

Equality of Opportunity and Diversity Policy

Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL)

<i>Responsible Officer:</i>	Nuzliya Fousdeen
<i>Latest Update:</i>	August 2025
<i>Review Date:</i>	August 2026

1. Policy Statement

Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL) recognises that the diversity of its communities is an essential part of its values and enriches employment and learning and development opportunities. We are proud to be part of a diverse community where multiculturalism and interculturalism are seen as positives and where individual and community integration and cohesion for the benefit of all sections of the community, and where equality of opportunity and diversity are valued.

This policy has been developed in line with the both the legislative and recommended guidance of the Equality Act 2010; as such the organisation is determined to ensure that Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL):

- Provides access and opportunities open to all
- Provide equality, fairness and treat all individuals with dignity and respect
- Provides a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment to all.
- Not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics.
 1. age
 2. disability
 3. gender reassignment
 4. marriage and civil partnership
 5. pregnancy and maternity
 6. race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
 7. religion or belief
 8. sex
 9. sexual orientation

RAMFEL is committed to building a workforce which is valued and whose diversity reflects the clients it serves, enabling it to deliver the best possible service to those communities. RAMFEL is also committed to enabling everyone to achieve their full potential in an environment characterised by dignity and mutual respect.

People should be able to work in an environment which respects their human rights and dignity where they are able to work free from harassment, racism and all other forms of unlawful discrimination, bullying and victimisation. These principles apply to all clients, partner organisations, employees, volunteers, and or placements.

2. Equality of Opportunity and Diversity Statement

The raising of awareness of the presence of asylum seekers, migrants, refugees, and BME (Black Asian and Minority Ethnic) individuals and communities in the area, and the celebration of their achievements, the promotion of common work and improvements to their welfare is the first priority of RAMFEL.

RAMFEL acknowledges that certain individuals and communities are more likely to face discrimination, oppression, and or disadvantage in society. RAMFEL is committed to combating discrimination and prejudice in all its forms, and will work to ensure that its services are fully accessible to sections of the community, and that it acts as an advocate and champion on behalf of those who are not able to access facilities and opportunities, or who are oppressed because of their gender, religion, age, disability, race, nationality, ethnic identity, national origin, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, political beliefs, marital status, family circumstance, caring responsibilities, or working hours.

3. Objectives

RAMFEL expects all employees to accept their individual and collective responsibilities in this area and to carry out their duties in accordance with this policy. This policy forms part of the formal contract of employment for employees.

All RAMFEL employees, volunteers, trustees and all stakeholders involved with the organisation must abide by this policy.

All RAMFEL clients should be treated equally and not be unlawfully discriminated against by RAMFEL staff, volunteers, third parties or trustees.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

A. Role of the Individual

- Should seek actively to promote equality of opportunity for others and strive to create an environment without fear or intimidation.
- Co-operate in the promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity.
- Advise their line manager or appropriate senior manager if they suspect that discrimination is taking place in employment practice.
- To treat everyone equally and not to discriminate, harass, bully or intimidate.
- Not induce or attempt to induce other employees to practice discrimination.
- Not to victimise or attempt to victimise individuals who may have complaints or have provided information on discrimination.

B. Role of the Line Manager

All line managers are accountable for ensuring compliance with the Equality of Opportunity and Diversity Policy within their own areas.

Specifically, and in addition to their responsibilities as individual employees of RAMFEL, line managers are responsible for:

- Fostering an environment in which compliance with this policy is regarded as integral to the work of RAMFEL.
- Ensuring, as part of the development of this environment, the implementation of diversity audits and plans.
- To ensure that this policy is effectively communicated, understood and implemented.
- To encourage employees to report any breaches of the policy and to investigate using the appropriate policies and procedures.
- To provide training and awareness opportunities for employees to enable them to fulfil their responsibility under this policy.
- To ensure equality of opportunity and diversity principles will be actively applied to all RAMFEL services, processes and procedures with employees, schemes and external agencies.
- To provide support and supervision.

C. Role of Human Resources

- To ensure monitoring of recruitment, promotion, retention, turnover and access to employee learning and development is undertaken and reported on an annual basis to the Board of Directors.
- To provide information sessions and training seminars, where appropriate, on the policy and procedure.

- To review the impact of policies upon age, different gender, racial and religious groups and those with disabilities, amending policies and procedures where there is evidence of possible discrimination.
- Provide unbiased advice and guidance to employees on all issues connected with their employment and their personal and professional development. Where there may be a conflict of interest then RAMFEL may seek external expertise.

D. Corporate Responsibility

Responsibility for ensuring that RAMFEL meets its legal obligations in respect of legislation relating to equality of opportunity and diversity rests with the Trustees. In practice, however, the management of these obligations is delegated to the Chief Officer.

RAMFEL is responsible as a corporate entity for putting into place mechanisms and procedures and for encouraging a culture and environment that accord with its statutory obligations and commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity.

5. RAMFEL Equalities Framework

A. Workforce for Equality and Diversity

To recruit and retain a workforce that is able to deliver high quality services that are accessible, responsive and appropriate to meet the diverse needs of different groups and individuals.

B. Better Place to Work and Volunteer

To ensure that RAMFEL is a fair employer and placement provider achieving equality of opportunity and diversity outcomes in the workplace.

C. To Make a Difference

To ensure that RAMFEL uses its influence and resources as an employer to make a positive difference to the life opportunities and the health and well being of its local communities.

6. Recruitment and Selection of Employees

RAMFEL will ensure that its recruitment, selection and promotion practices provide equal access to all persons and that they are treated with dignity, respect and equity without distinctions, such as gender, race, nationality, ethnic identity, or national origin, socio-economic status or role within RAMFEL, religious or political beliefs, disability, age, marital status, family circumstance (carers – caring responsibilities), sexual orientation or working hours.

