

**Meeting:** Redress Scotland Oversight Board

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> May 2025 0930- 1530

**Location:** Online via 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 (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member)
- Brian Houston (BH) (Redress Scotland Oversight Board Member, Panel Member)
- Mary McCallan (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)

**Apologies;**

None

**By Invitation;**

Neil Mackay(NM) (Redress Scotland, Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Member)

Beccy Gilpin (BG)Item 9.1 only Redress Scotland, Learning, Development and Wellbeing Lead

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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.

There were no board member conflicts of interest noted.

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

### **Agenda item 2. Minutes of the previous meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2025 including restricted item**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 24<sup>th</sup> March and the note from the restricted discussions were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting with no further amendment required.

The board noted the notes from the strategy workshop on the 24<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Agenda item 3. Matters Arising – Action Log**

The Action and Decision log was noted and updated during the meeting.

There was a suggestion to use full names and not just initials and to refine the RAG status of actions.

**Action; DP to update and refine the presentation of the action log.**

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

KD updated the board of her activity since the last meeting in March.

These include undertaking panel observations which provide a great insight into the working of panels. KD noted how professionally all members undertake these.

KD attended the April risk workshop led by Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee and the meeting which followed.

Non executive appraisals have been undertaken, and panel member appraisals continue on a regular basis. Some common threads are emerging from panel member appraisals.

Training on trauma and on convictions has been attended together with the staff conference. The video shown of two survivors was a highlight of the event and reinforced the value of the work done at Redress Scotland.

Training of the 1<sup>st</sup> cohort of new panel members is well under way. The high quality of training was noted and reflected the high expectations of panel members. Readiness to practice interviews have been scheduled for mid June.

KD had a digital meeting with the Deputy First Minister on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May. It was a positive meeting with recognition of the efficiency and effectiveness work we are undertaking. KD also had the opportunity to explain that the stabilisation of waiting times is due to a lower number of applications coming through from Scottish Government. The Deputy First Minister asked for two pieces of work to be completed. The first is a short paper proposing what would be our ask for additional funding should this be available and secondly a business case for the scheme as a whole. This second paper will be led by the Scottish Government Redress Division in collaboration with Redress Scotland

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

### **5.1 Chief Executive's report**

JM reported that in addition to a report on activity since the last meeting there are several items identified for discussion with the board.

Work of the Efficiency and Effectiveness group has been included in the main report but for future meetings a separate paper will be prepared.

- Last month the organisation recorded an increase in the number of decisions made. The expected high quality is being maintained.
- The queue is stabilising. Scottish Government had forecast around 170 applications monthly, but actual numbers are in the region of 120. This has resulted in Redress Scotland being able to tackle the backlog of applications.
- An outstanding action from the 2024 strategy day is the creation of an advisory group of survivors to the board, Work pressure has prevented this being moved forward and the board will be asked for direction at the end of the presentation.
- Operations Team is feeling the pressure of supporting the increased workload. All teams are working to capacity.
- Efficiencies and effectiveness work is at the stage of conducting life tests. One test is to reduce panel support coordinators for panels looking at fixed payment applications.

It was also noted that pre-panel preparation is a significant part of the budget allocation. Work has started on analysing preparation time and tasks. This work is being expanded to allow more panel members to be part of the analysis thereby ensuring this works for everyone.

Work already complete includes review of the role of panel support coordinators and scheduling of panels.

- The organisational restructure recommended at the previous meeting is progressing.
- Performance in 2024/25 recorded 50% more panels and 40% more decisions with a 50-55% increase in panel member activity. We are moving into the coming year with increased capacity.
- The People team reported good performance. On their KPI's. Absence is up slightly so there will be a renewed focus on wellbeing and support. We continue to have a low staff turnover rate.
- Induction and training of new panel members is well underway. 13 applicants are currently going through this however it may be the case that some take longer to complete training. The case studies used reflect the complexity of applications which are currently being received.

At the end of the report JM requested members to consider the following 5 areas

1. Note the substantial increase in delivery that was achieved in 2024/25, and the maintenance of the high quality of Redress Scotland's work; *this was noted with the caveat to continue to ask Scottish Government for regular updates to forecasting as this impacts on our planning and subsequent delivery. Scottish Government also don't know how many applications will be received in any period although recently applications have been increasing. In time this information will be even more essential as we look to closure of the scheme.*
2. Note and consider the current work on efficiency and effectiveness, including that a separate report will be provided at future meetings; *this was noted and members asked specifically for more information including costings around panel preparation time. Signing off minutes by panel members was considered an integral part of the role but one which could be delegated to the panel chair. JM added that improvements to the application pack have been initiated providing better guidance to survivors on the information required in the application. Work has started with and will continue with the legal advisors who support applicants. Services are seen to be variable and efforts are being made together with Scottish Government to address these variances. Also noted was the number of panel members undertaking higher numbers of panels in a month. This is a substantial volume of traumatic information to be exposed to; focus will continue on wellbeing. The appointment of new panel members during the second half of 2025 will reduce the pressure on current panel members noting that for many this is their main source of income, and any drastic reduction could result in them looking for more stable work.*

