Redress Scotland

Meeting Minutes

Meeting: Audit Risk and Assurance Committee
Date: 24th June 2025 0930-1400
Minuted by: Diane Piper (DP), Governance Secretary, Redress Scotland

Committee Members

- Bill Matthews(WM) Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Chair, Redress Scotland Deputy Chair
- Catherine Dyer(CD) Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Member, Non- Executive Member of Redress Scotland
- Jane Gordon (JG) Redress Scotland Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee member, Panel Member
- Neil Mackay(NM) Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Member, Non-Executive Member of Redress Scotland
- Colin Spivey(CS) Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Member, Non – Executive Member of Redress Scotland

Participants

- Joanna McCreadie(JM) Redress Scotland Chief Executive
- Michael Stevens (MS) Redress Scotland Head of Finance and Resources

By Invitation

- Martin Ritchie (MR) TIAA
- Gillian McCreadie (GM) Audit Scotland
- Kirsty Darwent Chair, Redress Scotland

Apologies

None

Agenda item 1. Welcome, apologies and conflicts of interest

1.1 Welcome

WM opened the meeting and welcomed all present. In addition to the usual business time has been allowed for a consider the first draft of the annual report and accounts.

1.2 Apologies

There were no apologies.

1.3 Declarations of Interest:

No declarations were made.

1.4 Appoint survivor voice;

JG was appointed as the meeting reviewer from the perspective of the survivor.

Agenda Item 2 Minutes of the previous meeting 9th April 2025

The minute from the meeting on the 9th April was approved as a true reflection of the discussions.

Agenda Item 3 Matters arising from the previous meeting

The action log was presented for approval. The two outstanding actions were updated and noted as complete.

Agenda item 4 Governance

4.1 Draft Oversight Board Meeting of 28th May 2025

These were noted by members.

4.2 ARAC Terms of Reference

The ARAC terms of reference have been revised to include the recommended changes and will now be published.

4.3 ARAC activity report 2024/25

The report was noted with 2 suggested changes; the inclusion of a table showing the completed deep dives into individual risks on the risk register and to change the wording from ***scrutiny*** of the KPIs to ***review***.

Agenda Item 5 Report from the Chair

WM updated the committee with details of his activity since the last meeting. These included;

- Panel observation – WM noted that the work of panel members during panel meetings remains of a very high standard. WM further noted that new and complex issues with applications continue to surface.
- Training of the new panel members is now complete. WM attended several modules. Joint training is scheduled with the parole board on decision making.

Agenda Item 6 CEO Reports

CEO Report and dashboard.

JM outlined a number of her key activities since the last meeting;

JM recently met with representatives from the Lambeth Scheme. JM noted much commonality between the 2 schemes. Both face the similar challenges and complexities. Of the approximately 2400 applications received they are now making decisions on the final few remaining and are in the process of scoping out a final report.

Action – JM to share links to Lambeth reports with to members.

- Met with the members of the child abuse enquiry and presented on the work of Redress Scotland.
- Met with Community Justice Scotland, with discussion about applicants with previous convictions.
- Work around efficiencies was shared at the last Oversight Board. The efficiencies group has met and prioritised looking at the pre-panel work undertaken by panel members. A small sample has been chosen for a deeper analysis. JM noted that we were now entering more risky areas where any change could impact on quality.
- Of the 14 new panel members allocated for the first round of training, 1 has resigned and a number have deferred finishing training and will rejoin the November cohort. JM confirmed that the delay will not adversely impact projected capacity.
- The circulated dashboard showed 3086 applications have been completed. Performance against forecast is good with twenty-three 3- person panels five 2-person panels and 23 reconvened panels. Spending is at the top end of our budget, and our inventory is slowly decreasing.

Members thanked JM for her update. BM noted the chart which reflected the number of days panel members are working highlighting that a small number of panel members are doing a high number of panels each month. JG raised that panel members had previously been asked to offer additional availability to support increased numbers of decisions to be made but were now being asked to decrease their work. JM thanked JG for this reminder and offered to share information about the new panel members and when they would start working on live sitting days.

Action – Information to be circulated to panel members on the planned training programme later this year and when new panel members would be working on live panels.

JM also advised that Scotland's Public Service Reform Strategy has been released adding that we are in an advantageous position to set out where we are in performing well against this strategy.

Action; JM to circulate a copy of Scotland's Public Service Reform Strategy to all members.

Agenda item 7 Strategic Risk Register

7.1 Deep Dive into Communications

This paper was prepared by ML but was presented by JM. People and resources will be considered at the September meeting.

JM advised that our key audience remains survivors, however we are now looking at our approach with key professional bodies.

The paper outlines;

- Risk factors and impact.
- The difficulty for us to manage communications which are sent by other parts of the scheme.
- Externally there is still confusion over the roles of Redress Scotland and Scottish Government.
- The paper also outlines the mitigations identified to address the risk.
- Identified gaps include further work with survivors with accessibility needs, increased of input from survivors and other stakeholders.
- The number of enquiries doubled last year.
- The team at Redress Scotland overseeing our communications is small.

