

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE
Infected Blood
Compensation Authority

IBCA Board - Minutes and Actions
22 July 2025, 13:00 - 16:10
Conference Room A, 70 Whitehall

Board Members:

1. Sir Robert Francis - Interim Chair
2. David Foley - Interim CEO
3. Russell Frith - Interim Non-Executive Director
4. Deborah Harris-Ugbomah - Interim Non-Executive Director
5. Paula Sussex - Interim Non-Executive Director
6. Gillian Fairfield - Interim Non-Executive Director
7. Helen Parker - Interim Non-Executive Director
8. Caroline Patterson - CFO, CO and acting Interim IBCA CFO Director
9. Celine McLoughlin - Interim Director of Digital
10. Sindy Skeldon - Interim Director of Operations

Attendees:

1. Hannah Probert - Deputy Director, Strategy & Governance
2. [REDACTED] - Board Secretariat
3. Catherine Webster - Chief of Staff
4. [REDACTED] Programme
5. [REDACTED] - Private Secretary to Sir Robert
6. [REDACTED] - Board Secretariat
7. Max Hacon - HMRC
8. Rachel Forster - Interim Director of Communications
9. Victoria Brock - General Counsel
10. James Quinault - Cabinet Office Senior Sponsor

Apologies:

1. Sir Rob Behrens - Non-Executive Director

1. Welcome

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the Board meeting.
- 1.2. The Chair thanked Paula Sussex for her contributions to the Board and wished her well in her new role.
- 1.3. No interests were declared.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

- 2.1. A correction to paragraph 6.6 was requested to reflect that management had advised that the accounts will not be laid before recess.
- 2.2. **ACTION** - Minutes to be corrected as per paragraph 2.1.

2.3. Actions

- 2.4. **Safeguarding policy:** Executive team are preparing a paper for August Board. They are awaiting a response from DWP, this will be included in the paper if received in time.
- 2.5. **Legal needs:** Work is underway, a paper is expected in August. General Counsel is reviewing current/future legal support requirements.
- 2.6. **Public/Private deliberation:** Governance team is drafting a protocol. A paper is due to come to the Board in August.

3. CEO Update

- 3.1. Current Status: 1,934 claims started; 808 offers made (£602m); 587 payments completed (£412m)
- 3.2. Inquiry response and Communications
 - A newsletter was sent to the registered community. 70+ regional media outlets have covered it.

3.3. Next Steps & Risks

- Community Involvement: There is a commitment to transparency and consultation on new services, starting with registration.
 - Cohort prioritisation: Work is ongoing in the unregistered living infected groups.
 - Legal support Dependency: IBCAs delivery pace and support models are reliant on Cabinet Office review outcomes.
 - Operational Risk: Treasury has accepted higher-than-normal risk threshold to expedite payments. This enables broader use of discretionary powers and evidence consideration (e.g., inquiry testimony).
- 3.4. Service Payment Issue (Overpayment Case):

3.5. [REDACTED]

3.6. The Board recognised the operational and financial risks of dynamic, retrospective changes to payment levels.

3.7. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

3.9. [REDACTED]

3.10. [REDACTED]

3.11. **ACTION:** Draft a consistent overpayment policy and process - Service Design, Finance, and Legal.

3.12. **ACTION:** Explore feasibility of escrow or alternative holding arrangements.

3.13. **ACTION:** Ensure legal input and documentation of decision-making for future reference.

4. Programme Update

4.1. Service Design:

- The Service Design status is Red due to cohort sequencing decisions and impact of the inquiry.
- Legal support services alignment is required for IBSS Finalisations, there is ongoing engagement with the DA's and Parliament to stay on track.

4.2. **Operational Tempo and Claims Management:** Rapid case progression may lead to underutilisation of claims managers by the end of August. Recruitment continues; onboarding will drop to 20 per month in August and September before ramping back up.

4.3. Establishing IBCA:

- The status for establishing IBCA is Amber - on track for independent employer status by 1 October.
- SSCL systems and HR: On track for first payroll in November.
- Risks remain in corporate service recruitment and office space pressures in Newcastle.

4.4. Performance Metrics & Public Messaging:

- Metrics such as invites issued, payments made, will naturally decelerate in new cohorts.
- Visual tools and narrative storytelling (including video) suggested to enhance public understanding.

4.5. **ACTION:** Review feasibility in creating visual tools and narrative storytelling for the website - Communications Executive.

