

**CARE AND REPAIR SCOTLAND  
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER  
2021 BY ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL**

**Present:** Gerry Power, The Alliance (Chair)  
Andy Douglas, Region 2  
Angela Brunton, Region 3  
Elizabeth Eadie, Region 4  
  
Robert Thomson, National Director

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

Gerry Power welcomed Board members to the meeting. Apologies from Gerry Begg and Stewart Wilson.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

The minute of 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 meeting was approved without amendment.

**4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes**

*Action: The March conference was considered a success. It is too soon to decide the format of the 2022 event. Gerry and Robert will meet towards the end of October to discuss how best to proceed and will then report back to the Board at the December meeting.*

Robert and Gerry met in Edinburgh on 26th October. They agreed that due to the continued uncertainty around Covid restrictions, it would be best to hold an online only conference. It was suggested that we include a presentation from the Scottish Government officials leading on the National Service. We also discussed possible international contributions. Robert will liaise with offices about best dates for maximum attendance.

*Action: Robert will write to offices and request bids for funding based on Aico prices which will be national and available to all offices.*

The bidding process took place and allocations were sent to the offices who have participated. More detail about the process and an update on the scheme is given in the National Director's report.

*Action: Board members to send in thoughts for response to consultation on the future of the Equity Release Scheme. Stewart will send a copy of the Western Isles' response to Robert. The officers from Glasgow and Argyll & Bute will also respond and copy to Robert.*

A response was submitted within the timescale. An update on the scheme is given in the National Director's report.

*Action: Gerry and Elizabeth will sign the accounts for 20/21online. Robert will send signed accounts to OSCR and Companies House.*

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The accounts were signed and submitted to Companies House and OSCR. OSCR has posted them on the website.

*Action: Gerry will go through relevant sections of National Care Service consultation to see where we can comment on Care and Repair.*

Gerry will write to Kevin Stewart and request some clarity of where C&R sits and how it will be funded. Gerry chairs The Third Sector Collaborative and they will hold a one hour session on the proposal. Robert will be invited.

Gerry and Robert discussed the response at their meeting on 26th October. Gerry wrote to Kevin Stewart. The Minister's response will be discussed under Agenda Item 7. Robert attended Third Sector Collaborative meeting on 6th October.

**Action: It was agreed that Robert will canvass the views of offices on the best date to hold an online conference in 2022 and will start putting together speakers for the event.**

## 5. National Director's Report

### Fire Safety Alarms

Following the decision at the September Board meeting to accept Aico's tender, the offices were invited to bid for funding based on Aico's costs. The breakdown of the bids, together with payment dates is given in the Financial Statement. Each office has confirmed in writing that they have received the funds. Unfortunately, Falkirk, East Dunbartonshire and Inverness chose not to bid for funding. East Dunbartonshire and Falkirk managers have now confirmed that their line managers dismissed the idea of Care and Repair providing free alarms but now they have seen the interest in the scheme they would be willing to revisit.

The Scottish Government has suggested that when we review spend in February, we may be able to distribute sums of money to them. Inverness has received a number of complaints, including one from an MSP, about their unwillingness to participate in the scheme.

We are required to report to SG on the first week of December, February and April. We will monitor spend and reallocate funding if necessary. SG has stressed that they do not want an underspend situation and all the funding must be accounted for by 31 March 2022. Glasgow, Edinburgh and Skye have reported that the Council Tax banding is quite strict. Other offices have reported that the funding criteria are quite defined and would welcome some discretion. As a result, SG officials advised me on 25th November that each manager can have discretion to adjust the national criteria provided they are able to justify the decision at a later stage. The published criteria will remain unchanged.

Each participating office has been offered training sessions by Aico and as far as we know everyone has taken advantage of these.

An organization has lobbied for deaf people to receive visual aids alarms under the scheme. SG finance people have spoken with colleagues in Social Work and their advice is that people should be referred to Social Work in the first instance and that this scheme must not be used to fit visual only systems.

Highland, South Lanark and East Ayrshire offices and CRS met with SG colleagues in Telecare to discuss the possibility of setting up a pilot project that would explore the compatibility of the smoke alarms with Telecare systems. The meeting however raised a number of technical and funding issues and we decided it would not be practical to pursue the idea.

