

## Minutes of the Redress Scotland Audit Risk and Assurance Committee

**6<sup>th</sup> May 2022 09:00 (Virtual Meeting)**

### **Present**

Bill Matthews(WM)	(ARAC Interim Chair, Redress Scotland Deputy Chair)
Lynne Harvie(LH)	(ARAC Interim Member, Redress Scotland Panel Member)
Colin Spivey (CS)	(ARAC Interim Member, Redress Scotland Board Member)
Michael Steele(MSt)	(ARAC Ad-Hoc Interim Member)

### **In Attendance**

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

**Apologies:** None

### **1. Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest**

WM welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the ARAC Committee. WM confirmed there were no conflicts of interests for the meeting and reminded everyone of Redress Scotland's values of respect, dignity and compassion.

### **2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

All agreed the previous minutes are an accurate reflection of the meeting and no amendments are required.

### **3. Matters arising from the previous meeting**

The outstanding actions are on table page 5 of the previous minutes (attachment 2.1).

The circulation of the Grant in Aid letter is shown as completed however, this is still outstanding.

**Action: MS to circulate the Grant in Aid letter to the committee members.**

#### **4. Report from the Chief Executive**

JM presented the Chief Executive report.

JM reported good morale across the team. There has also been helpful feedback from the panel members about issues that have arisen.

JM advised that the first meeting of the Joint Collaboration Board, has taken place and it was agreed that we would work together on shared priorities.

The Joint Collaboration Board have signed off an approach to managing the pipeline of applications. This is the first working paper agreed between Redress Scotland and the Scottish Government. Scottish Government have received more than 1100 applications with only a small number of applicants being supported by caseworkers. Redress Scotland have received only a small number of applications for panels to consider.

Recruitment is ongoing. We still have a number of contractors working for Redress Scotland but are focussed on recruiting permanent staff.

JM noted that one panel had made an error in their decision making and their decision letter. Both JM and JG are carrying out a formal review of what has happened. This is a significant piece of work, and JM will have a report on this for the next meeting of the Oversight Board.

There has been an increase in complaints and concerns about the scheme mostly around timescales and/or communication. There is some confusion with survivors and others about our role and that of Scottish Government.

It was agreed that JM would follow up on communications and timescales with Scottish Government and Charlotte Street Partners.

***Action: JM to follow up on communications and timescales with Scottish Government and Charlotte Street Partners.***

Our turnaround of applications is currently averaging 12 days however this could increase to four to six weeks once the volume of applications increases. The committee raised concerns about the volume of applications which are outstanding, and the projected timescale to work through these.

WM also discussed the challenge of ensuring consistency in panel decision making. There has also been recent discussion about potential conflict of interest for panel members for applications which are linked.

***Action: further consideration should be given to potential and actual conflicts of interest by the Oversight Board and ARAC.***

There was discussion on the dashboard report and how the data is being reported and analysed. It was agreed that JM would discuss this with Scottish Government.

**Action: JM will speak to Scottish Government about the modelling of costs for the redress scheme.**

WM suggested the data in the dashboard should be tracked on a financial year basis, rather than annual year basis, so this would better align with the annual report. Also, we need to know which complaints are about Scottish Government and which are for Redress Scotland.

**Actions: the dashboard will be updated to reflect financial year parameters. A report on complaints will be presented to the next ARAC meeting.**

It was also noted that the current expectation of the number of applications which can be considered during a panel sitting may need to be revised. JM advised this target will be reviewed given what we are learning from sitting panels.

**Action: JM to undertake further work on forecasting demand for panel members and whether there is a need to recruit more.**

It was noted that Fixed Payment applications are taking longer to process than Individually Assessed Payment applications.

**Action: JM to request that the team reviews the time taken on fixed payment applications and will report back to the committee.**

It was also noted that post-panel work is taking longer than expected to be completed, this involves getting minutes and decision letters signed off by the panel members. The current expected timescales may not be achievable for the panel members or coordinators.