- 4.6. **Community Engagement and Registration:** There's a commitment to community involvements in service design, including registration and prioritisation criteria. The current proposal is for a simple registration process by the end of next month, with parallel consultation on prioritisation criteria.
- 4.7. **Legal Support:** Legal support planning is underway across three claimant groups: unregistered infected, affected, and deceased. There is focus on eligibility advice, procurement readiness, and alignment with policy decisions.
- 4.8. **Financial Advice & Safeguarding:** The Board raised significant concerns over the quality and type of financial support offered:
- Current provision allows optional access to licensed financial advisors (IFAs), primarily focused on lump-sum vs. lifetime payment choices. The Board raised concerns that this guidance may be insufficient, especially for safeguarding large sums.
 - A recommendation was made to explore mandatory minimum financial advice or inclusion of tax accountants, who can provide better advice on inheritance, cash flow, and taxation.
 - The Board emphasised a need for: A clear policy and minimum standard for financial advice; Better tracking of uptake and outcomes; Alignment with FCA guidance and best practice (e.g. National Lottery); Support for affected groups, even if payments are smaller.
- 4.9. **ACTION:** A detailed note to be circulated to the Board outlining: what is currently offered, gaps in provision, and options for scaling financial safeguarding across groups - Strategy Executive.
- 4.10. The Board advised the need for a monthly engagement report summarising community insights and organisational responses; audit trail of what was heard, what actions were taken or rejected, and why; transparent visuals to illustrate performance dips, recovery trajectories, and evolving delivery strategy.
- 4.11. **ACTION:** Implement monthly summary of insights, actions, and rationales for the Board - Performance Strategy & Communications Executives.
- 5. Finance Update**
- 5.1. The Corporate team remains extremely stretched, particularly due to the recent leadership loss. Temporary support is in place through secondees and agency contractors, and recruitment is ongoing.
- 5.2. **Treasury Engagement and Budget Position:** The Treasury has approved the business case in principle, reaffirming alignment with the February budget and anticipated acceleration of delivery. The final agreement on amounts to follow during the estimates process later this year.

- 5.3. **In-Year Financial Forecast:** Current Forecast: £28m over the original budget, driven by support payments system extension.
- 5.4. The split of costs (core vs. payments) is still being finalised, pending further Treasury clarification
- 5.5. **Annual Accounts & Audit:** The accounts are scheduled for submission the first week of September. The Audit Committee has reviewed the financial statements in detail.
- 5.6. The National Audit Office (NAO) is still reviewing cost samples and has not raised any material issues but is considering a technical qualification due to limitations in varying certain provisions.
- 5.7. The Board acknowledged that qualified accounts may remain likely for some time, given the challenges in evidencing certain liabilities. Registration of affected persons is expected to help improve data assurance in future audit cycles.
- 5.8. NAO discussions continue around accounting treatment of support costs; these have now moved from being classed as a contingent liability to a provision, reflecting a more definite financial obligation.
- 5.9. **Annual Report Preparation:** Annual report drafting is underway. Focus areas include: clear articulation of financial risks and provision strategy, transparent presentation of post-balance sheet events, and compliance with relevant frameworks.

6. Community Advisory Panel

- 6.1. The Inquiry recommended a joint clinical and community panel, chaired by a community member with observer status at the Board.
- 6.2. The Board does not support merging the panels, as they serve a distinct purpose and would not function effectively as a joint body
- 6.3. The Board agreed that separate panels should proceed, with options for joint meetings explored where appropriate.**
- 6.4. The Board discussed the benefits and risks of a community member chairing the Community Advisory Panel, with a non-executive director lead for support and facilitation.
- 6.5. The co-chair model is intended to ensure community leadership while avoiding perceptions of executive control.
- 6.6. Public Board meetings may negate the need for a formal "observer status," but the panel chair could be invited to speak or share updates at meetings.
- 6.7. Clear Terms of Reference (ToR) will be needed to define any such role and manage expectations.

