

Meeting: Redress Scotland Oversight Board

Date: 16th October 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)
Roy McComb	(Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member)
Brian Houston (BH)	(Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member, Panel 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)

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 or notes of interest recorded.

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

Agenda item 2. Minutes of the previous meetings 24th July and 27th August , including addendums to both meetings

The minutes of the previous meetings held on the 24th July and the 27th August 2024 were approved as an accurate record of the meetings with no further amendment required.

Agenda item 3. Matters Arising – Action Log

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

A number of potential risks categorised as “horizon risks” were identified and will be discussed at the next ARAC meeting. These included cultural approach and unfunded pressure be included in any future budget submissions in relation to changes in employment law.

Action; Action log to be updated to reflect the discussion and horizon risks to be considered at the February meeting of the ARAC.

Agenda item 4. Report from the Chair

KD reported that many of her activities have been joint initiatives with JM. One of these has been the undertaking of individual reviews of panel members. These have gone very well and have evidenced how reflective and diligent panel members are.

Last week there was a joint training event with members of the Parole Board.

KD has been working with MN and WM to prepare for panel member recruitment. Approval has been given for the recruitment of 10 panel members. The advert is all ready to go however issues with the new Oracle system have delayed the process. It was noted that the sponsor team have been very supportive in helping to overcome the problems.

Discussions with Scottish Government in relation to our business case, have continued and KD met with the director and deputy director last week. There are a number of options for consideration, not all within the current legislation. A meeting with the Deputy First Minister will take place on the 30th October. During discussions with Scottish

Government there is a proposal to undertake an efficiency and improvement exercise. The review will be of the scheme's processes and not limited to Redress Scotland.

The board were supportive of following up on any review of the scheme to achieve further efficiencies and improvements. It was noted however that a number of documents held by Scottish Government have yet to be shared with Redress Scotland. The board suggested that JM draft a note detailing papers still outstanding. KD also asked members to consider ways of improvement and to share these with her.

Action; JM to draft a note for forwarding to Scottish Government detailing the information we have requested but not yet received.

Agenda item 5 Report from the Chief Executive

5.1 Chief Executive's report and 5.2 Dashboard report

JM reported that the team continue to be busy. The flow of applications continues at a pace and the queue of applications is increasing. The absence of a key member of the senior management team and the additional work around the business case and preparation for the meeting with the Deputy First Minister has been impactful. A couple of external contractors have been identified to support key pieces of work we have not been able to address internally.

The dashboard reflects the increase in waiting times currently experienced by survivors. However it was noted that most decision letters continue to be issued within 5 working days of a panel sitting. JM advised members that survivor experience depends on the priority level of the application and work is underway to see if this can be harmonised.

JM shared the communications with Scottish Government around the recommendations section within our annual report and accounts reminding members that we have a statutory duty to make recommendations for improvement to the scheme and to report on progress made during the year. A response has been received from Scottish Government to our recommendations and JM will confirm that the response received is the one we are to publish in our final report.

During discussion members requested that they be included in the mailing list to receive Chair Circulars to panel members.

Action; JM to contact Scottish Government to confirm their response to our recommendations prior to publication.

Action; Executive Secretary to include members in the mailing list for Chair Circulars.

Agenda item 6. Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Update

WM presented the minute from the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee held on the 4th September 2024. WM highlighted several key areas;

- Internal Audit have completed their review of Stakeholder Engagement and we were marked as providing substantial assurance in this area. Another excellent result for the organisation.
- Part of the rigour around risk management is to undertake periodic “deep dives” into specific areas of risk as identified in the risk register. The next area identified will be to look at operational impact. WM noted that the work around efficiencies will feed into this review.

Agenda item 7. Governance & Risk

7.1 Review of Governance Reporting Structure

JM presented the paper noting that the review was an action contained within the governance section of the approved business plan for this year.

The survey included feedback from both the senior management team, who prepare the reports, and members who are the recipients. Members agreed it was an excellent report and agreed with the content and recommendations. There were no changes suggested and the report will be finalised and a copy sent to Scottish Government along with the other papers currently being collated.