### Equity Loans Scheme

I previously reported to the Board that the officer responsible for Perthshire had indicated that he has a new job and would be leaving the scheme in October. However, his role will be to manage a new building site and there have been delays in the contract. He has been asked if he could change his start date to March 2022. He has therefore asked to continue his role with equity release and this will allow him to complete his case work. Scottish Government has advised the officers about the protocols for winding down the scheme and from now until March they will only deal with existing clients.

### Dumfries & Galloway Care and Repair

D&G Council notified the Care & Repair manager in September that the service would be tendered for the financial year 2022. It was assumed that Loreburn Housing Association who manage the service would submit a tender. However the Housing Association's management committee has taken the view that it wants to concentrate on other issues such as bringing the housing stock to net zero carbon. The Association has advised the Council that it will not bid for the service. Elizabeth and I met with the staff in September and we discussed with them the possibility of making a bid to become an independent company. The Council procurement team has confirmed in writing that they would accept a bid from the team provided they form a company and can demonstrate financial viability. The manager and I met with the Care and Repair steering group in November and we were surprised at the lack of urgency in the discussions. The staff are moving forward with a business plan and they have asked if I would be willing to become a board member of the new company for a temporary period until they can bring on local representatives.

### Stirling University

Stirling University has received a research grant to look at the current landscape for disabled adaptation grants. They want to work with CRS to glean the views of clients who have been successful in adapting their homes and other who have found that the system failed them. CRS have been interviewed as part of the initial research and then will assist the team to coordinate client interviews.

### Scottish Quality Mark

Alness and Ross-shire Care and Repair have submitted their evidence to the Quality Award team and we are currently trying to arrange a site visit with them. One of their small repairs team recently died from Covid 19 and they are reticent about visitors coming to the office, so this assessment may have to be completed by Zoom/Teams.

### Scottish Gas Network

The Scottish Gas Network has had discussions with CRS around carbon monoxide awareness and safety.

SGN has funding until 31 March 2026. They would like to work with us to provide free CO alarms and raise awareness amongst our clients about carbon monoxide safety. Because of the current work that we are doing with the Scottish Government, they are suggesting that at least from now into 2022, they are willing to fund free CO detectors. The details of how that would work has still to be discussed. They would prefer not to duplicate the Scottish Government scheme and so are suggesting that we apply to them for funding to allow us to meet the demand from people who are falling out with the criteria of the Scottish Government scheme. We would then look at how to expand our partnership in years 22-26.

The Board approved the report.

**Action: Robert will forward details of the Scottish Government meeting with hearing impaired representative groups to Gerry, so that he can liaise with the Alliance.**

## **6. Financial Statement**

The Board noted and approved the Financial Statement which was prepared to include known costs to 18<sup>th</sup> December.

The Board also approved a paper that detailed the payment schedule to offices for the £500,000 fire alarm funding. It was agreed that any projected underspend from an office could be reallocated to others by the end of January.

## **7. Discussion about Response from Minister on National Care Service.**

The consultation on the National Care Service makes no mention of Care and Repair and has only a few references to housing. Following a meeting with the Third Sector Collaborative, Gerry and Robert met together and drafted a letter to Kevin Stewart which was also submitted to civil servants who lead on the consultation process.

The Minister replied: "The consultation was far-reaching and sought views on a number of areas directly related to health and social care. However, we know that to create the comprehensive community health and social care service that Scotland deserves, we need a system that wraps around families and provides them with smooth transitions between different categories of care. As you point out in your letter, people do not compartmentalise their lives into health, social care and housing; we need to ensure that any reforms to social care make people's lives better, not more difficult."

This is a wide ranging proposal that will have implications for Care and Repair, including giving the new national service the power to commission services and staff. We therefore need to keep updated on the progress of this policy stream.

**Action: It was agreed that we should have a session on the proposals at the Care and Repair Conference.**

## **8. A.O.C.B**

There were no other items of business.

## **9. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that Robert will send proposed dates in early January.