

**-Meeting:** Redress Scotland Oversight Board

**Date:** 25th March 2024, 1000- 1300

**Location:** Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission 17 Renfield Street, Glasgow, G2 5AH) & Online via 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)
- Roy McComb (RM) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member)
- Mary McCallan(MM) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member, Panel Member)
- Brian Houston (BH) (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;**

None

**By Invitation;**

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

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

KD opened the meeting welcoming all present.

There were no apologies.

There were no Board Member conflicts of interest noted however item 16 , Remuneration Discussion, will be a closed meeting for Board Members and Head of People only with a separate minute prepared by DP.

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

### **Agenda item 2. Minutes of the previous meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024**

The minutes of the previous meetings held on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting with no further amendment required.

There were 2 addendums to the minutes both of which were also approved.

### **Agenda item 3. Matters Arising – Action Log**

The action log was presented and several updates were provided and the log updated.

KD noted good progress on all actions and members were content to remove completed actions from the list.

**Action; DP to update the action log as agreed and circulate to members.**

### **Agenda item 4. Report from the Chair**

KD advised that her report will be a verbal update covering 3 main areas; diary activity, emerging themes and continuous improvement.

#### **Diary events**

Panel member training finished on Saturday and was delivered to two separate cohorts. This Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> March, individual fitness to practice meetings are scheduled for the members of the second cohort. KD noted that the training has been excellent and this has been echoed by panel members.

KD has regular meetings scheduled with JM and members of the senior team. Focus has been on the development of KPIs, and a review of internal processes to support decision making.

The annual conference was an excellent day and it was a good for everyone to meet in person.

Martin from TIAA has undertaken an internal review of governance. Early indications are that the report will be good with only a few minor recommendations for improvement.

KD has taken the opportunity to observe 2 panels which has further grounded her in the work we do.

### **Emerging Themes**

With the induction of the new panel members now complete the capacity within Redress Scotland is significantly increased. This is being managed well and new members are being scheduled into panel sittings.

KD continues to meet with the sponsor team and Scottish Government. The current deputy director is moving into a part time role to be shared over 6 days with a colleague. Relationships and understanding of the various roles within the redress scheme continue to develop.

### **Continuous improvement**

An attitude of continuous improvement underpins all our work and KD has been pleased to experience this across the public body.

KD has met with a survivor who was very generous in sharing his experience. Of note were his comments around a lack of transparency over people working in the scheme, adding that he could establish who from within Redress Scotland was looking after his application but not in other parts of the scheme. KD has raised this with Scottish Government.

Meetings have also taken place with the Deputy Director and a meeting in April will include the Director of Children and Families, where JM will also be in attendance.

## **Agenda item 5 Report from the Chief Executive**

### **5.1 Chief Executive's report**

JM advised that her report focusses on the progress of the 2023/24 business plan.

JM reported good progress on all agreed actions. Some actions took longer than anticipated particularly when external stakeholders were involved. Future plans will be more focussed as the priority for the coming year will be managing the increased capacity. JM highlighted that there will be a significant increase in the volume of work we undertake. We are also expecting a commensurate increase in complexity of the applications received.

JM was pleased to report that the induction training for the 2 cohorts of panel members is now complete. The training was improved and refined and included more case studies with direct feedback to participants. Almost all panel members are ready to start sitting on panels. This has been a hugely demanding resource in terms of time and commitment. JM added that the training was developed as it was being delivered. The team were able to provide specific guidance for each Panel Member.

## **5.2 Dashboard report**

JM presented the key points from the dashboard report.

In the past year we have increased our output and at the same time maintained the quality standards we have set. However, the 30 day KPI is not met and the current timescale for priority three applicants is around 5-6 months. We continue to improve our communications with survivors but this doesn't take away from the disappointment due to delays.

The throughput from Scottish Government is slowing, however we are aware that Scottish Government has had an increase in applications to the scheme as whole.

