

Meeting: Redress Scotland Oversight Board

Date: 15th November 2023 1300 - 1600

Location: Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission, 17 Renfield Street, Glasgow G2 5AH, and online

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)
- Mary McCallan (MM) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member, Panel Member)
- Brian Houston (BH) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member, Panel Member)
- Joanna McCreadie (Redress Scotland Chief Executive)
- Gary Gallacher (GG) (Redress Scotland Head of Operations)
- Michael Stevens (Head of Finance and Resources)
- Michelle Nairn (MN) (Redress Scotland Head of People)
- Melanie Lowe (ML) (Redress Scotland Head of Policy & Improvement)
- Ian Donaldson (Deputy Director)

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

The Chair, KD, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. KD was pleased to welcome Mary McCallan (MM) and Brian Houston (BB), two panel members who have been appointed to the board. Also, ID, who has joined for today's meeting. Brief introductions were made.

Conflicts of Interest

None noted.

Survivor Voice

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

Agenda item 2. Minutes of the previous meeting on the 27th September 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 27th September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Agenda item 3. Matters Arising

Members were content that all matters arising were covered in the agenda.

Agenda item 4. Report from the Chair

KD reported that the “Coffee with Kirsty” sessions have been a great success allowing her to meet informally with both staff and panel members.

Seven panel members applied for positions on the governance committees and 3 have been appointed. 2 to the Oversight Board and one to Audit, Risk And Assurance Committee.

KD has participated in several conversations with outside bodies, including Scottish Government and our sponsor team.

Following from this morning's self-evaluation session our governance structure is in a good place. Agendas will be tweaked and improved and a few suggestions will be rolled out.

Recent meetings have focussed on budget and resourcing ensuring we have all we need to serve survivors as best we can. Waiting times are increasing which is a source of concern for all involved.

KD concluded by thanking those in the survivor groups who have met with her.

Members noted the points raised and requested formal feedback from the meetings with Scottish Government; perhaps a sharing of agendas and key themes. KD and ID agreed to discuss this at their next meeting.

Action KD/ID to agree best way to share details of their discussions with members.

Agenda Item 5. Report on Audit, Risk And Assurance Committee Meeting 24th October 2023

WM advised members that the draft minute from the meeting on the 24th October was circulated with the papers. A significant amount of time at the meeting was spent on the Chief Executive report but this will be reduced in future meetings.

Panel member recruitment is complete. ID, supported the process.

A significant part of the meeting was taken up discussing the key challenges of capacity and throughput.

The meeting undertook a first look at the budget for 2024/25. Having made some suggestions this is now on the agenda for this meeting for approval.

WM was pleased to advise that Catherine Dyer has agreed to extend her appointment to Audit, Risk And Assurance Committee for a further 2 years.

Agenda item 6. Report from the Chief Executive

JM advised all 3 papers circulated would be addressed in her update.

Redress Scotland is no longer meeting its KPI in relation to the pace of decision making i.e in 30 days. Priority applications are still being managed within this timescale but for individually assessed applications there is an increasingly long waiting list. Survivors are finding this uncertainty difficult to understand. We are receiving an increase in enquires relating to submitted applications. This is challenging for the team and it is anticipated that the waiting list could be as much as 300-400 applications by January 2024.

Once the new panel members are in post that the backlog can be addressed but even with the additional resource it will take several months to achieve a steady state. Feedback has been received from several sources i.e. survivor organisations, survivors, Scottish Government all advising dissatisfaction over the length of time taken to process an application through both parts of the scheme. In the most recent period we have seen a higher than forecast number of applications from Scottish Government.

JM continued that not only are we seeing an increase in the number of applications we are also receiving more complex cases extending to several hundred pages and containing great detail of abuse. We have in place a debriefing model and a full training programme on vicarious trauma.

Joint survivor engagement sessions have been undertaken with Scottish Government. Redress Scotland designed and led the process. There are 4 sessions scheduled, 2 in

person and 2 online. A summary paper will come to the board once all sessions are complete.

The business plan has been updated highlighting the work which we expect to complete this year or carry forward to next year. A number of key pieces of work have been identified and will be presented in the 1st quarter of 2024. These include a review of the scheme of delegated authorities, a deep dive into people risk, further work on best value and a more in depth paper on the value, price and expected efficiencies around investment in a case management system.

Finally, internal and external audit reviews have both gone very well with positive feedback from both.

Members were invited to comment on the update as presented and the papers.

The main feedback was in relation to how realistic a 30 day turnaround is given that Redress Scotland are not in control of end to end process. JM advised we would be better able to judge timescales once the additional panel members are in post. JM added that we set a high bar to deliver timely, quality decisions to survivors. JM suggested that we revisit this once new resource in place.

RM offered a contact from within the police crime section who could support our work on vicarious trauma.

Members noted that we have completed our recognition agreement with Trade Unions.

There was an error last month in the pay of a small number of staff who had been placed on the wrong pay scale, Members were assured that this has now been rectified, a repayment schedule is in place, and corrective actions processed.

There was a request for dates to be inserted into the business plan against all activity. This will be actioned before the next presentation to the board in March 2024. It was also requested that we show where feedback from survivors has influenced the business plan.

Members requested that the graphs on the dashboard are expanded for easier reading that some narrative would be very helpful in understanding the data presented.

