



Safeguarding Policy

Policy Author
The OR Society

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Introduction

As an organisation that delivers charitable activities, The OR Society has a duty to safeguard volunteers, employees, and participants. We aim to run The OR Society in a way that actively prevents harm, harassment, bullying, abuse, and neglect. We have rules and procedures in place which keep people safe while they are taking part in our activities. We are ready to respond safely and well if there is a problem. Everyone in the organisation has a role to play in safeguarding, it is part of our day to day activities.

All our safeguarding policies and procedures are publicly available on our website. They are reviewed on an annual basis.

Scope

This procedure applies to all employees and volunteers.

Understanding Risks

We understand, manage, record, and review the safeguarding risks in The OR Society, considering everyone we work with. We understand that anyone can be at risk of abuse, people are at risk at different times and in different situations. We also recognise that while protecting our employees and volunteers may not be safeguarding, we still have a duty to keep them safe. The OR Society has a Health and Safety policy which is made accessible to all employees and volunteers. The OR Society is also aware of the types of harm that can develop within an organisation and has procedures in place to resolve any issues which may arise as a result. These types of harm can be: discrimination, physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, neglect, financial or radicalisation.

Children and adults at risk

The OR Society, like all organisations, has a responsibility to safeguard children. A child is anyone under the age of 18.

An adult at risk is anyone aged 18 or over who has needs for care and or support, as a result of care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from abuse or is currently experiencing or is at risk of abuse. Adults at risk may have a mental or physical illness, have a learning disability, have addiction problems or be frail. Whether an adult is at risk or not is something which changes with their circumstances. Furthermore, everyone has the right to make decisions for themselves. We understand that when we are safeguarding adults, we must respect this to avoid causing harm by removing a person's freedom of choice.

Our safeguarding duties are proportional to the level of risk involved; therefore, we increase the time and effort we spend on safeguarding when we work with children through OR in Education and have a separate policy available that focuses exclusively on [safeguarding children](#). We rarely work with adults at risk but are aware that a different approach is required for this group of people.

Employees and volunteers should never work alone with children or adults at risk.

Making safeguarding a priority

Everyone at The OR Society is responsible for safeguarding. We make it clear to all employees, volunteers and people we work with that we intend to keep them safe, and that they have a role to play in keeping others safe. They know they have a right to ask questions and know who to tell if they think something is not right.

Designated safeguarding lead

The Deputy Executive Director is The OR Society's Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Education Officer and Pro Bono Manager are Safeguarding Officers. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for managing referrals to social services, reporting when problems are discovered and keeping internal records up to date. They also connect with the local authority to keep up to date with the separate processes for children and adults at risk.

Our culture and values

Everyone has a right to be safe from harm. We give employees and volunteers appropriate support and management expect employees and volunteers to behave in line with our values and to treat everyone with respect. Our bullying, harassment, grievance, and whistleblowing policies outline:

- how we plan to protect employees, volunteers and people we work with
- our expectations for employees and volunteers
- our procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Our ORS values, which we ask all employees and volunteers to adhere to, are:

- Rigorous: rooted in evidence, rational analysis & strong historic principles
- Inclusive: vibrant diverse community united by a common passion & purpose
- Proactive: leading improvements to services, processes, systems and outcomes
- Supportive: helpful, responsive and customer focussed

Safer recruitment

We consider how to make sure new employees and volunteers will be safe and responsible.

We follow the NSPCC guidelines on volunteer recruitment for ORiE volunteers as ORiE volunteers sometimes work with children. The guidelines are proportional to the typical duties and responsibilities expected of an ORiE volunteer. ORiE volunteer recruitment is covered in our child safeguarding policy.

NSPCC guidelines state that criminal record checks and background checks are not required for the work that ORiE volunteers do. As these volunteers are most likely to work with an at-risk group, criminal record checks are therefore beyond the scope of The OR Society's wider recruitment and safeguarding policies.

