

## Meeting Minutes

**Meeting:** Audit Risk and Assurance Committee

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024 0930-1230

**Minuted by:** Diane Piper (DP), Governance Secretary, Redress Scotland

### Committee Members

- Bill Matthews(WM) Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Chair, Redress Scotland Deputy Chair
- Catherine Dyer(CD) Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Member, Non- Executive Member of Redress Scotland
- Neil Mackay(NM) Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Member, Non- Executive Member of Redress Scotland

### Participants

- Joanna McCreadie(JM) Redress Scotland Chief Executive
- Michelle Nairn (MN) Redress Scotland Head of People
- Michael Stevens(MS) Redress Scotland Head of Finance and Resources

### By Invitation

- Martin Ritchie (MR) TIAA
- Gillian McCreadie(GM) Audit Scotland

### Apologies

- Colin Spivey(CS) Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Member, Non – Executive Member of Redress Scotland
- Jane Gordon (JG) Redress Scotland Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee member, Panel Member

## Agenda item 1. Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest

### 1.1 Welcome

WM opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

### 1.2 Apologies

Apologies were received from CS and JG.

### 1.3 Declarations of Interest:

No declarations were made.

#### **1.4 Appoint survivor voice;**

CD was appointed as the meeting reviewer from the perspective of the survivor.

Before moving to the formal business WM acknowledged the work and pressure the executive team have been under. Additional work to complete the annual report and accounts and preparation of the capacity paper for the Deputy First Minister have added to an already busy workload.

#### **Agenda Item 2 Minutes of the previous meeting 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

The minute from the meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June was approved as a true reflection of the discussions.

#### **Agenda Item 3 Matters arising from the previous meeting**

The action log was presented for approval. Several changes were noted and the log updated.

#### **Agenda item 4 Governance**

##### **4.1 Draft Oversight Board Minute 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

The draft minute from the Oversight Board meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July was presented for information and will go forward for approval to the October meeting of the Oversight Board.

WM continued that panel members have been informed that, following advice from the sponsor team, they will no longer be paid cancellation fees. The Chair and JM have shared this information with panel members. WM referenced the Sommerville Case highlighting the possible implications for all public appointments. The impact on Redress Scotland could result in a 10% increase to the cost of panel members plus any accrual. There is no action to be taken, and members will be advised of any response from Scottish Government.

Capacity was also discussed and will be covered by JM later in the meeting.

## **Agenda Item 5 Report from the Chair**

WM advised that the Chair has had two meetings with the Deputy First Minister where the pressures on capacity and the increasing throughput of applications to Redress Scotland were discussed.

## **Agenda Item 6 CEO Reports**

### **6.1 CEO Report**

JM advised that our draft Annual Report and Accounts was submitted to Audit Scotland on Monday. The final draft included feedback from the Oversight Board and Audit Risk and Assurance Committee and survivors. One outstanding area is around the inclusion of composite stories. These are important as they bring examples of the work we are doing. BH, a member of the Oversight Board and Practice Development Group, has supported this work and we are now consulting with survivors. A summary paper is also being drafted to sit along side the main report.

JM continued and highlighted the recommendations section within the annual report where we detail progress on last year's recommendations and identify new recommendations for the year ahead. We are communicating with Scottish Government on this section.

Work on a business case for an increase in capacity to manage both the backlog of applications and the potential increase in monthly throughput continues. At the August Oversight Board meeting member support in principle was given and a number of suggestions were made including preparation of a shorter sharper paper for delivery to the Deputy First Minister.

A meeting has been scheduled with Scottish Government to discuss forecasting and the difficulties around predicting the number of applications to the scheme. Any information from this meeting will also form part of the submission to Deputy First Minister and the request adjusted accordingly. JM advised that the draft paper will be circulated to members with feedback by Monday 9<sup>th</sup> September for same day submission.

JM has met with the sponsorship team who have agreed to support recruitment now for panel members.

