

Agency Worker Handbook

Contents

3	Introduction
4	General terms & conditions
5	Pension
6	Absence
7	Working time & holidays
9	Rules & regulations
11	Family-friendly policies
13	Health & safety
15	Complaints procedure

Introduction

About Acorn

The Acorn Group is one of the UK's leading recruitment companies. Acorn offers permanent, temporary and contract recruitment solutions to employers, supported by a portfolio of training, learning and development solutions.

Acorn is a member of the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) and ISO 9001:2015 accredited.

As a leading recruitment specialist, we have a great deal of experience in all types of recruitment, so will always be on hand to give you the advice and guidance you need to succeed in your role. When working with Acorn we make it our business to listen. We will ensure that the communication, support and service you are given is of the highest level.

This handbook will provide you with some important information about working with Acorn, and the policies and procedures which will apply to you. It is important that you read this information carefully and that you seek clarification from your Acorn Representative when needed. You may also receive a client specific handbook, which will provide you with further information specific to a particular assignment.

In addition to this Handbook, you will also receive a Key Information Document (KID), an Assignment Details Form and a Written Statement; all of which will contain specific details about your assignment and your engagement with Acorn.

Our clients

Acorn places agency workers into assignments with approximately 850 different client companies across the UK within various different sectors including; commercial, industrial, technical, steel, construction, rail, driving, food processing etc.

We will ensure that the assignment that you are offered suits your knowledge, skills and experience, and our experienced consultants will work with you to identify the best opportunities for you. Before each assignment, your Acorn Representative will provide you with full details of the assignment, including a written assignment confirmation.

Ethical recruitment

Acorn is a GLAA licence holder, Stronger Together Business Partner and complies with the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Base Code. This means that:

- You will never have to pay to register or to receive work (this includes giving money, gifts, vouchers, food etc. in exchange for work). This is illegal in the UK.
- We look out for signs of labour exploitation and human trafficking and we take action if we have any suspicions.
- We ensure that you are placed into a safe working environment, you are paid no less than the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and that you understand your contract and working conditions.
- We are always here to help you. Contact our confidential helpline on 07500 331 134 if you have any concerns relating to labour exploitation, human trafficking and bribery. This line is manned by Acorn's Head Office Compliance team.

General terms & conditions

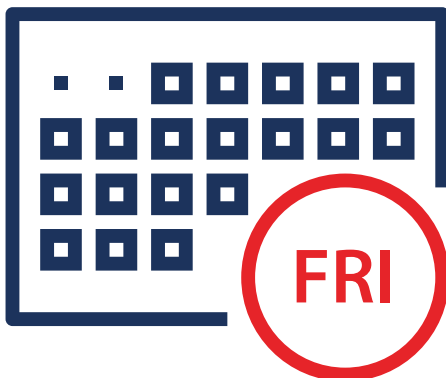
Payment of wages

Wages are paid on a weekly basis, one week in arrears. Method of payment will be by direct credit into a bank / building society account of your choice each Friday. You must have your own bank account or a joint bank account which you have access to. Should there be any changes in your circumstances, please inform your Acorn Representative immediately.

Your weekly payslip will be available to view on Acorn's online portal every Thursday. This provides a secure place for you to see current and previous payslips as and when you need – you will be emailed a personalised log-in and instructions on how you can use the portal.

We will require your National Insurance number as we are obliged by law to deduct National Insurance from your earnings and will tax you under the 'Pay As You Earn' (PAYE) scheme.

During your assignment you may be required to document your hours on a weekly timesheet. You must complete the timesheet honestly and accurately. Fraudulent completion of timesheets will result in the termination of your assignment.



Hours of work

The length of an assignment and the number of hours you work each week may vary. There may also be occasions when no work is available, and you are not entitled to receive any pay when you are not on an assignment.

Punctuality

When you begin an assignment, you will be advised of the start and finish times. You must make every effort to arrive in sufficient time to start work at your agreed start time. As we wish to provide the best possible service to our Clients, we take a serious view of lateness unless it is caused by circumstances beyond your control. Persistent lateness will result in the termination of your assignment.

Location of work

You have no permanent place of work and your place of work will vary according to each assignment.

