

RIASS

Redbridge Information, Advice & Support Service
for Special Educational Needs & Disability



Redbridge Information, Advice & Support Service Annual Report 2023 Accademic year 2022/2023

Overview

RIASS (Redbridge Information, Advice and Support Service) was established in January 2016.

The team was created in response to legislation contained in the Children and Families Act (2014), Sections 19(c), 26(3), 32 and 49.

This legislation states that local authorities must provide a service offering information advice and support for children, young people and parents/carers, covering special educational needs (SEN), disability, health and social care.

The team provide free, confidential and impartial information, advice and guidance which supports families to navigate SEN processes and understand their rights.

The RIASS team comprises a Manager, one Advisor, one Case Worker and an Admin Officer. Staff have a wide range of experience and qualifications, including IPSEA legal training at advanced level.

The Redbridge Information, Advice and Support Service (RIASS) offer free and impartial support to children and young people (aged 0-25) parents and carers, in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The Service provides legally based, impartial, confidential and accessible information, advice and support.



What do we mean by Information, Advice and Support?

IASSs are not support services. Support is only part of the service, Advice is more than information but less than support.

	What it looks like	How we do that
Information	Everything children, young people, parent/carers can access without contacting the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website and social media • Local Offer • Parent/carer course • Newsletters
Advice	Help children, young people, parent/carers apply information to their own situation so that they can make an informed decision and act themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triage • Website • Tribunal Packs • Information & Training Sessions • Advice from an advisor
Support	Helping families to act	Advisor appointment or attendance to a meeting

Support with Complaints

Part of the RIASS role is to provide information, advice and support to young people and parent/carers who raise concerns about education, health, social care and local authority services.

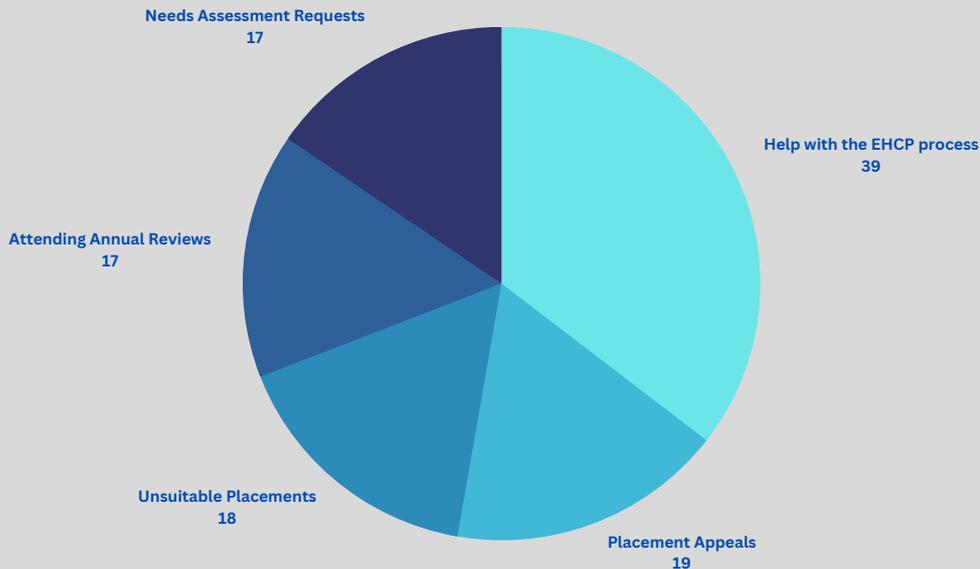
Formal complaints take time to be resolved and most families making referrals around complaints do not always want to go down the formal route but would like their query resolved as quickly as possible.

RIASS will give all the available options when trying to resolve concerns, which can include the formal complaints route, however, for ease and speed we will help resolve these matters before it reaches this stage.

	2023	Resolved
Contact with SEN Team	51	49
EHCP Process delays/concerns	33	30
EHCP Implementation	31	29
Education Setting Issues	48	46
Exclusions	5	5

Casework Summary

Top 5 Referral Reasons



New referrals made to RIASS
September 2022 -
August 2023

365

Mediation sessions RIASS attended

32

29

Annual Review meetings attended

427

Parent/carer phone appointments made

How parents heard about us

- ★ Previously Used 59
- ★ Education Setting 20
- ★ Word of Mouth 67
- ★ SEN Team letter 12
- ★ GP 7
- ★ Google 6

"The help and support that I received was amazing. Somebody knew what I had to do when I had no idea".

"Great service, very informative and extremely polite and understanding staff, thank you"

"Thank you for being so thoughtful and understanding of my situation and accommodating me. Your advice was very helpful and feels like all is not lost! Thanks for the links for further information. Your knowledge on the code of practice was amazing."