WM asked if our decision making was slower. JM replied that the team were working at a high pace before Christmas which has been unsustainable. The rates reflect staff shortages in team scheduling and quality assurance checks. Staff have been focussed on panel member training. GG added that we have also received a number of very large application packs and it is noted that some panel members are unavailable for long periods of time.

GG reported that we are filling the gap in quality assurance with a dedicated new role commencing in April thereby reducing the requirement to use other members from across the wider team.

PE enquired about the number of reconvened panels and was advised that the return of applications can occur at several stages of the process. There was a recommendation regarding the reconvened rate in the annual report.

It was further noted that the dashboard layout should be addressed. A front page summary with detailed notes would be helpful.

**Action; The senior team will review the dashboard and bring an updated version to the next meeting.**

## **Agenda item 6. Finance**

MS presented the management accounts for February 2024 noting an underspend in the provision for legal services but advising that this budget may yet be required for ongoing work.

We are currently on target for a £77.6k underspend for the year. In view of the 3% buffer we are likely to come in around budget at the end of the year.

## **Agenda item 7. Governance**

### **7.1 Governance Review**

KD advised that the review is a summary of the activity and processes over the past year and includes a projection into the year ahead.

WM added that he had supported the report which is a reminder of why we do what we do. The report to stand us in good stead for the future and reflects strong but proportionate governance for an organisation of our size.

Actions will be forthcoming following recommendations from internal and external audit and these will be considered on an annual basis.

### **7.2 Schedule of Delegated Authority**

This was presented to the Board at the January meeting and the consensus is that the current version is more straight forward than the original and easier to navigate.

WM added it was an excellent and proportionate paper. There was one further addition to be made in relation to the sign off of policies by the Oversight Board and that was to note that the authority for sign off is provided **“under the authority delegated to them by the Corporate Body”**

The Board approved the adoption of the revised Schedule of Delegation subject to the above addition.

**Action; JM to add the line “under the authority delegated to them by the Corporate Body”**

## **Agenda Item 8. Key Performance Indicators**

### **8.1 Revision of 30 day KPI and priorities for applications**

GG noted that at the last Oversight Board meeting it was agreed that further consideration should be given to whether the current KPI for decision making timescales should be changed, and whether any changes should be made in relation to prioritisation. GG continued that as these currently stand they provide a potentially inaccurate view for survivors. He noted that the majority of applications are Priority 3 and the current timescale for processing within Redress Scotland is 5-6 months.

In order to assess potential changes to prioritisation two areas were considered.

1. Mental and Physical Health considerations. These have been cited as new reasons for prioritising applications by survivors. Members were reluctant to pursue this on the basis that the organisation would need additional capacity in terms of expertise and financial resources. There would be multiple complexities in prioritising applications on the basis of mental and physical health with the potential for this to be unfair.
2. End to end timescales. Redress Scotland has only a limited understanding of full end to end timescales. We do not have access to any back information in relation to how long it has taken the applicant to complete the application or what help was enlisted. Not everyone enters the scheme at the same starting point and survivors can choose to pause their applications. GG concluded that we do not have a straightforward way of assessing the reasons for timescales before Redress Scotland receives the application, and for us the date the application is received is our starting point. If application paused, then it continues where it left off.

BH suggested age related priority should this be moved every year as survivors get older and is then routinely changed annually. However, it was recognised that this might unintentionally disadvantage later applicants to the scheme.

There was discussion around the current KPI and the most appropriate new timescale to be adopted, making sure that a new KPI is realistic and still ambitious. The Oversight Board approved the proposal for change in the paper. This will be monitored throughout 2024-25.

KD summarised the discussion noting that approval from the Board is requested to revise KPI. There will not be any change around mental health or end to end timescales. It was further noted that it was for the Chair of Redress Scotland, under the Redress for Survivors Act, to make the final decision on prioritisation.

