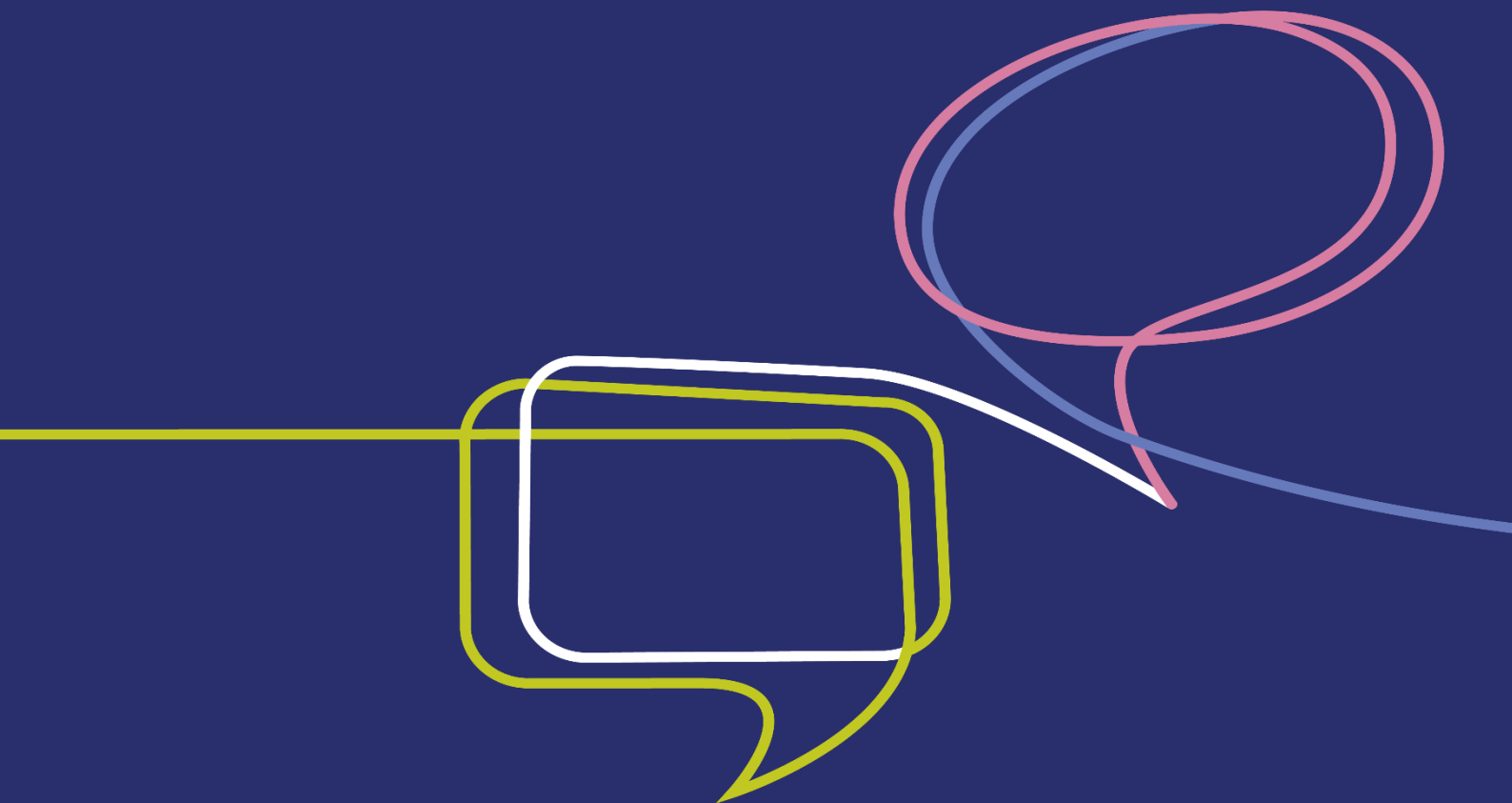


Redress Scotland Survivor
Engagement Annual Report
2022-24



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1. Introduction

Redress Scotland is committed to working with survivors to ensure that their voices are heard and that we continuously take feedback to improve the way we work.

Our values of dignity, respect and compassion underpin everything that we do. Our values drive how we undertake our engagement work. They exist to challenge us and hold us to account, ensuring that we keep survivors at the heart of everything that we do.

In October 2022, Rachael Boyle joined the Policy and Improvement team as Engagement Lead to develop and implement our engagement work. Below are highlights from the key pieces of work that have taken place over the past 18 months. We have also set out improvements that we have made based on direct feedback, and recommendations for next steps.

2. What we did

11 engagement activities have taken place over the past 18 months in various forms including online and in person. We have engaged with a variety of stakeholders including survivors, survivor organisations, and solicitors. We have also undertaken informal engagement work on an individual basis with survivors.

2.1 In person meetings

From the outset we have taken a person-centred approach to these meetings, and from the beginning we have referred to them as in-person meetings, rather than the formal 'oral testimony' as set out in the legislation. This is because the meetings are not about testing the credibility of a survivor, they are about enabling panel members to understand more about an individual's experience of abuse.

