

HR MANAGEMENT ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Service Level Agreement

2024-25



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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the SLA

The SLA is a part of the overall contractual and operational documentation and is intended to set out each party's service delivery obligations. The SLA has been designed to set out the outputs desired from all parties to the agreement setting out who is the lead party (the party responsible for making sure that the output is achieved) and what each of the respective parties is expected to input in order to achieve the required output.

1.2. Quality Indicators and Performance Reporting

Quality control

Hoople is committed to providing superior quality products and services. Quality objectives have been established to drive continuous improvement, greater efficiency and improved customer satisfaction. The quality programme employs effective quality control techniques, quality assurance reviews/audits aimed at continually improving value over the long term while addressing the needs of all stakeholders. Exceeding customer expectations is an aspiration for all service teams.

Quality improvement programme

A quality Improvement Programme has been implemented to promote innovation and excellence which includes:

- Collaborating with the customer and other representatives to identify and review processes and interfaces to locate the probable cause of failure demand;
- Reengineering processes, as appropriate, to reduce the occurrence of rework and other waste;
- Containing rework within reasonable and manageable parameters;
- Collaborating with the customer to design processes that are less prone to errors;
- Sharing best practice and innovation.

1.3. Points of Contact

The main points of contact for Human Resources is:

HR Services Manager – Julie Davies

Julie.Davies@hoopleltd.co.uk (tel 01432 260933)

1.4. Service Categories and Operating Principles

Hoople HR and Schools/Academies are working together to deliver a cost-effective, efficient and relevant HR and change management service which meets the customers' changing needs. Both parties recognise that effective forward planning and a full understanding of needs, expectations and outcomes is critical to the successful delivery of service.

1.5. Hoople Overall Responsibilities

- Discharging the services and standards listed in the SLAs.
- Continuously maintaining and improving levels of skills and expertise to deliver and improve the services in accordance with good industry practice.
- Dealing with additional / special customer requests as agreed.
- Notify customer of any problems in connection with the provision of service.
- Respond promptly to information requests from the connection in line with agreed levels within the SLA.
- Improve data quality.
- Delivering all service, programme and project requirements as agreed with the customer.
- Compliance with all legislation, statutory regulations and customer's financial procedures.

1.6. School Overall Responsibilities

- Treat the contents of this agreement as confidential.
- Act promptly in submitting requests and action paperwork/transactions in a timely and accurate fashion.
- Provide information reasonably requested by Hoople to agreed timescales.
- Ensure that all customer's staff are fully informed and adhere to all policies affecting the services provided by Hoople.
- Ensure that charges for services are paid within 30 days.
- Setting service, programme and project assurance requirements.
- Inform Hoople of any risks which may impact service delivery.
- Improve data quality.
- Register held or processed by Hoople under the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (i.e. as a bureau service) under the customer's registration.

1.7. Joint Overall Responsibilities

- Provide accurate and timely information to enable the agreed timescales for service delivery to be met.
- Ensure that all employees are aware of any changes to legislation, policies and procedures affecting the delivery of services with this agreement.
- Ensure co-operation and prompt action to correct all errors and anomalies.
- Ensure that service/ organisation objectives are clearly communicated in a manner that is understandable by all parties.
- Respect the confidentiality of information at all times.
- Do not disclose any information specific to this Agreement to any third party without the written authority of the other party, treat as confidential, including rates and contractual information.

2. HR Management Advice and Support Service Level Agreement

2.1. Schools buying into one of the HR Management Advice and Support services will also have free access to the following:

- Support to ensure maintained schools discharge their statutory (legal) duties to the council as the lawful employer
- Regular newsletter updates with employment law, case law, DfE and other relevant advice.

