

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Sale of the OR Society's Birmingham office

Why have you decided to sell the Birmingham office?

There are several reasons behind this decision, and it was not taken lightly. Since launching our apprenticeship offer, our staff team has become more geographically dispersed as we have recruited the best people regardless of location. During Covid, we successfully moved our operations online and demonstrated that a physical office is no longer essential. Today, the office is used only two days per week, and most training is delivered online.

At the same time, the building now requires substantial refurbishment and ongoing maintenance. Annual running costs are around £50,000 and continue to rise due to increasing energy and insurance costs. By reducing these costs, we can invest more resources directly into supporting our members and advancing the Society's work.

Are you doing this because the Society is in financial trouble?

No. However, like many charities, we must make careful decisions about how we use our resources to deliver the greatest benefit for members and the wider profession. The Society made a small surplus in 2025 (approximately £2,000), but this was achieved by temporarily pausing some initiatives, including our Masters' scholarships.

By reducing ongoing costs, we can reinvest in activities that support members and help grow the profession. This includes reinstating our Masters' scholarships and developing new initiatives that encourage more people to pursue careers in operational research.

What timeline are you working to?

Property sales can be difficult to predict, but our current plan is to vacate the Birmingham office by the end of June 2026, enabling us to complete the sale as soon as possible thereafter.

Subject to finalising an agreement with the London Mathematical Society, we intend to change the Society's registered address from Seymour House to De Morgan House in London from 1 July 2026. During this transition, the Society will operate from temporary rented accommodation in Birmingham.

How do you know that this is the right thing to do for the charity?

The Board considered a range of income generation and cost-saving options before deciding to proceed with the sale of Seymour House. Of the options reviewed, this was considered to have the least impact on members while providing several long-term benefits, including greater flexibility to recruit staff from across the UK and access to meeting spaces in both Birmingham and London for Society activities.

The OR Society is a national and international organisation, and our ability to support members is not dependent on being based in a single location. The Board's priority has been to ensure that resources are used in a way that delivers the greatest benefit to members and the profession.

In addition to Board approval, the governance process stipulates one further criterion. In line with Section 117 of the Charities Act 2011, trustees must obtain and consider professional advice before disposing of charity property and be satisfied that the terms represent the best outcome that can reasonably be achieved for the charity. An independent Designated Adviser's Report was commissioned and considered by the Board on 20 May 2026. The Board has taken appropriate professional advice and is satisfied that the terms of the proposed sale are in the best interests of the Society.

What will happen to the Society's memorabilia and records?

The sale of the building has provided an opportunity to review the Society's collections and records and to consider what should be displayed, archived, and stored for the future.

The Society's memorabilia, for example our Awards boards, will be put on display at De Morgan House in London. The Society's official archive will continue to be housed at the University of Warwick: <https://mrc-describe.epexio.com/records/ORS>.

What will happen to the OR Society's library and exhibition?

We have received two expressions of interest from universities who are interested in hosting the OR Society's library collection. We are keen that the collection is easily accessible and is part of the national inter-library loan (ILL) system. The collection will be put into temporary storage while these two options are explored. The exhibition will also be put into temporary storage pending a planned tour of science festivals throughout 2027.

Where will the charity be registered?

The Society's registered address will change to Room 24, De Morgan House, 57-58 Russell Square, London, WC1B 4HS on 1 July 2026.

Is this a permanent move?

These are transition arrangements. The room sponsorship agreement at De Morgan House is for one year in the first instance, and the temporary office space in Birmingham will be leased until the end of 2026. At that point we will review whether we are able to operate fully remotely, i.e. whether we need to keep both the London and Birmingham options. The Society will continue to review its longer-term accommodation needs and consider what a permanent home for the OR Society might look like in the future.

What does it mean for me as a member?

We receive very few visitors at the Birmingham office. In future, members will have the option to hold meetings at both De Morgan House in London and at our temporary office space in Birmingham (rooms will need to be booked in advance). Members will temporarily be unable to access the library collection while it is in storage, but after it moves to its new home it should be possible to order books from the collection via your local library, thus removing the need to travel to Birmingham. As mentioned previously, by reducing these costs, we can invest more resources directly into supporting our members and advancing the Society's work.

Last updated 03 June 2026. These FAQs will be updated as new information comes to light. If you have any further questions please contact Dr Colette Fletcher, Executive Director (Colette.fletcher@theorsociety.com).