

Meeting: Redress Scotland Oversight Board

Date: 22 July 2026 0930-1230

Location: Online via MS Teams

Minute by: Linda Aitken (LA)

In attendance

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| • Kirsty Darwent (KD) | Redress Scotland Oversight Board Chair |
| • Colin Spivey (CS) | Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member,
ARAC Member |
| • Paul Edie (PE) | Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member |
| • Neil Mackay (NMac) | Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member,
ARAC Member |
| • Roy McComb (RMc) | Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member |
| • Joanna McCreadie (JMc) | Redress Scotland Chief Executive |
| • Gary Gallacher (GG) | Redress Scotland Head of Operations |
| • Eileen Skinner (ES) | Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member
Panel Member |
| • 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 |
| • Andrew Freeburn (AF) | Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member
Panel Member |

Apologies:

Apologies were received from William (Bill) Matthews (Deputy Chair)

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

K Darwent opened the meeting welcoming all present.

Apologies were received from William (Bill) Matthews (Deputy Chair); feedback on the papers had been received from the Deputy Chair and would be heard in absentia.

J McCreadie was travelling and indicated she would join the meeting as soon as possible.

Members noted the values of Redress Scotland (dignity, compassion and respect) which were embedded in the work of the organisation; Redress Scotland seeks to ensure that survivors are always put at the forefront of business conducted by the Board.

E Skinner was appointed the survivor voice for the duration of the meeting.

Members were invited to raise any conflicts of interest which they may be aware of; with one being raised by A Freeburn under item 5.3 (Membership of Groups for Panel Members) and would therefore not participate in the meeting for that item.

2. Minutes of the previous meetings

2.1 Draft minutes of the previous meeting 2 June 2026

Members noted and approved the draft minutes of the Oversight Board meeting held on 2 June 2026, with one small typo identified by E Skinner. Paper 2.1 would be updated and resubmitted to eRDM.

Action: L Aitken to update minutes from 2 June 2026 and resubmit to eRDM.

3. Matters Arising – Action Log

The Chair spoke to this item, thanking members for their support in progressing and closing off several items. To that end, almost all the actions had been completed, with three remaining active, one of which would be carried forward to the next Oversight Board meeting in August. The remaining two action points were being progressed.

Members noted the action log.

4. Report from the Chair

The Chair provided Members with an update on various relevant aspects of business. Members noted the conclusion of the recent Panel Member recruitment process with over 20 Panel Members found to be appointable. Recommendations have been submitted to the Scottish Government for their consideration and for onward circulation to the Deputy First Minister; a potential challenge has been noted with one applicant which was being explored in the hope of a suitable resolution being found. Members would be updated in due course.

Considering the planned Panel Member appointments, M Stevens advised colleagues that 60 new laptops were on order from the Scottish Government (SG) with no definite delivery date yet advised, though estimated by SG to be anywhere between 1 or 2 months. It was hoped that the laptops would be received in time for the new Panel Members to access their induction training. M Nairn noted that there was the option to escalate the situation, with a request for it to be closely monitored as without the laptops the new Panel Members would not be able to be scheduled for sitting Panels, which would have an unintended knock-on effect to survivors.

The Chair, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO) attended an online meeting with representatives from the Australian Parliament taking the opportunity to discover good working practices and learnings from the Australian National Redress Scheme which had been brought into law on 1 July 2018. The Chair noted it had been a hugely interesting, helpful and beneficial experience.

The Chair met with Laura Murdoch, the new Deputy Director of the Scottish Government Redress Division in what was a positive initial meeting.

Four sitting panels had been observed by the Chair since the previous Oversight Board (OB) meeting. No two observations were the same and always generated an interesting and challenging process.

An on-going potential material error arising from a sitting Panel's decision outcome is being explored following the identification of the potential error prior to a decision letter being issued to the survivor. The matter was raised following the standard quality assurance activities. Panel Members have since received correspondence from the Chair along with a practice note to assist with interpretation and application of the legislation.

Action: Copy of practice note provided to Panel Members in relation to the potential material error to be shared with Board Members (L Aitken).

OB Members agreed this indicated a robust quality assurance process was in place noting that the process for requesting legal advice on applications had since been updated. A schedule for the review of practice notes had also been developed, with advice notes next due for review by the end of September 2026. All information arising from quality assurance reviews is shared periodically in a controlled manner.

A review will be completed by Joanna, supported by Kirsty Christie with Members advised of the outcome in due course.

Action: Review of decision process leading to material error to be completed by J McCreadie, reporting back to OB Members.