2.2. HR-Management Advice and Support Service Level Agreement: Core Level

2.2.1. Professional, comprehensive case management services: managing cases through to successful and efficient conclusion

Deliverable 1: Manage all HR related cases through to a swift and successful conclusion (Lead: Hoople)

Customer responsibilities	Hoople responsibilities
Customer ultimately responsible, and in particular for decision making.	Provide unlimited HR telephone and e-mail advice on all types of cases such as disciplinary (including safeguarding), grievance, attendance (including ill health), performance (capability), dignity at work, redundancy, managing change, flexible working and ad hoc case management activities.
Obtain HR advice on all types of cases such as disciplinary, grievance, attendance, performance (capability), dignity at work, redundancy, managing change, flexible working and ad hoc case management activities.	
Take ownership for case management decisions and use advice received to inform decisions	Provide template letters that are appropriate to the case scenario and provide advice on any suggested amendments to wording.
Take ownership for formal investigations including adherence to stated policy timeframes.	Provide professional advice on all employment cases as requested.
Follow internal policies, including the use of template letters provided by Hoople, to meet the needs of the employment case and to seek clarification prior to taking action.	
Ensure that actions and stages of the process are completed within the required timescales.	
Pay due attention to professional advice received.	
Raise potential problems with HR and/or Schools' Finance as early as possible in relation to workforce changes.	

Deliverable 2: Complex case management including employment tribunal management (Lead: Hoople)

Customer responsibilities	Hoople responsibilities
Ensure that Hoople has all information necessary to ensure that advice is appropriate, robust and relevant.	Provide unlimited telephone and e-mail professional HR advice on preparing for an employment tribunal.
	Support the customer in negotiating settlement agreements.
	Supply accurate and timely records of case management to support tribunal and legal activity.

Deliverable 3: Professionally managed and implemented change management programmes (Lead Hoople)

Customer responsibilities	Hoople responsibilities
Take decisions giving due consideration to the HR advice related.	Provide professional unlimited telephone and e-mail HR advice and support in line with customer policies and procedures and current legislation on all aspects of change management and restructuring.
Undertake the administration of communications regarding the change programme/projects, including the issue of all letters/ e-mail communications.	Supply expertise and support at consultation and union meetings in line with the specifications of the service level agreement.
	Support the customer in any redundancy or other process (excluding conversion to academy status) required as part of the change programme, in line with the specifications of the Core service level agreement.

2.2.2. Provide an Effective Job Evaluation System

Deliverable 1: Prompt and robust job evaluation (JE) and grading (Lead: Hoople)

JE scheme provide necessary safeguards and a robust defence against equal pay claims under the Equality Act 2010.

Hoople responsibilities
Complete all relevant evaluation forms including 'Request for JE' and provide other support information in compliance with agreed process.
Submit all relevant paperwork in a timely manner.
Provide professional advice on pay and grading and will provide a full job evaluation service.
Undertake job evaluations for support staff and inform school of outcome in a timely manner.
Advise on all aspects of the school teachers pay and conditions document and burgundy book.

2.2.3. Effective Provision of HR Support of Statutory Functions to Schools on Behalf of the Local Authority (Lead Hoople)

Deliverable 1: Provision of statutory functions to schools on behalf of the local authority

Hoople responsibilities
Provision of written communication of advice and interpretation on changes in employment law and changed on national conditions of service.
Provision of advice to any selection panel regarding the appointment of Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher.
Provision of advice and attendance at any dismissal hearing for any Teacher.
Referral of any dismissal of a Teacher to either the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA) and/or DBS (non-chargeable included for information only)

2.3. HR Management Advice and Support Service Level Agreement: Enhanced Level

2.3.1 Professional Case Management Service – managing cases through to a successful conclusion

Deliverable 1: Manage all HR related cases through to a swift and successful conclusion (Lead: Hoople)