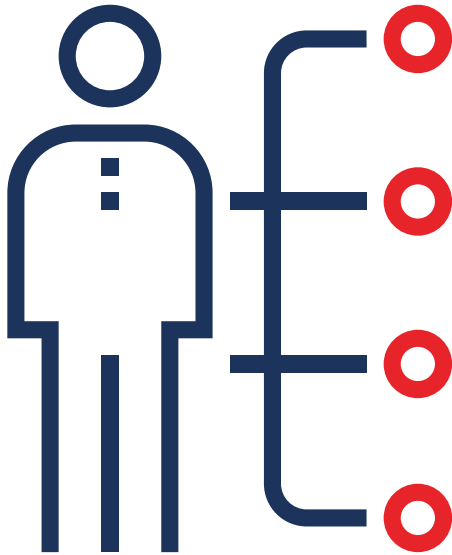
Termination of assignment

In accordance with your contract, an assignment can be ended at any time by yourself, the client or Acorn.

When an assignment ends, Acorn will endeavour to find you an alternative assignment which matches your knowledge, skills and experience. If you no longer wish to be considered for other assignments, please request your P45 and outstanding holiday pay from your Acorn Representative. This will not be processed automatically.

Agency workers regulations 2010 (AWR)

After completing a 12 week AWR qualifying period, you will be entitled to receive the same basic employment and working conditions as if you had been recruited directly by the client. This includes: basic pay, overtime rates and holiday pay etc. Your Acorn representative will advise you of any applicable increases. Please note that the AWR qualifying period is affected by holiday, sickness and shutdown.



Pension

The Acorn Group uses NEST (National Employment Savings Trust) as its pension provider. Subject to qualifying eligibility criteria, you will be automatically enrolled as a member of this scheme after you have worked for Acorn for three months. If you wish to opt-out of the scheme, you must follow the instructions provided to you by NEST shortly after your enrolment. You will be required to make a weekly contribution to your pension and Acorn will make a contribution too. The level of contribution will increase gradually over the coming years, as detailed below.

	Acorn	Agency Worker
*Before 05 April 2018	1%	1%
*06 April 2018 - 05 April 2019	2%	3%
*06 April 2019	3%	5%

*Dates are subject to change

You will receive correspondence regarding the pension scheme during the course of your assignment. Further details about the NEST scheme, including conditions of eligibility, can be found at www.nestpensions.org.uk.

Acorn cannot provide financial advice, so you must seek advice from NEST or your Financial Advisor.

Trade union membership

The Acorn Group does not formally recognise a trade union, however all Agency Workers are free to join a trade union of their choice.

Absence

In the event that you are unable to work, for any reason, you must contact Acorn and your Line Manager, as soon as possible, prior to your start time. Please make contact personally unless you are physically unable to do so. An answer-phone message should be left for Acorn if out of hours or during the weekend. It is essential that you advise Acorn every day that you are unable to work.

Sickness

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

You will be entitled to receive statutory sick pay (SSP) if;

- You are on an assignment when you become sick.
- Your average weekly earnings are at or above the Lower Earnings Limit (set by the Government). If your average weekly earnings are less than the Lower Earnings Limit, you will not be entitled to SSP and no payment will be made.
- You are absent from work due to sickness for more than three days (the first three days of sickness absence are known as 'waiting days' and no SSP is paid for these first three days).
- You provide Acorn with the following documentation:
 - A self-certification form, if your absence lasts seven calendar days or less and / or;
 - A 'fit note', which you must obtain from your doctor, if your absence lasts eight calendar days or more.

It is possible that during a period of sickness, a client will request a replacement worker. If this is the case, you will be informed that your assignment has ended. In these situations, you are no longer eligible to receive SSP as you are no longer on an assignment.

If you are ineligible for SSP for any reason, you will be issued with a SSP1 Form, which may enable you to obtain SSP from an alternative source.

Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence, or failure to follow the correct absence reporting procedure may result in the termination of your assignment.

Medicals

Acorn reserves the right to require workers to have a medical examination by an Occupational Health Specialist or Independent Medical Adviser, with any report made by the doctor supplied to the Company. If it is necessary to seek information from your own doctor or specialist, this will be done in accordance with the Access to Medical Reports Act.