In addition, RAMFEL will comply with current and future legislation and aims to promote good practice in all aspects of RAMFEL.

The intention of the recruitment procedure is to ensure the most appropriate response to any employment and volunteering vacancies. RAMFEL wishes to ensure the highest quality of candidates. All applicants for posts with RAMFEL shall be given as much accurate information about posts in advertisements, job/role descriptions and interviews necessary for them to be able to gauge their suitability for that post. All applicants for employment with RAMFEL will be informed that the organisation operates an Equality of Opportunity and Diversity Policy.

Recruitment literature will not imply that there is a preference for one group of applicants, unless there is a genuine occupational requirement which limits a post to a particular sex or racial group or to able bodied persons, in which case this must be clearly stated.

The selection process is of crucial importance and must be carried out according to objective, job/role related criteria. Written person specifications shall be devised and used by line managers in respect of all vacancies. RAMFEL will, through appropriate learning and development activities, ensure that line managers making selection decisions do not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.

As part of the recruitment and selection process line managers must record decisions reached and the reasons for those decisions. These records must be retained for a maximum period of one year (in line with the organisation's Document Storage Policy), in cases where the funder requires a lengthy period of retention this will be noted in a report to the board.

RAMFEL collects the necessary data to accurately profile the workforce and to monitor recruitment practice in accordance with this policy. Collecting and monitoring this data is undertaken to analyse trends and patterns to establish areas of development concerning equality of opportunity and diversity. Applicants are asked for their ethnic origin, age, and gender and disability status. This information is not seen by the recruiting manager and is separated from the actual application form. Employees commencing employment with RAMFEL are requested to state their ethnic origin, date of birth and gender, disability, gender, sexual orientation, and religion, which enables us to monitor these factors in relation to recruitment, promotion, training and workforce profiling. With the exception of the date of birth which is required for the facilitation of payroll services, all other data is at the individual's discretion.

The implementation of all terms and conditions of service will be non-discriminatory and applied fairly to all employees.

All candidates should be offered constructive feedback regarding their application. Any applicant not employed by RAMFEL, who considers that they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against in the operation of our recruitment and selection procedures are encouraged to contact the Chief Executive Officer who will investigate the complaint.

7. Learning and Development

RAMFEL will not discriminate in the provision of learning and development opportunities.

RAMFEL will provide learning and development to ensure equality of opportunity and diversity in career development and promotion.

The RAMFEL policy is that all employees, regardless of grade, hours or working arrangements, should have a performance appraisal and a resulting learning and development needs analysis which should be forwarded to the Chief Officer.

Employee learning and development needs (personal and professional) will be assessed through the appraisal process and the allocation of learning and development opportunities and resources will be made in accordance with the Learning and Development Policy and RAMFEL's organisational needs and objectives.

8. Tackling Discrimination

RAMFEL's position is **zero tolerance** on any form of discrimination, harassment and bullying. Please also refer to RAMFEL's Dignity at Work Policy.

RAMFEL's emphasis is on ensuring that:

- Employees, volunteers and clients are protected from any form of discrimination, harassment and bullying by employees and clients.

- There is the provision of adequate and appropriate learning and development opportunities in order that employees are aware of the impact of discrimination, harassment and bullying and feel confident to address situations where discrimination, harassment or bullying is involved.

Any employee who discriminates, harasses or bullies any other employee or client on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic identity, or national origin, socio-economic status or role within RAMFEL, religious or political beliefs, disability, age, marital status, family circumstance, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation or working hours, will be subject to RAMFEL's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. In serious cases, such behaviour may be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal in the absence of mitigating circumstances.

9. Quality of Working Life

RAMFEL recognises the need for employees to balance their work and domestic commitments and has the following policies and procedures to assist employees:

- Adoption Leave
- Compassionate Leave
- Dependents Leave
- Flexible Working
- Maternity Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Parental Leave

10. Complaints

Any employee who considers that they have been unfairly discriminated against in matters covered by this policy should first discuss their complaint with their line manager or an appropriate senior manager and if necessary have recourse to the RAMFEL's Grievance Procedure to resolve the situation.

11. RAMFEL's clients

RAMFEL recognises that it also has a role to play in supporting good relations between clients, especially where the issue of equality, discrimination and prejudice are fuelled by miscommunication, cultural stereotypes, and overt and covert discrimination. We understand and acknowledge that promoting equality and diversity is subject to changes in the legislative framework and what is commonly considered as good practice.

In keeping with this we are also aware that in promoting such work, language and terminology can be variable and subject to policy trends and legislative emphasis. Whilst always in keeping with the legislative framework and upholding the highest standards of good practice, RAMFEL will also remain responsive to the needs of all our clients and the promotion of what works well, based on evidence of existing practice.

12. Third party Suppliers

RAMFEL is committed to only working with third parties and suppliers that also promote equality and diversity within their practice and policies. We will treat all complaints towards any suppliers seriously and where necessary raise complaints and source alternative suppliers.

We do not unlawfully discriminate when selecting third parties or suppliers to work with.

13. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

In order to ensure and enact the spirit and commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity, RAMFEL recognises the need for evidence-based research. We will seek to undertake annually the following:

- A survey of existing clients
- A stakeholder survey
- An equality impact assessment of its services across all key protected characteristics
- A desktop review of the latest literature and research published on equalities issues

Such work will be developed as an appendix to the organisation's annual report.

This policy will receive a light touch review annually, and be subject to a detailed review every 3 years.