RMA REDUCING
SERIOUS HARM

Research Committee Minutes

24 October 2022, Virtual

Present
Dr Joe Judge, Chair
Mr Jim Farish
Dr Aileen Burnett

In Attendance
Mr Mark McSherry, Chief Executive
Mr Paul Keoghan, Director Corporate Services
Mr Geoffrey Tordzro-Taylor, Head of Development
Mrs Rachel Webb, Development Lead
Mr Jim Montgomery, External Audit

Apologies
Ms Michele Gilluley

Welcome

1.   The Chair called the meeting to order at 11:15 am and welcomed all present.

Apologies

2.   The Chair noted no apologies submitted in advance of the meeting. Michele submitted her apologies during the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

3.   The Chair called for declarations of interest.

4.   The Chair noted no declarations were submitted.

Approval of Previous Minutes

5.   The Committee reviewed and approved the minutes from the Research Committee held on the 20 June 2022.

6.   It was raised that there was no list of attendees on the minute. The Development Lead noted this would be amended.

Matters Arising

7.   The Board noted no matters arising.

8. **OLR Victims Research and Ethics Proposal – Committee Paper 005**

   8.1. The Head of Development presented the OLR Victims Research and Ethics Proposal to the Committee. It was noted that this is a continuation of the series of research on the OLR population. The Head of Development highlighted that there is an error in that its noted in the Committee cover paper that the ethics review was undertaken as a result of focus groups being conducted however this is not the case, the ethics review was completed due to the population. The Head of Development detailed that the proposal has been reviewed by the Victims Organisations Collaborative Task Force (VOCFS) who suggested that it would be of benefit to include data relating to the race and ethnicity of victims however this data is not often provided in Risk Assessment Reports (RARs). There is also the concern that including such information, particularly as it's infrequent, could identify individuals.

   8.2. The Committee discussed and noted the OLR Victims Research and Ethics Proposal.

   8.3. There was a question regarding individuals becoming identifiable and whether there was a threshold to be applied or whether this would be determined on a case by case basis. The Head of Development responded that this would be done on a case by case basis however if there was a risk of an analysis leading to small samples where identification was possible then this would be omitted from the research.

   8.4. The Chair asked about the communication of the research in that it's a sensitive area and mindful that the media may cover the publication. The Chief Executive responded that we would continue to engage and consult with VOCFS on an ongoing basis who support this work being undertaken. The Head of Development added that we would add a communication plan into this proposal and that the timeline for this study means it will likely commence in 2023.

      Action: Add communication plan to proposal

   8.5. The committee approved the proposal.

9. **Research Proposal – OLR Review – Committee Paper 006**

   9.1. The Head of OLR presented the Research Proposal for the OLR Review to the Committee noting that the Board had previously heard the research brief. The head of OLR detailed that the planned research is comprised of four strands –

      Strand 1 – Questionnaires with those subject to the OLR, the delivery of which would be supported by the OLR team.

Strand 2 – Focus groups and interviews with key professionals who have responsibilities for OLR implementation such as Deputy Governors and members of the Risk Management Team.

Strand 3 – Mapping OLR journeys. Key variables have already been trialled.

Strand 4 – Internal review of OLR processes and procedures such as how our evaluation processes work.

The Head of OLR added that there is the potential for this to drift but the plan would be to start with strand 3 which involves a review of file information and a staged approach.

9.2. The committee discussed and noted the Research Proposal for the OLR Review.

9.3. It was asked whether any thought had been given to opting for a randomised sample as well as whether there was a danger of being critical of others/other agencies. The Head of OLR noted that from initial discussions with SPS they welcomed the review of the sentence suggesting it may help with funding. In relation to the second question, added that there was reluctance to opt for randomised sampling and that there will be a percentage of the population who will not want to participate which will lessen the numbers of individuals involved.

9.4. The Chief Executive mentioned discussions with SPS and that the work involved in strand 3 is work the RMA should be doing as core business to better inform advice to ministers and SPS.

9.5. In relation to strand 2, the Head of Development mentioned that in terms of interviewing professionals, those with functions in the RMP could be prioritised.

9.6. The auditor asked what the FRGMA is. The Head of Development detailed that this is the Framework for Research Governance, Management and Assurance.

9.7. The committee approved the proposal.

10. **Research and Ethics Proposal for IIOC Assessment Framework – Committee Paper 007**

10.1. The Development Lead presented the Research and Ethics Proposal for IIOC Assessment Framework to Committee Members. The Development Lead detailed that the two year pilot of the framework is underway and research will be conducted to inform recommendations at the end of the pilot. This research will include –

Study 1 – Inter Rater Reliability – Examining how consistently the CPORT is applied to a case study.

Study 2 – Usability study – Conducting focus groups with assessors to obtain views on the framework.

Study 3 – Predictive Validity Study – Examining the relationship between the framework and recidivism rates.

The Head of Development added that only study 2 involves direct participant involvement and that we are hopeful Sheriffs may be willing to participate in the study.

10.2. The Members discussed and noted the Research and Ethics proposal for the IIOC Assessment Framework..

10.3. The Committee approved the proposal.

11. OLR Psychopathy/Personality Disorder – Verbal Update

11.1. The Development Lead gave Members a verbal update on OLR Psychopathy/Personality Disorder to the Committee Members. Highlighting that the data is already coded and that a member of the team is currently working on drafting the introduction and method section before proceeding to analysis.

11.2. The Members noted the verbal update.

12. OLR Offending Profiles - Verbal

12.1. The Head of Development updated the Committee on OLR Offending Profiles. It was detailed that the research is now published and the focus is on communications which includes recording webinars and presenting at conferences.

12.2. The Committee noted the verbal update on OLR Offending Profiles.

13. OLR Qualitative Research - Verbal

13.1. The Head of OLR gave a verbal update on the OLR Qualitative Research. It was noted that a first draft was produced in the Autumn but drifted slightly from the research questions and that the initial write up focused more on experiences of the OLR rather than recall and release. The Head of Development noted that it is currently being redrafted and will be with the Board soon for review.

13.2. The Committee Members noted the verbal update.

14. What Works Review - Verbal

14.1. The Head of Development updated the Committee on the What Works Review. Noting that there are now three draft entries on schema therapy, risk needs and responsivity and strategic training initiative in community supervision (STICS).

Consideration will be given as to how these entries will be uploaded on to the RMA website.

14.2. Members noted the verbal update.

AOCB

15. The Auditor asked if the Committee membership was solely four individuals rather than members of the Board. Additionally asked whether the minutes of the meeting would be published.

16. The Chief Executive asked whether it would be useful to circulate the review in relation to IPP sentences.

Action: Chief Executive to circulate IPP paper

Date of Next Meeting

17. The Committee noted the next meeting is scheduled for 13 February 2023

18. The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 12.27 pm.