Working time & holidays

Working time regulations

The working week

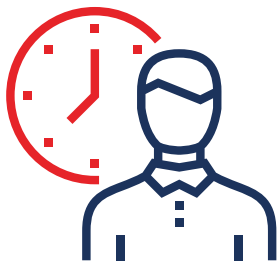
The maximum working hours, under the Working Time Regulations, is an average of 48 hours per week over a 17 week reference period. If you would like to work more than 48 hours per week, your Acorn Representative will provide you with a Working Time Opt-out Form. There is no obligation to sign the opt-out and with one week's written notice you can end the agreement. If you do work more than 48 hours per week, it is recommended that you work no more than 60 hours per week for health and safety reasons.

Rest periods

You are entitled to the following rest breaks:

- 11 hours' rest from work in each 24 hour period.
- A 20 minute break if the assignment lasts more than six hours per day.
- A minimum of one day's rest from work each week or two days per fortnight.

You must ensure that you have sufficient rest in order to protect your health and safety and that of your colleagues.



Young workers

If you are under the age of 18, you;

- Cannot work more than eight hours in any day or 40 hours in any week.
- Cannot work more than five days in any week.
- Cannot work at night (working at least three hours in the period between 11pm and 6am).
- Are entitled to a rest break of 30 minutes if the assignment lasts more than 4½ hours.

Holiday entitlement

- The Acorn holiday year runs from 1st January to 31st December.
- You will begin accruing holiday from the first day of your assignment.
- Your entitlement to holiday will be based on 28 days per annum for a full holiday year. This will be pro-rata'd if you start/finish during the holiday year. Your holiday entitlement may increase if you complete the AWR qualifying period and you will be advised of this in your assignment details notification.
- You will accrue entitlement to holiday time for each week that you are in receipt of payment from us (i.e. when a timesheet is submitted (working hours pay) or paid holidays). With an entitlement of 28 days, this will be an accrual of holiday time at a rate of 0.5384 days per week, for 'paid' weeks.

- The amount of payment which you will receive in respect of periods of annual leave taken during your assignment will be paid in accordance with the average qualifying remuneration calculated over the previous 52 weeks in which qualifying remuneration has been received. If you have worked for less than 52 weeks, the calculation will be based on the actual number of weeks in which qualifying remuneration has been received. Qualifying remuneration includes but is not limited to; holiday pay, SSP, SMP, SSP etc. Weeks where no remuneration is received will be disregarded for the purpose of the calculation.
- Your average weekly pay may fluctuate as the amount of pay that you earn on a weekly basis may increase or decrease depending on how many hours you work.
- Any weeks in which there is zero pay are ignored; this ensures that your average weekly pay is not reduced.
- Holiday pay is calculated in days and the value of a day is calculated as the weekly average of the previous 52 weeks' pay, divided by 5 to give an average daily rate of pay.
- If you work less than 5 days per week, your average weekly rate of pay is still divided by 5 to give an average daily rate of pay. This means that you may have to request more than 1 day's holiday to receive pay which is comparable to what you normally would earn in a day. This is because, even though you work part time hours, your holiday entitlement is based on 28 days per annum. This will even itself out over the course of the holiday year and you will not be disadvantaged. For example, if you work 4 days per week, you would have to request 1.25 days' holiday to receive a full day's pay.
- Your holiday entitlement includes 8 statutory Bank Holidays. Therefore, you must request a Bank Holiday as holiday, if you wish to be paid for it (and you are not working).

Here are some examples to help you understand how the holiday accrual process works:

Example 1:

John works 5 days per week and has requested 3 days' holiday:

- Over the last 52 weeks, John has been paid a total of £19,760.00.
- £19,760.00 divided by 52 weeks (to give average weekly pay) is £380.00.
- £380.00 divided by 5 days (to give an average daily rate of pay) is £76.00.
- John is paid £228.00 for 3 days' holiday.

Example 2:

Paul works 2 days per week and has requested a week off (2 days).

- Over the last 52 weeks, Paul has been paid a total of £7,488.00.
- £7,488.00 divided by 52 weeks (to give average weekly pay) is £144.00.
- £144.00 divided by 5 days (to give average daily rate of pay) is £28.80.
- In order for Paul to receive the equivalent of what he would normally earn in a week, Acorn would need to process 2.5 days' holiday for each holiday he requests.
- 2.5 x 2 days (Paul's standard working week) = 5 days' holiday to be processed.
5 x £28.80 = £144.00 holiday pay.

