

Meeting: Redress Scotland Oversight Board

Date: 22nd May 2024, 0930-1230

Location: MS Teams

Minuted by: Diane Piper (DP)

In attendance

- Kirsty Darwent (KD) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Chair)
- Bill Matthews (WM) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Deputy Chair, Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Chair)
- Colin Spivey (CS) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member)
- Paul Edie (PE) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member)
- Mary McCallan (MM) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member, Panel Member)
- Joanna McCreadie (JM) (Redress Scotland Chief Executive)
- Gary Gallacher (GG) (Redress Scotland Head of Operations)
- Michael Stevens (MS) (Head of Finance and Resources)
- Michelle Nairn (MN) (Redress Scotland Head of People)
- Melanie Lowe (ML) (Redress Scotland Head of Policy & Improvement)

Apologies;

- Roy McComb (RM) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member)
- Brian Houston (BH) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member, Panel Member)

By Invitation;

Neil Mackay (NM) (Redress Scotland, Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Member)

Agenda item 1. Welcome, apologies, conflicts of interest and appoint Survivor Voice

KD opened the meeting welcoming all present.

Apologies from RM and BH were noted.

There were no Board Member conflicts of interest noted.

MM was appointed the survivor voice for the duration of the meeting.

Agenda item 2. Minutes of the previous meeting on the 25th March 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 25th March 2024 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting with no further amendment required.

The restricted item from the last meeting was also approved.

Agenda item 3. Matters Arising – Action Log

The action log was presented . Several updates were agreed and the log amended accordingly.

Agenda item 4. Report from the Chair

KD informed members of her key activities since the last meeting.

KD met with Professor Andy Kendrick (AK). AK has written extensively on the history of childcare in Scotland particularly around corporal punishment. KD advised it was very helpful to get his perspective and input.

The last cohort of new panel members have been signed off as ready to practice. All training sessions are complete.

All but one of the non -executive appraisals have been undertaken. Once this is complete the skills map will be prepared and shared. KD noted that this was one of the audit recommendations.

KD has observed a number of panels and noted the quality and rigour employed across the whole panel member team. KD acknowledged the commitment and depth of thought in decision making.

In terms of activity with Scottish Government, KD reported one meeting with JM and the Director and Deputy Director. This was a constructive meeting discussing the areas of work of Redress Scotland and the Redress Division. At the end of the meeting there was an agreement to meet again in the near future to discuss all meetings which take place

between Redress Scotland and Scottish Government to establish the purpose of each meeting, the attendees, and the extent to which these support both parties. JM and ML are preparing a paper mapping out current meetings.

Agenda item 5 Report from the Chief Executive

5.1 Chief Executive's report

JM reported on activity since the last meeting.

The new panel members are now onboard and are already reflecting a good standard of working methods coupled with an openness to learn. The existing panel members have shown a strong commitment to support the new starts. It has been noted that the new panel members are taking a longer time to prepare for sitting days. As the preparation time impacts on the cost per decision and scheduling of meetings, research is now underway going back to the start of the scheme to compare preparation times. We are not yet reaching the capacity expected. Historically, panel members have increased their number of days over time but this cannot be guaranteed. The resignation of 4 panel members since inception was also noted as turnover also has an impact on overall capacity

Within our annual report were recommendations for improvements to the scheme. A response has been received from Scottish Government but further work is required to make these more definitive as we have to include reporting on progress on recommendations in our next annual report.

JM asked members for suggestions on how this work could be approached.

Members noted the recent changes with the Scottish cabinet and that this may result in a different approach to the scheme. As the annual report will be made public the lack of specificity around the recommendations could be open to criticism and therefore it would be better at this stage to once again approach Scottish Government for more information around the recommendations, with the reminder that survivors and survivor groups will be keen to see the progress which has been made.

JM thanked members for their input and confirmed that she would thank Scottish Government for their response and at the same time request more detailed information prior to publication of our annual report and our meeting with new Deputy First Minister.

Both PE and CS offered to review the response to SG.

Action; JM to write to Scottish Government as discussed and to refer to PE and CS before forwarding.

There is a new piece of work started which relates to the public sector reform agenda. Section 11 asks for information on the generation of income and details of how we would demonstrate our savings – ie by being a digital organisation. Our experience in this area could be offered as a consultative piece. JM advised that our ideas were at an early stage and any plan would come to the board as a draft for discussion before approval.

Redress Scotland have been asked to give evidence at the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee on the 12th June. KD, GG and ML are preparing for this and seeking advice from our legal advisors. It is an opportunity to showcase our work but we are also aware of the risks. WM advised that the opening statement will be vital in setting the scene and confirming what can and cannot be addressed during the meeting. WM offered to support if necessary.

Action WM to review opening statement for presentation to the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee.

5.2 Dashboard report

GG presented the recently revised Dashboard report and covering paper. Members were appreciative of the new format which all agreed was much easier to read.

