

Annual Report and Accounts
2022/23 – Response to
Recommendation 4



Background

The Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Act 2021 sets out that Redress Scotland must prepare a report on activities during that year and that the report may include recommendations.

There were four recommendations set out in our first [annual report and accounts](#). These recommendations are for both Redress Scotland and Scottish Government. The Scottish Government is developing their own separate response to the recommendations.

This report sets out how Redress Scotland has sought to address **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.

What we did

The strategic review and evaluation was led by Redress Scotland's Policy and Improvement Team. We asked a group of survivors, as independent experts, to give us feedback on our communications and help identify how we can make improvements.

To complete the review and evaluation, we first developed a set of questions. This was important in ensuring that we were consistent in our evaluation, and we used these same questions when working with survivors and gathering the thoughts of organisations who support survivors.

The questions we asked were:

- 1. From your experience, what do you feel Redress Scotland is doing well when it comes to our communications?**
Please include any experience you have had - for example, accessing our website, reading reports, attending an engagement session etc.
- 2. From your experience, what do you feel Redress Scotland could do better when it comes to our communications?**

Please include any experience you have had - for example, accessing our website, reading reports, attending an engagement session etc.

3. Of the improvements Redress Scotland could make to our communications, which do you think should be a priority?

4. If you have any further thoughts/feedback regarding Redress Scotland's communications, please share them below.

We worked with a small group of 7 survivors, who are experts through their lived experience and have experience of applying to Scotland's Redress Scheme. Given time constraints we were unable to bring the group together face to face. We therefore organised on-line Teams meetings and telephone calls with individuals and small groups.

It was important that survivors felt able to be open with us, especially about where we can do better. The survivors we spoke with were encouraged and supported to share an honest and frank appraisal of our communications work, and make recommendations on what and how we should improve.

For organisations who support survivors, we put the questions into a survey which was shared via email. We had responses from 4 organisations.

What we are doing well

Survivors told us that when it comes to our communications, we are open, clear, welcoming and friendly.

Feedback provided during this review has shown that survivors feel they are included and consulted when it comes to the development of our communications, and that Redress Scotland listen to their feedback and as a result of this feedback we implement changes.

Survivors also felt that Redress Scotland is available for survivors when they are in need of support and are always helpful in their approach. It is also felt that Redress Scotland give survivors good quality information whenever they have direct contact with us.

Feedback provided on letters reflected that they are informative pieces of communication. Survivors reflected that the new letters that have been implemented provided information about when an application is received by us and when an application is going to be considered by a panel. This was noted as a welcome addition and survivors valued the fact that these keep individuals up to date as much as possible.

Overall, there was positive feedback on our website. It was noted that the website held good quality information on it. Survivors also highlighted the

videos we have on our website as a particular way in which we communicate that they like.

Survivors reflected that we were proactive in our communication, for example by giving up to date information through our monthly focus which is sent to survivors, survivor groups and organisations that support survivors.

Our engagement sessions were highlighted in particular, with survivors saying that they felt the information they gained at these sessions was relevant and useful. Survivors also said that Redress Scotland staff were knowledgeable and honest at these sessions about ways in which we can make improvements.

What improvements can we make to our communication?

During the review there were keys areas highlighted where Redress Scotland can make improvements to our communications.

One area of improvement was around the structure of the website. It was noted that the focus of the website felt like it was becoming more corporate and governance focused. It was suggested that the website should be more focused on what is important to survivors on the landing page and that we should have important news pieces front and centre. It was highlighted that there are duplications on the website and certain pieces of information are being held in various places.

It was suggested that there should be more information or case studies captured about survivors direct and diverse experiences of applying to the scheme. There was also feedback that the website should contain more information about application timescales.

There was a suggestion that there is a need for financial advice and information to be included in our communications. A further suggestion was that there could also be a FAQ's section on our website and this could include questions about the impact on benefits when receiving redress.

The way in which we communicate with local authorities about the work we do was suggested as a helpful area to increase our communication. This would in turn give local authorities up to date information about Redress Scotland and our part in the scheme. There was also the suggestion that Redress Scotland should proactively be asking organisations that we engage with what more we could be doing to support them.

There was also feedback that there should be support offered for individuals once their redress journey has come to an end.

We asked survivors during our review sessions about the aspects of our communications that they felt were a priority. The website was the main theme that arose. This included making the website more accessible for survivors and also trying to make improvements to the website structure whilst also simplifying the content.

Another priority for survivors was around the advertisement of the scheme and raising awareness of the work we do in Redress Scotland. Lastly, survivors felt that having support available after redress was important.

What improvements can we make to our communication?

Outwith the set questions we asked the survivors who participated in the review if they had any other thoughts or feedback for us. Survivors expressed that it was important for Redress Scotland to continue to be honest and transparent with survivors.

A further point raised was that an individual did not like the name for panels, as this reminded them of children's hearing panels.

A final reflection from most of the survivors we worked with on the review was that Redress Scotland should continue to engage with survivors and survivor groups and also look at ways to connect with new groups.

Conclusion

We heard that Redress Scotland is seen as being open, clear, and honest in the way we communicate. This included keeping survivors up to date about their application through the letters being sent out. We heard that we are doing a good job at consulting with, listening to and responding to survivors – however, we could also be reaching out more, and making sure that we are proactively asking those organisations we already engage with what more we could be doing.

Survivors told us that they feel that Redress Scotland is helpful in its approach, and available to provide support when needed. It was also shared that there should also be support available for individuals once their redress journey has come to an end.

We also heard that we are knowledgeable, and that the information we provide is relevant and high quality. There are, however, ways that we could make the written information on our website easier to find, and specific information we could add – for example, financial advice and an FAQs section. We could also add more information which captures and shows survivors' diverse experience of applying to the scheme, and make sure that the information most relevant to survivors is front and centre on the website.

Next Steps

In response to the feedback shared with us, we will:

- **Make updates to our website**

These updates will take place over time, and they will centre around making sure that the website is survivor focused. To do this, we will look at how we can simplify the structure of the website, highlight the most relevant information, and add more content about survivors' experiences of applying to the scheme, including the development of more short videos. We will also develop FAQs and draw on work already undertaken by Scottish Government to link information they provide to survivors, in relation to financial advice and any other relevant information.

To make sure we are making the right changes, we will continue to work with the survivors who took part in this review during this development.

- **Continue and further develop our communication and engagement with survivors, survivor groups, and organisations that support survivors**

We will continue to develop our communication about application waiting times, making sure that we are honest and transparent with survivors.

We will continue to engage with the survivor focus group on a quarterly basis, and consider further ways in which we can reach out and proactively highlight the work of Redress Scotland.

We will continue to seek feedback from survivors, including on any changes that we make following this evaluation.

- **Consider the support available across the scheme**

We will think about the support currently offered during the time a survivor's application is with Redress Scotland.

We will also share this feedback with SG for consideration across the scheme as a whole.

Reporting Progress

Redress Scotland will include an update on the progress made in delivering our response to this recommendation in our 2024/25 annual report.