Customer responsibilities	Hoople responsibilities
School to specify the requirement for case management support and the type of face to face contact support required i.e. strategy meetings, Governor/Headteacher meetings, investigation support.	Provide unlimited HR telephone and e-mail advice on all types of cases such as disciplinary (including safeguarding), grievance, attendance (including ill health), performance (capability), dignity at work, redundancy, managing change, flexible working and ad hoc case management activities.
Customer ultimately responsible, and in particular for decision making.	
Obtain HR advice on all types of cases such as disciplinary, grievance, attendance, performance (capability), dignity at work, redundancy, managing change, flexible working and ad hoc case management activities.	Provide a dedicated HR Advisor to give advice and support on all types of cases (as listed above) to a maximum level of ten hours per case. Separate fee arrangements can be agreed for cases which require support above the ten hour maximum.
Take ownership for case management decisions and use advice received to inform decisions.	Provide professional advice on all employment cases as requested.
Take ownership for formal investigations including adherence to stated policy timeframes.	Provide template letters that are appropriate to the case scenario and provide advice on any suggested amendments to wording.
Follow internal policies, including the use of template letters provided by Hoople, to meet the needs of the employment case and to seek clarification prior to taking action.	Provide template letters that are appropriate to the case scenario and provide advice on any suggested amendments to wording.
Ensure that actions and stages of the process are completed within required timescales.	HR Advisor to support investigation stages – as part of the ten hours per case.
Pay due attention to professional advice received.	HR Advisor to provide expert advice on case management actions.
Raise potential problems with HR and/or Schools' Finance as early as possible in relation to workforce changes.	HR Advisor present to provide expert advice at all relevant hearings – as part of the ten hours per case. Dismissal meetings for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools are excluded from the ten hours per case.

Deliverable 2: Complex case management including employment tribunal management (Lead: Hoople)

Customer responsibilities	Hoople responsibilities
Ensure that Hoople has all information necessary to ensure that advice is appropriate, robust and relevant.	Provide professional HR advice on preparing for an employment tribunal.
	Support the customer in negotiating settlement agreements.
	Supply accurate and timely records of case management to support tribunal and legal activity.

Deliverable 3: Professionally managed and implemented change management programmes (Lead: Hoople)

Customer responsibilities	Hoople responsibilities
Take decisions giving due consideration to the HR advice received.	Provide professional HR advice and support in line with customer policies and procedures and current legislation on all aspects of change management and restricting.
Undertake the administration of communications regarding the change programme/ projects, including the issue of all letters/ e-mail communications.	
	Supply expertise and support at consultation and union meetings in line with the specifications of the service level agreement.
	Support the customer in any redundancy, TUPE or other process required as part of the change programme, in line with the specifications of the Enhanced Service Level Agreement.
	As required, provide the opportunity for the school to meet termly to discuss medium/ long-term plans.

3. Local Authority Statutory Duties

3.1. Human Resources Management Advice and Support

As the legal employer for all staff in community, community special and voluntary controlled schools, the LA retains the responsibility to ensure that schools, and other providers for HR advice and support, operate to statutory minimum standards and adhere to relevant LA employment policies and school policies and national and local conditions of service.

If a school chooses not to purchase the HR Services – Management and Advice SLA, the following statutory functions will be provided by the LA HR team:

- Providing written communication of advice and interpretation on changes in employment law and changes on national conditions of service.
- Consultation and negotiation with professional associations at Council level with regard to policies and terms and conditions of employment that may affect LA employed staff in community, community special and voluntary controlled schools.

3.2. Appointment of a Headteacher

For community, community special and voluntary controlled schools, the LA has a statutory responsibility to send a representative to relevant meetings in connection with the selection of Headteacher in order to provide advice to the panel. In order to undertake this function, schools must advise the LA in writing a) of any Head teacher vacancy; b) of the names of the shortlisted candidates for the post of Head teacher.

3.3. Dismissal

As the legal employer for staff employed in community, community special and voluntary controlled schools, the LA has a statutory responsibility to give advice to a Governor panel that is considering dismissing an employee. In order to allow the LA to perform this statutory function the school and the school's HR provider will be expected to inform the LA HR team on the arrangements on any dismissal hearing, and provide a full set of documents relating to the case.

