

Meeting: Redress Scotland Oversight Board

Date: 27th November 2024, 0930-1230

Location: MS 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)
Roy McComb (RM)	(Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member)
Brian Houston (BH)	(Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member, Panel Member)
Mary McCallan (MM)	(Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member, Panel Member)
Joanna McCreadie (JM)	(Redress Scotland Chief Executive)
Gary Gallacher (GG)	(Redress Scotland Head of Operations)
Michael Stevens (MS)	(Head of Finance and Resources)
Michelle Nairn (MN)	(Redress Scotland Head of People)

Apologies;

None

By Invitation;

Neil Mackay (NM)	(Redress Scotland, Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Member)
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Agenda item 1. Welcome, apologies, conflicts of interest and appoint Survivor Voice

KD opened the meeting welcoming all present.

There were no apologies or notes of interest recorded.

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

Agenda item 2. Minutes of the previous meeting 16th October 2024

The minutes of the previous meetings held on the 16th of October 2024 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. RM had been inadvertently excluded from the attendance and this will be corrected.

Agenda item 3. Matters Arising – Action Log

The action log was presented. Several updates were agreed, and the log amended and approved accordingly.

Agenda item 4. Minute from the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting on the 19th of November

WM advised this was single item agenda to receive the accounts and letter of recommendation from our Auditors, Audit Scotland.

Agenda item 5 To accept and approve the annual report and accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024

The papers presented were previously scrutinised by the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee at their meeting on the 19th November and included the annual report and accounts. WM noted the excellent working relationship between Audit Scotland and Redress Scotland. The covering letter from the auditors and the Audit Scotland annual report recorded on page 3 a clean audit with no recommendations.

Based on this the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee are happy to recommend that the accounts are signed by the accountable officer. It was further noted that at the AGM on the 7th November a resolution was passed by the corporate body allowing delegated authority to both the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee and Oversight Board to make such a recommendation on their behalf.

Oversight Board members were content on the basis of the information provided to recommend final signing of the accounts by the accountable officer.

Once signed the papers will go to the sponsor team, the Deputy First Minister and to ministers for final sign off.

KD thanked both the management team and the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee for the successful completion of the 2023/24 accounts.

Agenda item 6 Report from the Chair

KD reported on key activities since the last meeting.

The AGM on the 7th November was very successful and included an excellent message from the Deputy First Minister. This was followed by a presentation on engagement with survivors led by 2 members of staff and an interactive session around business continuity.

At a panel member training session, the day before the AGM there was discussion on the development of the Practice Development Group in relation to its communication with the wider panel member team.

The annual reviews of individual panel members are almost complete.

On the 30th November a meeting took place with the Deputy First Minister. This was a very positive meeting where we provided more information on the business case and on modelling. It was clear that the Deputy First Minister understood our situation. We will now wait for the budget announcement on the 4th December and formal notification of our budget allocation.

Meetings have also taken place with Scottish Government to discuss the schedule of meetings and efficiencies. As was mentioned at the last Oversight Board meeting there is a sprint/workshop proposed for January to look at joint work on improvements. RS had developed and provided a matrix analysis of potential changes to Scotland's redress scheme.

There has been a lot of activity around panel member recruitment, and we anticipate the appointment of at least 10 new members.

Members thanked JM for her update and noted the significant work required to complete the matrix analysis and hoped this would inform the sprint exercise and test the willingness to change. WM added that the exercise has informed us about our operations highlighting both bottlenecks and opportunities.

Agenda Item 7 Report from the Chief Executive

7.1 Chief Executive's report including papers 7.2 Dashboard report and 7.3 Review of Business Plan

JM picked the key messages from her report to discuss with board members.

The preparation of the business case and the development of the matrix analysis proved a very insightful exercise. This was a lot of work, but the final paper clearly evidenced the impact of changes and the effect on waiting times for survivors. These were presented to the Deputy First Minister, and the hope is for an increase in budget to address the backlog and ensure shorter turnaround times for future applications. It was however noted that there are currently huge demands on public services.

Progress on the business plan was set out in paper 7.3. Even during a busy year with several challenges good progress has been made. Going forward focus will be on growth.

The dashboard reflected a significant increase in the number of decisions made whilst maintaining quality. Good safeguards are in place for identification of any errors.

The annual training and development evaluation report is with the Senior Management Team for review and work has commenced in developing the plan for 2025.

JM suggested that for the strategy meeting in March the focus could be on growth. A lot of work has been undertaken on capacity and now would be a good time to look at growth and how this will be managed.

Members were invited to comment or question on the papers presented.

WM congratulated the operations team on the successful completion of 140 applications in the most recent period.

Other members noted the excellent training offered to both panel members and non-executives which provided a greater insight into the work of panel members. There was a request for the training plan to be shared with non-executives. JM confirmed this will be shared at future meeting.