3. Consider how well the current training model is working, given the internal resourcing requirements and the growth in the organisation; *Following this round of training KD and JM will discuss and amend where necessary.*

**Action; KD/JM to review training for new panel members and provide an update at the next meeting.**

4. Consider the development of an advisory group in relation to governance and whether this should be prioritised at this time; *the board acknowledged that given the size of the organisation and the current pressure of work it was difficult to see how this can be progressed in the way it was originally agreed. There was disappointment that this was not built into the original plan for governance. KD asked that the SMT consider if there are opportunities to engage survivors for ad hoc pieces of work.*

**Action; SMT to consider if there are opportunities to engage survivors for ad hoc pieces of work and provide an update at the next meeting.**

5. Consider whether monthly expenditure should be increased, given that this could then be outwith the 3% KPI for expenditure against budget but would deliver a higher number of decisions in the early part of 2025/26. *Members agreed that this was something that should be discussed with the sponsor team.*

*The Oversight Board recognised that there were several risks inherent in front loading the work including the inefficiencies resulting from reduced workload later in the year.*

**Action; KD requested that some simple modelling based on variances of 3%, 5% and 10% are worked on for the next meeting of the Oversight Board. It was noted that there is a compelling argument from the survivor perspective.**

## **5.2 KPI report**

Discussed during 5.1 above

## **5.3 Initial proposal for income generation**

JM reported that following the development of the efficiency and effectiveness action plan which was subsequently shared with the Deputy First Minister and sponsor team we were asked to explore ways of generating income. The board reflected on the earlier conversations on capacity and work pressure and that we are not progressing with a survivor advisory group it was considered not the right time to be looking at income generation. Current capacity is required to support decision making. Any knowledge we may want to share with colleagues, and other public bodies or

organisations, should be given freely and only if we have the capacity to support these requests.

## **Agenda item 6 Governance and Risk**

### **6.1 Draft minute from the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee meeting of 9th April 2025 and the risk workshop attended by members of Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee and Oversight Board**

WM advised board members that the last meeting of Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee combined a risk workshop attended by members of Oversight Board. The output has been incorporated in the risk register presented later in the meeting.

The Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee meeting which followed considered the committee terms of reference and made one addition in relation to training. A deep dive into survivor trust and confidence was reported on. It was also noted that there was discussion on the internal audit report on business continuity where we received only limited assurance. An action plan is in place to ensure adherence to the recommendations and regular reports on progress will be presented to future meetings.

### **6.2 Risk Mapping**

ML advised that the paper brings all assurances together in one document. It is a live document and the gaps are seen as a positive move forward as through identification they can be addresses.

Members thanked ML for a good piece of work which proportionally develops our attitude to risk. Thanks to NM for support in the preparation. This will now be reviewed periodically and at least annually at the risk workshop. One addition in relation to values to be included.

**Action; Values to be added to the top of the paper as it the role of Oversight Board to deliver on our mission.**

**Approved subject to the change noted and will be reviewed again in April 2026.**

### **6.3 Review of Risk Register – April 2025**

### **6.4 Risk Register updated April 2025**

JM presented the risk register and report on the changes adopted following discussion at the risk workshop in April. At the workshop there was substantial discussion and scrutiny of each risk, and the revised register reflects these discussions.

**The board unanimously agreed the changes and adopted the revised risk register for 2025/26. A mid year review will take place later in the year with a full review in April 2026.**

### **6.5 Review of governance Redress Scotland 2024/25**

Members acknowledged receipt of the governance activity for the previous year and noted the proposed changes to the terms of reference.

Any changes to the Rules of Procedure would require ministerial approval however it was suggested that an addendum be prepared outlining how these operate in practice and recommending changes.

**Action: approach sponsor team to check on the process for amending rules, if cumbersome give some thought to work arounds.**

## **Agenda item 7 Finance and Procurement**

### **7.1 Period 13 Management accounts**

MS reported that P13 includes for all year end adjustments and reflect an underspend of £93.0k which is 2.02% below the revised full year budget of £4.6m.

The cashflow has not changed since the P12 briefing, reflecting a year -end closing balance of £777.2K.

