

Safeguarding Policy

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| Applicable to: | ✓ | The OR Society |
| | ✓ | The OR Society EPAO Only |
| Accountable Owner | Head of Qualifications & Accreditation (Designated Safeguarding Lead) | |
| Frequency of review | Annual <i>or earlier if required for regulatory, legislative or business need.</i> | |
| Date of next review | July 2026 (full review) | |
| Relevant Regulator & Regulatory conditions associated with the policy | OFQUAL GCOR (A8) | |
| Associated policies and processes | Health & Safety Policy Governance, bullying, harassment, whistleblowing policies | |
| Version Number | 1.2 | |
| Date of review | March 2026 (interim review) | |
| Summary of Amendments since previous version | V1.2: Re-branded and contact details updated. | |
| OR Society Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Completed | 06 September 2024 , no outstanding actions | |
| Date of approval | 24 March 2026 | |
| Approver | Executive Director (CF) | |

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Purpose

As an organisation that delivers charitable activities, The OR Society has a duty to safeguard volunteers, employees, apprentices and participants. We aim to run The OR Society in a way that actively prevents harm, harassment, bullying, abuse, and neglect. We have procedures in place which keep people safe while they are taking part in our activities. We are ready to respond safely, quickly and robustly 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.

Staff working with children and vulnerable adults are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child or vulnerable person, staff should always act in the best interests of that person. If staff have any concerns about a child or vulnerable adult's welfare, they should act on them immediately, following the OR Society Safeguarding Process and informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a deputy.

Our safeguarding policy is publicly available on our website. Our safeguarding policy and processes are reviewed on an annual basis.

Scope

This policy and related procedures apply to all employees and volunteers including in the provision of End Point Assessment (EPA). Activities and workstreams across the organisation fall within the scope of this policy including but not limited to pro bono, education, publications, events and apprenticeships.

Responsibilities

Everyone at The OR Society is responsible for safeguarding. We make it clear to all staff, 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.

The DSL (Head of Qualifications & Accreditation) is responsible for the development, implementation and continuous review of the Safeguarding policy and related procedures. The DSL is supported by two Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL – Education Manager and Head of Membership Engagement). The Safeguarding team are responsible for a timely and robust response to safeguarding disclosures, for ensuring the implementation of appropriate training for all staff & volunteers and for liaising with external partners where disclosures require it. The DSL works with an identified board member in the strategic leadership of safeguarding, ensuring appropriate check and challenge on safeguarding policy, process and disclosures.

Understanding the 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 staff 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.

Vulnerable Adults & Children

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. We rarely work with adults at risk but are aware that a different approach is required for this group of people. Within our EPA activities Assessors are trained to recognise and escalate safeguarding concerns as required.

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

Our Culture & Values

Everyone has a right to be safe from harm. We give staff and volunteers appropriate support and leaders expect staff 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 staff, volunteers, and people we work with
- our expectations for staff and volunteers
- our procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour

Our ORS values, which we ask all staff 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 staff members and volunteers will be safe and responsible.

We follow the [NSPCC guidelines](#) on volunteer recruitment for OR in Education (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 Disclosure & Baring Service (DBS) checks are not required for the work that ORiE volunteers do.

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.

In compliance with Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition (A8) all staff involved in assessment activities who may have contact (either face to face or remotely) with apprentices or learners will be subject to a satisfactory DBS check.

Our safeguarding policy, procedures and expectations are outlined to staff during their induction. Volunteer safeguarding expectations and information is available on our website and as part of the Volunteer Handbook documents. Assessors involved in End Point Assessment (EPA) activity are trained in relevant safeguarding processes in their induction (this occurs regardless of whether their planned assessment activity will be remote or face to face) and details are included in Assessor guidance documents.

Listening and feedback

When somebody reports a concern or speaks up, staff and volunteers are encouraged to act with compassion and understanding. We will not allow anyone to be victimised for raising a safeguarding concern. Staff 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 policy.

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 staff and volunteers on our safeguarding policies and procedures.

What to do if you have a concern

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concerns or issues to the DSL or DDSL as a matter of urgency. We take historic and non-recent concerns as seriously as current or recent concerns.

To formally express your concern, please complete the [ORS Safeguarding Report Form](#) immediately and email the completed form to safeguarding@theorsociety.com. All information, including your details will be stored confidentially and will be shared with the safeguarding team. If you prefer not to share your concern with the whole safeguarding team please contact a team member you feel comfortable sharing with directly. Where it is not practical to complete the safeguarding report form immediately, contact the Safeguarding team immediately (allowing actions to commence) and complete the full documentation later.

Any member of staff or volunteer who encounters a situation where a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of imminent harm should immediately contact the emergency services as appropriate and then follow our safeguarding process. Internal safeguarding processes should never delay emergency intervention. The Safeguarding team will respond as soon as possible to a disclosure/concern, and within one day.