The matrix was very well received and was considered an excellent piece of work which will lay the foundation for any future service evaluation and development.

Action; 2025 Training plan to be shared with non-executive members.

Agenda item 8. Governance & Risk

The Risk Register has been updated and changes highlighted. Also included for the first time are risk mapping and horizon risks.

There followed a discussion of the various risks, and a few minor suggestions were made. The section on cyber security will reference IT and training.

Members agreed it was an accurate reflection of the current risk environment and were content to adopt the detail.

Agenda Item 9 Finance & Procurement, Management accounts Period 7

MS presented period 7 accounts noting the small underpayment of £16k due primarily to the timing of payments and the delay in the HR system.

The projected underspend to the year end is in the region of £553K. Scottish Government have been advised that we will reduce our draw down in the current year to £4.5m.

Members were happy with this approach which reflected the prudent financial management of the organisation.

Agenda 10 Policy and Improvement

JM provided an update on the work of the Policy and Improvement Team during the year.

Interim line management arrangements are working well with individuals reporting to and being managed by members of the senior management team.

Several key pieces of work have progressed;

- The QA framework designed for self-evaluation is working well and all teams will complete a self-evaluation exercise in early 2025 to inform actions in the business plan.
- The activity section at the AGM focussed on business continuity scenarios. The output from these sessions will inform policy improvement and associated training.
- Website development continues with survivor feedback directing future changes.
- The winter panel member newsletter is being prepared and will be issued before the end of the calendar year.

- The Communications Lead has developed a media monitoring report which tracks external interest in Redress Scotland
- Survivor engagement continues with both formal and informal approaches.
- Work on improving the decision letters to survivors continues and survivors have been involved in the process.
- The Research and Knowledge Lead has completed and shared with the PDG the first paper on review decisions.
- 2 pieces of work are being considered for commission from external specialists on restraint and bias in decision making.
- Policy register has been developed and will be discussed later in the meeting.

Members thanked JM for the update and were content with the work which is underway.

Agenda Item 11 Policy Approvals

11.1 – Policies and key documents paper

KD noted that this was an overarching list of the key documents and policies held by Redress Scotland. Work will continue to develop this further to reflect the timescales for review and to identify those policies which have to come back to board for approval when reviewed. Several actions were identified and noted.

Action; Proposal on policy management to be developed and brought back to the February meetings of both governance committees by policy team.

Action; Review dates to be added to the list.

Action; Consider if in addition to the Safeguarding Policy that an Adult Protection Policy should also be adopted given the nature of the work of Redress Scotland.

11.2 Expenses Policy- updated.

MS advised that the updated policy reflects inclusion focus of a sustainable nature in relation to travel together with an update of the rates to be applied. The policy reflects our alignment to HMRC rates.

Members were content to approve the revised Expenses Policy with no further changes.

11.3 Working arrangements for panel members- updated.

The revised policy reflects the removal of cancellation fees and a development of the process for panel members to raise concerns.

During discussion members agreed that the policy should state categorically that cancellation fees will **not** be paid should an arranged panel be cancelled. It was further agreed that panel member contracts with Scottish Government should be referenced.

The working arrangements paper was approved subject to the changes noted. Joanna noted that consideration may also be given to any feedback from panel members.

Action: Working arrangements for panel members to be amended as discussed and then circulated. JM

11.4 Retention and Disposal Policy and Guidance

The updated guidance was circulated for approval. Members queried our responsibilities in relation to survivor paperwork and requested greater clarity in this area. It was noted that Scottish Government would be the key information holders.

Action; Retention and Disposal Policy and Guidance to be reviewed by the policy team in relation to the retention of survivor paperwork and to be presented to a future meeting.

11.5 Business Continuity Plan

Several scenarios were presented at the AGM for groups to work through and feedback on. Further work will be required to fully develop this policy and associated training with playbooks of the most common scenarios. A working group will be established including RM and several members of Redress Scotland to progress this work and bring back to the board in the first quarter of 2025.

**Action; Working group to be set up and come back to board in the first quarter of 2025.
JM**

Agenda Item 12. Forward Planning

12.1 Forward plan

The content was noted.

Agenda Item 13. New And Emerging Risks

None noted, all risks captured in the risk register including horizon risks.

Agenda Item 14 Any other competent business

No other business was noted.

Agenda Item 15. Review of Meeting and Survivor Voice

PE advised that the nature of the meeting agenda with a focus on the formal business of approving the accounts meant that survivor focussed discussions were delayed until further into the meeting. This aside several topics of discussion including decision letters, policies, retention of paperwork all have an impact on the survivor and the survivor experience.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1225.

Members and MN remained to discuss item 16.

Agenda Item 16 Restricted Item

Separate minute prepared