In addition to the above, any community, community special and voluntary controlled school will need to provide relevant information in order for the LA to perform its statutory functions in relation to the following:

- Details on any potential dismissal case, including all documentation
- Details on any disciplinary cases where there is a need to refer to TRA

4. Terms and conditions of service

THIS AGREEMENT is between the education institution (the 'Establishment') and Hoople Ltd (Reg. No. 7556595) of Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE (the 'Service Provider').

WHEREAS:

The Establishment desires to obtain the services of the Service Provider for the purpose of providing certain services of the Service Provider for the purpose of providing certain services upon the terms and conditions set out in this agreement.

IT IS AGREED as follows:

1. Interpretation

1.1. In this Agreement unless otherwise specified:

- 1.1.1. Where context permits, words implementing the singular shall include the plural and vice versa; and words importing the masculine shall include the feminine and neuter and vice versa.
- 1.1.2. References to Clauses and Orders Placed with the dedicated Hoople School Buying Portal are to clauses of, and schedules to, this Agreement.

2. Term and Termination

2.1. This Agreement shall commence seven days after the order is placed (the 'Effective Date') and shall terminate automatically without notice at the end of the SLA period.

- 2.1.1. The Service Provider commits to implementing a 'cooling off' period of seven days between the date the order is placed, and the Effective Date during which time the Establishment may delete or amend the order.

2.2. Either party shall be entitled to terminate this Agreement with immediate effect by notice in writing to the other if;

- 2.2.1. The other party commits any material breach of the terms of this Agreement;
- 2.2.2. An order is made or a petition is presented or an effective resolution is passed or order is made for the bankruptcy or winding up of the other party; or
- 2.2.3. A receiver or administrator is appointed over all or any of the assets of the other party or an administration order is made with regard to the other party.

2.3. Termination of this Agreement shall be without prejudice to any rights and obligations existing at the date of termination, or any claim by one party against the other for any breach of this Agreement committed prior to termination, which shall become unaffected.

3. Obligations of the Service Provider

3.1. The Service Provider undertakes to provide the services as set out outline within the dedicated Hoople Schools portal to this Agreement (the 'Services'), in consideration of the payment as set out in the dedicated Hoople Schools portal. The Services Provider has undertaken Payment calculation based on the following terms:

- 3.1.1. Payment for services relating to employee numbers has been calculated based on the number of employees at each Establishment as at January 2024, included in the calculation is a 5% tolerance, if employee numbers rise above this 5% tolerance Hoople reserves the right to charge incremental fees
- 3.1.2. Payment for the Payments management service has been based on the number of payment vouchers raised in 2022/23, within a 10% tolerance level. The Service Provider reserves the right to increase pricing if volumes increase by more than states tolerance level.
- 3.1.3. Should the Establishment request an additional service during the duration of the term, the Service Provider reserves the right to charge the full, annual cost of the requested service.
- 3.1.4. Payment for services relating to pupil numbers has been calculated based on the number of pupils at each Establishment as at October 2023. Included in the calculation are sixth form and nursery pupil numbers, where applicable.
- 3.1.5. The Service Provider will provide digital order confirmation of the services ordered and associated feed by means of the functionality of the Hoople Schools portal.
- 3.2. Should the Establishment request and the Service Provider agrees to provide services additional to those specified within the Schools Buying Portal order, the fees for those additional services shall be mutually agreed between the parties, but otherwise for all purposes of this Agreement, the additional services shall be deemed to be included within the definition of the Services.
- 3.3. The Services shall be carried out by the Service Provider with all reasonable skill and care, and in full compliance of relevant established current professional standards the Service Provider undertakes to provide a detailed service level agreement (SLA) outlining the responsibilities of both parties with regard to each service. The SLA for each service will be provided as a downloadable document on the Hoople Schools portal.
- 3.4. The Service Provider shall indemnify the Establishment from all claims, actions, or demands made by third parties against the Establishment, and all liabilities of the Establishment to third parties (collectively 'Third Party Liabilities') and from all damage, losses, costs, expenses and payments whatsoever suffered or incurred by the Establishment either directly or in relation to Third Party Liabilities in respect of (a) personal injury to or the death of any person and any loss or destruction of or damage to property (not attributable to any default or neglect of the Establishment or of any person for whom the Establishment is responsible, which shall have occurred in connection with the provision of the Services under this Agreement, including without limitation, clause 3.3 provided that the liability of the Service Provider to the Establishment under this Agreement, including without limitation, this clause 3.4, shall be limited to a maximum amount of £1,000,000 in respect of any one incident or series of incidents and a maximum amount of £1,000,000 in respect of all and any incidents (whether or not related) arising during the term of this Agreement and in the annual aggregate.

