

Policies and Procedures

Complaints Policy for Clients and Third Parties

Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London

Responsible Officer:	Alice Giuliani (Head of Services)
Latest Update:	May 2024
Review Date:	May 2025
Approval:	

RAMFEL Complaints Procedure

Purpose and Scope and Commitment

RAMFEL aims to provide clients with the best possible service. However, users of our services and other stakeholders may feel that the quality, level or standard of service provided falls short of what can reasonably be expected of RAMFEL's staff. If clients/other stakeholders are unhappy with our services and have a complaint, we encourage them to share it with us.

We take all reports of concerns about RAMFEL's services very seriously and we thoroughly investigate each of them. We are committed to maintaining the confidentiality of personal and sensitive information, in line with our data protection responsibilities. Only those who are involved with responding to the complaint, concern or feedback will be made aware of it.

Complaints from staff or volunteers are addressed as grievances when appropriate and handled as set out in RAMFEL's Grievance Procedure.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is when a client/stakeholder is unhappy with the service provided or finds it unsatisfactory in any way.

Responsibilities

The overall responsibility for dealing with complaints lies with the Head of Services (Alice Giuliani). Any serious concern should be raised with the CEO who can notify the Board of Trustees where they feel necessary to do so. The Head of Services will also act as the legal aid complaints officer.

- All complaints are investigated by the relevant Line Manager who can seek the support of the Head of Services and / or People and Culture Manager, and where necessary liaising with the competent authorities.

- All information submitted by the complainant is taken into consideration.
- Each complaint is formally resolved, documenting the findings of the investigation, the decision and its reasoning.
- The resolution of the complaint and, where the complaint is deemed valid, the remedial actions that will be undertaken, will be communicated to the complainant.
- Where the Line Manager finds that the complaint was founded on valid grounds of concern, the Head of Services recommends remedial actions that they deem appropriate and instruct the management team to implement them accordingly.
- Where appropriate, recommendations are made to the management team to review internal processes and assess the need to undertake pre-emptive measures to minimise the risk of future occurrence of the acts and/or omissions that gave rise to the complaint.
- Where necessary, staff will be subject to established performance management and/or disciplinary proceedings.

How to file a complaint with RAMFEL

All clients should be informed of the organisation's complaints procedure when they first engage with RAMFEL. The procedure is explained in the client care letter, which is available on Advice Pro and should be given to clients as soon as the initial appointment is concluded (and no later than 3 working days). In addition, copies of this Complaints Procedure are made readily available and displayed in the organisation's offices and website.

In the event the contact details or the person responsible to handle complaints change, each caseworker should inform their clients of the new responsible officer's details in writing.

1. Where to file

Complainants should file their complaint in writing. The below form can be used, but an email is also sufficient. The complaint should be lodged:

- Directly with the member of the staff that has assisted the complainant; or
- The Head of Services – Alice Giuliano
- Using the designated complaint email address: complaints@ramfel.org.uk – This email is directed to Alice Giuliano
- On the online form: <http://www.ramfel.org.uk/complaints.html>

If you need the help of an interpreter to file a complaint, please ask a member of staff.

2. Minimum information required

Below you can find a template complaint form. At least the following information should be included:

- Full name
- If relevant, the Case number you are complaining about
- Address, phone number and/or email address at which we can reach you
- Details of the issue, clearly describing its nature and the alleged consequences of RAMFEL's behaviour
- A complete description of the events you intend to complain about, referencing dates and names of RAMFEL staff involved.
- If applicable, evidence on which you base your complaint
- Any other information you may think could help us assess your complaint.

3. Receipt of complaint

Within 5 working days of the receipt of your complaint, the complainant will be notified of the identity of the primary person assigned to the investigation of the complaint.

4. Timeframe and Complaint Investigation

All complaints will be investigated in a constructive manner to establish their validity. Any valid complaints will be thoroughly investigated and resolved at the earliest opportunity. We aim to finalise our investigation, resolve each complaint and determine appropriate corrective and/or pre-emptive actions (where applicable) within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint and any supplemental information requested.

If this is not possible (e.g. due to the lack of information about the complaint), the complainant shall be informed of the progress of the complaint.

If the complainant is unhappy with the response received to the initial complaint or concern, they are invited to let us know as we would like the chance to try and make it right. At this point, the matter can be escalated to James Tullett, RAMFEL's Chief Executive Officer, who will respond to the complaint in line with our complaints' procedure.

5. Alternative complaint procedures

As a responsible charity, we believe that we are able to address the relevant concerns. However, if the complainant does not want to contact us, they can direct the issues with the competent authorities at any point.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with our management and/or resolution of your complaint, a complaint can be filed with the UK Government Charity Commission, following their complaint procedure at <https://forms.charitycommission.gov.uk/raising-concerns/>

If the complainant has concerns about the services of one of RAMFEL advisers registered with OISC, they can contact The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) Complaints Team, 5th Floor, 21 Bloomsbury Street, London, WC1B 3HF. More info about the OISC Complaints procedure can be found on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oiscs-complaints-scheme-complaints-form-english> which is also available in other languages.

OISC should make a full response to complaints within 20 working days.

For Legal Aid Cases if we have not resolved the complaint to satisfaction within eight weeks of the complaint being known to us, complainants are advised they have the right to refer the case directly to the Legal Ombudsman who can be contacted on:

By telephone on 0300 555 0333

*visiting the Legal Ombudsman website, or
<http://www.legalombudsman.org.uk/consumer/index.html>*

emailing them at enquiries@legalombudsman.org.uk.

By writing to them at PO Box 6167, Slough, SL1 0EH

Complaint Management

Details of any complaint or feedback are always to be reported by the staff member to the Head of Services, Alice Giuliano. The Head of Services/Manager handling the complaint should then record the details of the investigation, actions taken and communications in the Complaints Records spreadsheet (in the Management Folder). In the case of complaints from clients a record is also to be made on the relevant client's file.

All significant complaints are reviewed by the management team (through management team meetings) to ensure that any corrective and/or pre-emptive actions are progressed /actioned in a timely manner.

On completion of any corrective / pre-emptive actions (subject to any checks that need to be carried out), the complaint spreadsheet should be updated.

The CEO and/or the Head of Services as appropriate can consider the substance of all complaints, and prepare a written summary report for discussion during the Management Review of the Quality System.

Serious complaints and incidents will be reported to the Board and the Charity Commissioner. are a standing item for discussion at each Board meeting.

All complaints will be reviewed annually to address any patterns and inform ways of improvement for the staff and charity.

Complaints against Staff members

In the event that a staff member is the subject of an upheld complaint, staff will be subject to performance management and/or disciplinary proceedings.

If you need help completing this form please ask a member of staff or email complaint@ramfel.org.uk. This complaint will be sent to our Head of Services, Alice Giuliano. If you'd prefer to not complete this with a member of staff then please email chair@ramfel.org.uk

RAMFEL	Date :	Status:
Complaints Form		
Please complete the following:		
Name		
Address		
Nature of complaint		
Details of complaint (include dates and times)		

Action requested by the complainant:

I hereby declare that the information given above is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Complainant's Signature:

Date:

The information given may be used for monitoring purposes as well as dealing with individual complaints and follow up work.