

**Meeting:** Redress Scotland Oversight Board

**Date:** 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023 1400 - 1700

**Location:** Microsoft 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)
- Emma Lewis (EL) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member, Panel Member)
- Anne Houston (AH) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member, Panel Member)
- Lynne Harvie (LH) (Redress Scotland Panel Member -Interim Oversight Board Member and Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Member)
- Michelle Nairn (MN) (Redress Scotland Head of People)
- Gary Gallacher GG) (Redress Scotland Head of Operations)
- Melanie Lowe (ML) (Redress Scotland Head of Policy & Improvement)
- Mike Reid (Redress Scotland Finance Manager)

#### **Not in Attendance**

- Ian Donaldson (ID) Deputy Director
- Roy McComb (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member)
- Joanna McCreadie (JM) (Redress Scotland Chief Executive)
- Mike Stevens (MS) (Redress Scotland Head of Finance & Resources)

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

The Deputy Chair (WM) opened the meeting welcoming all present.

Apologies were noted and brief introductions were made.

WM introduced Kirsty Darwent (KD), the new chair of Redress Scotland to the meeting. KD thanked WM for the introduction adding how delighted and honoured she is to have appointed to this role. KD went on to thank WM for his orientation to the

organisation and also during his period as interim chair which ensured continuity while the post of chair was vacant.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

None noted.

### **Survivor Voice**

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

### **Agenda item 2. Minutes of the previous meeting on the 16th August 2023**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> August were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

### **Agenda item 3. Action Log, Work Plan and Matters Arising**

DP spoke to the action log which was updated and agreed.

Members were reminded that the work plan was originally signed off in May 2022. At the time a large number of the actions related to start up ie governing documents, appointment of members, auditors etc. Since this time we have received our first reports from our internal auditors and the external audit is about to start. Both the corporate and business plans are signed off it is felt that now would be a good time to revisit and realign to workplan. KD/WM/JM will meet to draft a new workplan will be presented at a future meeting for sign off by the board. A similar exercise will be undertaken for Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee.

**Action; A new workplan for the oversight board will be drafted. KD/WM/JM to meet to discuss.**

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

KD advised the board that the past two weeks have been very busy and noted how helpful and supportive everyone has been in welcoming her to the organisation. Lots of meetings have been set up including introductions to panel and board members and survivors.

Various meetings have also been held with Scottish Government and the sponsor team.

KD noted that there has been 7 notes of interest from panel members to be part of the governance committees. KD and WM will meet with those interested.

WM added that we held a very successful AGM attended in part by the Deputy First Minister. At the meeting the corporate body approved the delegation of sign off of accounts to both the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee and the Oversight Board.

### **Agenda Item 5. Report from the Chief Executive**

In JM's absence, GG presented the key focus areas outlined in the CEO report to the board.

Following approval of both the corporate and business plans these are now published on the website.

The AGM on 30th August provided a great opportunity to bring everyone together. Also noted were the positive remarks by the Deputy First Minister on the work of the Redress Scotland. The world café section focussed on key areas of work from values through to communication. The output from these sessions will inform the business plans for next year. The annual report is with Studio LR for final design and print.

Finalising the trade union agreement has taken longer than anticipated. MN is checking if we require sign off from the sponsor team.

The Dashboard data confirmed that over 1000 applications have been completed. This marks a milestone as an organisation to get this far in 19 months of operating (1<sup>st</sup> February 2022- 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023). The organisation is continuing to see a rise in applications coming through from Scottish Government.

The board discussed in detail the data available and the implications for forward planning and capacity. It was agreed that more information was required in order to plan effectively, identify realistic timeframes to inform KPIs.

Members felt it would be useful to have details of the time the whole application process takes from start to finish including time taken for each section of the process. GG advised that Scottish Government are showing a willingness to work with us and to produce this data.

Members felt it would be useful if for the next meeting GG could provide some more detailed information on end to end timings. KD added that this could be a separate item for discussion and there may be some sub KPIs we need to look at. It was cautioned that averages can hide the full length of the end to end process.

It was also requested that the graphs be redesigned as they are difficult to navigate and read.

The People Team organised whole team training on vicarious trauma. There was an acknowledgement that the content of the applications has an impact on staff and panel members. There is always a concern over the burn out rate of those working regularly on panels. Future training topics will include sessions on unconscious bias.

Several large projects undertaken by the Policy and Improvement team are now concluded and on the website. These include the corporate and business plans and the draft annual report which is ready for audit. The Survivor Forum is gathering momentum and several joint sessions with Scottish Government are planned for the coming months and will include survivor groups.

The work of the Finance Team will be covered fully by MR under item 6.

GG concluded by advising that the organisation is under pressure at the moment. There is now a backlog of applications impacting on our turnaround time of applications. This is having a direct impact on staff and panel members.

**Action; GG to work on establishing the time taken for an application to move through the scheme highlighting both sections which fall within the remit of Scottish Government and those within Redress Scotland, as the decision making body. Regular updates to come to future meetings.**

**Action; The graphs in the dashboard to be redesigned for easier reading, GG**

## **Agenda item 6. Finance**

In the absence of MS, Head of Finance and Resources the Finance Manager, MR, spoke to the papers.

### **6.1 Period 5 Management accounts**

MR reported that our budget for the year remains at £5m. Monthly expenditure in period 5 is coming in less than expected primarily as a result of lower board and panel member claims. It was noted that the longer than expected timescale for recruitment of new panel members was contributing to the lower expenditure. An additional invoice was received in relation to the production of the Talking Heads videos. The combined year to date figures are 17.5% below forecast.