The Budget Account and Accountable Officer template remained unsigned and has not been issued to Redress Scotland. However, a letter of comfort advising Redress Scotland (RS) it would receive the financial support it needed had been received from Neil Rennick, the Director General for Education and Justice within the SG. Efforts by the RS team to be iterative in its growth had served the organisation well, however the high number of applications currently with the SG Redress Division was indicative of a potential future strain on RS resources and a possible adverse impact on survivors. Members welcomed news of the letter, though concern remained at the position RS

was placed by not having had receipt of its budget allocation. Discussion ensued, with Members asking whether this situation was unique to RS as other Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPB) may be experiencing similar delays in receiving their budget allocations. Members requested a copy of the letter be circulated; B Matthews requested a copy also be shared with Audit and Risk Committee (ARAC) members.

Action: A copy of the letter of comfort to be circulated to OB and ARAC Members (L Aitken)

Members thanked the Chair for this update.

M Lowe withdrew from the meeting, with apologies.

5. Report from the Chief Executive

5.1 Chief Executive's report

5.2 Dashboard Report

Items 5.1 and 5.2 were considered together.

The CEO provided an update to members, adding to the Chair's comments noting that the budget allocation had still not been received, albeit correspondence had been provided giving reassurances to RS. The uncertainty was difficult to manage, being an unintended consequence of the SG approach. Forward planning without knowing the budget was challenging, with the result potentially being a reduction in decision outcomes, lower growth and less overall expenditure. Adding to the Chair's comments, J McCreadie advised Members that a response from RS to the letter of comfort received from N Rennick had not yet been drafted.

The RS scheme is an innovative and unique solution to a difficult historical situation that is felt by survivors across Scotland. Members noted the budget delay could influence administrative and procedural functions of the organisation and were alert to the potential impact on survivors. Members agreed with N Mackay that the situation was extremely uncomfortable and were supportive of his request that the Chair write to the Principal Accountable Officer by way of providing support to J McCreadie as RS's Accountable Officer.

The Chair reminded colleagues of the impending meeting scheduled with the DFM, noting that N Rennick would also be in attendance and could speak to potential consequences. It was agreed that following the meeting with the DFM, K Darwent and J McCreadie would share an update on the salient discussion points with OB Members.

Action: K Darwent and J McCreadie to share a note of meeting with DFM.

J McCreddie continued with her report, speaking to recent appointments made and current vacancies that would be recruited to, which included:

- Accessibility and Engagement Lead (2-year fixed term appointment)
- Scheduling Lead (successful candidate was internal to RS)
- Scheduling Manager (backfill for internal appointment to role of Scheduling Lead; closing date of 16 August 2026)
- Resource Lead (closing date of 2 August 2026)
- People and Wellbeing Lead
- Panel Support Co-ordinators (several roles, all permanent appointments)
- Backfill for internal candidate recently appointed to role of Head of Operations.

Work continues to develop practice around applications received with previous convictions. Panel Members are engaged in this complex challenge and will report back to Members in due course.

Charlotte Street Partners have completed a review, the results of which have been shared with the SG. A meeting with the RS Deputy Director is scheduled for the afternoon of the 22 July 2026, where the key aspect of the quality of legal advice available to survivors and the impact that may have on them.

Action: Report produced by The Charlotte Street Partners to be shared to OB Members (L Aitken)

B Matthews shared his support for RS's response to the potential material error; K Darwent confirmed to Members that a report in respect of RS's response to it will come to the Board at a future meeting.

J McCreddie acknowledged the hard work and commitment of RS colleagues, noting improved use of appropriate digital resources could support colleagues at this busy time. G Gallacher advised Members that a small working group who had completed Artificial Intelligence (AI) training would be exploring a policy position to bring to the Board before the October meeting. N Mackay offered to forward guidance from the National Audit Office to L Aitken for onward circulation to Board Members.

Action: G Gallacher to share findings of working group relating to appropriate use of AI to support improved working practices.

Action: N Mackay to share guidance from the National Audit Office on AI use, via L Aitken.

Paper 5.2 was noted, with thanks.

5.3 Membership of Groups for Panel Members

As noted under item 1, A Freeburn did not participate in any discussion arising under this item.

Paper 5.3 considered arrangements for the membership of groups for Panel Members with suggested amendments which could be introduced to support improved connectedness between the various groups. The flexibility of having formal and informally constituted groups was acknowledged, as was the benefits of utilising the various skills and expertise brought by Panel Members in this contribution to the wider organisation; however, there was scope for creating a stronger framework within which working groups could operate.