Action; Dates to be inserted in to business plans and evidence of input from survivor groups to be highlighted where possible.

Action ; Dashboard report to be reformat for easy reading and to include a narrative.

Agenda item 7. Strategic Risk Register

JM presented both papers on the strategic risk register, the overview report and the updated register.

There was discussion around the increase in time for decisions being made which had also been discussed in detail at the Audit, Risk And Assurance Committee. Here for scrutiny and approval.

In relation to risks around decision making it was suggested that we were actually looking at two different aspects, the nature of decision and timeliness, i.e. robustness and pace. It was suggested and agreed that these be separated into two distinct risks. It was further suggested that an overarching statement on impact to survivors on all the work we do is included and separate risk on mission and values.

Members agreed the approach taken to risk within Redress Scotland and approved the register subject to the noted changes

Action; JM to amend the register in relation to decision making separating robustness of decisions from the time taken to schedule the decision making process. Also to include an overarching statement on survivor impact.

Agenda item 8. Finance

Head of Finance and Resources, MS, presented 3 papers for consideration by the board.

8.1 Management accounts for periods 6 and 7. The current period 7 reflects an underspend in a number of areas due primarily to a delay in the appointment of panel members. The full forecast for the year is projecting an underspend of £700k. The proposal is to hand back £500k marking £200k for investment in a case management system.

8.2 Internal audit have 5 reviews planned for this year. The most recent around records management has been scored as providing significant assurance. The policy team will write a response to this report and this will be presented at the next Audit, Risk And Assurance Committee. The next report will consider diversity and inclusion.

MS was pleased to advise that our external auditors, Audit Scotland, have provided a clean audit, unqualified report for our first year. There will be an additional meeting scheduled to sign off on these accounts. The expectation is that they will be available for Audit, Risk And Assurance Committee at the end of November.

Action: When the final report and accounts is available DP to arrange an additional board meeting to sign off the accounts.

8.3 Proposed Budget 2024/25

MS advised that he and the Head of Operations, GG, have worked together to prepare the budget for the forthcoming year. The budget presented takes into account the staff pay award agreed last month and incorporates the increased resource in panel members and support staff.

3 options were presented for consideration

£5.1 The base budget to maintain current level of activity providing for additional staffing and panel members.

£400k to tackle the backlog of applications. The estimated requirement is to schedule an additional 84 sitting days (£284k plus the cost of support staff). It was noted that we underspent in previous years because the applications were not coming through from Scottish Government. We have now developed a backlog which can be addressed in the coming year. Delaying this will result in extending the life of the scheme.

£570k capital spend in a case management system

The board discussed the advantages of tackling the backlog in the coming year concluding that any delay would cost more in the long run and result in extended waiting times for survivors.

The board saw the advantages to a case management system but were aware that projects can overrun in both time, cost and resource and requested that a full business case be prepared.

It was suggested that JM approach the sponsor team for advice but the board were in principal content to support the budget as presented requesting £5.5m plus a capital spend of £600k.

Action; JM to seek advice from the sponsor team and to proceed with the budget as presented making a case for tackling the backlog in the forthcoming year and the investment in a case management system.

Agenda Item 9. Legacy

ML presented the paper on **Legacy Work – Proposed Ideas and Approach**. This stemmed from discussions with survivors and has 2 strands. The first is the corporate legacy in relation to the setting up of Redress Scotland and including that it is the first

fully digital non departmental public body. Our experience and learning will be valuable for other such schemes and organisations. The second strand is that of the survivor voice and their experience.

Members thanked ML for an excellent paper. There was discussion around who was responsible for collating the information particularly in relation to survivor voice and that this sits with Scottish Government. JM reminded the board that our legacy work is incorporated into the corporate plan. At this stage we are exploring what legacy may look like.

It was agreed the paper would be shared with the Joint Collaboration Board for further consideration. In the interim we will continue to ensure our records are up to date and revisit this in 6 months' time.

Action; JM/ML to share and discuss the paper with the Joint Collaboration Board and update the oversight board in 6 months' time.

Agenda Item 10. Policy Approvals

10.1 Dignity at Work

MN presented the Dignity at Work Policy for approval advising that the policy links to a number of other people related policies such as Equality and Diversity and Disciplinary and Grievance Policy. MN added that the policy relates to staff, panel members and non-executive members.

The board approved the policy subject to the insertion of a paragraph detailing the other linked policies which should be read in conjunction.

Action; MN to add a paragraph detailing linked policies.

Agenda Item 11. Work Update

DP spoke to the action log which was updated based on today's meeting.

KD advised that the workplan would be updated and circulated at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 12. Any other competent business

None noted.

Agenda item 13. Review of Meeting and Survivor Voice

RM noted that at the start of the meeting it was referenced that survivors should receive the justice they deserve and which had not been offered to them before. They have not had the opportunity to tell their story and to be listened too.

There was constant reference during the meeting to the impact we have on survivors and their families. Relationships with survivors are good and many feel they can now pick up the phone and speak to us about the process and the scheduling of their application to a panel.

Tremendous work has gone into the engagement processes and we are now looking at the legacy work of the scheme.

Communication is constantly improving and innovative ways of engaging are being explored.

KD thanked everyone for their contributions advising that following presentation of the annual report and accounts to the Audit, Risk And Assurance Committee at the end of the month the board will meet with the auditors for sign off.

Dates for 2024/25 are in the diary.