



RIASS Steering Group Meeting Minutes

Thursday 11th March 2021

Meeting held remotely

Attendees

EB	Emma Bell (RIASS Service Advisor) CHAIR
ML	Marie Leeming (RIASS Administrator) MINUTES
CW	Clair Warner (Manager PD/Medical/SPLD/SERC SEaTSS Team)
JH	Jahangir Hussein (Educational Psychologist)
PF	Penny Fordham (Children with Disabilities Team)
KC	Karen Curran (Head of Early Years Advisory Service / SEYP Chair)
PM	Parveen Mahal (Parent Representative / EPT Co-Chair)
LV	Lochy Virdi (Parent Representative)

Apologies

VD	Vivienne Doe (Parent Representative)
RN	Ruth Newell (Redbridge Early Years Funding and Independent Advice Lead)

Appointing a chairperson

EB – We are keen going forward to utilise the Steering Group more and make use of your expertise. With that in mind we still need to appoint someone to the role of Chairperson.

ML to send out information on the role once more.

Previous minutes

Previous minutes from Nov 2020 were discussed. KC and PM had had a discussion regarding Early Years Parent representatives and will continue to discuss this.

ML to add SEaTSS and Early Years to the newsletter mailing list

Minimum Standards

A copy of the minimum standards were shared prior to the meeting. No questions arose.

EB – I'm happy to answer any questions regarding the minimum standards at any time.

Service update

Termly Report

- EB went through the report for last term (Sep – Dec 2020) which was also shared prior to the meeting.
- Trends were discussed, what the majority of our work involved during this term and how we addressed these issues. E.g. working with Connexions to address the NEET

(Not in education, employment or training) and providing “What is an EHCP” parent training to address the large number of referrals requesting support with the EHCP process.

- We were pleased to see that our referrals are now coming through some new pathways, e.g. The Grove (Health)
- We've had good feedback regarding our online parent training, which we continue to deliver.
- Question was asked “what is a mainstream special School”? It was agreed that “Maintained Special” maybe a better description going forward.
- High volume of work in February 2021 was discussed. This is due to secondary school placements being decided earlier in the month and the appeals that arose from this. This is anticipated to re-occur in March/April when 16+ placements and continuing of EHCPs will be decided.

Grant

EB explained the history of the service and the previous grant. The RIASS managers post has now been advertised and interviews are likely to go ahead early April.

EB shared the operational plan for current funding request and how we would like to operate going forward.

Staffing

The part time advisor role has now come to an end as the contract has ended and Tasneem Miah's last day is Tuesday 16th March.

Website

EB asked the question “How can we increase traffic to our website”?

PM – Always link Facebook posts back to your website.

KC – I think it just needs to be regular, we have just launched our YouTube site and regularly add new videos. Also make sure all your pages are tagged correctly.

PM – we've found that a lot of parents don't use websites, they want information that's accessible from their phones.

Also, RIASS's Facebook page isn't listed as RIASS, its listed as SENDIASS Redbridge.

ML to check this on Facebook and look into changing it.

Coronavirus impact

During the pandemic and lockdown, we have conducted all meetings online via Zoom or Teams. Going forward we intend to keep this facility as it enables RIASS to reach more parents and increase our capacity.

We have had good feedback regarding online parent training as parents find online sessions much more accessible than previously arranged training.

Any Other Business

CW – Are RIASS aware of new government initiatives that are coming in to place in Sep 2021 called “The Engagement Model” and “Pre- Standards”? It was due to begin in Sep 2020 but was put on hold due to the pandemic. It will be a legal requirement for schools to deliver this and parents will need to be aware of this new way of working and new language it will bring about.

This new way of working and how it can work in schools especially in regards to Annual reviews was discussed.

EB to set up a meeting with PM and CW to liaise and decide how best to disseminate this information to parents.

CW – Can RIASS Support children with HI (Hearing Impairment) and families with HI?

EB – Yes, we can but only if the family can provide their own interpreter as RIASS does not have the budget to provide interpreters.

PM – Empowering Parents Together (EPT) conducted a survey during the pandemic to assess the impact of lockdown. Feedback from this survey showed that some EPT members were not getting updates and newsletters from RIASS.

EB – Please could you direct these parents to us and we can add them to our mailing list and also I’m more than happy to attend any EPT Coffee Mornings and explain more about how RIASS works and how we can support families.

Date of next meeting will be in June 2021