J McCreadie suggested:

- whenever possible and practicable, there should be an 'open call' to all panel members for participation in different groups or work tasks;
- for some tasks or groups, it will be appropriate to approach individual panel members with specific knowledge and skills;
- that for formally constituted groups, Panel Members should usually be a member of only one of these groups at any time;
- the new short life group on applications for previous convictions should be more formally constituted with a term of reference, given that this group is likely to continue for at least another twelve months; and
- consideration should be given to concluding the efficiencies and effectiveness group when the approved action plan has been sufficiently progressed.

Members noted the Paper, agreeing with the recommendations and welcoming the positive position RS was in by having such an engaged team of Panel Members who wished to participate in multiple working groups.

6 Audit and Risk Committee (ARAC) Business

6.1 Draft Minute: ARAC Meeting held 22 June 2026

Members noted and approved the draft minutes of the ARAC meeting held on 22 June 2026, with no amendments.

6.2 Update from ARAC

Colin Spivey spoke to this item, advising Members that ARAC Members were similarly alert to the challenges presented because of the delayed receipt of the budget allocation. Gillian McCreadie from Audit Scotland attended the meeting, which was welcomed by ARAC members.

In terms of business continuity, Members were reassured that M Stevens has worked through multiple scenarios, which was noted as being of relevance in light of challenges arising from the delayed receipt of the budget allocation.

Members noted C Spivey's report, with thanks.

7 Governance and Risk

7.1 Strategic Risk Register (Master Copy)

7.2 Review of Strategic Risk Register

Joanna McCreadie spoke to items 7.1 and 7.2 recognising the work completed by M Lowe in support of these documents.

Members were invited to consider and note Paper 7.1 within which two key aspects of risk (post mitigation) were highlighted where predictability of application numbers is available, and challenges identified in relation to the lack of budget allocation.

Members were advised that further to discussion at earlier Oversight Board meetings, each strategic risk had been reviewed in detail, with several changes proposed for the register. Members were therefore invited to:

1. consider the updated risk register, and whether there are any further gaps or changes needed; and
2. approve the strategic risk register, subject to any changes agreed following scrutiny of the work completed.

N Mackay noted it would be beneficial to have sight of how RS's response to the growth in RS activity would be framed, which may in turn influence the score it is allocated on the Risk Register. IT risks should also be identified within the Risk Register as it is possible for the newly appointed Panel Members to not have access to laptops or other IT kit.

Members noted and approved Papers 7.1 and 7.2.

7.3 Business Plans (Collated)

Members were invited to consider and comment on Paper 7.3 which set out Redress Scotland's collated Business Plans for the financial period April 2026 to March 2027 detailing areas of Governance, Operations, People, Finance and Resources, and Engagement, Communications and Knowledge. Members took the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft document with which would be integrated into the document for future adoption as the Redress Scotland Business Plan for 202-2027.

8 Operations

Gary Gallacher spoke to this paper which had been provided for information, noting that this was the fourth update report on actions taken to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the operational delivery of decision making. The report considered both integrated work practices and newly development initiatives to improve both efficiency and effectiveness.

Members learned of:

- the introduction of a new application pack which is now being accessed by survivors
- the different methods utilised by Panel Members when reconvening Panels,
- the time taken by Panel Members to prepare for their panels,
- decision record Panels,
- triage work in place for applicants with relevant convictions,
- applicants with a terminal illness,
- anticipated next steps.

Re Priority 1 (P1) applications, G Gallacher confirmed Panel Members would be content to receive incomplete applications to take forward where appropriate and they have the ability to do so. The Redress Division in SG would be informed of the potential to expedite P1 applications.

It was agreed that the next discussion focussing on efficiency and effectiveness of decision outcome process would focus on each budget line rather than on a per case level. G Gallacher confirmed that detailed information to that effect could be made available to Members.

Paper 8 was noted.

9 Finance and Procurement

9.1 Management Accounts 2026/27 P3

M Stevens advised members on aspects including a Period 3 financial update including Year to Date data, and the organisation's cash flow position.

This Paper was approved.

9.2a Operational Activity and Expenditure Forecast Briefing

9.2b Operational Activity and Expenditure Forecast Briefing Model

Chair to invite Michael Stevens to speak to Papers 9.2a and 9.2b together.

Members were invited to consider both Papers, noting Paper 9.2a provides a brief background to the development of a separate scenario costing tool based on performance analysis and throughput of application. The Oversight Board was previously informed that this tool was being developed to support the Senior

Management Team and the governance committees in relation to the annual budget, expenditure and related productivity. This tool was now shared with the Oversight Board and would be used for planning in future.