MSt asked for more information about the error that the panel made. JM outlined this in more detail for the committee.

**Action: JM will complete a report on the panel error for the Oversight Board.**

## **5. Recruitment to Redress Scotland**

MN explained the structure chart which is intended to be interactive and visual so people better connect with each other, especially as we are working virtually.

Prior to 18 April 2022 , we had 17 staff and this has now increased to 23.

Michelle discussed the recruitment tracker and the three stage recruitment process that is being used. The new scheduling manager role was appointed internally. There are also three new people joining next week. Both the Governance Secretary and Administration manager roles have been offered

and accepted. The Head of Operations role is being shortlisted this afternoon.

We have recruited ten new panel members. Their training will start in June once Scottish Government have completed their BPSS checks.

## **6. Code of Conduct**

WM advised that all public bodies need to adopt the code of conduct, and any changes have to be agreed by the Public Bodies Unit. JM discussed the proposed code of conduct and the contents of the overview report.

### **The committee approved the proposed changes.**

CS advised the papers say Redress Scotland is an executive non-departmental public body, and that it might be more appropriate for Redress Scotland to be a tribunal NDPB. Although we are listed on the Scottish Government website as an executive NDPB, Colin is concerned this information is not always accurate and he noted that, based on the definitions Redress Scotland does not easily fit into either category.

**Action: JM to check whether the 'executive' definition is correct with the sponsor team.**

JM advised that there will be a separate conflicts of interests policy for panel members, rather than as part of the code of conduct. The conflicts of interest policy is currently under review following the most recent Oversight Board meeting.

**Action: JM to review changes needed to the conflict of interest policy following further discussion with the Oversight Board.**

Michelle left the meeting at 11am.

## **7. Risk register for Redress Scotland**

JM provided an overview of the Risk Register and the changes that have been made following feedback from the last ARAC meeting adding that this is now developing into a strategic risk register which could be published.

Each ARAC meeting will discuss one risk topic in depth and it was agreed that the next meeting would look at decision making.

**Action: the committee agreed that the next ARAC meeting will discuss panel decision making in detail.**

WM suggested the register should show if the risk has increased, stayed the same or decreased from last report.

**Action: JM will add whether risk has increased, decreased or stayed the same this to the report.**

There was a general discussion about the need to add a risk in relation to impact of the delays for applications and how survivors experience this. JM advised this could come under several different categories, but thought operations would be the most suitable category.

**Action: JM to add this risk on the impact of delays to the register and share with the Oversight Board.**

## **8. Financial report**

MS discussed the financial report and advised we were under budget due to reduced staff costs. Non-staff costs also under budget. There have been overspends on our legal costs, media costs and printing costs. It was very difficult to forecast these budgets accurately as Redress Scotland is a very new organisation.

Procurement has taken longer than expected for occupational health, employee assistance and health and safety. The Scottish Government procurement team has advised we will need 120 days of procurement support, which is higher than estimated.

MSt advised it would be useful to see a cash flow analysis for future requirements.

**Action: MS to provide cash flow analysis for future committee meetings.**

A draft fraud policy is in place and a process has been developed for checking fee claims.

In regards to internal and external audit, MS stated this is included in the next stage of procurement requirement, likely to be September 2022.

**Action: MS to contact Audit Scotland about external audit after the internal auditors are appointed, and not wait until the end of the year.**

## **9. Depreciation policy**

MS discussed the depreciation policy and set out the key elements for the committee. **The committee approved the proposed policy.**

## **10. Work Plan for the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee**

JM gave an overview of the proposed work plan for the committee. WM agreed it will be important to take a flexible approach as the work progresses. ***The committee approved the proposed work plan.***

## **11. Any other competent business**

LH suggested it would be good to remind panel members they can dial into teams meetings, including panel meetings, if their laptop is not available.

***Action: JM agreed to add to the next communication to panel members that they can dial into meetings if laptops aren't available.***