Grievance Policy

Overview

A grievance is an issue, complaint, concern, or problem. A volunteer may have a grievance on a variety of factors that affect their well-being and ability to carry out their duties effectively.

These include:

- Harassment
- Intimidation
- Incompetent colleagues
- A dangerous working environment
- A lack of resources to do their job
- Too great a workload
- Bullying

It is important for Raphael to deal with grievances, disputes, and complaints seriously and quickly. If they are not addressed and resolved, a volunteer may consider that they are unable to carry on working.

Good grievance practice

The grievance policy should state that volunteers must:

- Be given a fair hearing concerning any grievances they may have
- Have the right to be accompanied by a fellow volunteer when raising a grievance.
- Have the option to air their grievance at agreed levels, such as team leader, Head of Department (HOD), and Director.

Sensitivity needs to be used in cases of alleged sexual or racial harassment or other discriminatory behaviours. External advice may be needed in such cases.

The organisation should keep clear and confidential records of:

- Nature of grievance
- Copy of volunteer's written statement of grievance
- Copy of organisation's response
- Action taken
- Reasons for action
- Any business relating to an appeal
- Further developments

Statutory grievance procedure

Organisations are encouraged to use informal methods where appropriate and to provide more comprehensive procedures in excess of the minimum standards set out below. Organisations should also remember to apply procedures equally to all volunteers to avoid any potential discriminatory practices.

The minimum acceptable procedure has three steps:

1. Volunteer provides written statement

The volunteer must:

- write a detailed statement
- give a copy of the statement to the organisation

A volunteer must state a grievance formally (unless it is resolved informally) for this procedure to be applied.

Under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995,* organisations are required to make reasonable adjustments. For example, if a volunteer is unable submit a written grievance because of a disability, the organisation should assist them. Setting out a grievance in writing is not easy if English is not the volunteer's first language or if they have difficulty expressing themselves on paper. In such cases, the volunteer should be encouraged to seek help from a colleague.

2. Organisation and volunteer meet

The meeting must take place at a reasonable time place for both the organisation and the volunteer.

The volunteer has the right to be accompanied by a fellow volunteer.

Organisations are encouraged to make a decision within 5 days of the meeting, rather than at the end of the meeting, in order for a reasonable 'cooling off' period to take place.

All volunteers have the right to appeal against a decision if they are not satisfied.

3. Volunteer appeals if they are unsatisfied

The volunteer must notify the organisation of their decision to appeal, **in writing**.

A further meeting must then be arranged, at a reasonable time and at a reasonable location for both the organisation and the volunteer.

Again, the volunteer has the right to be accompanied by fellow volunteer.

Wherever possible, the appeal should be heard by a different supervisor or a more senior representative of the organisation to bring a fresh point of view.

A final decision is then made. Again, organisations are encouraged to make a decision within 5 days of the meeting, rather than at the end of the meeting, for a reasonable 'cooling off' period to take place.

Modified Statutory Grievance Procedure

The modified procedure applies in the exceptional circumstance where:

- engagement has ended **and**
- the organisation has been unaware of grievance, **or** the standard procedures have not been started or completed

This procedure can therefore be used in circumstances such as when a volunteer has already left the organisation.

Under this procedure:

- The grievance must be stated in writing to the organisation
- The response to the grievance must be in writing

Again, under the *Disability* Discrimination *Act 1995*, the organisation is required to make reasonable adjustments. For example, if a volunteer is unable submit a written grievance because of a disability, the organisation should assist them. Setting out a grievance in writing is not easy if English is not the volunteer's first language or if they have difficulty expressing themselves on paper. In such cases, the volunteer should be encouraged to seek help from a colleague.

Example grievance procedure to be given to Volunteers

This procedure should be used to settle all disputes and grievances you wish to raise. The purpose is to settle any grievance fairly, simply, and quickly.

1. You should first discuss your grievance with the person involved
2. If this does not resolve the matter, you should talk to your team leader and make a verbal complaint. If the person concerned is your team leader, you should talk to another team leader or your HOD.
3. If the matter remains unresolved it will be referred to a meeting of the organisation or a subcommittee of it which you will be entitled to attend and address, either yourself, or through and with a representative. The decision will be given to you in writing.
4. If you are unsatisfied with the decision, you have the right of appeal.
5. You should ensure that there is no unreasonable delay in the implementation of this procedure

Status of the Policy

The Trustees of the Raphael Pilgrimage have approved this policy and any breach would be taken seriously and may result in formal action. The Policy will be reviewed annually.
Any person who considers that the policy has not been followed in respect of personal data about themselves should raise the matter with the Director of Operations in the first instance.

This Guidance has been reviewed and agreed by the Trustees

Tracy Ennis, Chair of Trustees
26/05/2026