Paper 9.2b as a template required further updating as each annual budget as confirmed. Input of a budget baseline allows for a better-informed budget and forecasts to take place. This is hoped to enable a pro-active view of budget requirements and considerations across the financial year. This tool should assist Redress Scotland to plan for current and future years, and in the preparation of information for the Scottish Government and Ministers.

B Matthews requested a meeting with M Stevens to have clarity of some of the detail within the papers, for instance, the difference between 'decisions' and 'completed applications' and to better understand the denominator in RS's 'cost per decision', ensuring consistency over time.

Action: B Matthews to meet with M Stevens to seek clarity around some of the terms used within Papers 9.2a and 9.2b

In relation to the growth of RS and the causes of any fluctuation in costs per decision outcomes, the increase in applications presenting complex assessment requirements was noted. This influences the time allocated by Panel Members when assessing and preparing for sitting days, and therefore impacts on the overall cost per decision which typically ranged between £2,800 and £3,100. Whilst RS had no control over the complexity of applications received, this does present an interesting aspect to data analysis and it is important for this to be taken into account.

10 Engagement, Communication and Knowledge

J McCreadie spoke to this paper on behalf of M Lowe. Members agreed that the addition of quantitative detail would be beneficial, instead of being purely qualitative measures. Use of graphs would support the narrative as well as serving to underline potential future challenges.

Action: J McCreadie and M Lowe to add quantitative data and to include greater use of graphics.

11 Forward Planning

The Chair requested that efficiencies and effectiveness be added as a sub-heading and included in the agenda as a standing item.

Action: L Aitken to include efficiencies and effectiveness as a subheading, and to include as a standing item for future agendas.

Members noted this Paper

12 New and Emerging Risks

As discussed under items 7.2 and 7.2, the Risk Register had identified potential new and emerging risks.

13 Any Other Competent Business

No other competent business was submitted for consideration

14 Review of Meeting and Survivor Voice

E Skinner noted several areas discussed which impacted on survivors including:

- Budget allocation and uncertainty created
- The recruitment of additional Panel Members
- The milestone of 5,000 applications received and completed has almost been reached
- New application packs should reduce the number of clarifying questions raised by Panel Members, reducing the time for a determination
- How survivor feedback influences and encourages changes to the process

Members concluded that in all meetings the survivor is ever present in the room.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions today and confirmed the date and time for the next meeting as being **Wednesday 12 August**, which will be a joint OB, ARAC and SMT meeting, possibly being a single item agenda. Diary invites have been circulated.

Actions arising from meeting on 22 July 2026

Action	Item	Actions	Lead	Progress
1	2.1 Draft Minutes from Meeting on 2 June 2026	Members noted and approved the draft minutes of the Oversight Board meeting held on 2 June 2026, with one small typo identified by E Skinner. Paper 2.1 would be updated and resubmitted to eRDM.	L Aitken	Complete

2	4 Report from the Chair	Copy of practice note provided to Panel Members in relation to the potential material error to be shared with Board Members	L Aitken	
3		Review of decision process leading to material error to be completed by J McCreadie, reporting back to OB Members	J McCreadie	
4		A copy of the letter of comfort received by RS to be circulated to OB and ARAC Members	L Aitken	Complete Emailed 240726
5	5.1 CEO's Report	K Darwent and J McCreadie to share a note of meeting with DFM	K Darwent J McCreadie	Complete KD emailed 240726
6	5.2 Dashboard Report	Report produced by The Charlotte Street Partners to be shared to OB Members	L Aitken	Complete Emailed 100826
7		G Gallacher to share findings of working group relating to appropriate use of AI to support improved working practices	G Gallacher	
8		N Mackay to share guidance from the National Audit Office on AI use, via L Aitken.	N Mackay L Aitken	Complete Emailed 220726
9	9.2a 9.2b Operational Activity and Expenditure Forecast Briefing / Model	B Matthews requested a meeting with M Stevens to have clarity of some of the detail within Papers 9.2a and 9.2b	B Matthews M Stevens	Pending
10	10	J McCreadie and M Lowe to add quantitative data	J McCreadie M Lowe	Complete

	Engagement, Communication and Knowledge	and to include greater use of graphics		
11	11 Forward Planning	The Chair requested that efficiencies and effectiveness be added as a sub-heading and included in the agenda as a standing item.	L Aitken	Complete