

**RMA**

# **BEST VALUE REVIEW**

2021-22



**REDUCING  
SERIOUS HARM**

# CONTENTS

Introduction .....	3
Vision & Strategic Direction.....	4
Partnerships & Collaborative Working .....	6
Governance & Accountability .....	8
Use of Resources .....	11
Performance Management & Improvement.....	13
Cross-Cutting Theme: Sustainability .....	14
Cross-Cutting Theme: Equality .....	15

# INTRODUCTION

As a public body, the RMA must comply with the duty of Best Value. As defined in the Scottish Public Finance Manual ([SPFM](#)), this is:

- To make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost; and, in making those arrangements and securing that balance,
- To have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, the equal opportunities requirements and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

Best Value is self-assessed against the following five themes as described in the [Guidance](#):

- Vision & Strategic Direction,
- Partnerships & Collaborative Working,
- Governance & Accountability,
- Use of Resources,
- Performance Management & Improvement,

And the two cross-cutting themes:

- Sustainability,
- Equality.

The RMA is a small organisation of less than thirty staff and a 2021-22 budget of £1.742m which is considered in this self-assessment

## 1. VISION & STRATEGIC DIRECTION

A Best Value organisation will have in place a clear vision and strategic direction for what it will do to contribute to the delivery of improved outcomes for Scotland's people, making Scotland a better place to live and a more prosperous and successful country.

The strategy will display a clear sense of purpose and place and be effectively communicated to all staff and stakeholders. The strategy will show a clear direction of travel and will be led by Senior Staff in an open and inclusive leadership approach, underpinned by clear plans and strategies (aligned to resources) which reflect a commitment to continuous improvement.

### STRATEGIC

- The RMA sets out its long term purpose, strategic aims and delivery approach in its [Corporate Plan](#). The current plan was developed in 2017 following a collaborative process with staff, approved by the Board in March 2018 and published on the RMA website. This plan links the RMA's work to the Scottish Government's justice strategy and how it contributes to the national outcomes of the Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#).

### OPERATIONAL

- Each year an annual [Business Plan](#) is developed in collaboration with staff to set out key strategic and operational objectives for each area which focus on continuous improvement. These objectives are clearly linked to the aims in the Corporate Plan. The Business Plan also advises how the budget will be used for the coming year and details the plans for stakeholder engagement.
- All line managers completed a comprehensive Leadership Management Programme which included corporate planning and delivery training. This was delivered by University of York in 2021-22.

[Link to Corporate Plan 2017](#)

[Link to Business Plans](#)

[Link to Annual Reports and Accounts](#)

## NEXT STEPS

1. The next Corporate Plan is due to be published in early 2023 and is currently in the planning stages. All staff have been involved in workshops to review the RMA's Mission and Strategic Aims to ensure the RMA's work continues to fit within the Scottish Government vision, and within the current political, social and justice landscape. These workshops are also developing new Values which will underpin all the RMA's activities.
2. A plan will also be developed to embed the Values into the RMA's policies, procedures and decision making.
3. A contractor has also been engaged to develop an Internal Communications Strategy which will be published in early 2023 to inform improvements in information flow and internal messaging.



## 2. PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIVE WORKING

A Best Value organisation will show how it, and its partnerships, are displaying effective collaborative leadership in identifying and adapting their service delivery to the challenges that clients and communities face.

The organisation will have a clear focus on the collaborative gain which can be achieved through collaborative working and community engagement in order to facilitate the achievement of its strategic objectives and outcomes.

### STRATEGIC

- The RMA continually supports partnership working to support evidence based, effective and ethical risk assessment and management in Scotland. The RMA's role is an authority on reducing the risk of serious harm posed to the public, but the focus is on approachable and collaborative delivery.
- The RMA contributed expert advice to 22 working groups in 2021-22.
- From March 2022, upon the request of the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans, the RMA convened and led a collaborative working group - with membership from justice partner organisations including the Scottish Prison Service (SPS), inspection agencies and victims' groups - to conduct a review to ascertain if a scoring error with the Level of Service / Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) IT system had resulted in any material impact on how a case was dealt with in the Scottish justice system.

The RMA created Terms of Reference with the working group and developed a comprehensive analysis framework to support the review of almost 18,000 cases across the country. Led by the RMA, the working group met on a regular basis and provided oversight and operational support to justice social work across Scotland in reviewing affected cases.

The working group are in the process of concluding the review, and produced recommendations for Scottish Ministers, providing public and Parliamentary assurance the scoring error resulted in no public protection issues.

### OPERATIONAL

- The RMA benefits from using a number of Scottish Government resources:
  - finance systems (SEAS, Worthy Causes) for finance controls and payments,
  - payroll systems,
  - IT support for PCs and servers and the support and management of electronic document storage (eRDM), and
  - online e-learning provisions.

### NEXT STEPS

1. The RMA will collate all partnerships, collaborative working and inclusion on committees and working groups into a single schedule to provide strategic oversight.
2. The RMA will explore becoming part of the Scottish Government's central bargaining unit to standardise pay elements.