Since December 2021, we have carried out 11 in-person meetings with survivors. Out of these 11 meetings, 10 of these have taken place in-person and one was a telephone call.

At the meetings the survivor, the panel member(s), and Engagement Lead attend. On occasion the survivor may also have a legal representative or a supporter attend. The meetings are carried out by the Engagement Lead, in a location that is suitable for the survivor.

Despite the meetings being an intense experience for survivors, we have had positive feedback from everyone who has attended them. To support survivors, we developed, with survivors, an information leaflet about the process.

The Engagement Lead also provides pre and post support to the survivor to try and alleviate any anxieties about the process, and to ensure they are as involved in the process as possible.

2.2 Who Cares? Scotland Engagement Session

We were introduced to Who Cares? Scotland by one of our panel members. We were invited to facilitate a face-to-face engagement session with seven of their phone line staff.

The session took place in June 2023 and was led by Joanna McCreadie, our Chief Executive and Rachael Boyle, our Engagement Lead. The session focused on providing information about the work of Redress Scotland. It resulted in a lot of myths about Scotland's Redress Scheme being discussed and provided phone line staff with a clear understanding about the work that we do.

As a result, those who attended found that it was 'really helpful to understand the process but also what evidence to discuss with survivors.' They found it 'vital to be able to help people focus on abuse suffered, rather than how it made them feel.' One of the members of staff said that they felt 'we are better trained to support people sensitively and to share our knowledge to empower them.'

2.3 Online Engagement Sessions with Survivor Organisations

We hosted 3 online engagement sessions with survivor organisations and solicitors in February 2023. These sessions gave attendees an insight into Redress Scotland as an organisation, as well as the process an application goes through once it reaches us. We also provided an opportunity for questions and answers at the end of the session. These were then published on our [website](#).

We had over 40 individuals attend these sessions from numerous organisations including Wellbeing Scotland, Rape Crisis Scotland, and Future Pathways.

We received very positive feedback on these sessions with people agreeing that session was both informative and relevant, that the topics covered were what they wanted to hear about and that it was well delivered.

2.4 Online Joint Engagement Session – Redress Scotland and Scottish Government

In October 2023 we hosted a joint online engagement sessions with Scottish Government and Redress Support Service.

The purpose of these sessions was to give a full overview of the scheme and allow survivor organisations to ask questions to each organisation.

We had around 30 attendees from a number of organisations. The feedback for Redress Scotland from this session was that it was 'very helpful' and that attendees liked 'the emphasis that survivors are at the heart of the process.'

2.5 Survivor Engagement Session August

In August 2023 we hosted our first face to face engagement session in Glasgow with a group of survivors. This was hosted by the Policy and Improvement team, and supported by members of the Operations Team too.

We had 8 survivors attend this session, with some bringing their partners.

The session discussed topics such as communication, decision letters and individual's experience of applying to the scheme.

2.6 Survivor Forum Engagement Sessions – Face to Face

In November 2023 we held 2 face-to-face engagement sessions with members of the Survivor Forum. These sessions were jointly delivered by Redress Scotland and Scottish Government.

The sessions were held in Glasgow and we had 32 survivors take part across the two sessions. During the sessions we discussed topics such as communication, people's experience of applying to the scheme and future activity of the forum.

We split survivors into small groups with a member of Redress Scotland and Scottish Government in each group so that we could capture feedback from both parts of the scheme.

We had a lot of feedback for both organisations at the session and also some constructive ways in which survivors see future forum activity moving forward.

2.7 Survivor Forum Engagement Sessions – Online

In November 2023 we hosted 2 online engagement sessions which were offered as an alternative to the face to face engagement sessions.

We had 5 survivors attend the online engagement sessions. The topics were the same as the online sessions with there being a member from Redress Scotland and Scottish Government in attendance. We also had one survivor who requested a 1-1 session and this was carried out too.

2.8 General Survivor Engagement

We have undertaken general engagement work with individual survivors throughout the year. This engagement has mainly focused on updating survivors on our work with a particular focus on our communications, as well as seeking feedback on where we can make improvements.

We have also been engaging with survivors who have contacted us directly. We have been offering to provide individualised information to survivors, including those who have requested updates on where they are in our priority queues.

2.9 Monthly Focus

We developed a Monthly Focus which is a monthly piece of communication that goes out to survivor organisations. This was created following feedback from our online engagement sessions, where attendees told us they would like to be kept updated more frequently about our work.

The monthly focus gives updates about key pieces of work within Redress Scotland, for example, staffing updates, website updates, new communications which have been developed and future engagement sessions. We also take the opportunity in the monthly focus to introduce a member of our staff team giving information about them and their role. We also publish the monthly focus' on our website.

We have decided moving forward that we will send these focus pieces our every second month to avoid repeating information.

3. What we are doing well

Over the last 18 months we have done well at engaging with a variety of stakeholders on a number of different platforms.

