

Meeting: Redress Scotland Oversight Board

Date: 26th February 2025

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)
Mel Lowe (ML)	(Head of Policy and Improvement)
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.

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

Agenda item 2. Minutes of the previous meeting 27th November 2024 and Restricted Item – addendum to meeting 27th November 2024

The minute of the previous meeting held on the 27th of November 2024 and the minute for the restricted item were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. RM had been inadvertently excluded from the attendance, and this will be corrected before publication.

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 5th of February 2025

WM noted a good meeting with nothing adverse to report. The meeting included the opportunity for the self evaluation exercise to be undertaken by members.

WM reported the adoption of a new approach to deep dives on items within the risk register. These will be covered on a cyclical basis taking the form of a presentation from the risk owner of the nature of the risk and the mitigations in place. GG gave the first presentation on operational processes.

TIAA advised an award of reasonable assurance for Corporate Performance Management with a couple of minor recommendations proposed.

There was a thorough scrutiny of the 2025/26 budget. This is coming forward today for approval.

Audit Scotland advised they have changed their audit team in relation to Redress Scotland. Due to the organisation being classed as low risk we no longer have to be overseen by the audit director and going forward the current audit manager will take the lead.

Agenda item 5 Report from the Chair

KD reported her continued observation of panels, aiming to attend 1-2 per month. The latest ones attended were 2 person panels for fixed payments. KD noted that even these applications were complex and the impact on panel members was noted.

Panel member assessments continue and going forward WM and members of the executive team will support these assessments.

Panel member recruitment is well underway and there is the expectation that on completion we will have at least 10 new panel members forming a 4th cohort. The quality of applicant has been particularly high.

KD also reported 2 survivor meetings coming up. One is a regular meeting with a survivor who represents a small group of survivors where any questions or areas of concern are aired. The second is a first meeting and will take the form of a general introductory conversation.

KD noted the amount of time taken up with Scottish Government following the submission of our business case and preparation of the recent joint workshop.

Agenda item 6 Report from the Chief Executive

JM advised that the focus in preparation of this meeting has been the work with Scottish Government and work on efficiencies and effectiveness.

JM continued that one recommendation from the recent internal audit report was to report regularly on our KPIs. The following is a summary,

- Finance has a good adherence to budget and management of expenditure. We are however no longer meeting our invoicing target. This is due to the move by Scottish Government to the Oracle system. Several organisations have reported similar problems.
- The KPI around People reflects our low attrition rate and a stabilisation of the staff team. Absence rates are low, despite the winter viruses. This provides a good indication of staff health and wellbeing.
- Our performance is good on processing Priority 2 applications however we have underperformed at Priority 3. This is not what we want as survivors are waiting longer and we are not able to meet this target. It was noted that the waiting times generate enquiries which then require resources from the team.

Members agreed this was to be revisited at the next meeting and a more reasonable KPI adopted, one which reflects the queue and the capacity of Redress Scotland given we have not received any increase in our budget.

- Complaints are low, possibly due to management of the queue and inquiries by the operations team.

JM added that a full review of KPIs will be undertaken and brought to the next board meeting.

Action; – KPIs to be reviewed and updated and brought to the March meeting.

Dashboard

In January 145 decisions were made, This is the highest number to date. The queue appears to have stabilized however the number of reconvened panels has increased.

Although it has been a difficult few months preparing the business case and working with Scottish Government JM was pleased to report that good quality decisions continue to be made.

WM noted that from Chart A it looks as if we have completed over half of all applications. GG offered to check and confirm if this was in fact the case.

Action; GG to check if half of all applications forwarded to RS have now had a decision?

JM advised that an analysis of the reasons for reconvened panels has been undertaken, it was noted that a high number of these come from applicants who have sought legal support in their preparation. This is a concern and Redress Scotland are looking at ways of addressing this. We have approached Scottish Government and recommended changes to the application pack to better inform the applicant of the information required. Scottish Government have taken this on board and changes have been made. It was noted that this would only improve new applications to the scheme.