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

- 6.8. The Board was advised that the panel chair may be invited to speak publicly about panel work, but care must be taken to avoid perceptions or claims that one person represents all community views.
 - 6.9. The Board agreed that the ToR will include provisions that the chair may be invited to participate in engagement activities, with the panel's agreement.
 - 6.10. **ACTION:** ToR to include the above provision - Governance Executive
 - 6.11. The Board suggested considering a tenure of 18 months rather than 12 months.
 - 6.12. The Board endorsed offering a remuneration per meeting, with flexibility for members to decline or donate payment.
 - 6.13. Consideration was given to benefits impact, particularly the 16 hour DWP threshold. The Board confirmed panel roles will not exceed 16 hours per week. Guidance will be available to help members understand implications and options.
 - 6.14. The Board agreed that recruitment could begin subject to minor updates to the ToR and alignment with the clinical panel.
 - 6.15. Community groups previously consulted will be notified before launch, with the opportunity to provide final input.
- 7. Clinical Advisory Panel**
- 7.1. The Board reviewed the draft ToR for the Clinical Advisory Panel and agreed to expand the panel from 3 to 7 members to reflect the range of expertise recommended in the Inquiry Report.
 - 7.2. The Board requested the Clinical and Community Panel ToR be updated to ensure alignment in structure and function.
 - 7.3. The Board requested regular communication between the two panel chairs be established, and consideration be given to holding a joint panel meeting annually to encourage cross-panel insight and collaboration.
 - 7.4. The clinical panel will formally meet three times per year, with flexibility for the Board to request additional meetings as needed.
 - 7.5. Attendance at Board meetings by panel members will be by invitation.
 - 7.6. The Board noted the value in connecting the clinical panel with clinical advisors, particularly during high-demand policy phases.
 - 7.7. The Board agreed in principle to proceed with recruitment for the expanded clinical panel.
 - 7.8. The Board stressed the importance of clearly explaining the rationale for maintaining separate clinical and community advisory panels.

8. Critical Friend Review

- 8.1. The Chair welcomed Max Hacon, a Director at HMRC and an experienced IPA reviewer, who conducted a critical friend review of IBCA's progress and delivery model.
- 8.2. The Board was presented high-level reflections drawn from light-touch interviews with colleagues and document reviews.
- 8.3. Several Board members noted that IBCA remains in a 'major incident mode'. There was recognition of the need to move toward a more sustainable and strategic model as operational pressures begin to subside.
- 8.4. The Board echoed the need for a clear strategy to link the high-level mission with operational delivery. There was support for developing a roadmap that includes clear priorities and sequencing.
- 8.5. The risk of burnout was acknowledged. The executive team is committed to exploring further practical measures to maintain team wellbeing and organisational effectiveness.
- 8.6. Board members discussed the importance of shaping IBCA's longer term legacy, beyond compensation payments, including how it could model a more resilient, humane state response in future crises.
- 8.7. The Board acknowledged the need to ensure full cultural and operational integration of new regional offices as a priority.
- 8.8. The Board thanked Max for the review and reflected positively on its insight and constructive tone.

9. Claimant Charter

- 9.1. The Board approved the content of the Claimant Charter, which outlines key commitments and expected behaviours.
- 9.2. The Charter aligns with Inquiry recommendations on transparency and will be published and shared publicly.
- 9.3. The Board was advised that the performance measurement against the Charter will follow in a separate phase, led by the data team.
- 9.4. The Board noted the need for a clear framework to assess performance, including user satisfaction, complaints, appeals, and service experience.
- 9.5. The Board discussed the risks of stating commitments (e.g., access to legal/financial support) that may be subject to change. They stressed the importance of clarity, realistic commitments, and transparent communication, especially if offering change over time.
- 9.6. The Executive confirmed that the Charter will be shared with the network of 32 community groups for feedback and awareness-raising.

9.7. The Board discussed customer satisfaction data and was advised that informal feedback is being collected but not yet in a structured format. There are plans to develop a structured satisfaction measurement approach, capturing feedback at multiple points in the user journey.

10. Public vs Private Agenda Items

- 10.1. The Board discussed how best to split future Board content between public and private sessions.
- 10.2. It was acknowledged that CEO and programme updates will need to be structured for both public and private discussion.
- 10.3. Finance updates are generally suitable for publication, even if the content may not be easily understood by all audiences. However, some finance matters (e.g., live Treasury negotiations or embargoed decision), would need to remain confidential until formally announced.
- 10.4. The Board advised that papers would need to be formatted to support clear division between public and private content.
- 10.5. The Board was advised that a paper to develop a framework for categorising and structuring Board materials was underway.

11. AOB

- 11.1. The next Board meeting will be held virtually on 19 August.

Close