Parent Training Sessions

Families accessed training & information sessions delivered by RIASS during 2022/23

153

Events delivered throughout 2022/23

8

"RIASS took time out to listen to individual questions, provided a good overview of legal framework and expected process"

Events delivered by RIASS 2022/23

What is an EHCP?

Discusses EHCP sections and what a plan should look like.

Applying for an EHCP

Information on how to apply and the Needs Assessment process.

Annual Reviews

Discusses what a good Annual Review should include, along with outcomes and provision.

Visiting Schools

Discusses points to consider when visiting schools and questions to ask.

Preparing for Adulthood

Discusses what PfA is and how it is implemented within Redbridge.

Transition in Social Care

Held jointly with LBR this session looks at how transition from children to adult services is implemented in Redbridge

Short Breaks and Services

Held jointly with LBR this session looks at the different services available and the referral process.

Choosing a School

Held jointly with LBR this session looks at the process of applying for schools when your child/YP has an EHCP.

Social Media

Monthly
Newsletter
subscribers

612

258 followers
on Facebook

We are beginning to
set up our Text Service
and hope to have this
ready soon

You Tube

23 Videos for YP and
professionals

13 Subscribers
735 Views overall
"Applying for an EHCP" is
our most popular video

RIASS Website

101 pages on website
Over 1800 page views since Jan 2023

By providing free information
young people and
parent/carers are empowered
to make their own choices

RIASS

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Search

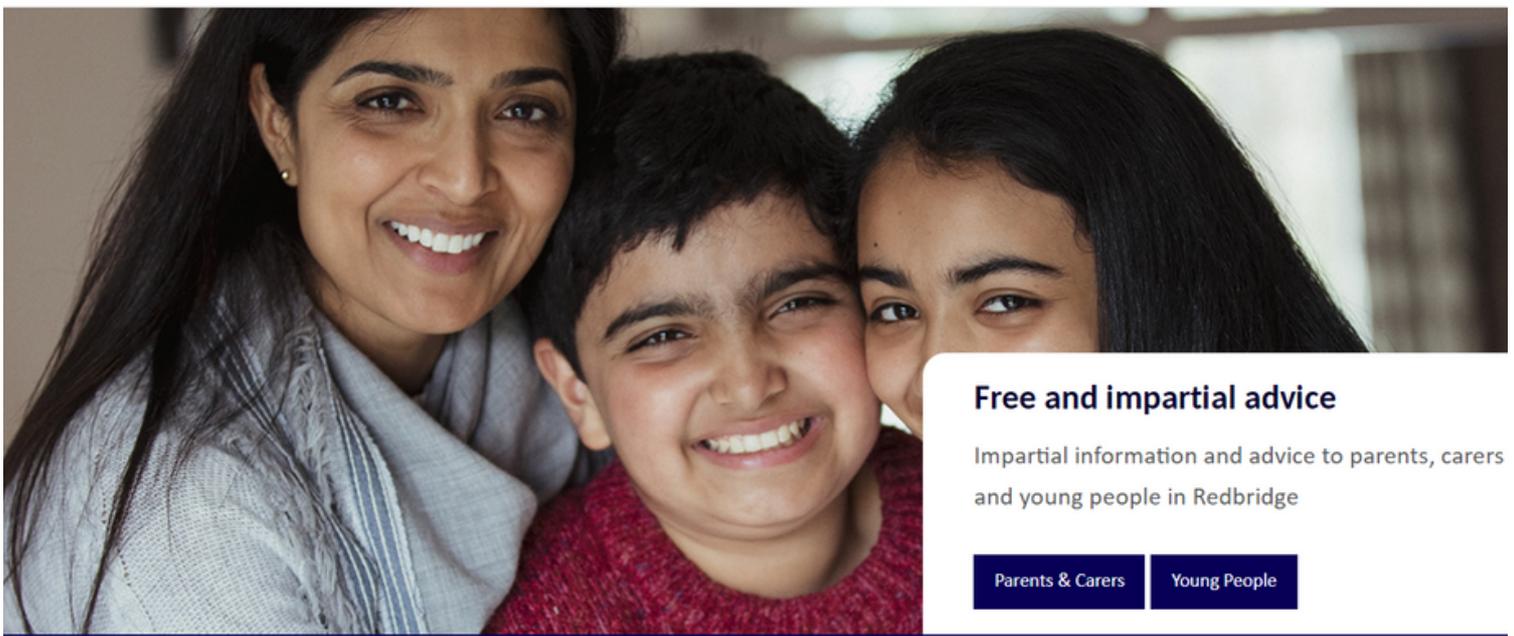


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Free and impartial advice

Impartial information and advice to parents, carers
and young people in Redbridge

Parents & Carers

Young People

What else have we done!