Agenda Item 7

7.1 2024/25 Annual Report and accounts Recommendation Action Plan

JM noted that the action plan was developed to support our recommendations within the annual report and accounts. JM advised that these are progressing well and that

with the aid of subcontractors two of these are almost complete. These relate to accessibility and material errors and final reports will be presented to the board in due course.

The other recommendation in relation to a review and evaluation of the scheme is more difficult to progress as Scottish Government have stated they do not support this recommendation, and it is difficult for Redress Scotland to progress this separately. Members noted JM comments, but their view was that exploratory work should commence, and a more creative approach taken to this.

Action; The paper was noted with one recommendation from the board to explore the options for review and evaluation of the scheme.

Agenda item 8. Finance and Procurement

8.1 Management accounts Period 10

MS noted an underspend in the period of £37k. In the previous 2 months we reported an overspend of £7k. The projected underspend to the year end is £410k.

A balance of 6 weeks cash is maintained.

The average cost per decisions continue to reduce.

Members were keen to explore the cost per decision figure and it was agreed to undertake additional work and elaborate these with case studies. Suggested areas for exploration included looking at preclusion, material errors and re-convened panels.

Action; revisit the cost per decision calculation highlighting the limits and implications of the various parts of the process.

8.2 2024/25 Budget

MS advised that the figures used were the same as those reflected in business cases of August and November 2024 and which were presented to the Deputy First Minister. The subsequent Grant -in Aid award was made of £5,046k. This amount does not make allowance for the subsequent increase in employer national insurance, the annual pay award, and inflationary increases. MS added that the budget as presented will not result in any underspend.

Members raised some points in relation to the ratio of different costs in the budget and requested a further breakdown to be provided along with a narrative around the impact of the increase in costs and the contribution made by Scottish Government to these.

Action ; The board approved the budget subject to further narrative to be provided to support the 2025/26 budget award; Chair and Deputy Chair to review the revised document with it returning to the board in March for final decision.

Agenda Item 9 People

9.1 Results from Panel Member Survey

MN summarised the key results, the first being the excellent response rate of 79%. Members of the practice development group are developing an action plan. MN confirmed that the survey was designed by the people's champion group and follows closely the structure of the staff survey.

Members thanked MN and her team reiterating the great engagement rate and feedback.

Agenda 10 Health and Safety

10.1 Health and Safety – Annual audit report from Worknest

MN advised that our H&S consultants, Worknest, have completed their annual audit and awarded 100% with no recommendations made.

Worknest also reviewed the RS policy and Health and safety handbook and there were no changes to be made.

Members thanked MN for supporting this excellent result.

Agenda Item 11 Policy Approvals

11.1 Right to disconnect

MN spoke to the implementation of this new policy. Members were content to approve subject to minor changes.

11.2 Annual Review Policy

Members were content to approve this policy subject to cross reference with other linked policies particularly in relation to any poor-performance issues and how these are managed.

Agenda Item 12. Forward Planning

12.1 Forward plan

The content was noted.

Agenda Item 13. New And Emerging Risks

None noted.

Agenda Item 14. Any other competent business

No other business was noted.

The formal meeting closed at 1520.

There followed a closed session with all board and executive team members.

Agenda Item 17. Review of Meeting and Survivor Voice

RM summarised the meeting acknowledging that it was a challenging business meeting however the survivor was at the forefront of all discussion.

Key performance indicators will be reviewed to reflect the actual state of play within the organisation and will better reflect the processing time of applications based on current capacity levels. This should provide survivors with better information.

We evidenced moral courage in relation to following through with evaluation of the scheme as this in the interests of survivors.

The results from the panel member survey support and highlight the values we protect.

Lastly, the Chair has met with and will continue to meet with survivors to have a conversation around their perspective of our work.