Research Data Scotland (the "Company")

Minutes of a general meeting of Research Data Scotland (RDS) on 13 September 2022

Company number: SC677016  
Charity number: SC051305

# **Attendees**

## Present:

Paul Boyle Chair

Roger Halliday Director / Trustee

Scott Heald Director / Trustee

Mark Parsons Director / Trustee

Jill Pell Director / Trustee

Neil Rawlins Minute Taker

## Apologies:

Gillian Docherty Board advisor

Andrew Morris Board advisor

Giselle Cory Board advisor

Shannon Vallor Board advisor

# Agenda

## Items on the Agenda

### 1.1 Introduction and welcomes

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. Apologies were received from Gillian, Andrew, Giselle and Shannon

## Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2022 were approved by the Board without further amendment.

## Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

## 4. Papers and Reports

### 4.1 Progress Report Quarter One 2022-23

Highlights included staff appointments, the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow joining the RDS membership, the appointment of Jill Pell as the University of Glasgow’s Director / Trustee and the desire of Scottish Government (SG) to appoint their Director / Trustee. An Alliance Group for Data Research had been formed as a focal point for Service Design decision making.

### 4.1.1 Key Performance Indicators Report April – June 2022

Outcome metrics have been developed and there is confidence that these are the right measures. Work is ongoing to operationalise these and report rolling quarterly metrics. Baseline data has been achieved for Comms. Outcome 1d, Number of publications using RDS data, specifically, RDS data and data that is common with other organisations need to be identified and separated. Clarity required on the wording of Outcome 1d.

### 4.1.2 Finance

Scottish Government (SG) have agreed a roll over from the previous financial year which has led to a budget of £5 million and consequently a budget underspend in the current financial year which is a significant risk. The main areas where spending will take place this financial year is:

* eDRIS
* Regional Safe Havens
* Demonstrator Projects

The Chair noted that there was a risk of budgetary cuts from government and invited comment. It was asked if the eDRIS funding was ‘firefighting’ or for improving service. It was noted that eDRIS had dedicated a number of posts to work on Service Design skills and that RDS was putting in three posts to help with the Service Delivery.

### 4.1.3 Risk – RDS Risk Management Half Yearly Report September 2022 and RDS High Scoring and Significant Risks Register August 2022 (Standing Item)

The CEO considered the key risk would remain transformation and partners (risks IG3 and IG4) until data owners sign off on joint data controller agreements, this has yet to be considered by organisations lawyers. The Chair noted as a general point many risks before mitigations were applied were red, but not after mitigations were applied - was amber appropriate and should they remain red as it was unusual to have no red risks even after mitigation. The Chair was surprised to see this and suggested risks IG3 and IG4 may need to be red risks even after mitigations, although this may change over time. The Chair further enquired as to what risks were missing and that finance was a risk ‘down the track’ that needed to be reasonably captured in the Risk Register.

### 4.2 Researcher Access Service Report

The RDS Chief Information Officer (CIO) joined the meeting and presented a number of slides which summarised the Researcher Access Service Report. There was an opportunity to ask questions.

* With regard to the aims outlined, the human error rate needed to be highlighted – lots of new people were becoming involved and systems should be in place to avoid error and duplication. Customer feedback should be encouraged.
* What was engagement like with eDRIS and the PBPP. It was noted that historically eDRIS had engaged very helpfully, but they had reduced their input as RDS now had inhouse expertise. There had been recent sessions with eDRIS Research Co-ordinators and engagement remained good. RDS had made clear to eDRIS it’s expectations.
* If RDS become the representatives of Data Controllers for Health Board data sets, this would replace eDRIS and may become an issue at some point. It was noted that the PBPP were digitising their application process to a significantly faster timetable and RDS were trying to integrate the process. There is an emphasis on collaborative working. PHS are to follow up with the Health/Care PBPP team to try and align timetables.
* The Chair noted that the Report would develop and asked if the assumption of Data Controllers is that of RDS creating a data warehouse.
* With regard to slide showing the diagram of the Research Data Service, ‘should there be more support at the end of the process i.e. providing analytical support for projects’, it was cautioned against this approach as RDS could be swamped with requests and RDS is unlikely to want to offer a statistical service as this would be at a cost. The Chair noted it needed to be decided whether this is to be a function of RDS or not. This may evolve and reporting back on this function required as it may be a ‘public good’.

### 4.3 Data Acquisition Paper and Presentation

The RDS Programmes and Data Acquisition Director and Data Acquisition Manager joined the meeting and talked through a slide presentation. It was noted that the presentation indicated the direction of travel and was not a timeline. There was an opportunity to ask questions.

* It was highlighted the overlap with the work earlier presented by the CIO and noted that they should be joined up.
* It was asked how fast paced this was and what resource was there – an iterative approach should be taken, it should be faster and join up with the work the CIO is undertaking.
* The HMRC data had been taken out of scope because the ONS Integrated Data Service has not gone through the Digital Economy Act (DEA) process.
* It was asked should RDS get DEA accreditation. This had been discussed, but currently RDS does not hold any data, however, should things change steps would be taken to gain accreditation. It was noted that RDS may wish to get accreditation as the process can take some time. The Chair noted that the Board should consider this again at some future point and suggested that RDS get in touch with the secretariat of the UK Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) and get their view. The Chair concluded that if data is offered by RDS which is also sat in the ONS secure function, RDS need to be clear about the service differentiation.

### 4.4 Policy Development update

Following the policy approach agreed at the March 2022 Board meeting this was the second and for the moment, final set of policies for agreement by the Board. Comments were invited.

A discussion was held over the Intellectual Property (IP) Policy, in particular section Four and how this would work with the eDRIS relationship. The lines would be blurred for researchers and it was agreed PHS would confirm if eDRIS retain IP rights. The Chair noted that ‘share’ was a tricky word and required more thought and the CEO agreed that it needed to be brought out in the policy. It was further noted that the policy needed more work to reflect the relationship with researchers appropriately, shared IP with partner organisations and does not give IP away. It was also noted that should the data be developed further by academic(s) then care would be required as to ‘ownership’. The Chair summarised that more reflection was required and that conversations with SAIL Databank should be held to provide clarity of wording. It was asked if the Information Security policy was new and it was confirmed that it was. It was also noted that it looked like the ISO 27001 direction was being followed and this was suggested. The CEO confirmed this was the case as a precursor to DEA. Linked to the need for Digital Economy Act Processor Accreditation, it was agreed that whether to secure ISO27001 status would need further discussion by the Board in the future. No further comments were received on any of the other policies

## 5. AoB

It was stated that SG were entitled to nominate a Board member as Director / Trustee under the Articles of Association. Previously this had been the CEO, but as he was now seconded to RDS this was no longer applicable. SG wished to nominate their Chief Scientific Officer, Professor Julie Fitzpatrick. The Chair noted that this was appropriate and asked the other Board members present if they were content. Unanimous consent was agreed. Professor Fitzpatrick to be invited to the December Board meeting.

Date of next meeting is Monday 5 December at 10am

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 11.30.