

HACKLES & CO

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

HOW TO RAISE A COMPLAINT, AND HOW WE RECEIVE,
REVIEW, RESOLVE AND RECORD IT

COMPANY PROCEDURE
FOR WEBSITE, CLIENT, CANDIDATE AND PUBLIC USE

DOCUMENT DETAILS

DOCUMENT	Complaints Procedure
COMPANY	Hackles & Co Business Solutions Ltd
VERSION	1.0
EFFECTIVE DATE	24 July 2026
READ ALONGSIDE	Privacy Policy · Candidate Privacy Notice · Equality and Diversity Policy · Terms of Business

CONTENTS

This procedure explains how Hackles & Co Business Solutions Ltd, trading as Hackles & Co, receives, reviews, investigates, resolves and records complaints. It is written for candidates, workers, clients, suppliers, partners and members of the public, and it applies to our recruitment and business-support activity. It is fair, practical and open, and raising a genuine complaint will never count against you. It sits alongside our Privacy Policy, Candidate Privacy Notice, Equality and Diversity Policy and Terms of Business.

01	Purpose	14	Complaint Outcome and Remedies
02	Scope and Who Can Complain	15	Asking Us to Review the Outcome
03	Our Commitment	16	Complaints Involving Recruitment Activity
04	What Counts as a Complaint	17	Complaints Involving Clients, Workers and Candidates
05	Matters Handled Under a Different Process	18	Complaints Involving Specialist Providers or Partners
06	How to Make a Complaint	19	Data-Protection Complaints
07	Information to Include	20	Equality and Discrimination Complaints
08	Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments	21	External Escalation Routes
09	Informal Resolution	22	Malicious, Abusive or Repeated Complaints
10	The Formal Complaint Process	23	Confidentiality
11	Acknowledgement and Initial Review	24	Records and Retention
12	Investigation	25	Monitoring and Review
13	Keeping You Informed	26	Document Control

AT A GLANCE

How to complain. Email contact@hackles.co.uk and mark your message for the attention of the directors.

What we aim to do. Acknowledge your complaint within five working days and look into it without unreasonable delay, keeping you updated where a matter takes longer.

No retaliation. Raising a genuine complaint will not affect your registration, a placement, your work prospects or your relationship with Hackles & Co.

SECTION 01

PURPOSE

Hackles & Co is committed to a good standard of service. When something goes wrong, or falls short of what you expected, we want to hear about it, put it right where we can, and learn from it.

The purpose of this procedure is to explain, clearly and openly, how to raise a complaint and what happens next. It sets out how we receive, review, investigate, resolve and record complaints, the timeframes we aim to work to, and the routes available to you if you remain unhappy.

This procedure is a statement of how we work. It does not form part of any contract, and it does not give legal advice. We may update it from time to time to keep it current and effective.

SECTION 02

SCOPE AND WHO CAN COMPLAIN

This procedure applies to complaints about the service and conduct of Hackles & Co in its recruitment and business-support activity. Anyone affected by that activity can use it.

You can raise a complaint if you are, for example:

- a candidate or applicant;
- a worker;
- a temporary or contract worker we place or engage;
- a client or prospective client;
- a supplier;
- a specialist service provider;
- a business partner;
- a member of the public;
- anyone else affected by our recruitment or business-support activity.

You can complain on your own behalf, or you can ask a representative to complain for you. Where someone complains for another person, we may need that person's consent before we share information about them.

SECTION 03

OUR COMMITMENT

We treat every complaint seriously, fairly and without defensiveness. We aim to make complaining straightforward, and to resolve matters as early and as simply as we can.

When you complain, we will:

- listen, take your complaint seriously and treat you with respect;
- look into it fairly, and consider it on its facts;
- keep you informed, and explain our decisions in plain language;
- handle your information carefully and confidentially, so far as we reasonably can;
- put things right where we have got them wrong, and use what we learn to improve.

Raising a genuine complaint will never count against you. It will not affect your registration with us, a current or future placement, your work prospects or your business relationship with Hackles & Co.

SECTION 04

WHAT COUNTS AS A COMPLAINT

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions or conduct of Hackles & Co, where you would like us to look into the matter and respond.

A complaint might concern, for example:

- the quality or standard of our service;
- a delay or a lack of communication;
- the way a decision was made or explained;
- the conduct of someone acting for us;
- how your personal information was handled;
- fairness or equal treatment;
- the way an introduction or placement was handled;
- any other aspect of our recruitment or business-support activity.

You do not need to use the word "complaint" or to quote any policy. If you tell us that you are unhappy and would like us to look into something, we will treat it under this procedure.

