



Hoople Complaints Policy (HP021)

1. Purpose

Hoople is committed to providing high-quality services. We recognise that on occasion things may go wrong, and when this happens, we want to know so we can put matters right, learn from feedback, and improve our services. This policy sets out a clear, simple and consistent approach to receiving, investigating and responding to complaints.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all complaints received from customers or service users about:

- The standard or quality of service provided
- Actions or lack of action by Hoople or its employees
- Unacceptable behaviour by employees
- Failure to do something that should reasonably have been done
- The handling of personal data

This policy does not apply to:

- Employee grievances or whistleblowing (covered by HR009 Grievance Policy or HR020 Whistleblowing policy)
- Matters that are subject to legal proceedings or insurance processes

This policy does apply to all Hoople employees, sub-contractors, agency workers and partner organisations working on behalf of Hoople, however complaints regarding Hoople Care should follow QQ03 Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Policy and Procedure. Complaints regarding Hoople Care will still be logged and reviewed in line with this policy.

3. What is a Complaint?

For the purpose of this policy, a complaint is defined as:

“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by Hoople or its employees.”

Complaints should be made within three months of the incident, so that the investigation can be carried out thoroughly.

4. How to make a Complaint

Complaints can be made using the method most convenient to the customer:

- Email: contactus@hoopleltd.co.uk
- Telephone: 01432 383678
- In writing: Complaints Team, Hoople Group, Auxilium House, Legion Way, Hereford HR1 1LN

Customers are encouraged to provide as much detail as possible and, where appropriate, outline how they would like the complaint to be resolved. Comments or messages via social media platforms will not be treated as formal complaints. In this case, the individual will be given the above contact details, should they wish to make a formal complaint.

4.1 Anonymous Complaints

We recognise that individuals may wish to raise concerns anonymously. Anonymous complaints will be dealt with in line with this policy as closely as possible, however, investigations and responses may be constrained where further information cannot be sought and contact details are not provided.

4.2 Safeguarding

Complaints that raise safeguarding concerns will be referred without delay to HP010 Safeguarding Policy. Such matters may be handled outside of the standard complaints process and, where appropriate, reported to relevant external agencies in line with statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

5. How we handle Complaints

Step 1 – Acknowledgement

- Complaints will be acknowledged within **3 working days** of receipt.
- A senior manager responsible for the service area will be assigned to investigate.

Step 2 – Investigation

- The complaint will be reviewed fairly and thoroughly and dealt with in a courteous and efficient manner.
- Relevant evidence will be gathered and, where necessary, the complainant may be contacted for further information.

Step 3 – Response

- A full written response will be provided by the Head of Service or Senior Management Team member within **10 working days** of complaint being received.
- A formal apology will be issued if a complaint is upheld.
- If the complaint is complex and additional time is needed, the complainant will be kept informed and provided with an update **every 5 working days**.

6. Escalation

If a customer is dissatisfied with the response received, they may request a review by the Executive Management Team (EMT).

- The EMT will review the complaint and issue a final written response within 10 working days of the escalation.
- This response concludes the complaints process.

The complaints handling procedure and flow of communication is further documented in HP021a Hoople Complaint Procedure.

7. Our Commitment

We will:

- Treat all complainants with respect, fairness and courtesy
- Handle complaints confidentially and in line with data protection legislation
- Investigate complaints impartially and without avoidable delay
- Use feedback and lessons learned to improve our services

We will provide reasonable support to customers who need help to make a complaint, including accessible formats and reasonable adjustments where required.

8. Behaviour and Support

Our employees have the right to be treated with respect. Unreasonable or aggressive behaviour may result in communication restrictions being put in place or other appropriate action being taken. Putting your case forward in a persuasive manner is acceptable, however, being rude or aggressive is not. Unreasonable behaviour could include, but is not limited to:

- Harassment or persistent contact
- Abusive conduct in any way, such as shouting or swearing, threatening, discriminatory or hateful remarks
- Excessive or unreasonable demands that fall outside of Hoople's complaint handling procedure
- Refusing fair and reasonable solutions, or continuing to raise complaints about the same set of facts
- Recording calls without consent
- Being rude or aggressive
- Adopting a 'capture-all' approach by contacting many employees

9. Data Handling and Retention

All information provided in order for us to investigate and respond to a complaint will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation. Records relating to complaints will be retained for up to two years and then securely deleted/destroyed.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years to ensure that it remains effective and reflects current practice.