

**CARE AND REPAIR SCOTLAND
MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 4th JUNE 2021
BY ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL**

Present: Gerry Power, The Alliance (Chair)
Stewart Wilson, Region 1
Andy Douglas, Region 3
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.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minute of 26th February 2021 meeting was approved without amendment.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes

Action: Robert to send dvd of all presentations and speaker biographies to Gerry when they are available. It was agreed to uprate the CRS Zoom to a webinar account for 1 month. The cost of the conference will be funded through the digital contingency fund.

There was a slight amendment to this action, as the Housing Minister and Australia were not finalised their until Monday 22nd March and there was no time to deliver a dvd to Gerry. However all recordings were hand delivered to Nick on the evening of 22nd. The speakers' biographies were sent to Gerry. The Zoom account was uprated for one month and has reverted back to our normal account which allows meetings of up to 100 people for an unlimited timescale. The accounts are out for audit and the auditor has been advised about costs that are allocated to the digital contingency fund.

The Board considered that the digital conference had been a great success and were delighted by the interest shown. Further discussion at Agenda item 7.

Robert commented that there are organisations that have discovered that their Articles do not allow the Board to meet via Zoom/Teams. Elizabeth looked into this and advice was that if the Articles do not forbid it, there is no difficulty. She specifically had asked about AGMs and was advised that everyone invited to the meeting should have the functionality to attend on-line.

Action: Robert will collate from emails any comments received from conference delegates. It will serve as useful evidence in the future. He will also check with OSCR and Dentons about our legal position around on-line Board meetings.

5. National Director's Report

Refresh of the Website

The website was refreshed as it was looking dated and the typeface was quite small and could present accessibility issues for readers. The site was also updated to be more compatible with tablets and phones. The media page was changed so that it has a higher bandwidth and can show more videos on the page. Other than the design layout all information on the website is controlled and updated by CRS and not by an external company.

Equity Loan Scheme - General

The Housing Minister announced at the annual conference that the equity loans scheme will be funded for a further year until March 2022. During this time the scheme will be reviewed and a decision made about rolling it out to other areas in Scotland. On 21st May, Scottish Government held a day long workshop that was attended by each stakeholder. It was a very useful event that hopefully has addressed the concerns of each party. It was stressed throughout the day that we all must cooperate to make this year a success in order to promote the idea of a roll-out to Ministers. The PDF notes of the meeting were provided to the Board.

Fire Safety

There have been a number of meetings with Scottish Government about the possibility of CRS partnering with them to deliver linked smoke and heat detectors in the homes of vulnerable older people. The current status of the discussions is summarised in joint note below:

"We have decided to proceed on the basis that, subject to securing funding, SG propose a grant for the business year 21/22 to Care and Repair Scotland, which can be administered centrally to provide individual offices funds to cover the cost of purchasing and installing fire alarms.

The offices would make a bid for a share of this, with a review of take up during the year and funds redistributed if necessary. This is essentially the model that we used a few years ago with the Electrical Safety Council. We also do not have time to wait for offices to respond to us to gain a national picture, as a proposal needs to be ready for the new Ministers in early June.

Care and Repair Scotland will look at procurement for the alarms to agree on a single price throughout Scotland. It seems that SG has no objection to us sourcing the best rather than the cheapest alarms. That can be discussed further once funding is approved.

Care and Repair will also consider qualifying criteria. SG is happy for the organisation to have discretion on qualifying criteria on whether people get advice, help to install or alarms are provided, as long as the overall aim to assist homeowners who struggle is met. However, we agreed that some kind of criteria will be needed to ensure support is targeted, with offices allowed flexibility to provide alarms in other cases. We agreed that we need to be careful about the messaging so that we don't create a demand from people who don't need help buying an alarm. We also agreed that if the project goes ahead there will be liaison between Care and Repair and SFRS. So far, SFRS are indicating that they do not want to be involved in the installations. That of course will vary locally.

We agreed that this is essentially a major PR exercise for Care and Repair, and while related costs will be covered, this will not be an opportunity for employing additional staff or purchasing equipment. Scottish Government will promote the scheme.

We discussed the option of a short pilot based in Aberdeen to test logistics. Possibly some advantage to this but would want to keep it short, no more than 1 month. We also agreed that in areas without a Care and Repair service, like Midlothian, West Lothian, North Lanarkshire and North Ayrshire, neighbouring services could bid to cover them.