SECTION 05

MATTERS HANDLED UNDER A DIFFERENT PROCESS

Some matters are better dealt with under a different process, or by a different organisation. Where that is the case, we will not dismiss your concern. We will explain the most appropriate route and, where we can, help you take it.

General enquiries and requests for information. These are handled as normal correspondence rather than as complaints, although you are always free to complain if a response falls short.

Data-protection concerns. Concerns about how we handle personal information are covered by Section 19, our Privacy Policy and our Candidate Privacy Notice.

Equality, discrimination or harassment concerns. These are handled under our Equality and Diversity Policy and are covered by Section 20.

Employee grievances. Concerns raised by a member of our own team are dealt with under our internal arrangements, not under this public procedure.

Safeguarding concerns. Where someone may be at risk of harm, we treat the matter urgently and, where appropriate, involve the relevant authority. Where there is immediate danger, contact the police.

Whistleblowing. A concern about wrongdoing raised in the public interest is treated seriously and separately from a service complaint.

A complaint about an independent specialist provider. The provider is responsible for its own service; see Section 18. We will still review our own role and help you find the right route.

SECTION 06

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

You can raise a complaint with us by email. To make sure it reaches the right people, please mark it for the attention of the directors.

HOW TO REACH US

Email: contact@hackles.co.uk

Please mark your message: **For the attention of the directors.** This is our confirmed route for complaints. We do not operate a separate complaints line, portal or postal complaints address.

If you have already been dealing with someone at Hackles & Co, you are welcome to raise your concern with them first. If you would rather not, or if your concern is about that person, you can email the address above and ask for it to be handled by the directors.

SECTION 07

INFORMATION TO INCLUDE

You do not need to set your complaint out in any particular way. To help us look into it quickly, it is useful, where you can, to include the following.

Where possible, please tell us:

- your name and how to contact you;
- what happened, and when;
- who was involved, if you know;
- any reference, role or placement the matter relates to;
- what you would like us to do to put things right.

If you do not have all of this, please still get in touch. We will ask for anything else we need as we look into your complaint.

SECTION 08

ACCESSIBILITY AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

We want this procedure to be open to everyone. If you need a reasonable adjustment to make a complaint, or to take part in the process, please tell us and we will do what we reasonably can to help.

For example, we may be able to:

- communicate in a different format;
- allow more time at any stage;
- accept a complaint through a representative;
- agree a different, workable way to stay in touch.

A request for an adjustment will be handled sensitively, and any related information will be treated as confidential and used only for that purpose.

SECTION 09

INFORMAL RESOLUTION

Many concerns can be sorted out quickly and informally, and that is often the best outcome for everyone. Where it is appropriate, we may first try to resolve your concern directly, for example by explaining what happened, correcting a mistake or agreeing a practical next step.

Trying to resolve a matter informally does not remove your right to make a formal complaint. If an informal approach does not resolve things, or if you would prefer to make a formal complaint from the outset, you can do so at any time using the route in Section 06.

SECTION 10

THE FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS

When you make a formal complaint, we follow a clear and consistent process. The table below sets out what we aim to do at each stage. These are aims rather than fixed guarantees, because some complaints are more complex than others, and a fair review sometimes takes longer.

STAGE	WHAT WE AIM TO DO
Acknowledgement	Acknowledge your complaint within five working days of receiving it, and confirm how we will handle it.
Initial review	Review the complaint promptly to understand the issues, decide how it is best handled, and identify who will look into it.
Investigation and outcome	Look into the complaint without unreasonable delay and provide a written outcome where appropriate, aiming to do so within twenty working days.
Where more time is needed	Where a matter is complex, or depends on others, we will tell you, explain why, and give you a realistic idea of timing, keeping you updated as we go.

We will not rush a complaint at the expense of getting it right, and we will not leave you wondering what is happening. If we need longer, we will say so.

SECTION 11

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND INITIAL REVIEW

When we receive your complaint, we will acknowledge it and carry out an initial review. The review helps us understand what your complaint is about, decide the best way to handle it, and make sure it is dealt with by the right people.

At this stage we will:

- confirm we have received your complaint;
- check whether it is best handled under this procedure or another route;
- identify who will look into it, avoiding, where we reasonably can, anyone the complaint is about;
- let you know if we need any further information to proceed.

SECTION 12

INVESTIGATION

We look into complaints fairly and proportionately. The amount of investigation depends on the nature of the complaint, but our aim is always to understand what happened and to reach a reasonable and evidence-based conclusion.

An investigation may involve:

- reviewing relevant records and correspondence;
- speaking with the people involved;
- considering any evidence you provide;
- seeking information from a third party where appropriate;
- taking professional advice where a situation calls for it.