Booking holidays

- All accrued annual leave must be taken during the holiday year in which it accrued and none may be carried forward to the following year. Any annual leave which has been accrued and not taken will be lost.
- You are responsible for ensuring that paid holiday is requested and taken.
- Prior to requesting a holiday, you will need to check that you have accrued sufficient holiday entitlement.
- If you have accrued sufficient holiday, you must complete an Acorn Holiday Form, which must be given to your Acorn Representative. The completion of a Holiday Form does not mean that your holiday has been authorised. You will receive confirmation from Acorn when the holiday has been authorised.
- You must provide notice of at least twice the length of the period of leave that you wish to take e.g. if requesting two days leave we require four days' notice.
- In exceptional circumstances, authorised holiday may be cancelled by Acorn or the client giving you no less than twice as much notice as the amount of holiday requested.
- You may also be required to take holiday at certain times of the year e.g. during a company shutdown. Holidays may also be limited at certain busy times of the year.

Rules & regulations

Client rules and regulations

You are required to comply with any rules, regulations, policies, procedures and practices that are specified by any client, for whom you are working, during an assignment.

IT systems

During your assignment, you may be given access to the client's IT system and you must at all times adhere to the client's IT Policy.



Social media

Access to social networking sites during working hours is strictly forbidden unless authorisation is obtained from your Line Manager.

Your use of social networking sites may impact on Acorn and its business. Such impact includes potentially causing damage to its reputation, loss of confidential information, or exposure to other liabilities such as claims of discrimination, harassment or workplace bullying. The content of any communications or comments posted on a social networking site must not damage or bring into disrepute Acorn, its staff, clients or candidates. Therefore, if you use social networking sites, even where this is not in the workplace or is outside of working hours, you are prohibited from:

Engaging in any conduct or posting any comment which are detrimental to Acorn or its clients.

Engaging in any conduct or posting any comments which could be derogatory to another person or third party or which could constitute unlawful discrimination or harassment.

Recording any confidential information regarding Acorn (or any of Acorn's client companies) on any social networking site or posting comments about any business related topics such as company performance.

You may be required to remove postings that breach the above guidelines.

Alcohol and drugs

You must not attend work under the influence of alcohol and / or drugs. Acorn and its clients reserve the right to conduct alcohol and / or drug testing of workers, where appropriate, and to deny workers access to, or remove them from, premises if such tests are positive. If you test positive, you will have your assignment terminated.

Dress code and personal appearance

You should present yourself for work in clothes that are smart, clean and tidy, as expected for business standards and appropriate to the type of assignment you are undertaking. Some clients may require specific dress standards or uniform to be worn for an assignment. You will also be expected to follow any client specific rules and guidelines relating to personal appearance, for example concerning visible body piercings.

Equality and diversity

Acorn's agency workers are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential and all recruitment, selection and training processes are free from discrimination on the grounds of the following protected characteristics:

Age

Disability

Gender re-assignment

Marriage or civil partnership

Pregnancy or maternity

Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)

Religion or belief

Sex

Sexual orientation

Bullying, harassment and discrimination are unacceptable and should you be found to be subjecting colleagues, customers and / or clients to this behaviour, your assignment will be terminated with immediate effect.

If you feel that you have been harassed, bullied or discriminated against during your assignment, please make your Acorn Representative aware at the earliest possible opportunity. Complaints of this nature will be handled sensitively and will be investigated thoroughly.

Acorn's full Equality & Diversity Policy can be found on the company's websites.

Data protection

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into effect on 25 May 2018 and changes data protection legislation in the UK. Acorn is required to process your personal data in order to provide work finding services. We must process personal data (including sensitive personal data) so that we can provide these services and in doing so, we act as a data controller. This is why we have asked for your personal data on the application form and other registration forms that you will have completed during your registration. When we process your personal data we must do so in accordance with data protection laws. Those laws require us to give you a Privacy Statement to explain how we manage your personal data. This is available on our website.

You must ensure that any data that you come into contact with during an assignment is also processed in accordance with data protection legislation. You might be required to read, sign and understand a client's data protection procedures so that you are fully aware of their company specific requirements. Failure to adhere to Acorn's and / or the client's data protection requirements may result in the termination of your assignment.

