Minutes: Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) Board meeting, 13 September 2021

OSCR
Scottish Charity Regulator

Board

Members Present:	George Walker (Interim Chair), Jill Vickerman (Deputy Chair), Pat Armstrong, Stephanie Fraser (StF), Jessica Wade, Shona Ulrichsen

OSCR attendance:	Maureen Mallon, CEO
	Martin Tyson, Head of Regulation & Improvement;
	Judith Hayhow, Head of Corporate
	Senior Manager Communications & Digital
	Finance Governance & Business Manager (items 4, 6, 7 & 9)
	HR & Learning Co-ordinator (item 5)

Observers:	OSCR Legal Advisor
	OSCR Team Leader Casework

Board Secretary:	Mandy Downie, PA to CEO

Private Business		
Item	**Area**	**Action**
1.	**Chair's introduction, welcome, apologies and declaration of interest** GW welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting heard that Jill Vickerman had received her letter of appointment as Deputy Chair and had accepted the position. GW thanked both JV for taking up the role and PA for the contribution she has made as Deputy Chair including the excellent work she did while OSCR was in between Chair appointments. Members heard that work was progressing for reappointing those Members eligible for another term. **Declaration of Interest:** No declarations of interest were declared. **Apologies:** No apologies were given.	
2.	**Minutes of previous meeting/Action Log: 22 April 2021** The Minute was agreed as an accurate record and approved. Members were content that actions as outlined in the Action Log were either dealt with or were progressing as agreed.	
3.	**CEO Report** MM provided an overview of the paper as presented. Members heard June-September was a busy period for everyone in OSCR. Joint working across teams has increased and sharing news on changes and specific pieces of work across the organisation with all staff is becoming the normal way of doing business. Feedback and input from colleagues in relation to the Business Plan has been good and overall we are progressing in the right direction. Members heard that our approach to staff returning to the office continues to follow the SG guidance. It is important to highlight the flexibility and agility required to ensure any transition is handled appropriately. Members noted the sheer volume of work being undertaken to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible, including mechanisms to support staff while balancing home working and moving towards hybrid working with meeting our business needs. MM clarified the ELT and our Transitions Group are committed to looking at the current SG guidance and reviewing the benefits gained in the last 18 months, along with lessons learned from home working. There is a strong focus to make sure that all colleagues and OSCR get the best out of hybrid working and don't just return to "business as usual". The ambition is to ensure that all views across the staff body are heard and considered. Members agreed and encouraged officers to continue thinking about what is best for OSCR (corporate) and what we are collectively trying to achieve.	

	OSCR is committed to striking a balance between business need as a public body and staff preferences. Members heard there will be a pilot phase on return to the office when Scottish government guidelines allow and encourage this approach. Most staff are likely to be in the office 1 or 2 days per week, with some less and some more. This will be trialled for a period of 3 months and kept under review. The value of face-to-face interactions cannot be under-valued and OSCR is committed to moving forward in the most effective and positive way while adhering to SG guidelines. **ACTION:** **-Updates will continue to be shared with the Board.**	**SMT**
4.	**Business Plan Progress Update** (Finance Governance & Business Manager joined for this item) The paper was presented to provide the Board with a progress report on the Business Plan priorities. The question was asked why OSCR stepped back from joint messaging with other bodies; MT clarified this was only in relation to the post-COVID awareness raising campaign with other Sector Bodies. This was not a good fit or the most appropriate direction for OSCR as the Regulator to take. OSCR continues to work with other bodies in areas of mutual interest. Members agreed the format was good but noted the Board is not involved in day to day operational matters and this level of detail is not easy to understand. Feedback included: - Defaulting charities look-up table developed (1st outcome), clarity was sought; MT confirmed this was a bespoke addition of the Register to help identify charities in particular areas who need help and support in relation to their level of compliance. - Work to increase public confidence (2nd outcome); activity re AR & A/Cs does not relate to public confidence; Finance Governance & Business Manager will review Members agreed although a better format, it is difficult to link all of the pieces together often having to jump between lots of tables to make the connections to understand the information. Members agreed that there is a need for something overarching, clearly defining the relationship between the different tables and information. Comments included: - Influencing SG and Parliament, should we be thinking about PFG, particularly COVID recovery and tying in some of OSCR's priorities - Partners; where relations can be better we agree to do more to foster ways of working with other bodies Members heard that OSCR continues to engage and work with a large range of bodies and are looking across PFG to ensure we are covering all legislation that is and will have an impact on the sector. Work is also continuing to expand our engagement. Further questions included: - in relation to format; can consideration be given to colour coding to make this paper easier to follow - Data research hub; theme coming through around equalities and diversity, are there any plans within the hub to take this in given there is little data about staff/trustees in the sector currently; Finance Governance & Business Manager undertook to consider and feedback to Members. - Helpful if there was a mechanism for Members to feedback on papers prior to meetings - Helpful to provide lead member of staff (contact) and contact telephone number on front of papers **ACTION:** **- Consider overarching document to pull all information/tables together**	

