



**RIASS Steering Group Meeting Minutes**  
**March 2022**  
**10.00 – 12.00**

**Attendees & Apologies**

**Attendees:** Emma Bell – RIASS Manager; Marie Leeming – RIASS Administrator; Jacqui Glanville – RIASS Advisor; Deepa Bhatt – Parent Rep; Viviane Doe – Parent Rep & EPT; Parveen Mahal – Parent Rep & EPT; Diederick Meij – NELFT; Clair Warner – SEaTSS Lead; Janice Booth – Youth Forum Lead; Merry Collins – Engagement Officer; Nina Rehal Chohan – FiND & LBR Rep; Louisa Leaman – Parent Rep;

**Apologies:**; Sue McMahon – Head of SEaTSS; Lochy Viridi – Parent Rep; Kay Charalambus – EP Service; Karen Curran – Early Years ; Penny Fordham – CWD Team; Bianca Spencer – Parent Rep; Kaj Kajen – Parent Rep; Barbara Boddy – Parent Rep

**Steering Group Chair**

EB explained that RIASS is still looking for a chair for the steering group and talked about the job role. A parent representative would be preferable.

Emma will continue to chair until an alternative can be found.

**Previous minutes**

Previous minutes approved with no issues arising.

ML – to chase Lara Parr taking over from Louise Parr on the steering group.

**Service update**

**Report**

- Stats for Winter term (Sep – Dec 2021) were discussed and EB explained that RIASS is currently in a very good position as a service.
- We are now fully staffed. Jackie is on 21hrs, Marie on 30hrs, Nancy 7hrs and Emma – full time, which means we can now cover any absences.
- Parental Sessions stopped over the Winter term due to staff shortages but have now returned and are extremely well attended. We have some new sessions arranged as well as also continuing all original sessions. Our session on Transition was extremely well attended and our most successful yet.  
Next month we have a session on Accessing Short Breaks which we think will also prove extremely successful.

Unfortunately, LBR cancelled the session arranged on Autism Education Trust at short notice. We hope to have this rescheduled soon.

We also have a "Preparing for Adulthood" session planned at the end of the month. We have been asked to assist with the SEN Strategy Focus Groups as the recent consultation didn't return many family voices and is therefore not representative of SEN families in the borough. EPs will lead on delivering this, RIASS will arrange bookings and invites.

### Contact with Families

- We are back to responding to parents within 48hrs despite officially having 10 days. Having Jackie on board has helped to speed this up.
- We are hoping to arrange Coffee Mornings in the community again as we begin to live with Covid and restrictions are lessened.
- We have seen more complex cases arising and more young people with poor mental health and refusing school.

DM- Our team (CAMHS) would be keen to arrange a joint workshop that may help to address some of these issues.

LL- I agree, I think parents would really value this.

### Trends

- Contact with the SEN Team has been very difficult due to severe staffing issues. This has been addressed with Matt Small from the SEN Team and we are hoping to see a turnaround shortly.

VD – This has been very difficult, no one picks up the phone at all.

KK – There is a real lack of professionalism and it's really not acceptable.

DB – We are just being ignored, emails are not even acknowledged.

Emma will continue to feedback the concerns

- Secondary school placements went well this year and we have not seen many appeals. 93% of parents got their first or second preference school place.
- We have had more cases with children and young people refusing school and we have been working with schools to help them deal with these situations.
- DB – Do all assessments happen via Zoom?

DM – Recruitment has been a large problem for us, and our waiting list is long. Some staff can only carry out assessments via Zoom due to being at risk, we are trying to take a hybrid approach to this with assessments happening in clinic and via Zoom.

DB – Assessments via Zoom have not worked for us, and we need a plan B.

DM – I will look into this matter, it's not a Redbridge issue but a National one.

Therapists are in short supply, and we are largely relying on locums.

### Partnership Work

- We are working with LBR on some sessions and projects.
- EB was asked to sit on the panel for the Redbridge Staff Awards, which was a great networking opportunity.

- We are also working with Havering and supporting them with cases whilst their manager had been on long term sick. And we in turn get good peer support from them.

### Grant

- We discussed the grant and what was asked of us in order to be awarded any money. We are delighted to announce that we have been awarded the full amount of £14k, something we had not managed to obtain in previous years.
- We are still waiting on a contribution from the CCG (Health) to enable us to fully meet the minimum standards. This has been agreed in principle but no agreement from health has been provided yet, however, CDC have agreed that there is nothing further RIASS can do in regard to this, and it has been left with LBR to chase this.
- The Grant Project has now ended, there will be no need to write an exit plan.
- We do need to spend £7k by the end of the year and we welcome any ideas on how to do this.
- We have used £3k to create some YouTube videos. We worked with Redbridge Drama Centre, using young people to deliver short videos on topics relevant to them, such as bullying, EHCPs and college.  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0EXse9LS-qjSMFkKArH9vA/videos>  
MC – I can include these on the Local Offer.
- We looked at purchasing some iPads but were told that Redbridge would not help us with any IT support.  
CW – SEaTSS has it own tech team, so we can help you with this.

### Minimum Standards

- We are one of only a few SENDIAS Services across the country that are totally meeting the minimum standards. It's been a lot of work over the last 3 years, but we have finally got there.

### Statistics

- Emma Bell went through the statistics in the report and evaluation feedback.  
MC – Very nice feedback, all very positive.  
JB – Shared some info on her service, the Youth Forum is back up and running online and hoping to work with RIASS in the future.

### AOB

- We will look at dates in June 2022