

**Minutes: Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) Board
meeting, 16 June 2026. Quadrant House, Dundee**



Board Members Present: Marieke Dwarshuis (MD) – Chair
Robin Strang (RS)
Lynn Bradley (LB)
Kirsten Howie (KH)
Neil Mackay (NM)
Bill Maxwell (BM)

OSCR attendance: Quentin Fisher (QF) – Interim Chief Executive
Judith Hayhow (JH) – Head of Corporate
Alex Wright (AW) – Head of Regulation and Improvement
Finance, Governance and Business Manager
Senior Manager, Higher Risk Cases & Quality Assurance
HR & Learning Coordinator
Senior Legal Advisor

Item	Area	Action
1	Chair’s introduction, welcome and apologies MD welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from • Ellie Craig (EC) Board member • Senior Manager Digital and Comms • Senior Manager Policy and Sector Improvement MD noted that EC had provided notes in advance and these would be incorporated where appropriate. MD noted the new item at the end of the agenda, a discussion with the CEO and the Board. This has been included on a trial basis.	
2	Declaration of interests RS noted his interest in relation to Sport Aberdeen. No further (new) declarations were made.	
3	Minutes of previous meeting and Action Log	

	The Board approved the minutes as an accurate record of the 28 April 2026 meeting. Action log The action log was reviewed:	
4	Chair update • Annual Board member appraisals have been completed. • QF's appraisal completed. It was noted that, in light of ongoing uncertainty, objectives had been set for the full year rather than a shorter timeframe, to support longer-term progress. • An update was provided on the Board Chair recruitment process, noting that the campaign was live and members were encouraged to promote it. • Engagement with Julie Humphreys, Director for Tackling Child Poverty and Social Justice has been productive with discussions around the Annual Report narrative and the underspend. • MD and KH have taken part in a University of Stirling research project on trust in charities. They noted alignment between sector views and OSCR's approach. • An update was provided on the new Social Justice, Housing and Local Government Committee. MD noted that 5 of the members were new to parliament and that there is a need for proactive engagement.	

5	Interim CEO Update QF gave a further update to that already included in the papers. • The final financial outturn for 2025–26 was discussed noting an underspend arising primarily from delays in recruitment. QF noted that earlier identification of underspend would be a focus for improvement in 2026–7. MD noted that the Board and the Leadership Team shared responsibility for not identifying the underspend at the earliest opportunity. • QF updated on his attendance at a Public Service Reform (PSR) event with the First Minister, Deputy First Minister and the Cabinet Secretary for Public Service Reform. QF said that the event highlighted the importance of delivering public services that both met the needs of the public and that were sustainable. He indicated that there is an expectation that PSR activity would be delivered at pace. • An update was also provided on published draft Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) guidance on the implementation of the Supreme Court ruling on the meaning of “sex” in the Equality Act, and collaborative work with other UK regulators and the EHRC. It was noted the draft Code of Practice was laid before Parliament on 21 May 2026. It is currently undergoing a mandatory 40-day parliamentary scrutiny period. Assuming neither House objects, it is expected to become statutory guidance in July 2026.	
6	Performance Update (including Financial Report) QF introduced the revised format of the Performance Update report, noting it aligns to the organisation’s strategic themes, incorporating narrative commentary where appropriate, performance indicators and supporting data. MD welcomed feedback from Board members on the content of the report and the revised format. She noted that discussion would cover both the substance of performance and the format of the report. Strategic theme 1 Report Format and Presentation Members welcomed the narrative provided under this section, noting that it gave a fuller picture of engagement activity and stakeholder relationships.	