Contacting a safeguarding officer

Any of the safeguarding team can be contacted by email at: safeguarding@theorsociety.com or via Teams.

Staff and volunteers are encouraged to discuss concerns however small.

Reporting a safeguarding concern

If a safeguarding concern is shared with the Safeguarding team, an initial assessment will quickly be made 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 a member of staff 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 a member of staff or volunteer from The OR Society has harmed or abused adult who isn't at risk, we will follow our disciplinary procedures.
- If we receive an allegation involving another organisation, we will contact their DSL 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. The OR Society can provide links to support via Togetherall and the Safeguarding team can also support with links to external support.

Other regulatory activity

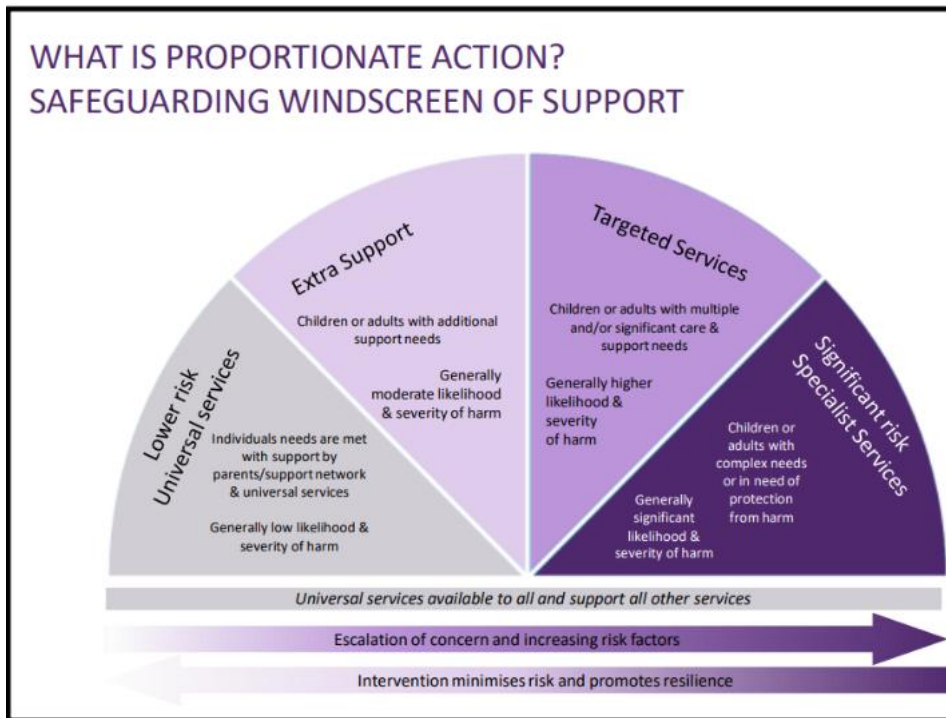
As an Ofqual recognised EPAO, where a safeguarding concern has the potential to cause a potential or actual adverse effect, the Responsible Officer will report accordingly to the regulator.

DSL/DDSL Actions

On receiving a safeguarding disclosure either via an ORS Safeguarding Report form or via any other means of communication, a member of the safeguarding team will review the available information as a matter of urgency identifying:

- The likelihood of harm
- The OR Society's duties and responsibilities
- The severity of harm

Every safeguarding disclosure is different, however in general concerns of low risk will likely be responded to with signposting and welfare advice whilst higher risk situations will involve active and engaged response with statutory agencies. This ensures a proportionate response.



Source: NCVO

The safeguarding team will ensure disclosures are appropriately logged.

Having established an appropriate response to the safeguarding concern, the safeguarding team will complete a range of follow up actions including:

- Considering of any further investigation and/or disciplinary action required (working with SLT).
- Establishing any lessons learnt from the disclosure and any impact that this should have on policy and processes.
- Ensuring any staff involved receive any support required.
- Raising any concerns with SLT if there is any reputational risk to the OR Society.

Closing a Safeguarding Concern

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

- **Malpractice.** The person was justified in their concerns. If possible, any action taken, including any learnings, will be shared with the reporter.
- **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.
- **Malicious.** If, after investigation, we believe a false concern was raised, we will follow our disciplinary procedures for employees or grievance procedures for volunteers (a full copy of our grievance policy can be made available on request).

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.

Governance

The DSL oversees the policy, its continuous review and implementation. The Executive Director is accountable for the policy's approval. The DSL works with a link board member to ensure appropriate safeguarding governance, policy and process.

It is a Charity Commission requirement that the OR Society identifies a DSL (and that this is included in a job description) and that a senior board level safeguarding lead is identified.

Retention of materials

Safeguarding records are retained in line with the [OR Society's approach to data retention](#).

Contact

Queries in relation to the content of this policy should be raised with the Safeguarding team by email to safeguarding@theorsociety.com

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier if legislative or regulatory change requires it to be revised.