**The Oversight Board approved recommendation to the Chair to amend the timescales around the KPI for decision making, and the Chair confirmed this is the decision to be made.**

## **Agenda Item 9 Quality Assurance**

### **9.1 Quality Assurance Report 2023/24**

ML reported that this was the first quality assurance report to be presented to the Board following approval of the framework in March 2023. Significant evaluation has been undertaken over 23 areas and going forward we will have to ensure that we can report against all of these areas. Themes have been identified across Governance and world café outputs and from these implementation and development plans have been drafted.

#### **The Key findings**

- Survivors at heart of the organisation
- Confidence in purpose of Redress Scotland
- Training for all staff
- A culture of continuous improvement is evident across all areas.

#### **What we could do differently**

- Concerns about capacity both within and out with the organisation
- How do we continue to engage effectively with survivors.

Generally, people found it helpful to be part of the self-evaluation process

The paper is presented for information with the recommendation that going forward quarterly reviews will be presented to the Board.

The Board thanked ML and her team for the paper and noted appreciation for the challenge of collating all the different evaluation streams without overstressing the resource to do this. It was further agreed that a quarterly report would be useful.

**Action; Quarterly reports to be presented by ML to the oversight board, July and November 2024 and February 2025.**

## **Agenda 10 Survivor engagement**

### **10.1 Appraisal of remuneration for engagement work**

ML presented the paper as a starting point for further discussion. Underpinning this is the acknowledgement of the importance of survivor contribution to the work that we do. The question for the Board was to consider if this should be developed further advising that the next step would be the development of a policy and associated process.

The Board agreed this was a complex area and we would have to work out what is general survivor engagement and what is related to a specific project and could be remunerated.

WM agreed with the discussion and enquired if we had the capacity to support and resource this.

In general the Board were keen to explore this further acknowledging the complexities involved and suggested that a sense check with our lawyers would be useful at this stage.

**Action; ML to approach our lawyers for an opinion on survivor remuneration for engagement work and to further develop the work on this area.**

## **Agenda Item 11 Policy Approvals**

### **11.1 Recruitment Policy**

MN advised that this was a further policy for approval as listed on the schedule. MN continued that although based on the Scottish Government template the policy presented allows us flexibility but with the assurances of a Scottish Government drafted policy.

CS felt this was a good paper. There was one question raised around interview feedback and MN confirmed that feedback is offered following interview but has to be requested by the applicant should they want feedback on their application and why they were not selected for interview. Implementation of the guaranteed interview scheme will form part of Equalities Policy. MN added that the policy is in line with the one used by Scottish Government. The Board recommended adding “**we would not routinely offer feedback**” at shortlisting stage.

**Action; Policy approved subject to the addition of “we would not routinely offer feedback” at shortlisting stage.MN.**

## **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. The following were highlighted.

- The change to the 30 day KPI has the potential to impact our reputation
- Potential remuneration of survivors
- Cyber threat continues
- Risk of our reputation as a result of SG activity

WM reminded members of the risk workshop on the 10<sup>th</sup> April when these could be noted and addressed.

**Action; Emerging risks to be noted at the risk workshop on the 10<sup>th</sup> April. WM**

### **Agenda Item 14 Any other competent business**

There was no further business for consideration.

### **Agenda Item 15. Review of Meeting and Survivor Voice**

RM reported back on the content of the meeting highlighting a number of conversations and comments.

There was much discussion on the time taken for the whole end to end process and the impact on survivor. It was noted that Redress Scotland is tied into the overall process. The organisation will continue to work started by communicating clearly and effectively with survivors and providing clear timescales where available.

The Chair, KD, has met with survivors.

The first quality assurance report from across the organisation noted that survivors were seen to be at the heart of everything we do.

Finally, at numerous points today the Board asked the question "What would the survivor think of this?"

### **Agenda Item 16 Remuneration discussion – Update**

Closed session- Chair and non- executive members only.