	- Add summary narrative to future versions highlighting key priorities for consideration/discussion **- Mechanism for feedback on papers prior to meetings to be considered** **- Finance Governance & Business Manager to revisit level of detail provided in the paper going forward** **- Include lead contact and phone number on individual papers**	
5.	**People Strategy (HR & Learning Co-ordinator joined for this item)** HR & Learning Co-ordinator provided an overview on progress of the People Strategy. Members heard the People Focus Group met on a number of occasions and shared the draft Strategy with their teams for comment and suggestions. Constructive feedback was provided in terms of content and wording. The Strategy was shared with the ELT who considered the content and provided additional suggestions and feedback. Great care was taken to be mindful of OSCR staff feelings over the past few years while still allowing for the Strategy to thrive and aspire for positive change. Members felt encouraged on reading the Strategy and acknowledged the work that had been undertaken and that engagement with staff was moving in the right direction. Members asked that clarity is given to who is responsible for what and timescales involved as well as expanding criteria for measuring success. It was acknowledged we have the information from surveys but thought be given to staff leaving, less absence etc. as other measures. It was confirmed that responsibility and timescale will be detailed in the Action Plan that will sit underneath the Strategy. Members highlighted the volume of goals contained within the document and it would be important to see how we would achieve these. HR & Learning Co-ordinat**o**r undertook to reflect on this. Staff are being encouraged to be creative and this should be reflected in the development in our risk work. MM clarified staff are the only resource that organisations like ours have. The purpose of bringing the HR & Learning Co-ordinator role into the organisation was fundamental to that premise. It is rare that an organisation of around 50 staff have a dedicated HR role within the organisation. It is important to note the range of things encompassed within that new role. The strategy needs to have longevity to at least 2023 and the Action Plan will show responsibility, timings and how this will be achieved. This needs to be a living document that all staff across the organisation will identify with. **ACTIONS:** **- Overview of timing/responsibility to be included in Strategy; full detail in the Action Plan** **- Measure of success to be reviewed and strengthened** **- Review and consider revisions in light of feedback** The Board **approved** the Strategy subject to revisions outlined at the meeting.	
6.	**Moving OSCR Forward; Organisation redesign update (Finance Governance & Business Manager joined for this item)** Finance Governance & Business Manager provided overview of the paper which provided Members with an update of our approach to delivering our ambitions for our Organisation Redesign. It was confirmed amendments to the paper had been made following the Board discussion in June. All agreed the ideal would be one document showing everything but in reality this may not be possible. However this will be reviewed and feedback provided. Members noted staff have access to the tracker and asked if staff can see what has been done and dispute or add comments if they do not agree. The tracker is available for all staff to access and can see what progress is being made. Staff can feedback and dispute if they wish to do so.	

	Members agreed the paper included a lot of relevant information and would benefit from narrative with this paper as an appendix. The paper in its current format is quite complex to read and does not aid constructive discussion. **ACTION:** **- Review in light of feedback, revise and incorporate summary narrative**	
7.	**Accommodation Update (Finance Governance & Business Manager joined for this item)** JH gave overview of the paper and Members discussed the lease for Quadrant House. We have been engaging in discussions with other occupants to discuss ways forward and to determine the space requirements of each stakeholder. Further comprehensive discussions are planned with SG Property Service who are considering the requirements of the full SG estate as well as other occupants for later this month, October and November to explore our options. The options are: stay where we are, move floors within the building or move to a different property. We will bring back a proposal to the Board in December with details of cost, business and people impacts. There is a lot of discussion and fact finding taking place at the moment. Members encouraged OSCR to have a proactive think about what OSCR actually wants and communicate that to SG, JH and MM confirmed that this was the approach being taken. Previous work with Scottish Future Trust in 2019 which looked at better use of our current space will be useful and we will continue to work as a staff team to get the best from our accommodation. **ACTION:** **- Further updates and options to be provided to Board as available**	JH
8.	**Finance Update** JH provided an overview of the paper that provides Members with information about OSCR spend against budget and what our likely outturn position will be at the end of March 2022. JH confirmed we are currently expected to spend our full budget for the year, but there are a number of variables which could impact on our final outturn position and these are outlined in the main commentary. Members heard there are currently 4 vacancies being filled and noted that the SG recruitment process we are required to use can be lengthy and cause delays. **ACTION:** **- Further updates provided to Board as available** **- Discussions will take place as to how to take forward**	
9.	**Performance Management Report (Finance Governance & Business Manager joined meeting for this item)** Finance Governance & Business Manager provided overview of paper. The full suite of KPIs and Management Information have now been finalised. These were developed in conjunction with all areas of OSCR and the Board and are based on the Corporate Plan and Strategic Outcomes. We have taken account of Board and Leadership Team feedback to make sure that we measure what is needed and to help identify where we need to look deeper. Members heard that KPI no. 42 is currently not populated. We are looking at ways of doing that but it is likely linked to the D635 project and that will be revisited when that is up and running. The Board were asked the Board for feedback. Members agreed the table and numbers were useful but asked for clarification how the arrows worked. This will be reviewed and revised.	

	Members asked for clarification where inquiries are shown to have gone up and MT confirmed there has been a big push in the Risk Team, meaning worked had been assessed and moved on meaning in turn the number of inquiries increased. Members heard that the Finance Governance & Business Manager role is a new role developed to bring strands of work happening across the organisation together and we have come a long way with this. A further conversation will take place at ELT to make sure we are using the information to improve. GW happy to help in any way that would add value to discuss next steps etc. **ACTION:** **- Review and include presentational feedback provided** **- Include visuals e.g. charts** **- Include meaningful narrative to inform discussion**	5
10.	**AOB** **Risk work:** SU gave update to Members. The working group has been expanded to include Jess Wade and the Senior Manager, Higher Risk Cases & Quality Assurance. At a recent meeting it was agreed what was needed under the 4 Risk Pillars using SG guidance principles. The October ARAC is being postponed to later in the month or beginning November due to availability issues. This work will be further considered and discussed at the next meeting of ARAC before coming to the Board. The Risk Actions Note from our August meeting is now signed off and available for Members feedback in Connect.	