	Members suggested that: • A reflective conclusion relating to each strategic theme be included. This would give a clearer indication of overall progress under that theme and how this contributed to outcomes. • Consideration to additional quantitative information be included in areas such as engagement activity, where this would support understanding of the scale and impact of work. • Members discussed the differing terms used for targets and suggested the term progress indicators rather than KPIs be used in the future. Performance and Delivery There was a discussion around work with TSIs. SG Third Sector Unit are reviewing TSI's role. The variations in support provided by TSIs was noted. There was a suggestion to include reference to TSI work in the Recommendations to Ministers section of the Annual Report and Accounts, but it was agreed to keep that under consideration for future reports. Strategic theme 2 Report Format and Presentation Members noted that the measures and indicators under this section were largely narrative and that this was appropriate in part, given the nature of the outcomes. However, it was suggested that greater clarity could be provided on progress, particularly in relation to direction of travel through the inclusion of numeric information. Performance and Delivery • Members discussed the use of OSCR's Positive Power of Direction noting that increased use of such powers would not necessarily indicate improved performance. It was agreed that the focus should be on appropriate use of powers rather than volume. Action – Reword 'The number of times we use the positive power of direction increases on the 2025–26 baseline of 2' to highlight an update on when this power is necessary, rather than an upward trend. • Senior Manager, Higher Risk Cases and Quality Assurance noted that no thematic reports were issued in 2025/26 due to	Finance, Governance and Business Manager
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	resourcing issues. In 2026–7 to date one thematic report is in train around financial management, and discussions to be held with LA and JF to generate a ‘good governance tips’ thematic report. • AW updated that the new SCIO regulations have been delayed and are now expected to be laid in November, meaning they would come into force in February 2027. Anticipated benefits will now not be realised during this performance year. • Members attention was brought to a debate in parliament, ‘Strengthening Scotland’s Partnership with the Third Sector’. Action – Link to be shared with Board members to the parliamentary debate ‘Strengthening Scotland’s Partnership with the Third Sector’. • There was a discussion around the move to refresh and create MoUs rather than relying on our statutory powers to share information with other public bodies. It was noted that OSCR staff’s approach to ensuring we have certain MoU’s has been informed by ICO guidance. Members asked for further detail about this ICO guidance, and suggested that the change in approach might result in increased use of resources. It was agreed the level of resource allocated to MoU work is an operational decision. Action – Consider the correct level of resource allocation to MoU work Action – ICO guidance around MoUs to be circulated to the Board • Members requested an overview of the data we currently share publicly and what is in the pipeline Action – Overview of data we share publicly and other plans to share our data to be included in the performance report at the next meeting Strategic theme 3 Report Format and Presentation • Members welcomed the inclusion of both workload data and accompanying narrative, noting that this provided a useful and comprehensive overview. It was agreed that the Casework Committee would direct which casework related information is included in future performance reports.	AW AW Senior Legal Advisor Finance, Governance and Business Manager
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	• A discussion was held about the data included in the report, members requested that information about the position with status cases be included in future reports and the annual average to be removed from the risk assessment data Action – Data to demonstrate the position with status cases to be included in the performance report at the next meeting, and the risk assessment annual average to be removed • Members requested that, when future work targets 'not appropriate' concerns, a narrative update be provided to the Board, as part of the Workload Update. Members reflected that this work is associated with OSCR's risk appetite. Performance and delivery • AW said that casework demand on both status applications and concerns remained significantly higher than in previous years, however due to process improvements performance had improved, with internal targets for risk assessing concerns and status applications now being met. She cautioned that summer leave and resourcing changes in casework teams may affect this. • Members discussed the impact of targets on staff, noting that care would be required to ensure that they were framed appropriately and did not create undue pressure. It was confirmed the 15 day goal for queries is based on OSCR's service standards. Strategic theme 4 Report Format and Presentation Members noted they were content with the formatting of this section. Performance and delivery People • A question was asked to determine if the AWDL data could be converted into working hours and total cost. It was confirmed we do not have the data in this format and it would take significant resource to produce this information, which would not provide significant value.	AW/ Finance, Governance and Business Manager
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	Finance - Finance, Governance and Business Manager noted that ELT would meet the following week to carry out a full review of the 2026–7 Budget, and spend projections. It was highlighted that spending money takes time and resources, and noted that finding both, whilst also delivering business as usual activities can be very challenging. - Members made suggestions around the use of temporary staff and project work.	
7	ARAC update LB introduced this item noting that ARAC had fulfilled its remit. LB explained that internal audit had provided the highest level of assurance available (substantial), and that external audit feedback had been very positive, including strong ratings in relation to engagement and audit processes and the quality of the accounts. LB thanked committee members for their work noting BM who had recently left the committee and KH who joined. She also thanked staff for their work. Following the annual ARAC self assessment review, Members discussed how best to ensure they were kept aware of legal and regulatory developments which were relevant to OSCR. It was agreed that a combination of updates via the Chief Executive’s report and ad hoc communications would provide a proportionate solution.	
8	Casework Committee update [Paper versions of the supplementary minutes to the May Casework Committee were handed out at the meeting]. RS introduced this item noting that there have been two Casework Committee meetings since the last Board meeting, which have both included deep dives. One looked at the section 3(4) exemption processes and the other looked at casework that does not provide regulatory value to OSCR. There will be further discussion on the risk around the latter at the Strategy Day meeting in October. RS updated on current Casework being brought to the Committee including the closure of a long running inquiry into Clan Donald Lands Trust. The Annual Report confirmed that the Committee had fulfilled its remit and provided appropriate assurance. RS noted thanks to committee	