#### IN 2021-22, THE RMA CONTRIBUTED TO:

# 22

Working groups, providing our expert advice and guidance to justice partners across Scotland.





### 3. GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

A Best Value organisation will be able to demonstrate structures, policies and leadership behaviours which support the application of good standards of governance and accountability in how the organisation is improving efficiency, focusing on priorities and achieving value for money in delivering its outcomes.

#### STRATEGIC

- The RMA is sponsored by the Scottish Government’s Justice Department and funded via grant-in-aid. The [Sponsorship Framework](#) sets out the duties and responsibilities of each party and monthly financial reports are submitted for review.
- The Board provide strategic direction and monitors progress against agreed objectives. The Board has [Standing Orders](#) for regulating Board meeting and proceedings and the [Scheme of Delegation](#) describes the delegated authority given to Members and the senior executives. These powers are reviewed annually and updated if necessary. Members of the Board are subject to a [Code of Conduct](#) and publish relevant interests in the [Register of Interests](#).
- Committees exist to support the Board and to provide constructive challenge. Their purpose and powers are set out in Terms of Reference which are reviewed on an annual basis.
- **Audit and Assurance Committee:** supports the Board’s responsibilities in dealing with risk, control and governance and associated assurance.
- **Accreditation Committee:** supports the Board’s responsibilities in respect of the RMA’s Accreditation Scheme. This scheme provides assurance for court appointed assessors to provide quality and standard risk assessments.
- **Appeals Committee:** to consider appeals against decisions made by the Accreditation Committee.
- The RMA is committed to transparent decision making and all relevant reports, governance documents and meeting minutes available on the [RMA website](#).

Meetings in 2021-22	Number
Board Meeting (including extraordinary)	9
Audit and Assurance Committee Meetings	4
Appeals Committee Meetings	0

#### STRATEGIC (CONT.)

- As part of the annual finance cycle, a five-year forecast is presented to the Board each year and the annual budget is agreed with the Scottish Government Sponsor Finance Department. Monthly reports are provided to monitor against these plans.
- Staff resources are regularly reviewed as sufficient to meet legislative demands by carefully monitoring the number of individuals subject to the Order for Lifelong Restriction (OLR), and the rising demand for advice and consultations. Expectations and demands on the service are regularly reviewed by the Sponsor Finance Department.

#### OPERATIONAL

- External [Governance Reports](#) are reviewed and updated regularly and published on the RMA website:

REPORT	FREQUENCY OF UPDATE
Gender Representation (Board)	In line with Board changes
Biodiversity Duty	Every three years (next due in Jan 2024)
Records Management	Progress Update Review (PUR) reviewed by National Records of Scotland
Best Value	Annually following finalisation of Accounts
Freedom of Information	Annually
Mainstreaming Equality	Annually
Disclosure of Senior Staff Salaries	Six-monthly (Mar & Sep)
Complaints - A Guide for Customers	Periodically reviewed and updated

- To support transparency, the RMA operates a publication scheme and freedom of information service. In 2021-22, the RMA received 12 requests for information under FOISA, with all cases responded to within the legislative guidelines of 20 working days.



#### IN 2021-22, THE RMA RESPONDED TO:

12

Requests for information under FOISA, with all case responded to within 20 working days.

### 3. GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY (CONT.)

#### OPERATIONAL (CONT.)

- Internal governance policies and reports are reviewed and agreed by the Senior Management Team, and submitted to the Board for scrutiny and to provide assurance:

REPORT	FREQUENCY OF REPORT/REVIEW
Fraud Policy	Annually
Whistleblowing Policy	Annually
Finance Management Performance	Quarterly
Business Plan Performance	Quarterly
Human Resources Performance	Quarterly
Communications Performance	Quarterly
Health & Safety	Quarterly
Freedom of Information Performance	Six-monthly
Certificants of Assurance from Department Heads	Annually

- A calendar for all meetings, dates and schedule of reports are agreed for the year ahead and published to staff and Board. This process is subject to scrutiny from Scottish Government Internal Audit, and recommendations form an action plan with progress being reported to the Board.
- Corporate Risk is regularly considered in all functions. Risks identified are assessed and scored by the Senior Management Team and entered on the Corporate Risk Register. Appropriate control measures are put in place and these are reviewed by the Audit & Assurance Committee quarterly and a summary report is presented to the Board.

#### NEXT STEPS

- The Sponsorship Agreement is being reviewed and is hoped to be concluded in early 2023.
- A Research Committee to support the Board in approving new research projects and monitoring current projects is in the process of being set up. Terms of Reference will be established during late 2022.
- A comprehensive review of the Corporate Risk Register and covering strategy should be completed during 2022-23.
- New governance reports to be produced during 2022-23 include British Sign Language & Climate Change (Scotland) Act.

### 4. USE OF RESOURCES

A Best Value organisation will show that it is conscious of being publicly funded in everything it does. The organisation will be able to show how its effective management of all resources (including staff, assets, information and communications technology (ICT), procurement and knowledge) is contributing to delivery of specific outcomes.