Members thanked the Research and Knowledge Lead for undertaking this work and documenting the findings. The report, together with the recommendations, will be discussed at the board self evaluation meeting at the end of November.

Action: Review paper to be discussed at board self evaluation meeting in November,

Agenda Item 8. Operations

8.1 Review of Communications with Survivors

JM presented a paper to the board that outlines the consultation that had been undertaken with survivors around our communication strategy. This followed on from a meeting that KD attended with the Deputy First Minister, relating to a communication from one or more survivors who had expressed concern about a letter that updated survivors on the increased length of wait for a decision by Redress Scotland. We have not been able to ascertain the exact number of survivors who have raised this concern. Colleagues expressed disappointment that this matter could not have been resolved operationally at an earlier stage. It was further noted that Redress Scotland do not have direct communication with individual survivors and all letters are issued by Scottish Government.

JM highlighted that our research and good practice would suggest that survivors appreciate being kept informed. However, it is not the intention to add stress to anyone and the recommendation proposed is that survivors are asked if they want to be kept up to date with timescales or if they want to opt out of such communications.

JM added that she will be meeting with other organisations and will discuss their approach to communications and best practice.

KD summarised the board discussion where the recommendation is to keep giving timescales to those survivors who would prefer to receive this information with an opportunity to opt out at any time was approved. We further agreed that any timescale letters would be reviewed before reissuing and would include support information for survivors.

Agenda Item 9 Finance & Procurement

9.1 Management accounts Period 6

MS noted an underspend during period 6. The total underspend for the year to date is £306K. The cost of the Annual General Meeting and recruitment are additional costs to the usual monthly spend but there will still be an estimated £500k underspend at the end of the year. This will be discussed by the senior management team and there is the possibility we will reduce our draw down in future periods.

The change to Oracle resulted in the organisation not receiving its monthly payment however there was sufficient cash available to cover salaries. The problem with Oracle has since been rectified.

Members asked if the underspend could be used to reduce waiting times. GG responded that the latest cohort of panel members are working to full capacity and

matching the two established cohorts. BH cautioned against loading more work on panel members as the risk of vicarious trauma and burnout can increase.

Members were content with the management accounts as presented.

9.2 Annual Report and Accounts

MS reported that the first design draft from Studio LR has been received, and audit adjustments made. The report will now go to the senior management team and sponsor team for final review with the final version expected by the end of October.

Agenda item 10 People

10.1 6 month Health & Safety Report

MN presented the interim Health & Safety report on activity over the previous 6 months. The progress reflects our duty of care and commitment to the health and wellbeing of team members.

Members were content with the content of the report and requested that mental health remain a key focus in the coming period.

Agenda Item 11 Policy Approvals

11.1 Menopause Policy

MN presented this new policy to members advising that the policy will offer support through documented guidance supported by planned awareness sessions and management training.

Members noted that it was good to now be moving to supportive policies in addition to the statutory required ones.

Members felt this was an excellent piece of work and were happy to approve with no further amendments being required.

Agenda Item 12. Forward Planning

12.1 Forward plan

The content was noted with one addition to the annual diary – that of the release of the annual report and accounts.

Action; DP to add publication of the annual report and accounts to the rolling annual diary within the forward plan.

Agenda Item 13. New And Emerging Risks

Two items from the meeting were redirected to ARAC for consideration:

- Relationship with directorate
- Pension liability following Sommerville decision

Agenda Item 14 Any other competent business

The only other business was to confirm the arrangements for the AGM on the 7th November. If the Deputy First Minister is unable to attend in person then we expect a recorded message to be available to show at the meeting. We have yet to hear if the sponsor team will attend. Apart from these guests it is a closed Redress Scotland meeting.

Agenda Item 15. Review of Meeting and Survivor Voice

CS provided feedback on the content and discussion during the meeting noting that a large part was taken up on administrative matters which prevented discussion from the perspective of survivors. Relationships with Scottish Government also took a large part of the meeting particularly the difference of approach around communications with survivors. A way forward has been agreed however, we should continue to be focussed on the mission and delivery for survivors, and work to prevent issues from detracting from our main focus.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 1240.