Family-friendly policies

Maternity absence

As you are not an employee, and are engaged on a contract for services, you are not entitled to take a period of maternity 'leave' and you will instead be entitled to maternity 'absence'.

If you are pregnant, you must inform Acorn, in writing, by no later than the 15th week before the baby is due. Please note that when working in certain industries, it may be necessary to inform Acorn and the Client of your pregnancy at an earlier stage due to health and safety reasons e.g. if you are working with certain chemicals. You must take compulsory maternity absence in the two weeks after your baby is born or four weeks, if you are working in a factory.

As you will be taking a period of maternity absence, you do not have an automatic right to return to the same job. When your maternity absence ends, please contact your local branch and they will endeavour to find you a different assignment; if the original assignment is no longer available.

You will not accrue holidays while on maternity absence; this only applies to employees on a contract of employment. Any holidays that you have accrued prior to maternity absence, should be taken before your maternity absence begins.

Maternity pay

Subject to the following eligibility criteria, you will be eligible to receive up to 39 weeks of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). SMP is paid at 90% of your average weekly earnings for the first six weeks and 33 weeks at the lower of either the standard SMP rate, or 90% of your average gross weekly earnings. The remainder of any additional maternity leave will be unpaid.

In order to qualify to be paid SMP:

- **Your average weekly earnings must be at least equal to the lower earnings limit (LEL).**
- **You must give the correct notice.**
- **You must provide proof you're pregnant (via a MATB1 Form).**
- **You must have been working for Acorn continuously for at least 26 weeks up to the 'qualifying week' (the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth).**
- **You must / will be working in the 'qualifying week'.**

If you do not qualify for SMP, Acorn will send you a SMP1 Form, which you can take to Jobcentre Plus who will advise if you qualify for maternity allowance, which is paid by the Government.

Paternity pay

Paternity absence is available to the father of a newly born child, provided he has responsibility for the child's upbringing. Eligible workers will be able to take either one week or two consecutive weeks' paternity absence (not odd days) in the eight weeks following the birth of the child; this leave will be paid at the current statutory paternity pay rate (SPP).

To be eligible for paternity absence and pay:

-
- You must have been working for Acorn continuously for at least 26 weeks up to the 'qualifying week' (the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth).
-
- You must give the correct notice of 28 days.
-
- Your average weekly earnings must be at least equal to the lower earnings limit (LEL).
-
- You must notify Acorn in writing, in the qualifying week, when the baby is due, when you wish to take your absence leave and how much leave you want to take.
-
- You must provide a declaration confirming that you have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing and a copy of the MATB1 Form.
-

Bereavement leave

There is no statutory entitlement for time off to deal with bereavement. We will, however, work with you and endeavour to support you through such times. Any requests for time off will be dealt with on an individual basis and any time off may be taken as either unpaid leave and / or holiday, depending on your holiday accrual at the time of the request.

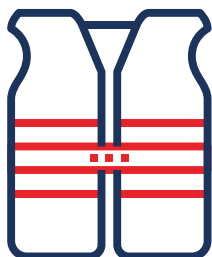
Health and safety

Acorn and its clients take your health and safety very seriously and we expect you to do so too. This handbook outlines some general rules, which we expect you to adhere to at all times during an assignment. It is likely that there will be additional client specific rules and regulations, and these will be explained to you by Acorn and the client where you are working. This may take the form of a client specific induction. Failure to adhere to any health and safety procedures, rules and regulations will almost certainly result in the termination of your assignment.

Acorn's obligations

In order to help you remain healthy and safe during an assignment, Acorn will ensure that:

- The client has an appropriate written Health and Safety Policy.
- The client has appropriate employment insurance to cover agency workers.
- The client has carried out appropriate risk assessments in relation to the work you are required to carry out.
- You are notified of any risks associated with the work to be carried out.
- You are advised of any personal protective equipment required.