We will only share what is necessary, with those who need to be involved, and we will handle personal information in line with our Privacy Policy and UK data protection law.

SECTION 13

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

We will keep you informed as your complaint progresses. If a matter is taking longer than we hoped, we will tell you why and give you a realistic idea of when you can expect to hear from us.

We may contact you to clarify your complaint, to ask for more information, or to check that we have understood what you would like us to do. Clear communication helps us resolve complaints fairly and avoids misunderstandings on either side.

SECTION 14

COMPLAINT OUTCOME AND REMEDIES

When we have finished looking into your complaint, we will give you an outcome. Where appropriate, we will confirm it in writing, explain what we found, and set out anything we intend to do as a result.

Depending on what we find, an outcome may include:

- an explanation of what happened and why;
- an acknowledgement where we have got something wrong, and an apology;
- correcting a mistake, or completing something that was missed;
- a change to how we do something, so the same issue is less likely to happen again;
- where relevant, raising the matter with a client, worker, supplier or provider involved.

We will be honest about what we can and cannot do. Where a matter is outside our control or responsibility, we will say so, explain why, and point you towards a more appropriate route.

SECTION 15

ASKING US TO REVIEW THE OUTCOME

If you are not satisfied with our response, you can ask us to review it. Please reply to us, within a reasonable time, explaining what you feel we have not addressed or got wrong, and what you would like us to reconsider.

Where we can, a review will be carried out by a director who was not responsible for the original response. We will look again at the complaint, consider anything new you have raised, and confirm the outcome of the review. If you remain unhappy after that, the external routes in Section 21 may be available to you.

SECTION 16

COMPLAINTS INVOLVING RECRUITMENT ACTIVITY

Because Hackles & Co carries out recruitment activity, a complaint may relate to any stage of that work. We will look into complaints of this kind fairly, and in line with our obligations under the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003 and the Equality Act 2010.

A recruitment complaint might involve, for example:

- advertising;
- candidate registration;
- communication;
- shortlisting;
- candidate consent;
- client introductions;
- interviews;
- placement decisions;
- treatment at work;
- pay or work-related concerns, where relevant;
- discriminatory instructions;
- agency conduct;
- personal information;
- recruitment records.

Not every complaint that arises during recruitment falls within Hackles & Co's legal responsibility. Where a complaint concerns a hirer, a workplace, a payroll provider or another organisation, we will review our own role, assist where we appropriately can, and help you identify the relevant route, including any of the external routes in Section 21.

SECTION 17

COMPLAINTS INVOLVING CLIENTS, WORKERS AND CANDIDATES

A complaint may come from, or concern, a client, a worker or a candidate. We handle each on its facts, fairly to everyone involved.

Candidates and workers. We consider complaints about how we have communicated, assessed, put forward or supported you, and about how your information has been handled. Where a concern is about a hirer or a workplace rather than about us, we will review our role and help you find the right route.

Clients. We consider complaints about the service we have provided, the way we have handled an introduction or placement, or the conduct of someone acting for us. Where a concern relates to a worker, a candidate or an independent provider, we will look at our own part and coordinate sensibly.

Where a complaint involves more than one party, we will be even-handed, share only what is necessary, and focus first on understanding what happened and putting right anything that is ours to put right.

SECTION 18

COMPLAINTS INVOLVING SPECIALIST PROVIDERS OR PARTNERS

For some needs, Hackles & Co helps arrange support through independent specialist providers and partners. Where a provider delivers its own service, it remains responsible for that service, including its own advice, pricing, delivery and complaints.

Where your complaint concerns an independent provider, we will:

- review our own role in the introduction or coordination;
- put right anything that is genuinely ours to put right;
- help you raise the matter with the provider, and share what is appropriate to do so;
- explain that the provider is responsible for resolving complaints about its own service.

We will not take responsibility for a provider's own service, and we will not pretend a matter is ours when it is not. What we will do is stay helpful, keep the route clear and make sure you are not left going in circles.

SECTION 19

DATA-PROTECTION COMPLAINTS

If your complaint is about how we have collected, used, shared or looked after personal information, we will handle it in line with our Privacy Policy, our Candidate Privacy Notice, the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Please raise it with us first, using the route in Section 06, so that we have the chance to put things right. If you are not satisfied with how we handle it, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office, the UK regulator for data protection, at ico.org.uk. Hackles & Co is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office under registration ZC195115.

SECTION 20

EQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS

We take complaints about fairness, equal treatment, discrimination, harassment and victimisation seriously. We handle them under this procedure and in line with our Equality and Diversity Policy, the Equality Act 2010 and the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023.