### **7.2 Period 1 Management Accounts**

This year the allocated budget from the Scottish Government is £5.046m. Expenditure for period 1 was £232.6k in total, which is £2.1k, (0.9%), above forecast. Cash balance of £736.5k will remain in the bank account at the end of the year which will be sufficient to cover expenditure until the next Grant In Aid payment in late May 2025.

### **7.3 Business Continuity Update**

MS reiterated the limited assurance received from the internal auditors in relation to this area of business. 9 actions were recommended, and a working group has been established to oversee the work. Business impact assessments for all areas are complete and the revised business continuity plan is almost complete and will go through the normal process for approval starting with Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee in June.



## **Agenda Item 8 Complaints and positive feedback report**

GG spoke to highlights from the annual complaints and positive feedback report stressing the impact the general enquiries phone line has had on survivor feedback. Although waiting times are longer the improved communications can be assumed to be reducing the number of formal complaints. Work in this area is noted as significant and impactful.

GG added that they are seeing more complaints around the actual decisions that are being made.

Board members thanked GG for the comprehensive report and confirmed that they were content with the approach taken for communication.

## **Agenda Item 9 People**

### **9.1 2025/26 Training Plan**

BG joined for this item informing members that the aim of the plan is to secure dates as far ahead as possible. All panel member training has been doubled up thereby allowing flexibility of attendance. Training dates will be linked to the new HR system.

### **9.2 You Matter Survey Results- (Employee Survey)**

MN summarised the key points from the recent You Matter survey. This is the second survey undertaken and provides the start of some comparative information. Take up is down slightly but still very high. There were 4 sections to the survey including culture and wellbeing. Wellbeing scores were up on last year.

One area to keep on the radar is workload and the People's Champion Group which oversees the action plan has already met to address these issues.

The board thanked the People's Champion Group for their work with staff and for overseeing both the survey and the action plan which follows.

### **9.3 Equalities Monitoring Report**

MN advised that the board receive a copy of the full report, but that a summary report will be available for publication. As we are a small organisation it is easy for individuals to be recognised. The report will be used as part of our annual report.

The board noted the content of the report.



## **Agenda Item 10 Policy Approvals**

### **10.1 a and b Policy Review and policy register**

ML advised that 2 papers were put forward for consideration, the schedule of key policies and a revised process for regular update and review.

A couple of suggestions were made for improvement including highlighting those which come to the board regularly for review. Also, to hyperlink to the policies.

**Action; schedule and process approved. Board policies to be identified and captured on the schedule and in the forward plan.**

### **10.2 a Policy on Material errors**

#### **10.2 b Operational Guidance on Material errors**

JM advised that this work has been undertaken with the help of panel members and an external contractor. This is a complex area and one which has been discussed with panel members. An accompanying leaflet has also been drafted but requires more work. Once the designers have worked on the changes it will be shared with other survivor communities for feedback.

Members were keen that the document clearly explains the process for managing material errors. BH highlighted a number of points that he felt would benefit from having greater clarity, and that it was important to ensure consistency across the policy and procedure.

The board approved the policy and the procedure subject to changes and agreed for final sign off to sit with KD/BW with BH and JM undertaking further work.

**Action: BH and JM to further review the policy and procedure before sharing with KD/BW.**

### **10.3 Shared expectations**

JM advised that this paper arose following several conversations with panel members and staff where a number of areas of confusion over roles and tasks were identified. The paper is brought to the board for approval before incorporation into the guidance for panel members and staff.

The board requested that the signing off minutes by panel members should also be included

**Action; approved subject to amendments and final sign off delegated to KD and WM.**

### **Agenda Item 11. Forward Plan**

Members were content that all future items identified had been captured.

### **Agenda Item 12. New and emerging risks**

None noted

### **Agenda item 13. Any other competent business**

None

### **Agenda Item 14. Review of Meeting and Survivor Voice**

KD thanked those present for their contributions to the board meeting.

BH highlighted several areas where the survivor was key to the discussion. These included discussions around:

- KD observation of panel meetings
- Video shared at the conference featuring 2 survivors
- Recruitment process which was also supported by survivors
- Chief Executive report which referenced work with survivors
- Discussion on governance and survivor groups
- Reduction in waiting times
- Discussion on a staged way of involving survivors in our governance activities
- Work of the efficiency and effectiveness group to explicitly enhance survivor experience and waiting times
- Work on accessibility proving more complicated than first thought
- Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee deep dive was on survivor trust and confidence.
- Addition of paragraph in the Rules of Procedure referencing survivor voice at all Redress Scotland meetings
- General enquiries work is improving relationships with survivors
- Material errors will be re worked to ensure it is usable by survivors

- Shared expectations paper will support more efficient work

There being no other business the meeting ended at 1530.