General rules

At the beginning of each assignment you must familiarise yourself with, and conform to, the:

- Client's Health and Safety Procedure, undergoing training where necessary.
- At all times, you must comply with all instructions given by the Client's Safety Officer and others with a responsibility for Health and Safety.
- You must obey the Client's safety rules at all times and take reasonable care for your own safety, and that of your colleagues.
- You must not take any action, where you work, which might endanger the Health and Safety of yourself or any other person.
- Where required by legislation, or by the Client, you will be supplied with and must wear / use appropriate safety clothing or equipment.
- All accidents, damage, unsafe practices and unsafe workplaces must be reported, without delay, to both the appropriate Client Representative and to Acorn, whether people are injured or not.
- You must bring to the Company's attention any health condition that you believe may have been caused or aggravated by a work activity.
- You must report any health condition that you have, or that you develop, (whether or not it is work-related) that may put you at particular risk from a work activity.

-
- You should be aware of the dangers, which may arise from excessive working hours, and the importance of adequate rest breaks. You must bring to the attention of Acorn any requests to work excessive hours or if inadequate rest breaks are provided.
 - You must always ensure you are aware who your first aiders and fire wardens are during your assignment.
-

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

You are required to wear PPE in certain roles and when doing certain tasks. PPE includes items such as; safety boots, helmets, safety glasses, Hi-Viz jackets and ear defenders. PPE is required to keep you safe and failure to wear the correct PPE means that you leave yourself exposed to risk of serious injury. Where you are required to wear PPE, you must do so in all the designated areas and at all times. Failure to wear the correct PPE will result in the termination of your assignment.

Manual handling

Manual handling (lifting and carrying) is the most common cause of accidents at work. A variety of injuries may be caused by poor manual handling techniques. Injuries are most commonly to the back but hands, arms and feet may also be damaged.

What you are able to lift depends on a number of factors; your personal physique, your age, fitness and experience, the nature of the load and the techniques to be employed.

When preparing to lift, consider; What has to be moved? How far it is to be moved? Where it is to be moved to and where from? Can it be safely handled by one person? Will assistance be required? Can the load be broken down?

When lifting, it is important that you maintain the correct posture; ensure you keep your head up - do not look down at the load, keep your back straight, keep your elbows in, ensure your knees are bent and your feet should be slightly apart.

When preparing to lift ensure; your feet are apart with one foot slightly forward, your knees are bent, the load is kept close to your body and your back is straight.

When grasping the load ensure; you have a secure grip, tilt the load slightly towards you and keep the load close to your body with your arms in.

When lifting loads ensure; there are no jerks, snatches or twists, you look up and you keep your back straight.

When you move off; use the momentum of the lift, keep the load close to your body and use smooth movements.

Work equipment

Work equipment can be hazardous and cause injury. Make sure that you;

Always:

-
- Follow instructions and comply with safe working procedures.
 - Take simple precautions, such as pre-start checks.
 - Report defects and faults immediately.
 - Keep the working area clean and tidy, clean up spills and remove obstacles.
 - Switch off equipment when not in use.
 - Tie back long hair and cover it.
-

Never:

-
- Use machines if you have been drinking alcohol or taking drugs.
 - Tamper with guards or safety devices.
 - Wear loose clothing or jewellery when operating machinery.
 - Hurry or cut corners.
 - Work with equipment, unless trained to do so.
-

Accident reporting

All accidents and near-misses, no matter how minor, must be reported at the time of the incident to your supervisor and to Acorn at the earliest opportunity. You will be required to complete an accident form. Reporting accidents or near-misses helps prevent them recurring.

Complaints procedure

General complaints

For minor complaints in relation to your assignment, please contact your Acorn Representative who will endeavour to resolve your concerns.

If you have a more serious complaint or you feel that concerns you have raised with your Acorn Representative have not been resolved, please contact the HR Department, Acorn Recruitment, Somerton House, Hazell Drive, Newport, NP10 8FY or via email hr@acornpeople.com

Next steps

1. We will send you a letter, or e-mail, acknowledging your complaint and may ask you to confirm or explain the details set out. We will also let you know the name of the person who will be dealing with your complaint. You can expect to receive our letter within five days of us receiving your complaint.
 2. We will record your complaint in our central register.
 3. We will then conduct a thorough investigation into your complaint which will involve interviewing all parties concerned.
 4. You will receive a written response to your complaint within ten days of completion of the investigation.
-

If we have to change any of the timescales above, we will let you know and explain why.