Alongside our own process, free and independent advice is available. The Equality Advisory and Support Service can advise on discrimination and human rights issues, and the Equality and Human Rights Commission is the regulator in this area. Depending on the circumstances, a person may also have the right to bring a claim to an employment tribunal, where strict time limits apply. These routes are set out in Section 21.

SECTION 21

EXTERNAL ESCALATION ROUTES

If you remain unhappy after we have responded, or if you would prefer independent advice, the following routes are separate from Hackles & Co. Depending on the issue, one of them may be able to assist. We can help you identify a likely route, but we do not give legal advice, and we cannot guarantee that an external body will take on a particular complaint.

ROUTE	WHEN IT MAY BE AN APPROPRIATE ROUTE
Acas	Free, impartial advice on workplace problems and employment rights. An Acas helpline is available.
Fair Work Agency	Concerns about the conduct of employment agencies and employment businesses, and certain agency worker rights. The Fair Work Agency now carries out this role.
Information Commissioner's Office	Concerns about how personal information has been handled, if we have not been able to resolve them with you first.
Equality Advisory and Support Service	Advice on discrimination and human rights issues. The Equality and Human Rights Commission is the regulator.
Employment tribunal	Where a person wishes to bring a legal claim, for example about discrimination. Strict time limits apply.
Police or emergency services	Where conduct may be criminal, or where there is a risk to someone's safety. In an emergency, call 999.

SECTION 22

MALICIOUS, ABUSIVE OR REPEATED COMPLAINTS

We deal with everyone respectfully, and we ask for the same in return. Almost every complaint is made in good faith, and this section is not aimed at people who are simply upset or persistent.

Very occasionally, a complaint is abusive, is pursued in an unreasonable way, or is made in bad faith or on the basis of information the person knows to be false. In those cases we may limit or change how we deal with the contact, for example by asking that it come through a single channel, while still considering anything of genuine substance. Where behaviour is threatening or unlawful, we may involve the appropriate authorities. Making a genuine complaint, even a strongly worded one, is always welcome and is never treated in this way.

SECTION 23

CONFIDENTIALITY

We treat complaints as confidentially as we reasonably can. Information about a complaint is shared only with those who need to be involved in looking into it and resolving it.

Sometimes we cannot keep everything to ourselves. To investigate fairly, we may need to share relevant details with the people or organisations involved, including a client, a worker or an independent provider. In limited situations, we may also need to share information where the law requires it, or to protect someone from harm. Where we can, we will let you know if we need to share your complaint more widely, and we will share only what is necessary.

SECTION 24

RECORDS AND RETENTION

We keep a record of complaints and how they were handled. This helps us respond properly, meet our obligations, and spot patterns so we can improve.

Complaint records are kept securely and treated as confidential. We keep personal information for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which we hold it, in line with our Privacy Policy, our Candidate Privacy Notice and UK data protection law. Access is limited to those who need it.

SECTION 25

MONITORING AND REVIEW

We keep this procedure, and the way we apply it, under review, so that it stays clear, fair and effective.

To do this, we will:

- review this procedure at least once a year, and sooner where the law or our business changes;
- look at the complaints we receive to check we are handling them fairly and consistently;
- act on any pattern or theme that suggests we could do something better;
- update our wording and practice as guidance from bodies such as Acas and the Information Commissioner's Office develops.

This procedure records how Hackles & Co handles complaints. It is not legal advice. Where a specific situation calls for it, we will seek appropriate professional advice.

SECTION 26

DOCUMENT CONTROL

This procedure is published and maintained by Hackles & Co. Questions about it, and complaints under it, can be sent to the contact address below, marked for the attention of the directors.

REGISTERED COMPANY NAME	Hackles & Co Business Solutions Ltd		
TRADING AS	Hackles & Co		
COMPANY NUMBER	17331210		
ICO REGISTRATION	ZC195115		
CONTACT EMAIL	contact@hackles.co.uk		
READ ALONGSIDE	Privacy Policy, Candidate Privacy Notice, Equality and Diversity Policy and Terms of Business		
VERSION	DATE	SUMMARY	OWNER
1.0	24 July 2026	First issue	Hackles & Co directors

This procedure has been written to reflect the following UK legislation and guidance:

- the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003;
- the Equality Act 2010 and the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023;
- the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018;
- guidance from Acas, the Information Commissioner's Office and the Fair Work Agency.

STATUS OF THIS PROCEDURE

This procedure is a statement of how Hackles & Co receives and handles complaints. It reflects the UK legislation and guidance listed above, and is read alongside our Privacy Policy, Candidate Privacy Notice, Equality and Diversity Policy and Terms of Business. It is not legal advice, and it does not replace your legal rights or the role of any external body.