

Safeguarding: The Protection of Children and Adults at Risk

Guidance for Assessment Specialists



This guidance has been put together by the OCR Safeguarding Team and is designed to help you understand your responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and child protection when working as an OCR representative.

For the purposes of this policy, and its enforcement, the following terms used are defined as:

Child – a child is anybody who has not yet reached the age of 18.

Adult at Risk – an adult at risk is defined as a person who is aged 18 years or over whom a 'regulated activity' relating to adults at risk (as set out in the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006) is provided.

Abuse – Abuse may be specific mistreatment or neglect of a child or adult at risk. Somebody may abuse a child or adult at risk by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and adults at risk may be abused by an adult or adults, or by a child or children. Abuse and exploitation may result from single or multiple acts of sexual exploitation, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, harm from bad practice or undue pressure that affects the child or adult at risks independence or personal development.

Safeguarding – the act of putting policies, procedures, training, and appropriate people in place to minimise the possibility of abuse and to deal appropriately with abuse if it occurs.

OCR Representative - any assessor or any other person whose activities and/or reason for coming into contact with vulnerable groups is substantively defined by OCR.

Radicalisation – the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

Dealing with Concerns or Disclosures

There can be a range of possible ways in which a concern might arise during your activities:

- a candidate's script or coursework
- student-teacher or other-adult relationship
- indications of self-harm
- behaviour between older and younger students
- behaviour of a fellow assessor
- social media

All allegations or suspicions of abuse must be taken seriously and treated in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Things to look out for as signs of a possible issue include:

- threats or accounts, direct or inferred, of self-inflicted harm
- threats or accounts, direct or inferred, of harm to others
- indications that the individual is being physically, sexually or emotionally threatened or harmed by others
- indications that the mental state of the individual may be impaired
- indications that the individual is being bullied or taken advantage of
- use of indecent or violent images
- indications that individual(s) are being radicalised or aiming to radicalise others.

These signs could take the form of answers to questions, other narrative on a question paper, graphic drawings, emails or any other form of correspondence. References to previous incidents or experiences, as well as immediate issues, should be highlighted to an OCR Safeguarding Officer (see contact details).

Events that would NOT normally constitute a Safeguarding issue unless other signs are present are:

- a failure to answer any questions in an examination
- isolated uses of indecent language
- generic doodles

Concerns or Disclosures Arising from a Script or Coursework

If the concern arises as the result of any **written communication** the course of action should be the same.

DO NOT contact the candidate or try to intervene yourself refer the documentation to one of the OCR Safeguarding Officers (see contact details) in one of the following ways:

- For RM™ Assessor scripts flag the item using the 'material of concern' option.
- If it is an examination script, copy the front cover and all pages that contain material of concern. Send these, where possible by registered post, and a covering note to one of the OCR Safeguarding Officers, clearly marked 'Private & Confidential'.
- For other hardcopy documents send a photocopy of the material and a covering note to one of the OCR Safeguarding Officers, clearly marked 'Private & Confidential'.
- For emails forward the email to one of the OCR Safeguarding Officers putting the words 'Safeguarding Concern' in the subject line.
- In all cases the original document should be allowed to continue through the standard assessment process, to be dealt with as normal.
- If you have a more immediate issue or would like further advice please contact one of the OCR Safeguarding Officers by telephone (see contact details).

Concerns or Disclosures Arising From Inappropriate Activities at Centres

On occasions, a child protection concern at a centre may arise out of an activity that you are observing. Two possible contexts for this are drama performance and discussions you are observing. If an activity you are watching gives you cause for concern, you will need to consider whether to stop the assessment prior to completion. No activity should continue that might be seen as raising safeguarding issues, or putting anyone at risk of harm or abuse.

You must raise your concerns immediately with the Head of Centre. As soon as possible you should send a written account by email to one of the OCR Safeguarding Officers.

Concerns Arising from the Actions or Comments of a Colleague

Any allegation of abuse or suspected abuse in relation to a colleague acting as an OCR Representative must be referred to an OCR Safeguarding Officer for discussion and guidance. The matter will be dealt with in accordance with the OCR's Safeguarding and/or whistleblowing/disciplinary procedures.

If a concern arises during a visit to a Centre where the colleague is in direct contact with children, you must immediately notify:

- the Head of Centre and/or the Centre's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- an OCR Safeguarding Officer

Contacting OCR Safeguarding Officers

OCR has two Safeguarding Officers who can be contacted via safeguarding@ocr.org.uk

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Complaints and Admin Processes Manager

Stuart Ross

Special Requirements Manager

Code of Conduct

When you are working with children, young people, or adults at risk you need to demonstrate the highest level of professional conduct. This includes:

- Avoiding physical contact
- Avoiding verbal or non-verbal expression, or other behaviour, that could be construed as intimidating
- Avoiding placing yourself in situations where you are open to false allegations
- Protecting vulnerable individuals from possible abuse by others.

To put candidates at their ease, you should appear friendly, open-minded, and relaxed, without becoming too familiar.

When arriving at a centre, be ready to provide proof of your identity with recognised documentation such as a photocard driving licence or passport.

When visiting a centre, a member of centre staff should always be with you, and you should not be unaccompanied at any time. If you are conducting a virtual visit using an online conferencing platform such as Microsoft teams, you must never allow yourself to be online with candidates without a member of centre staff being present.