GG spoke to the individual charts outlining the content and the trends they were reflecting.

Several additions were suggested:

1. A chart which shows new applications to SG. It would be helpful to see this mapped against our data.
2. More information around Panel Member working and sitting days.
3. Add a line of narrative to reflect if data related to fixed or individually assessed payments.
4. Present the average processing time for each priority rather than an amalgamated figure.

KD summarised the feedback from the board that the new presentation is a significant improvement and recommended that, subject to the noted changes, future data is presented in this way.

Agenda item 6. Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Update

WM spoke to the minute from the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee held on the 10th April.

Redress Scotland continues to score well with internal audit reports recently receiving reasonable assurance for training and substantial assurance for governance. The audit calendar will be reviewed the revised plan for 2024/25 will be agreed at next Audit Risk and Assurance Committee. In the interim TIAA will undertake a review of stakeholder engagement. JM and WM continue to look at cyber security however there is comfort in the assurances received from Scottish Government that we have the required protection.

Agenda item 7. Governance & Risk

7.1 Strategy Review – Survivor voice

This paper was presented by JM for discussion and is based on the workshop discussion held in March with Eleanor Ryan.

The paper sets out the key points from the discussion together with suggestions for our next steps. A key recommendation is to set up an expert advisory group to sit alongside the board. The advantage of this is in its efficiency and approach providing meaningful engagement with survivor voice speaking direct to governance.

Members agreed that there were pros and cons to any approach adopted acknowledging that it was important to take action and also allow for evaluation and review.

KD summarised the board recommendation for a paper to be presented at the next meeting with clear recommendations, and to include details of remuneration, and a survivor impact assessment.

Action JM to bring a paper to the next Oversight Board providing more detail around the establishment of a survivor advisory board.

7.2 Strategic Risk Register

JM noted there was good discussion at the April Risk Workshop which will be used to update the Strategic Risk Register. All new risks including cyber will be incorporated and

then matched against operational risk registers. The initial report will be presented to Audit Risk and Assurance Committee for scrutiny before coming back to Oversight Board for approval.

7.3 Business Plans

The business plans were initially presented by JM at the March Meeting of Oversight Board where they were included as part of the CEO report. These are presented today for decision. The plans are there to guide and steer activity for the forthcoming year. This year the main focus is to manage capacity. In terms of process, the senior management team have engaged their team members to develop their sections thereby enabling everyone to see their part in the development of the organisation. The board will be provided with regular updates on progress with a full report being provided at the end of the year. Next Year there will be a review of Corporate plan.

KD recommended one addition, that priority be given to the development of survivor voice, structure and remuneration. Following inclusion the plans can then be signed by KD and WM.

Action; members were content to approve the business plans with the inclusion of survivor engagement and for these to be signed off by KD and WM.

Agenda Item 8. Engagement

8.1a, 8.1b Survivor Engagement/ Mapping

ML advised that the paper was requested by members during their self evaluation exercise where it was noted it would be helpful to see the organisations with which we engage. The paper presented is a light touch but easy to understand. ML asked members for feedback on content and presentation.

KD advised that this should be seen as an active document to be used to inform and guide our future activity in this area.

It was agreed to include a section for “contributors and other interested organisations” in the Power Point.

JM will also share this with the Practice Development Group.

Action; Power Point to be amended by ML to include contributors and other interested organisations and papers to be presented to the PDG.

8.1 c Annual report on activity and engagement

ML advised that this was the first annual report on survivor activity and engagement to have been prepared. Much work has been undertaken over the last 12-18 months in terms of scope and depth and with both survivors and survivor organisations. The report also highlights what can be done better and includes a section on next steps. These are already stated with the work in the business plan.

KD thanked ML for the report adding that it pulls together the extensive amount of engagement we have with survivors.

8.2 Complaints and Positive Feedback

The Complaints and Positive Feedback report has been presented to Audit Risk and Assurance Committee and the Practice Development Group and is here for information.

GG highlighted our approach to complaints, where survivors speak directly to a member of the Redress Scotland Team. This approach helps build relationships with individual survivors and we have found that as a result potential complaints have turned into ongoing conversation on the progress of applications.

The main complaint profile is around timescales for decision making. There is frustration at times as delays are primarily a resource issue. All complaints have been upheld but unfortunately there is not much which can be done to increase resources. Direct communication with survivors has however eased the impact and disappointment of the delays.

GG added that performance against KPI has been met.

There is also some positive feedback particularly around decision letters.

KD thanked GG for the detailed report and for evidencing the effectiveness of our approach which reflects the skill of team who work with complainants.

Agenda Item 9 Finance & Procurement

9.1 2023/24 Final Management Accounts

MS confirmed that year end adjustments have been processed we will report on a full year figure of £3,669k and a variance of -£81.3k against the revised budget for the year. The figure is 2.17% below the full year budget figure.