We have successfully gathered feedback at these sessions which has then informed work we have carried out.

We published a ['You Said We Did'](#) article setting out key issues and areas for improvement that sets out examples of changes we have made as a result of feedback we received during our engagement work.

From feedback, we know we are doing well at creating a safe and open environment for survivors who have engaged with us.

We are doing well at building and sustaining relationships with survivors who we have engaged with at engagement sessions. We are always open to speaking and communicating with survivors at any point in their Redress journey.

4. What we need to do differently

We are looking at new ways to capture feedback through general enquiries and complaints that we receive. This will allow us to engage with more

survivors and gain a wider understanding of survivor's experiences of the scheme.

We need to look at developing additional ways to continue to engage with survivor organisations while still giving them up to date and relevant information. This year we will be hosting focused engagement sessions on areas of Redress Scotland, for example panel sittings days and additional information that panel members may ask survivors for.

We need to look at new and innovative ways of communication and also develop this on our website. We will be seeking feedback from survivors on ways in which our communication is working well and ways that this can improve. This will allow us to develop a plan and new materials which are as relevant and accessible as possible.

5. Conclusion and next steps

Overall, we have made a good start on working and engaging with survivors and survivor organisations however, there is still much more we can do.

We should continue to develop and build on the engagement work we have started and continue to maintain and build relationships with the groups we have already engaged with. Over the next year we will engage with survivors and those that support them, listening to their experiences of applying to Scotland's Redress Scheme. We will continue to be open and transparent about how the feedback we receive during our engagement work helps to improve the work that we deliver across Redress Scotland.

5.1 Next steps

In our business plan for 2024/25, we have committed to organising at least 4 direct engagement sessions with survivors. We will also have individual discussions with survivors and actively seek feedback on their views and experiences of the work of Redress Scotland. We will be carrying out a variety of engagement activities, both internally and externally.

We will be reviewing the in-person meeting process during 2024/25. We will set up a working group from across Redress Scotland, including the Engagement Lead, Operations team members, and Policy and Improvement team. We will also seek feedback from panel members who have been involved in in-person meetings. This will enable us to identify what is working well, what improvements we can make and implementing improvements.

We will continue to build on our engagement with Who Cares? Scotland via email and regular team meetings. We will be developing and hosting further engagement session(s) with Who Cares? Scotland.

We will be undertaking at least 2 further online engagement sessions with survivor organisations. These will be focused on specific topics, such as, panel sitting days, or clarifying questions. These will be jointly hosted between the Policy and Improvement team and the Operations team.

In August 2024 we will be hosting a further face to face engagement session with a group of survivors from Smyllum. This will be building on the engagement work that we undertook with this group in August 2023. The content of the session will be developed with the group members.

Throughout 2024/25 we will be working alongside Scottish Government colleagues to host 2 further face to face engagement sessions with Survivor Forum members. Other opportunities for those who do not want to engage in a face to face session will be offered, such as, a telephone call or a Teams meeting. We will also be introducing the opportunity for Survivor Forum members to attend monthly online drop-in sessions. We will be monitoring the uptake for these sessions as they are a new opportunity to engage.

A newsletter will also be sent to Survivor Forum members throughout the year enabling us to seek views on planned engagement, offer sign-up to sessions, and provide feedback following engagement sessions.

In our 2023/24 Annual Report and Accounts we set out 4 recommendations for improvement. These recommendations are for both Scottish Government and Redress Scotland. The Policy and Improvement team are leading on our response to the recommendation:

Recommendation four - Scotland's Redress Scheme should complete a strategic review of all communications about the scheme with a strong focus on accessibility and awareness for survivors. There may be benefits in appointing an independent agency or expert to lead and deliver this review. Central to any review are the voices and experiences of survivors, which should be used to identify what improvements are needed. The strategic review should be completed within six months of the publication of this report and result in a clear action plan for the Scottish Government and Redress Scotland to implement.

To respond to this recommendation we will be working with a small group of survivors, who are experts through their lived experience and experience of applying to Scotland's Redress Scheme, to undertake a strategic review and evaluation of Redress Scotland's communications.

The group will be encouraged and supported to share an honest and frank appraisal of our communications work, and make recommendations on what and how we should improve.

This approach will ensure survivor's voices are at the centre of our improvements and that we establish a clear action plan that describes the positive changes that survivors want to see and how we will achieve them. The action plan will be published by end of May 2024.

The work on legacy is moving forward well and over the next 6 months, we intend to speak with and gather reflections from The Deputy Chair and Chief Executive of Redress Scotland , team members who were with the organisation from inception (appropriate staff within the Operations Team) and Panel Members who have been with the organisation from inception.

There are also plans across the next 6 to 9 months to speak with members of the Practice Development Group with regards to capturing the early formation and development of the group. We also plan on speaking with the Learning, Development and Wellbeing Lead about the formation and development of training inputs.

If the opportunity arises at engagement sessions with survivors, we will also bring up the topic of legacy and ask for ideas and feedback from this group.