We also discussed grant reporting procedures, and anticipate a requirement for a quarterly return and a breakdown of spend/alerts per area.”

Robert has met with the Regional Manager for Aico who produce the highest quality alarms and we have discussed costs, distribution and training and have agreed that we cannot take our conversations any further until we get an agreement from Ministers.

Gerry B has also been in touch on behalf of ALACHO to discuss the messaging around this proposal and how CRS will link in with Local Authorities.

National Dementia Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Group

Robert is a member of this wider group but in recent months an adaptations and housing options sub group has been established and I am a member of that. We have meet together to discuss specific issues and the conversation so far is summarised in the padlet below:

<https://padlet.com/helenmclellan/dqjezu6v20x2zza4>

Scottish Housing Network

Spoke to 45 delegates at the SHN adaptations meeting, which represents Local Authorities across Scotland, and gave an update on Care and Repair services and how the coronavirus response has impacted us. We also discussed the need for a review of the Scheme of Assistance and SHN is taking this forward with a questionnaire to its members.

East Lothian Quality Mark assessment visit will take place on 10th June. Elizabeth and Robert will discuss the East Dunbartonshire evidence gathering at the end of the meeting.

Action: Robert will discuss with SG a procurement process for the alarms at their next meeting.

The Board approved the report.

6. Financial Statement

The Board noted and approved the Financial Statement.

Robert advised that the new lease extension was signed by CRS after Easter. However there has been a delay in John Lewis Director’s signing. There is therefore no spend against office rental. The accounts are out to audit and should be available for the September Board meeting.

7. Annual Conference

Delegates who Registered: 223
Delegates who Cancelled: 4
Individual views of sessions: 174
Number of concurrent views: 154

Representatives from Care and Repair England and Wales attended as did some from Australia, Virginia and Canada.

From Scotland, Care and Repair in East Lothian, Scottish Borders and West Dunbartonshire (Lomond & Clyde) had the highest number of delegates per office.

There were a number of students from Stirling University and Queen Margaret University Edinburgh. Organisations that were unlikely to have attended a physical event in Scotland included:

Age UK Cheshire, Southwark Council, University of West England, Bath & North East Somerset Council, Council, Derbyshire Council, Luton Council, Redcar-Cleveland Council, Middleborough Council, RNIB UK, Telford Council, St Andrews University, High Peak Council.

Since posting the videos on the CRS website, Google analytics shows that 1,400 people have visited. There were 3 email requests for the link from IJBs and the link has since been sent to all IJBs in Scotland.

Each delegate should have been sent a link to the Zoom recording of the event. We had one report from Wales that they could not view it.

The Board agreed that digital conference was very successful and that even if we return to a live event next year that we should still continue online streaming to make it available to a wider audience. We could also continue recorded presentations from organisations worldwide. There was a good interest from IJB/HSCP in Scotland. One HSCP has contacted the local Care and Repair team on the basis of the conference recordings. It was disappointing to note that a number of Care and Repair offices did not attend the event.

Action: Robert will follow up with C&R offices that did not send any representatives to the conference.

8. Perthshire Equity Loan Officer

The Board had a long and detailed discussion about a proposal for CRS to take on the management of the Perthshire equity loans officer until March 2022, following the withdrawal of Caledonia HA. This has been previously discussed between meetings by email. Robert tabled a paper that outlined the conditions and advised that we could not agree to KPI 3&4. The meeting also considered items from the discussion paper tabled under the National Director's report. Robert also reported on the resolution of a complaint made to Joe Fitzpatrick MSP and another to the Cabinet Secretary.

It was agreed that the position of CRS is that we do not want to see the Perthshire scheme fail at this late stage but we cannot agree to the terms of the MOU as it stands. We should stress to EST/SG that we are offering to help out in a difficult situation but we cannot be burdened by bureaucracy that interferes in the work of the National Director, nor can we agree to KPIs that we know we cannot meet.

Action: Robert will draft a letter to EST and share with Gerry prior to sending. There will be a meeting of all equity teams in Scotland on 8th June and that will also inform the content of the letter.

9. A.O.C.B

There were no other items of business.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting is arranged for Friday 3rd September 2021.