#### STRATEGIC

- All staff roles have clear job descriptions. Personal objectives, aligned to the objectives set out in the annual Business Plan, are agreed annually and monitored through six-monthly performance appraisals.
- The RMA understands the importance of its data and the security of that data. In addition to personal staff information, the RMA holds sensitive and personal data regarding individuals who offend. All staff undertake regular GDPR training. Any data sharing requests are subject to a Data Sharing Agreement. During 2021-22, two agreements were put in place.
- A robust Records Management Plan is in place and regularly reviewed to ensure best of use of information. A Progress Update Review (PUR) was completed by National Records Scotland in April 2021. The RMA uses electronic records management system (eRDM) managed and supported by the Scottish Government and is therefore covered by the Cyber Essentials Plus Certificate of Assurance.
- Further resilience is provided by documents held on eRDM Connect – an effective backup solution which is also managed and supported by the Scottish Government.
- Board and Committee information is shared using an external system Diligent, a cloud-based portal, which Board Members access using their own devices. This system has been comprehensively reviewed and meets high security standards.
- A thorough Cyber Security Risk Analysis and associated Business Continuity Plan was developed during 2021-22.
- The RMA has a robust financial planning framework which includes an annual budget together with a five-year forecast which are presented to the Board and Sponsor Department for approval. Monthly financial reports are produced and reviewed by the Senior Management Team, the Board and the Sponsor Department.

## 4. USE OF RESOURCES (CONT.)

### STRATEGIC (CONT.)

- The RMA's policy is to tender for goods or services over £10,000. This is done using the Scottish Government's online procurement portal Public Contract Scotland (PCS). In 2021-22, three tender processes were completed.

### OPERATIONAL

- All staff have monthly one-to-ones with their line manager along with regular supervision and support meetings where appropriate.
- All staff are offered training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD). During 2021-22 all staff received at least one instance of training costing a total of £31,643 - an average of £1,318 per head. In addition all Board Members received some training with a total finance commitment of £1,400.

### NEXT STEPS

1. A strategy to develop a proactive approach to training is to be developed and implemented.

## 5. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & IMPROVEMENT

A Best Value organisation will ensure that robust arrangements are in place to monitor the achievement of outcomes (possibly delivered across multiple partnerships) as well as reporting on specific activities and projects. It will use intelligence to make open and transparent decisions within a culture which is action and improvement oriented and manages risk.

The organisation will provide a clear line of sight from individual actions through to the National Outcomes and the National Performance Framework. The measures used to manage and report on performance will also enable the organisation to provide assurances on quality and link this to continuous improvement and the delivery of efficient and effective outcomes.

### STRATEGIC

- Key Performance Indicators (KPI), aligned to the aims in the Corporate Plan are reported in the annual Business Plan.

### OPERATIONAL

- Objectives set out in the Business Plan are centred around continuous improvement and have a multi-year focus to provide extended horizon scanning of future activity.
- Staff personal objectives show a clear link to the Business Plan objectives.

### NEXT STEPS

1. Extend the Corporate Plan to include a five-year roadmap for continuous improvement.
2. Review of [Standards and Guidelines](#) scheduled to take place 2023-24 .
3. Implement the delayed IT system for case management.
4. Development of a framework for research to provide greater resilience.
5. Development of an HR strategy.
6. Review of the [Records Management Plan](#).

[Link to Corporate Plan 2017](#)

[Link to Business Plans](#)

[Link to Annual Reports and Accounts](#)



## 6. CROSS-CUTTING THEME: SUSTAINABILITY

A Best Value organisation will demonstrate an effective use of resources in the short-term and an informed prioritisation of the use of resources in the longer-term in order to bring about sustainable development.

### STRATEGIC

- The RMA is committed to ensuring a strong, healthy and just society. The Corporate Plan 2017 states its purpose is to “Make Scotland safer by setting the standard for risk practice, to reduce reoffending and the harm that it causes”, all aims, objectives and daily activities are designed to support this vision.

### OPERATIONAL

- Even though the RMA is a very small organisation, it is committed to improving its sustainability through a number of targeted practices and a paper free culture. The current initiatives include:
  - A hybrid working arrangement is in trial with staff attending the office a minimum of two-days each week, resulting in lower co2 emissions for staff commuting.
  - All Board and Committee meetings take place online where possible to reduce travel.
  - Office recycling commenced with plastics, paper and cans being recycled.

### NEXT STEPS

1. As part of the RMA Training strategy, during 2023-25, training materials will be further developed as online resources which will reduce the need for printed materials.
2. The RMA plan to install cycling storage to support alternative methods of transport to the office.

## 7. CROSS-CUTTING THEME: EQUALITY

A Best Value organisation will demonstrate that consideration of equality issues is embedded in its vision and strategic direction and throughout all of its work.

### STRATEGIC

- The RMA is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce while encouraging equal opportunities and fairness. All staff undertake equalities training.

### OPERATIONAL

- The RMA produces a comprehensive annual [Mainstreaming the Equality Duty Report](#) which is published on the website.

### NEXT STEPS

1. It is expected to have an HR Manager in post during 2023 who will champion continuous improvement in equality within all functions of the RMA.







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