

**Support and advice to business**

There are a number of bodies that provide support and advice to business, ranging from the local Chamber of Commerce or Chamber of Trade to government organised helplines, covering a range of important areas such as exporting to another country, or developing new employment initiatives e.g. the employment of disabled workers. Britain's mouthpiece for the business community is the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). It exists primarily to voice the views of its members to ensure that governments of whatever political complexion - and society as a whole - understand both the need of British business and the contribution it makes to the well-being of the nation. The CBI provides essential information and research services to its members. Membership of the CBI is corporate - organisations and companies are members, not the individuals nominated to represent them.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) was set up in 1974 and is funded by government to improve employee relations. It provides advice and support to businesses on a range of employee relations issues.

Trade Associations provide a focal point for different sectors of the UK economy and provide a means by which companies can work together. They provide a range of useful information to business such as market analysis, research and advisory services. In addition they organise trade and export initiatives to promote a particular sector in new and existing markets.

Trade Associations are made up of member firms in a particular sector e.g. travel agents, road haulage and financial services. The Associations:

- \* promote the interest of members
- \* create conditions in which the sector will flourish
- \* work together for the good of all.

The chief ways in which they achieve this are by:

- \* providing a forum for discussion so that member firms can exchange views
- \* represent their members, for example in lobbying government
- \* provide services to members such as industrial data, and training courses.