Meeting minutes

General meeting of Research Data Scotland  
13 September 2022

# Attendees

## Present:

Paul Boyle Chair

Roger Halliday Director, Trustee

Mark Parsons Director, Trustee

Scott Heald Director, Trustee

Jill Pell Non-Executive Director

Neil Rawlins Minute Taker

## Apologies:

Giselle Cory Non-Executive Director

Shannon Vallor Non-Executive Director

Andrew Morris Non-Executive Director

Gillian Docherty Non-Executive Director

# Agenda

## 1. Items on the Agenda

### 1.1 RDS Strategy and Business Case update

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

## 2. Minutes of the previous meeting

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

## 3. Papers and Reports

### 3.1 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 to appoint their Director / Trustee. An Alliance Group for Data Research had been formed as a focal point for Service Design decision making. This group is to be included within the Governance diagram to be updated and circulated.

### 3.1.1 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. It was noted that RDS data and data that is common with other organisations needed to be identified and separated and that greater clarity would be provided on the wording of Outcome 1d.

### 3.1.2 Finance

Scottish Government has 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 is a significant risk. The main areas where spending will take place this financial year is:

* eDRIS
* Regional Safe Havens
* Demonstrator Projects

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.

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

It was noted that the key risk would remain transformation and partners (risks IG3 and IG4) until data owners sign off on joint data controller agreements, and this has yet to be considered by organisations lawyers. It was suggested risks IG3 and IG4 may need to be red risks even after mitigations, although this may change over time.

As a general point it was noted that a lot of risks before mitigations were applied are red, but not after mitigations were applied - was amber appropriate and should they remain red. It was asked what risks were missing and that finance was a risk ‘down the track’ that needed to be reasonably captured in the Risk Register.

### 3.2 Researcher Access Service Report and Presentation

The Researcher Access Paper circulated previously was discussed.

It was noted that with regard to the aims outlined, the human error rate needed to be highlighted – systems should be in place to avoid error and duplication and customer feedback should be encouraged.

Engagement between eDRIS and the PBPP. There had been recent sessions with eDRIS Research Co-ordinators and engagement remained good. RDS had made clear to eDRIS it’s expectations.

Longer term impacts – if RDS become the representative 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. It was noted that the Health/Care PBPP team were trying and align timetables.

It was noted that the paper would develop and the assumption of Data Controllers is that of RDS creating a data warehouse.

It was noted there should be more support at the end of the process i.e. providing analytical support for projects, although it was cautioned against this approach as RDS could be swamped with requests and RDS is unlikely to want to offer a statistical service and there would be a cost. It needs to be decided whether this is to be a function of RDS or not. This may evolve and reporting back on this function as it may be a ‘public good’.

### 3.3 Data Acquisition Paper and Presentation

The Data Acquisition Paper circulated previously was discussed.

It was noted that the presentation indicated the direction of travel and was not a timeline.

It was noted there was an overlap with the Researcher Access Service presented earlier and that they should be joined up.

It was asked how fast paced this process was and what resource was available – an iterative approach should be taken, it should be faster and join up with the Researcher Access Service work being 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, therefore HMRC data had been taken out of scope as this was a staged process.

It was asked why RDS had not gone through the DEA process and should RDS get DEA accreditation. It was noted that 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 soon as the process can take some time, but as RDS holds no data this could be a ‘chicken and egg’ situation, but the Board should consider this again at some future point. It was suggested that RDS get in touch with the secretariat of the UK Research Accreditation Panel (RAP) and get their view.

It was noted 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.

### 3.4 Policy Development update

This followed the policy approach agreed at the March 2022 Board meeting and introduced a second set of policies for requiring agreement by the Board. Comments were invited.

It was asked how the second paragraph of section four of the Intellectual Property (IP) Policy would work with the eDRIS relationship and the lines would be blurred with researchers. PHS would confirm if eDRIS would retain IP rights. It was noted that the word ‘share’ used required more thought. It was noted that this had not been well articulated and needed to be brought out in the policy. More work required to reflect the relationship with researchers appropriately.

It was noted that should the data be developed further by academic(s) then care would be required as to ‘ownership’ and that more reflection was required. Conversations with SAIL Databank should be held to provide clarity of wording.

It was confirmed that the Information Security policy was new. It was noted that it resembled the ISO 27001 direction was being followed as a precursor to DEA. It was 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

## 4. AoB

It was noted that Scottish Government (SG) were entitled to nominate a Board member as Director / Trustee under the Articles of Association. Previously this had been Roger Halliday, but as he was now seconded to RDS this was no longer applicable. SG wish 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 given. Professor Fitzpatrick to be invited to the December Board meeting.

Date of next meeting is Monday 5 December via MS Teams.

There being no further business, the chair declared the meeting closed.