The committee was asked to consider if there are any gaps in the information provided and if there were any improvement which could be made. Members noted the ongoing confusion over the roles of the 2 parts of the scheme. NM stressed that risk control points should be tested and that the greatest risk were our decision letters. Members agreed that external communication is good but focus now should be on internal communications. It was further highlighted that an entry in Wikipedia holds the wrong information about the scheme.

JM confirmed agreement with the comments on internal communications adding that this will be even more important as the organisation grows. The comments on decision letters were noted.

Agenda Item 8 Audit Updates

Internal Audit Reports – presented by MR

8.1 Payroll and Expenses

MR reported a positive outcome to the audit of payroll and expenses which provided substantial assurance. There are no recommendation and MR confirmed that the old previous issues have been addressed.

External Audit Presented by GM

The audit plan was approved at the last meeting, and the interim review is complete. GM advised that Oracle has caused significant issues within other organisations. MS added that we have maintained the use of spreadsheets, and this will provide corroboration of the figures produced.

Agenda Item 9 Papers for Information

9.1 Management accounts P2

MS reported of an underspend of £8.8k equivalent of 0 .1% of a variance. The main reason for the underspend was on legal services. MS continued that we will reduce the grant in aid drawdown next month and keep the funds in reserve until November when the next round of training is scheduled. The cost per decision remains consistent at £2900.

Agenda Item 10 – Annual review of Report and accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025

10.1 Draft Annual report and accounts
10.2 Checklist of assurances
10.3 2025 Accountable Officer Cert of Assurance Letter

WM open the discussion suggesting that the focus for today should be on the strategic input. Members agreed to keep the discussion at a high level and will email JM and MS with minor amendments by Monday the 7th of July.

Board members raised several points during the discussion;

- The narrative is too long, check for tenses and ensure it reads as one document
- Explain the whole of this scheme and the specific role of Redress Scotland

- Identify what the key message should be i.e. progress, or cost reduction per decision
- Highlight issues on reconvened panels and the complexity of applications received.
- Use graphs and visuals where possible including charts from the KPI report
- Note it's been a challenging year for the organisation; applications are also longer and more complex than predicted at the start of the scheme
- The backlog has started to be addressed
- New increase in capacity and move to steady state could be drawn out more in the report
- There could be more highlighting of the work on efficiencies
- Identify and focus on the main point for each section
- Include glossary at the end

WM reminded ARAC members to send a list of changes by Monday the 7th of July to MS and JM. The document will then be reworked and presented to the Oversight Board on the 23rd of July.

JM continued that there will be a workshop with Scottish Government around the recommendation sections considering areas for development.

JM asked for member guidance with regards to the approach to highlighting the impact which could be made with increased capacity. A great deal of work was undertaken developing the business case for the Deputy First Minister and perhaps some of this detail could go into the annual report and accounts.

Members felt that as we at the halfway point it would be reasonable to produce a capacity plan with a reassessment of the work to date an and a focus on what is required between now and the end of the scheme. Members suggested that this is factual and unemotive and include figures from years 22/23, 23/24 and 24/25.

There may be the opportunity to remind stakeholders that the scheme received all party support. There was agreement to keep this message within the Chief Executive's report. Also to be included is the pressure efficiency work has had on staff and panels.
Finally, our approach should be discussed informally with Scottish Government.

JM suggested including composite stories of insights from panel members and panel support coordinators.

Checklist of assurances

CS advised that other bodies had questioned the length of this form being appropriate to smaller public bodies and had received a shorter version for completion. Any feedback on the content to also be sent to JM and MS by Monday the 7th of July.

Agenda Item 11 Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee forward plan

Two items to add to the forward plan in person meeting in February and the assurance map and list checklist of assurances to be reviewed A at that meeting.

Agenda item 12 AOB

None

Agenda item 13 Review of Meeting Survivor Voice

JG noted there were large parts of the meetings which were quite technical in their detail however the chair's report highlighted the high quality of panel conduct and the complexity of some of the applications. Everyone concerned is desirous of reaching the best decision for the survivor. Feedback on training has been excellent however this will continue to be developed to support the decision-making process.

The chief executive report highlighted the Lambeth meeting where the representatives had confidence that they had delivered on the original purpose of the scheme.

Several deferrals to completion of training were noted but that this will not impact on volume of decisions being made. Initial training has an emphasis on the values which underpin all our work.

A milestone has been reached with the completion of over 3000 applications. Queues and waiting times are reducing although it was acknowledged that this is very much dependent on the number of applications which come through from Scottish Government. Waiting times are in the region of 7 to 8 months for completion once received by Redress Scotland.

The deep dive into communications highlighted accessibility, decision letters and invitations to external events.

The annual report will note that one key achievement is our work on survivor engagement. As in previous years efforts will be made to ensure the annual report and accounts is accessible to all stakeholders.

WM thanked everyone for their input. The meeting ended at 12:04.