We continue to maintain a clear communications strategy and are committed to providing survivors with clear timescales. JM and Scottish Government are discussing this approach, and a report will come to a future meeting of the board.

As previously noted the workload of the executive team is particularly challenging. Preparations for meetings with the Deputy First Minister, the annual report and business

case have been in addition to the day to day work. This workload is expected to continue as the volume of decisions is increasing and a key member of staff will be absent for a period of time. JM/MN are looking at creative approaches to fill this gap in the interim.

JM advised members of the letter circulating asking public bodies not to start any new spend and for any unused funding to be returned. The board noted that we currently save £400k by being a remote organisation. We are a small organisation with a focus on improving efficiencies. At the last PDG meeting there was a long and detailed discussion on improvement and efficiency and how we could refocus our approach and get more out of what we have.

Previous board meetings noted the problem encountered with the purchase of a new HR system where the company selected wanted payment in advance. This is not permitted within the finance manual. JM wrote to their CE who is now content to accept payment in arrears and this work can now progress.

WM thanked JM for her update noting that we now have approval to make good the attrition on panel members. The sponsor team have been very supportive and have been working with us to ensure swift progress.

The Deputy First Minister met with panel members who shared with her the nature of the work we do at Redress Scotland.

JM reported improvement in efficiency over time as evidenced by the reducing cost per decision. This has dropped from over £5k at the start of the scheme to £3k now. The rate of errors is less than 1 % and requests for review (appeals) sit around 4%. The organisation has yet to have a judicial review which is also a good indicator of the quality of delivery.

WM thanked JM for her full report. There was a request for a definition of the way cost per decision is calculated and that this should be tracked over time.

**Action; MS to define and then continue to track cost per decision over time.**

## **Agenda item 7 Strategic Risk Register**

### **7.1 Risk Management – Deep Dive**

JM advised that there were no changes to the strategic risk register since the last meeting.

WM invited an open discussion to identify areas within the risk register which would warrant a deeper review advising members that the Practice Development Group are

looking at efficiencies and suggesting that the committee could deep dive into the end to end process of an application within Redress Scotland.

Members agreed to this approach and WM offered to scope out in a draft paper the parameters of such a review and circulate to members for comment.

**Action; WM/JM to draft paper on deep dive of end to end operational process to link in with the work underway in relation to efficiencies.**

### **Agenda Item 8 Audit Updates**

MR, TIAA, confirmed that subject to inclusion of the management response, the review of Stakeholder Engagement was complete and marked as providing significant assurance. There is one low level recommendation in relation to the use of analytical reviews to improve services i.e. using website analytics to inform communications

JM was pleased to get this response and good for the team to have the recognition that they are survivor focussed.

GM, Audit Scotland, confirmed receipt of the annual report and accounts. The interim work will be concluded this week and then the full audit will commence.

It was noted that all audit recommendations were progressing according to plan. MS advised that the template and procedure for delegating budgets was complete and will go to the senior management team for approval.

### **Agenda Item 9 Papers for Information**

#### **9.1 Management accounts P4**

The July management accounts were presented by Mike for information

These reported an underspend of £63K due primarily to fewer sitting days than projected. Total underspend to date is £227K under budget and extrapolated to the year end we could report an £680k underspend.

JM noted that there is the potential for induction training in January if we recruit by December.

### **Agenda Item 10 Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee forward plan**

Presented for information.

**Agenda item 11 AOB**

No further business was noted.

**Agenda item 12 Review of Meeting Survivor Voice**

CD provided feedback on the meeting particularly from the survivor perspective noting the commitment of all at Redress Scotland to ensure the best service within the resources available. Even with a high number of applications, quality is being maintained and the cost per decision is reducing. The Communications and Engagement report confirmed the organisation is survivor focussed. Survivors continue to be consulted when appropriate and this is noted in the work on the annual report and the development of composite stories.

WM thanked everyone for their contributions closed the formal meeting at 11.41

**Agenda item 13 Closed Session (Members and Auditors Only)**