	members including Jill Vickerman, the previous Chair of the committee. He also thanked AW for her work for the Committee. AW noted the proposal within the Committee's Annual Report to revise the Terms of Reference related to meeting frequency, in order to align Committee meetings more closely with the Board cycle and reduce the number of meetings to 5 or 6 per year. Agreement from the Board on this proposal, and dates for 2027 will be discussed at the September Board meeting. There was a discussion around media coverage of the University of Dundee and the current position of the inquiry case. Members highlighted the need to manage communications carefully to ensure that OSCR's role and actions were clearly understood. They noted the clear distinction of the operational handling of the case and the governance role of the Board. Members discussed the importance of capturing and sharing learning from such cases. They suggested the possibility of a broader 'lessons learned' report.	
9	Annual Report narrative approval Finance, Governance and Business Manager introduced the item, noting that the report had been reviewed by ARAC. There is outstanding information regarding pensions and an independent assurance report on Scottish Government systems, required by the external auditors and commissioned by the Scottish Government. JH noted that pensions information may be late, or may become so delayed that it is unavailable for inclusion in this year's report. In a previous year, the FReM was updated to allow an exemption for the inclusion of pensions information. Members discussed SG Shared Services assurance certificates and specifically the certificate provided in respect of Corporate Operations. QF advised that SDBG members had noted the assurance levels provided in the SG certificates. LB noted that Internal Audit advised that the assurance level of the SG certificates did not affect OSCR's level of assurance. Members discussed including the possible recognition of Martin Tyson in the Chair's introduction. Action – Include recognition of Martin Tyson in the Annual Report Chair's introduction	MD/JH

	Members highlighted some minor typographical corrections were required Action – Board members are asked to send a note of minor corrections on the Annual Report to JH and GT by email The Board approved the draft narrative subject to minor amendments and missing information being included. If available, the final draft will be brought to the September Board meeting or October Strategy Day for sign off. If this is not possible it will be approved for sign off by correspondence.	Board members
10	Quality Assurance review Senior Manager, Higher Risk Cases and Quality Assurance introduced the paper, noting the proposals respond to Board feedback by providing clearer assurance across the organisation. The existing QA framework was considered outdated, with proposals to move to a single, integrated assurance approach based on the Assurance Map. The proposals also strengthen assurance over casework through an enhanced role for the Casework Committee, providing clearer visibility and assurance to the Board. The Assurance Map will be updated with content from the QA framework to include all relevant areas, such as policy and sector improvement, and reviewed twice yearly by ELT to ensure it remains current. The Board welcomed the direction of travel and supported the principle of a simplified, strengthened assurance framework. Members emphasised the need for clear, outcome-focused QA activity, distinguishing routine management from assurance. The respective roles of the Casework Committee and ARAC were discussed, with agreement that they are complementary—Casework Committee focusing on operation of casework processes and outcomes, and ARAC providing oversight of the overall framework—though further clarity on practical operation is required. Members highlighted the need for consistency, proportionality, and avoidance of unnecessary complexity. Assurance over casework quality was discussed, including approaches such as sampling, feedback, internal challenge and potential cross-team review, with internal audit possibly being considered to provide additional process-level assurance where appropriate. Overall, the Board supported the approach, noting further development is required. Detailed proposals will be progressed with	

	the Casework Committee and ARAC before returning to the Board, and a timetable for implementation will be prepared. Action – Timetable to be prepared to showing stages of development work by Casework Committee and ARAC, and timetable for sign off by Board and implementation	Senior Manager, Higher Risk Cases and Quality Assurance
11	Communication and Engagement Strategy 26–29 JH introduced this item. She said that the strategy brought together the previously separate communications and engagement strategies into a single document, in line with earlier Board discussions. Members were asked to provide feedback for inclusion in the final version. Members noted the Strategy was clear and concise and well aligned to the organisation’s strategic objectives. They suggested the following for consideration: • strengthen how data and evidence would inform decision-making and prioritisation. • clearer identification of stakeholder groups (including funders and beneficiaries). It was acknowledged that beneficiaries may be included implicitly within broader categories. • greater emphasis on communications supporting public trust and regulatory impact. Build trust by informing the public when action has been taken. There was a discussion around including the development of a risk appetite in relation to concerns. It was noted that internal work is ongoing to review communication approaches, including balancing transparency with the need to manage legal and reputational risks. It was agreed that the strategy would be updated to reflect Board feedback and circulated by email for final approval. Action: Updated Communications and Engagement Strategy to be circulated by email for final approval	JH

	It was noted that the annual review of the strategy will take place in June. There will be a Communications update at the November Board meeting. Action – Board Schedule of Business to be updated to include the Annual review of the Communication and Engagement Strategy 26–29 in June. Remove the ‘Communications Strategy update’ and add a communications update to the November Board meeting	Executive Assistant
12	Review of Board papers and agreement of action log Members said that the papers were good and noted that the new style Performance Report was a significant improvement. They said it was clear and that it enabled a more holistic view of OSCR’s performance. The inclusion of a written CEO update was welcomed as supporting a more informed discussion. Members discussed and agreed that a hybrid approach of a written and verbal report to capture up to date information would be beneficial. MD reviewed the action log and noted no changes from those agreed earlier in the meeting.	
13	Dates of Next Meetings and close The next meeting is a Board meeting on 1 September 2026 followed by the Strategy Day on 8 October 2026. Arrangements for leadership cover during the Chair’s absence in August were noted with RS being available in MD’s absence. There was no further business, MD closed the meeting. A CEO–Board Discussion followed the meeting.	