Cash flow is strong and we drew down £150k less this month from the Grant in Aid but this can be accessed at a future date if required.

In summary, there have been no major changes and year end projections have allowed for the additional panel members being appointed towards the end of 2023

and new support staff. MR continued that once we have period 6 results there will be a conversation with Scottish Government to assess the level of future cash draw downs.

WM noted that there is the potential in the last 3 months of the year to have a higher run rate. The finance team are aware of this and confirmed they have discussed this with the sponsor team. There will be a full budget review in period 6 which will also tie in with the process for setting the budget for 2024/25.

## **6.2 Budget**

The paper presented provides an explanation of the various budget categories. Our greatest expenditure is on staff salaries and panel member costs. Costs for recruitment of additional panel members and panel support coordinators have also been included.

In setting the budget various scenarios are considered including the cost of living increases, recruitment and board costs. Last year there was a provision for contract staff however we are not expecting any costs in this category in the coming year.

Savings are being achieved through being a digital organisation and not having premises.

Legal advice costs are dependent on the information provided within survivor applications and level of complexity.

CS thanked MR for the helpful run through of the detail within the categories adding that it would be useful for future presentations to show actuals v budget in final table.

Several items were identified as requiring further consideration i.e. investment in IT and the contract for media management.

In terms of the process for budget setting, MR confirmed there were a wide range of discussions to be held at SMT, ARAC and OSB.

Audit Scotland are due to start their audit on the 9th October. MR was asked to let the chair and deputy chair know if it looks as if deadlines may be compromised.

**Action; Finance team to advise KD and WM if the audit deadlines are not being met.**

## **6.3 Pay Award**

MR advised that the pay award proposed is the one agreed by Scottish Government with the assent of the 3 unions. It is a complicated 2 year deal which will affect all staff with the exception of the CEO who is differently.

The total cost of increase is in the region of £118K. £85k is already provided for and the additional amount of £33k will be made up from underspends in other areas.

***The board approved the pay award which will now be presented to Scottish Government for final sign off.***

## **Agenda item 7. Capacity in the Redress Scotland team**

This report detailed the options appraisal requested by the Oversight Board in relation to increasing the staffing complement and capacity of Redress Scotland. This follows on from the report presented at the last meeting and the discussions with members.

GG explained that the basis of the analysis was to increase capacity to ensure that we worked towards meeting our KPI in relation to the completion of our part of the process and to maintain current survivor expectations.

Three options were presented for consideration by the board each having associated advantages and disadvantages. GG added that our initial projection was for receiving 100 applications per month, however the reality is that we are receiving 140 applications per month. There is now a substantial backlog developing at Redress Scotland and we are aware that Scottish Government already have a significant backlog of applications.

During discussion of the options the board agreed that it is essential that Scottish Government assist to enable accurate long-term forecasting of flow into the organisation.

The implications of increased staffing in both the short and long term were considered.

GG emphasised that the backlog at Scottish Government will take time to clear therefore the assumption is that the 140 throughput will increase. GG added that experience of other schemes is that they have seen a massive increase in applications during the final months of a scheme.

KD thanked GG for the paper and acknowledged that the board were asked to make a decision with perhaps less than complete information about throughput, but that the risk of doing nothing would impact significantly on survivors.

**The Board agreed with the recommendation to adopt Option B which is an increase to operational staffing. This will positively impact on the experience of survivors and increase capacity proportionate to demand.**

### **Agenda item 8. Staff Benefits**

MN advised that Redress Scotland has access to a Crown Benefits framework where we can add to our staff benefits. There is no cost associated but this will enhance overall staff benefits.

**The board unanimously approved the enhancement of staff benefits as proposed.**

### **Agenda Item 9. Report on cyber security from 360 Defence**

This item will be carried forward to a future meeting.

### **Agenda Item 10. Any other competent business**

#### **10.1 Board Self-evaluation**

KD outlined options for undertaking the board self-evaluation prior to the retirement of the panel members for whom this is their last board meeting. It was agreed to adopt option 2 where the meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> November will be extended to allow for both the evaluation and an Oversight Board meeting. It was further agreed to hold this in person in Glasgow.

#### **10.2 Amendment to May meeting minute**

The board were asked to note an inaccuracy in the minutes from the Oversight Board meeting on 2nd May under 'Action' in Agenda Item 5.

GG confirmed that the communications noted will be rolled out on the 9<sup>th</sup> October. The Board noted the error and that the minute will be updated accordingly.

### **Agenda Item 11. Review of Meeting, Survivor Voice**

KD thanked everyone for their contributions to the meeting and the discussions. A special note of thanks went to the 3 panel members who would be standing down from their governance roles. Their contribution to the running of the board since it was started last May has been invaluable and set the way forward for the next group.

MN provided feedback as the survivor voice highlighting that one of the first tasks being undertaken by the new chair was to meet with survivors. The report from the CEO

emphasised the importance of understanding the end to end process from the survivor perspective.

Training on trauma ensures our people are supported in their work and continue to deliver high quality decisions to survivors.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1700.

### **Actions arising from meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>1.</b>	3	A new workplan for the oversight board will be drafted. KD/WM/JM to meet to discuss.	KD/WM/JM	Date set for 30 <sup>th</sup> November
<b>2.</b>	5	GG to work on establishing the time taken for an application to move through the scheme highlighting both sections which fall within the remit of Scottish Government and those within Redress Scotland , as the decision making body. Regular updates to come to future meetings.	GG	Ongoing
<b>3.</b>	5	The graphs in the dashboard to be redesigned for easier reading.	GG	<b>Complete</b>
<b>4.</b>	6	Finance team to advise KD and WM if the audit deadlines are not being met.	MS	