Joint Working

- Redbridge Carers Support Service (RCSS) info day
- Redbridge's Disability Festival in Park - involved in the planning
- Project Search
- LBR Social Care Transition Project
- Autism Education Trust (AET)
- Coffee Mornings in schools and children's centres
- Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Steering group
- Mentoring other IAS Services in London
- Sense - Lifeline project
- Local Offer support

Awards

RIASS was nominated in the "Recognising Redbridge 2022 Award"

RIASS received a "Six Five High Five" for our newly created videos.

The Council For Disabled Children (CDC) released our case study on online line training from March 2021

Other work this year

- Leaflet created explaining "How we work"
- New staff member to start this year
- New electronic Welcome Packs and online forms designed for parent/carers
- Electronic Appeal Info Packs created for parents/carers
- Posters created for professionals
- Huge poster delivery to all Redbridge primary & secondary schools, libraries and GP surgeries
- 23 YouTube videos created for young people and professionals
- Hosted a work experience placement from Loxford School

Work Experience Placement

RIASS had the pleasure on hosting a work experience placement for a Y12 student from Loxford School.

It was a chance for the service to have a young person to review our website pages and information that we have created for other young people with SEN who access the service.

The Education & Inclusion Work Experience ended on a high note at the EYPaD on Friday where the students reflected on their learning with their placement managers and identified transferable skills to support their future study and employment.

They also attended a seminar on the National Graduate Development Programme delivered by Najiyah Ahmed. Adrian Loades, Corporate Director of People, presented certificates to students marking the outstanding contribution to their placements



Festival in the Park

This year RIASS was asked to be involved in the planning of the “Redbridge Disability Festival in the Park”, which means more services and activities for 0–25-year-olds. Another way we can make sure that the families are able to connect with the support they need

Not only did we have our own stall providing information and advice we even supported the Fashion Show event!

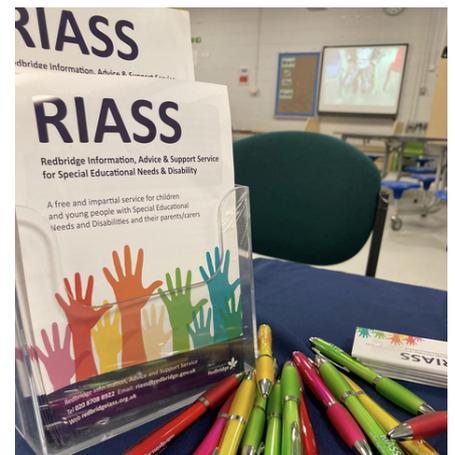
It was lovely catching up with our parents/carers and meeting the young people we have been supporting in person. At one stage we had a queue reaching outside the tent. We are looking forward to supporting next years event



Who said information and advice has to be boring!

Information Day

We hosted in partnership with RCSS (Redbridge Carers Support Service) an Information event as part of National Carers Week. We had over 120 parent/carers attending. Due to the success we had to end the sale of tickets early as we were at full capacity. We are hoping to host another similar event in November which will be in line with LBR releasing the Carers Charter.



Case Studies

T's story

T's family contacted the service to ask for information and advice about submitting to tribunal for Part I for their son.

A mainstream setting was named for a Year 6 transfer and the family felt he was unable to cope in the mainstream secondary schools, even in a resourced provision setting, because of his sensory issues.

We reviewed the EHC Plan that was used to consult with secondary schools and found that this had not been updated for 3 years and did not show a full and clear picture of the support needs and provisions that were currently in place in his primary school.

The family felt that the SEN schools within LBR were not suitable to meet his academic levels.

Whilst information and advice were being provided around the tribunal route, RIASS supported the family to request an Emergency Annual Review with the primary school so that the EHC Plan could be updated.

Once the review took place, RIASS advised the family that they could request mediation and try to resolve the concerns whilst waiting for their tribunal hearing.

RIASS worked with the family to make sure that they were fully prepared for mediation and as a result LBR agreed to re-consult with schools of the family choosing and with the mainstream and SEN schools within LBR. The mainstream school stated that they would not be able to meet T's needs and the local SEN schools stated that they could meet T's emotional support needs but not his academic levels. The parents preferred school responded that they could meet T's needs.

LBR agreed to name this school and therefore prevented the need for a tribunal.



“Thank you RIASS, without your advice we would have had a lengthy wait for tribunal. Your advice has led to our son being able to start at a school in September which we feel can fully meet his needs”

D's Story

D's family contacted our service to explain their 18-year-old son was refused entry into a further education college because the Local Authority (LA) ceased their EHC Plan without their prior knowledge or consent. They now wanted to know what options were available to their son as they did not want him NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). The family had been trying to contact the SEN Team to ask about their options.