- 3.5. The Service Provider shall take out and maintain during the term of this Agreement an insurance policy, with a reputable insurance company upon terms which are sufficient to cover his liabilities under this Agreement, including without limitation, his liabilities under clause 3.4, the Service Provider shall upon reasonable request to produce to the Establishment a copy of the said insurance policy, and a receipt for the payment for the current premium. For the avoidance of doubt the Service Provider shall be liable under all of the provisions of this Agreement, including without limitation, clause 3.4, whether or not he complies the provisions of this clause 3.5.
- 3.6. The Service Provider shall promptly provide to the Establishment written reports on the discharge of his obligations under this Agreement as and when these may be reasonably requested.
- 3.7. All communications and all information supplied to or obtained by the Service Provider in the course of or as a result of the discharge of his obligations under this Agreement and all information relating to any invention, improvement, report, recommendation, or advice given to the Establishment by the Service Provider in pursuance of his obligations shall be treated by the Service Provider as confidential and shall not be disclosed by him to any third party, or published without prior written consent of the Establishment, such as consent not to be unreasonably withheld.
- 3.8. The Service Provider undertakes that in the event of his being unable personally to perform the Services in accordance with his obligations under this Agreement, he will provide by way of a substitute to perform the Services in his place a fully qualified alternative service provider acceptable to the establishment (the 'Substitute'), provided that the provision of the Substitute shall be under a subcontract between the Service Provider and the Substitute and that the rights and obligations of the Service Provider under this Agreement in relation to the Establishment shall not be affected, nor shall the Establishment be under an obligation to pay any fees to the Substitute for the provision by him of the services.

4. Intellectual Property Rights

- 4.1. All intellectual property and industrial property rights throughout the world in patentable and non-patentable inventions, discoveries and improvements, processes and know-how, copyright works and the like discovered or created by the Service Provider in the course of or as a result of the discharge of his obligations under this Agreement shall vest in and be the absolute property of the Service Provider. Upon the request of the Establishment the Service Provider, at the Establishment's expense, execute all documents and do all acts and things required to vest or perfect the vesting of such property rights legally and exclusively in the Establishment or any nominee or assignee of the Establishment.

5. Expenses and Payment Terms

- 5.1. The Establishment will reimburse the Service Provider for all reasonable expenses incurred in the discharge of his obligations under this Agreement, provided that all such expenses will be subject to the prior written approval of the Establishment. Expenses are to be accounted for, and a reimbursement will be made by the Establishment in accordance with relevant standard Establishment procedure as from time to time established and notified to the Service Provider.
- 5.2. The Establishment shall pay the Service Provider's invoices within 21 days of the date of invoice. Failure to pay may result in additional penalties.

6. Confidentiality and Security

- 6.1. Each party acknowledges that all material and information which has or will come into the possession and knowledge of each in connection with this Agreement or the performance here of, consists of confidential and proprietary data, whose disclosure to or use by third parties will be damaging. Both parties, therefore, agree to hold such material and information in the strictest confidence, not to make use thereof other than for the performance of this Agreement. To release it to only employees requiring such information and not to release or disclose it to any other party.
- 6.2. Each party agrees that in the event that confidential information which is the responsibility of either party is accidentally released to either party to the other, each party undertakes to inform the other upon discovery, to keep the information strictly confidential, and to return or destroy the information immediately without copying or onward transmitting that information.

