



Off The Record Counselling Service

Willow Lane House
Willow Lane
Norwich
NR2 1EU
admin@otr-norfolk.org.uk

Safeguarding Policy

Policy Statement

Off The Record Counselling Service (Norfolk) Limited (OTR) are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all service users, staff, volunteers, and any other contacts (directly or indirectly) with the organisation. This includes vulnerable adults and children*. *Whilst OTR does not provide counselling to children we recognise that safeguarding matters concerning children may arise through counselling adults.

This policy outlines our commitment to safeguarding and our procedures for responding to concerns about abuse or neglect.

This policy applies to anyone working on our behalf, including staff, counsellors, our trustees and other volunteers. It covers all aspects of our work, including face-to-face counselling, online services, and any other activities.

Partner organisations will be required to have their own safeguarding procedures that must, as a minimum, meet the standards outlined below, and include any additional legal or regulatory requirements specific to their work. These include, but are not limited to other [UK regulators, if applicable](#).

Principles

The organisation believes:

- Nobody who is involved in our work should ever experience abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation.
- We all have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all of our beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, to keep them safe and to work in a way that protects them.
- We all have a collective responsibility for creating a culture in which our people not only feel safe, but also able to speak up, if they have any concerns.
- The welfare of the individual is paramount.
- Everyone has the right to be safe from harm.

The organisation will:

- Act promptly and appropriately in response to any safeguarding concerns.
- Maintain confidentiality, except where there is a risk of harm.
- Work in partnership with other agencies to safeguard individuals
- Ensure the safety of vulnerable adults by integrating strategies, policies and services relevant to abuse within the framework of the NHS and Community Care Act 2014, the Mental Health Act 1983, the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, the Care Standards Act 2000, Equalities Act 2010 and the Bill of Rights Bill 2022 .



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Definitions and Types of Abuse

Vulnerable adults are any persons aged 18 or over who are in or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental, physical or learning disability, age or medical condition and are or maybe unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

The five core types of abuse:

- Physical abuse – involving harming a person physically such as hitting, kicking burning etc.
- Emotional abuse – involving actions designed to hurt someone's feelings including threats, insults, intimidation or controlling behaviour.
- Sexual abuse – any sexual activity that a person does not want or consent to
- Financial abuse – theft of money or possessions, fraud, being prevented from accessing own finances or assets without consent.
- Neglect – failure to provide for a person's needs including medical care, food, warmth, hygiene or stimulation.

Responsibilities:

Throughout the organisation there is a responsibility for safeguarding as set out below:

Trustees and Senior Management (Clinical Head of Service and Head of Administration):

- Ensure that the safeguarding policy is in place and reviewed annually.
- Provide adequate resources for safeguarding.
- Are aware of and will comply with the Charity Commission guidance on [safeguarding and protecting people](#) and also the [10 actions trustee boards need to take](#) to ensure good safeguarding governance.
- Create a culture of respect where all feel safe and able to speak up and ensure any issues are properly investigated and dealt with quickly, fairly and sensitively and reported appropriately.
- Appoint a suitably qualified Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The Trustees have appointed Beth Evans (Clinical Head of Service).
- Appoint a DBS Verifier
- The Trustees have appointed Lisa Burnett (Head of Administration).

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Receive and manage safeguarding concerns.
- Liaise with external agencies as required.
- Maintain accurate records.
- Keep up to date with safeguarding training.
- Ensure all members of staff, counsellors and volunteers are up to date with safeguarding training and keep an appropriate log and central register for DBS clearances and training.
- Be confident counsellors understand how to keep themselves and their clients safe online if offering online counselling as an alternative to face to face therapy.
- Ensure that safeguarding risk assessments are carried out and appropriate action taken to minimise these risks e.g. no lone working etc.



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DBS Verifier:

- Complete induction of all new staff, counsellors and volunteers
- Request all new staff, counsellors and volunteers complete DBS application and check all identification documents against application and submit.

Counsellors, Staff and Volunteers:

- Inform clients of the organisations Safeguarding Policy
- Read and understand this policy.
- Report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries with clients.
- Attend all required safeguarding training.

Recruitment and Induction

All new staff, counsellors and volunteers will be required to complete a DBS Enhanced Check with Barred List (Vulnerable Adults) as part of the process prior to client work commencing. The induction process includes being inducted on policies and procedures to include the safeguarding policy and DBS checking process.

Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Concerns

The organisation recognises that safeguarding concerns can arise at any time and in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:

- Clients during their counselling sessions;
- Counsellors in clinical supervision or group supervision;
- Administration staff and client interaction;
- Administration staff and counsellors interaction;
- Trustee and Senior Management meetings.

Reporting Concerns:

- Any person who has a safeguarding concern must report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Concerns should be reported immediately.
- Detailed records of all concerns will be kept.
- All clients are reminded of our Safeguarding policy.

Responding to Concerns:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess the information and take appropriate action.
- This may involve:
 - Discussing the concern with the client.
 - Contacting external agencies, such as social services or the police.
 - Providing support to the individual concerned.



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Confidentiality:

- The organisation will maintain confidentiality, except where there is a risk of harm to the individual or others;
- Information will only be shared on a "need to know" basis with appropriate external agencies or the police.

Record Keeping:

- All safeguarding concerns will be recorded, and those records will be stored securely.

Training and Support

All staff and volunteers will receive regular safeguarding training and ongoing support and supervision will be provided.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if required.

Contacts

Designation Safeguarding Lead:

Beth Evans

Tel: 01603 626650

email: headofservice@otr-norfolk.org.uk

In cases of emergency dial 999

Contacting Police Adult Protection Units

Call 101 in the first instance

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

If concerned about a vulnerable adult or child call 0344 800 8020.

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/39170/Multi-agency-safeguarding-hub-MASH>

Accessibility

This policy is available on the organisations website and forms part of the organisations policies which are maintained electronically and are available in paper format on request by telephone 01603 626650 or email admin@otr-norfolk.org.uk

Approved October 2025

Next review October 2025