The cashflow has not changed since the P12 briefing with a year-end closing balance of £569.1k. This consists of £219.1k in relation to accrued expenditure, with £350k of cash held for expenditure until our next grant-in-aid is paid at the end of the April. This is approximately one month of cash on hand.

WM enquired about the work of Audit Scotland and was advised the interim audit is complete with the full audit starting in September.

Paper 9.2 – Paper detailing the business case for the purchase of an HR system

MN advised members that the original plan for Redress Scotland was to acquire the HR support from Scottish Government. However, at the time they were unable to accommodate our request due to dealing with the pandemic and other resource implications which meant they did not have the capacity to take on any more work.

The people team been working with procurement for some time to work on a specification and consider all options for getting the right system. This has been complicated and much thought was given to whether to go with open tender, mini competition or to explore the Scottish Government and Crown frameworks to see what supplier may meet our specification requirements.

One failed attempt to secure a provider required us to go back out and use the crown framework and we have since identified a provider.

MN confirmed that due to the sensitive nature of the information held, advice from procurement was sought. As the provider is on the framework we have the assurance that our data will be safe. Other NDPB'S are also using this system. Contained within the specification is an assurance that the provider has the ability to transfer data and this will be included in the contract proposal.

Members were concerned about the costs in the event of an extension to the time period.

Members agreed to support the purchase of an HR system from the recommended provider subject to clarification on the cost of a one and/or two year extension. CS offered to support MN to establish functionality and data migration.

Action – MN to proceed subject to clarification on the points raised. CS to support.

Paper 9.3 – List of current 3rd party providers

The list is provided for information. Members confirmed there were no conflicts with any of the providers specified.

Agenda 10 People

10.1 Health and Safety

MN spoke to the Annual Health and Safety Report prepared by our provider Worknest. The board are requested to formally accept the paper and specify if there is follow up or actions required.

MN advised that we received the maximum score and accordingly provides assurance to the board. Our policy is still compliant and therefore no changes are recommended.

There is still an ongoing programme of work from last year.

KD noted the very substantial assurance from the audit and the board agreed to approve and accept the recommendations.

10.2 Staff Survey

MN presented the report on behalf of the People's Champion Group advising this was the first significant piece of work undertaken by the newly formed group. The survey will be undertaken annually and progress will be tracked. The results are very positive and the challenge will be to maintain this going forward. There were seven key areas identified for improvement and these will be approached on a " *you said – we did* " format.

The Board thanked and praised the team for the work. The action plan will be developed and a further update will come to the board in 6 months time.

Action; Progress to be made on the action plan and report back to the board in 6 months, MN.

10.3 Equalities Report

MN advised that the report presented highlights the actions and improvements which have been undertaken since the last report which was presented to board last year. This has been extended to include applicants from the last 2 recruitment campaigns. It is expected that the new HR system will allow for automation of the reporting. Due to the size of the organisation an anonymised report will be prepared,

KD thanked MN noting a good diversity in range of applicants and appointments.

Agenda Item 11 Policy Approvals

11.1 Fraud Policy

JM presented the final version of the Fraud Policy for approval. This has previously been presented to both Audit Risk and Assurance Committee and Oversight Board. The recent amendments include details on the role and responsibility of panel members.

The board approved the Fraud Policy as presented.

Members enquired if there were any outstanding policies to be approved. ML will check with her team and bring the updated schedule to both Audit Risk and Assurance Committee and Oversight Board.

Action – Current policy schedule to be shared at a future meeting of Audit Risk and Assurance Committee and Oversight Board

Agenda Item 12. Forward Planning

12.1 Forward plan

The content was noted and members confirmed there was nothing from today's meeting to be added.

Agenda Item 13. New And Emerging Risks

KD asked members if there were any emerging risks to be noted from today's meeting. There were no additional risks to note.

Agenda Item 14 Any other competent business

There were a two additional items for consideration.

- The next meeting of the board is on Wednesday 24th July. KD suggested that in order to allow sufficient time for discussion on certain items that members block out the whole day. This will not be required on every occasion but better to have the flexibility built in.
- There was a request for Papers to be circulated in advance of Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee appearance.

Action; members to hold the whole day for future meetings. All

Action: Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee papers to be circulated to members in advance of the meeting. JM

Agenda Item 15. Review of Meeting and Survivor Voice

MM summarised the meeting from the survivor perspective. A great deal of time was spent reflecting on survivor voice and how this can influence the board and support the quality and rigour of decision making.

The complaints and positive feedback report demonstrated the successful approach of direct engagement with survivors. As an organisation we continue to seek out the thoughts of survivors and to establish working arrangements whereby their voice can be included.

KD thanked everyone for their contributions. The meeting demonstrated our ability to reflect and to show commitment to our own improvement.