance pages for a period of 30 seconds. The 'pop-up' should briefly introduce the survey and provide a form for users to fill in their contact details. This approach aims to cause minimum disruption to the user experience and journey and mirror the approach taken in the 2018 evaluation.

Contractors will need to have the capability to write code to generate a pop up for embedding on our website. The code must meet WCAG AA accessibility standards and follow the Acas digital brand.

3.3 Instrument

The existing questionnaire utilised in the previous evaluation will need to be used with necessary adaptations. Nevertheless, we envisage that the questionnaire will be similar in style and length. **As such, the contractor is required to familiarise themselves with the questionnaire in detail in order to make effective adaptations**.

The questionnaire should be adapted in close collaboration with Social Researcher's in Acas' Research, Analysis and Insight (RAI) team.

4. Deliverables

Research outputs

Please cost and provide full details as to your approach (with details of relevant experience) for producing the following:

4.1 Dataset

A fully labelled, clean data set in SPSS format is required to allow us to carry out further analysis should we need to. This should be provided alongside some top line findings prior to the final report.

4.2 Report
The final output required is a report comprising a commentary of the results, with a short executive summary bulleting the headline findings and a technical annex to allow the research to be replicated. The analysis should be presented as a series of tables showing frequencies and percentages for each question, and some key breaks and cross tabs where appropriate.

It is important that the report follows the Acas style guidance for research publications found in Annex A. It is also important that any visualisations follow the Office for National Statistics guidelines which can be found here. Any submissions that do not take this guidance into account will not be considered.

For any questions that were used in the last evaluation as a baseline upon which to build future evaluations, the report should make comparisons and reference the equivalent figure for the last evaluation. The report will be used both internally and externally and needs to be written and presented as such, in similar style to the report from the 2018 evaluation, only where the aforementioned style guidance allows.

4.3 Presentation of findings

This will need to cover the main points covered in the final report in presentation format. A slide deck in Microsoft PowerPoint may be the most appropriate format, although we are open to suggestions should contractors have other more suitable mediums to use. This is likely to be held in Summer 2021.

ANNEX B

Supplier Proposal
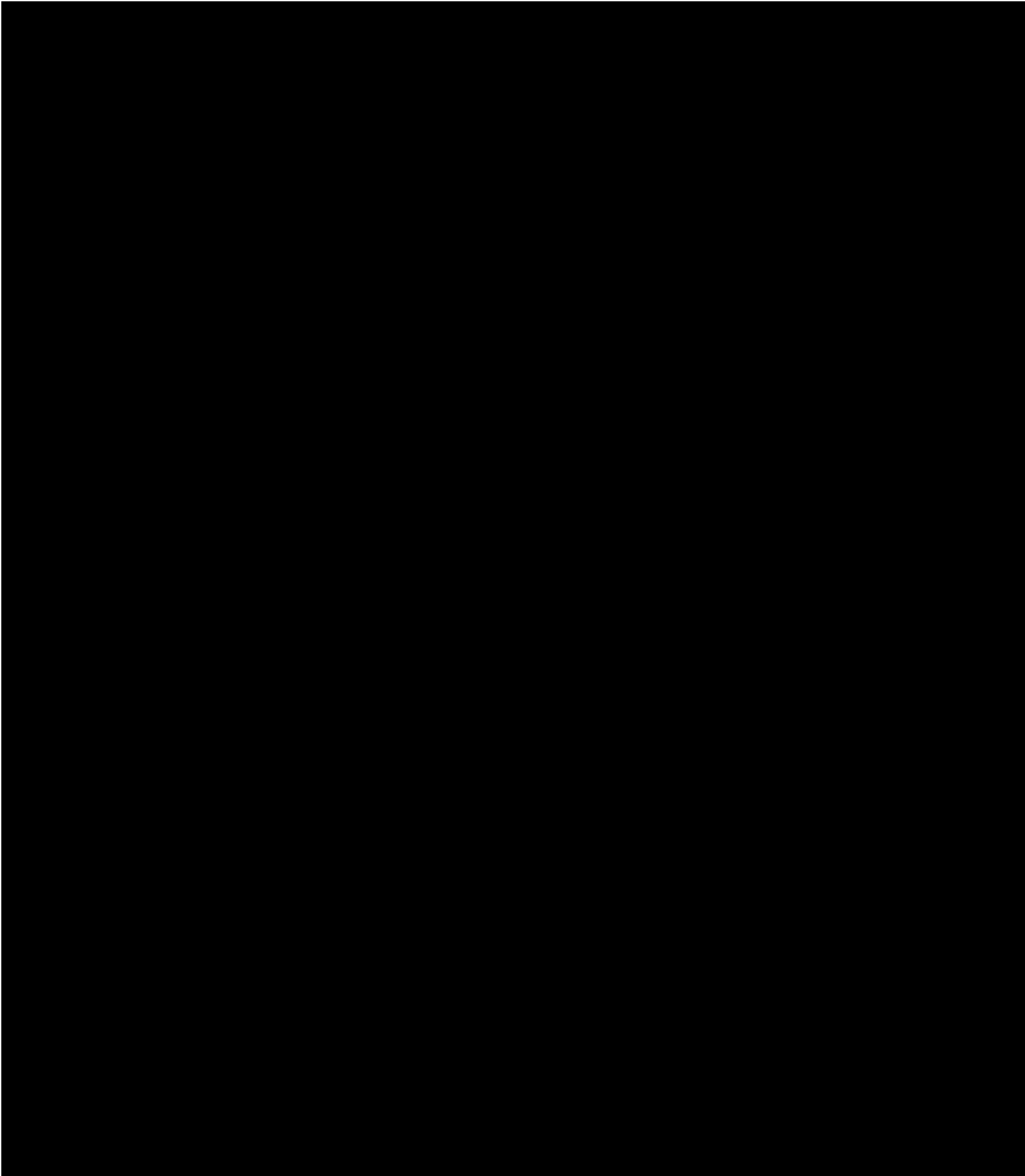
Part 2: Contract Terms

Contract Terms v6.0