



Whistleblowing Policy

Policy Author
The OR Society

Date Implemented
April 2021

Version
1.0

Introduction and scope

The OR Society is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards of public service. This policy is intended to cover and help volunteers who have major concerns over wrongdoing within The OR Society where, due to unlawful or criminal action or other inappropriate acts or omissions, the interests of others or that of The OR Society is at risk.

The OR Society's Responsibilities

The OR Society will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a whistle-blower.

The OR Society recognises the difficulty volunteers may face in voicing concerns and assures them of support during the initial investigation process. The OR Society will seek to protect the confidentiality of volunteers who raise matters of concern where possible unless required to provide evidence as part of an official investigation. It is also recognised that individuals may be reluctant to voice their concerns, particularly if the conduct or action of another volunteer is involved. It is important that volunteers feel able to raise such concerns without fear of subsequent action being taken against them.

The OR Society will be responsible for monitoring this procedure and the concerns/issues that are raised as a result.

The Executive Director/Deputy Executive Director has a responsibility to:

- Take concerns seriously
- Consider them carefully and undertake an investigation
- Understand the difficult position a volunteer may be in
- Seek appropriate advice
- Take prompt action to resolve the concern or refer it to an appropriate person
- Monitor and review the situation
- Ensure individuals who genuinely repost concerns are not penalised in any way

Volunteer Responsibilities

All individuals who volunteer with The OR Society have a responsibility to:

- Work within their professional code of conduct
- Ensure that the best standards of care are achieved
- Report any concerns which might compromise these standards
- Raise concerns in good faith with a true belief that malpractice has occurred
- Not raise concerns with any malicious intent

Confidentiality

Whilst pursuing the aim of openness, it is imperative that client confidentiality is maintained, and that no parties unreasonably undermine the confidence in the services provided by The OR Society.

Anonymous Allegations

We encourage whistle-blowers to put their name to an allegation wherever possible as anonymous allegations may often be difficult to substantiate/prove. Allegations made anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of the Executive Director or trustees. This consideration will take into account:

- The seriousness of the issue raised;
- The credibility of the allegation; and
- Whether the allegation can realistically be investigated from factors or sources other than the complainant.

Whistleblowing Procedure

Volunteers wishing to raise concerns can discuss them with the Deputy Executive Director, another member of the Senior Management Team or any of the Trustees. Volunteers may be accompanied during the discussions on the issues that they have raised.

Details of the Allegation

Whether a written or verbal report is made, it is important that relevant information is provided including:

- The name of the person making the allegation and a contact point (unless it is agreed the allegation can be anonymous);
- The background and history of the allegation (giving relevant dates and name and positions of those who may be in a position to have contributed to the allegation); and
- The specific reason for the allegation. Although someone making an allegation will not be expected to prove the truth of any allegations, they will need to provide information to the person they have reported to, to establish that there are reasonable grounds for the allegation.

Resolution

Wherever possible, volunteer concerns about The OR Society issues should be resolved locally between the volunteer and their point of contact within the Society e.g. Education Officer, Pro Bono Manager, etc. The person will consider the issues fully and sympathetically. The person will record details of the allegation including:

- The record of the allegation;
- The acknowledgment of the allegation; and
- Any documentation supplied by the whistleblower.

If the allegation relates to fraud, potential fraud, or other financial irregularity, the Treasurer will be informed.

If the allegation discloses evidence of a criminal offence it will immediately be reported to the Board of Trustees and a decision will be made as to whether to inform the Police.

- The acknowledgment of the allegation will include:
- An indication of how The OR Society proposes to deal with the matter;
- An estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
- An indication of whether initial enquiries have been made;
- Information on whistleblower support mechanisms; and
- An indication of whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.

Where an allegation has been made anonymously, The OR Society may not be able to communicate what action has been taken.