Our Pro Bono OR scheme ensures that all client organisations are directly asked about the nature of the volunteers' expected work with regards to safeguarding and make sure that all client organisations have a written Health and Safety policy and safeguarding policy if applicable. Volunteers are made aware before applying if a DBS check is required to undertake a particular project. If it is believed that a Volunteer will be asked to work directly with children or vulnerable adults (as defined by The Care Act 2014), Pro Bono OR state that all organisations must make sure the Volunteer has a full understanding of the organisation's safeguarding policy before beginning a project.

Our safeguarding policies and expectations are outlined to employees during their induction. Volunteer safeguarding expectations and information is available on our website and as part of the Volunteer Handbook documents. ORiE volunteer training also includes an overview of our child safeguarding expectations for volunteers.

Listening and feedback

When somebody reports a concern or speaks up, employees and volunteers are encouraged to act with compassion and understanding. We will not allow anyone to be victimised for raising a safeguarding concern. Employees and volunteers are encouraged to speak up about things that happen to them within The OR Society as well as outside it and should be aware of our whistleblowing policies.

Safeguarding works best when people feel they are empowered to speak up and keep themselves and others safe. Therefore, we provide updates on safeguarding in The OR Society whenever relevant. We welcome feedback from all employees and volunteers on our safeguarding policies and procedures. Employees have several ways to provide feedback, including an anonymous suggestion box. Volunteers are asked for feedback each time they volunteer with The OR Society.

What to do if you have a concern

All employees and volunteers have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns or issues to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Officers. They know how to recognise and report abuse or harm affecting people The OR Society has contact with, wherever that abuse has occurred, so that we can help people to speak up and take action. You don't need to be certain before you raise a concern, it is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Officers and Designated Safeguarding Lead to investigate concerns. We take historic and non-recent concerns as seriously as current or recent concerns.

Contacting a safeguarding officer

Any of the safeguarding officers can be contacted via phone or email. Telephone 0121 233 9300 and ask to speak to the Deputy Executive Director, Education Officer or Pro Bono Manager. Email safeguarding@theorsociety.com, education@theorsociety.com or ProBonoOr@theorsociety.com.

Reporting a safeguarding concern

If a safeguarding concern is shared with us, we will make an initial assessment of the concern. We will ask questions to establish what action has already been taken and whether anyone else in, or working with, The OR Society has been affected by the situation. We will decide what actions need to be taken and will make a record of the information we are given and the actions we take.

Actions we may take depend on the situation:

- If it is an emergency, we will also contact the emergency services.
- If we receive an allegation that an employee or volunteer from The OR Society has harmed or abused a child or adult at risk, we will also contact the local authority safeguarding team.
- If we receive an allegation that an employee or volunteer from The OR Society has harmed or abused an adult who isn't at risk, we will follow our disciplinary procedures.
- If we receive an allegation involving another organisation, we will contact their Designated Safeguarding Lead to inform them.

Once we have assessed a concern, we will monitor the situation and record new information and actions as they arise. If possible, we will let the person who reported the concern know that we have taken action.

We understand that reporting a safeguarding concern can be difficult and will do our best to support anyone sharing concerns with us.

Closing a safeguarding concern

Most safeguarding concerns fall into one of the three categories below:

Misunderstanding. The person reporting didn't have the full information and when this was investigated, there was no wrongdoing found. We will provide full feedback to reassure the person reporting that the concern was investigated.

Malpractice. The person was justified in their concerns. If possible, any action is taken, including any learnings, will be shared with the reporter.

Malicious. If, after investigation, we believe a false concern was raised we will follow our problem-solving procedures for volunteers or disciplinary procedures for employees.

We are responsible for closing safeguarding concerns. This will happen when we no longer have a role in the investigation or any actions to complete. Everyone involved in the concern will be told that it is closed, and we will update our records. This will include filing a final report, which will summarise the concern and show any changes to our policies as a result of the concern.

This policy will be reviewed in May 2022.