7. The General Data Protection Regulations

- 7.1. In the course of delivery of the services outlines within the dedicated Hoople Schools portal, it may be necessary for the Service Provider to process personal information relating to the Establishment. The Service Provider guarantees that it will implement appropriate technical and organisational measures in such a manner that processing will meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation ('GDPR') and ensure the protection of the rights of the data subject.
- 7.2. In order to provide the services under this agreement, it may be necessary to process personal data. The type of personal data which we may process includes employment and financial information. We will only process personal data for the purpose of providing the services requested and we will only process this information during the term of this Agreement. The data subjects whose personal information it may be necessary to process includes school staff responsible for complying with the obligations under this Agreement, staff members, governors, parents, pupils, and other persons who may come into contact with the school from time to time.
- 7.3. The personal data processed for the delivery of the services will be retained by the Service Provider only for the period specified in the Establishment's data retention policy.

- 7.4. In providing the services, the Service Provider will process personal data only on written instructions from the Establishment, including in regard to transfers to personal data to a third country or an international organisation unless the processing is required to comply with a legal obligation. If such a legal obligation arises, the Service Provider will notify the Establishment before processing unless prohibited from doing so by law.
- 7.5. The Service Provider will ensure that persons authorised to process the personal data have committed themselves to confidentiality.
- 7.6. The Service Provider will implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure a level of security appropriate to the risks associated with the personal data being processed.
- 7.7. The Service Provider will not engage another processor without the authorisation of the Establishment. Where such authorisation is given by the Establishment, the Service Provider will enter into a contract with the sub-processor imposing the same processing obligations as required between the Service Provider and the Establishment.
- 7.8. The Service Provider will assist the Establishment, to the extent required by the GDPR, in providing subject access in allowing data subjects their legal rights under the GDPR.
- 7.9. The Service Provider will assist the Establishment, to the extent required by the GDPR, in ensuring compliance with its obligations in relation to security of processing, the notification of personal data breaches and data protection impact assessments.
- 7.10. At the conclusion of the services provided under this agreement, the Service Provider will either delete or return all of the personal data to the Establishment relating to processing, and delete existing copies unless storage of the personal data is required by law.
- 7.11. The Service Provider will make available to the Establishment all information necessary to demonstrate compliance with the processing obligations laid down in Article 28 of the GDPR, and allow for and contribute to audits, including inspections, conducted by the Establishment or another auditor mandated by the Establishment.
- 7.12. The Service Provider shall immediately the Establishment if, in it's opinion an instruction infringes this GDPR or other data protection laws.
- 7.13. Service Provider point of contact for GDPR: Adrienne Davies (Business Change Manager).
Contact details: data.protection@hoopleltd.co.uk

8. Miscellaneous

- 8.1. For the avoidance of doubt both parties confirm that the Service Provider enters into this agreement as an independent contractor and he is not nor shall for any purpose be regarded as an employee of the Establishment.
- 8.2. Force Majeure – Neither party shall be liable to the other for any failure to perform it's obligations under the contract where such performance is rendered impossible by circumstances beyond it's control, but nothing in this condition shall limit the obligations of the contractor to use it's best endeavours to fulfil it's obligations under the contract.

- 8.3. Except as otherwise provided in this Agreement, all notices, instructions, or other communications shall be in writing and may be made by email, facsimile message, by letter or other form of communication as agreed between the parties from time to time, and delivered to the requisite party as it's address.
- 8.4. The obligations imposed upon the Service Provider under clauses 3.7 and 4 shall survive the expiry or termination of this Agreement.
- 8.5. The terms of this Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English law and be subject to the non-exclusive jurisdiction of the English Courts.