RIASS explained that the LA cannot cease the EHCP and the LA must write to a parent to inform them of their intention to cease an EHCP and the reason(s) why, which did not seem to have happened. We then reassured the family that there is due process to be followed according to the Children and Families Act (2014). There are 2 legal reasons for ceasing to maintain an EHC plan (they are set out in section 45 of the Children and Families Act 2014).

RIASS then contacted LBR to ask for further clarification and copied the family into the email as proof of permission for RIASS to act on their behalf.

The response from LBR was that there had been an oversight of the case management and reassured the family that the EHCP had not been ceased and apologised for the confusion.

Without the involvement of RIASS the family would not have known of their rights and their son would have left full time education.



“Thanks so much for making this happen. I’ve been trying for the last few days and you did it in a morning! We are very grateful for your help, support, and advice and so pleased that D can continue in his education”

Evaluations

34 returns from June's evaluations

How easy was it to get in touch with us?	90% of respondents said it was very easy, 10% said it was easy.
How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?	45% of respondents said it was very helpful, 45% said it was helpful and 10% were neutral
How neutral, fair, and unbiased do you think we were?	55% of respondents said we were very fair and unbiased, and 45% said we were fair and unbiased
What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?	33% of respondents said it had made some difference, 60% of respondents said it had made a lot of difference and 7% were neutral.
Overall, how satisfied are you with the service we gave?	34% of respondents said they were satisfied, 46% of respondents said they were very satisfied and 20% were neutral
Would you recommend our service to others?	100% of respondents' said they would recommend our service to others.

You said, we did!

You said that you would like the service to work more directly with young people.

We have started to rebuild our links with the SEN Youth projects with LBR. This is a slow process but during the summer break we held a fun session with SEN young people, where we played prize Bingo and introduced RIASS and the LO to the young people who attended. We also spoke about their concerns within Redbridge and which services and information that would like. Hopefully this was the start of many more sessions over the next year.

You said that you would like RIASS to hold drop-in sessions.

We have, in partnership with FiND, arranged some new and exciting drop in coffee mornings where families can not only obtain SEND information and advice, but information and advice on all services within Redbridge that provide support.

You said that you did not feel our service was promoted enough across Redbridge.

We created new posters and delivered these to every education setting in the borough, including early years settings. We have also delivered these posters to key health services, such as the polyclinics, Grovelands, Children Centres, Libraries and Social Care offices. We still need to deliver posters to GP services but hope to have done this by October half term.

You said you would like more information events for parent/carers.

We hosted, in partnership with RCSS an information day. We were also invited to join part of the planning for Festival in the Park, making sure that there were more activities and services present on the day for those with SEN 0-25 years old.

Future Focus

RIASS are delighted to be able to start our **Outreach Sessions** in September 2023. Following on from evaluations received by parent/carers this is something that has been requested.
You said, we did!

Recruitment has started for a new **Case Worker** to join our service. This is a new role within the service, and this will help us to continue to deliver the information and advice in a timely manner.

All IASSs will start implementing the **New Tier Levels** from September. This is a large piece of work for the service to undertake which involves updating our database, but this does not affect the information, advice and support that is provided. This new way of recording will help show the development of a referral. The focus needs to be on bridging the gap between information and advice giving, which will then reduce the need for support. Our recording of statistics for future reports will look different but the new system will be explained further.

RIASS is now in a position to be able to look at recruiting **Young Volunteers** to provide outreach sessions and information to other young people. We hope that by the end of the year we will have 2 young people volunteering with our service.

The Minimum Standards set out that IASSs need to provide **Training to Professionals**. We have created a session called “What is an EHC Plan” for professionals and we hope to deliver our first session in October 2023.



RIASS Steering Group

Are you a parent/carer of a child or young person who lives in Redbridge?

Would you be interested in joining our Steering Group as a parent/carer representative?

Redbridge Information, Advice and Support Service (RIASS) is an impartial information, advice and support service for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities (SEND) and their parents/carers.

To make sure that RIASS operates impartially and at "arm's length" from the Local Authority & ICB (Integrated Care Board), the provision of information, advice and support to children and young people with SEND and their parents/carers is overseen by a Steering Group.

With joining the Steering Group, you will be supporting with the growth of this vital service and help structure the way in which we deliver information, advice and support to parent/carers and young people living in Redbridge.

The current Steering Group is made up of parent representatives, education settings and specialised support services within LBR, including the EP service and Early Years' service.

The aims and objectives of the Steering Group is to:

- Act as a "critical friend" to RIASS.
- Regulate and ensure "arm's length" requirements and impartiality from the LA and ICB.
- To guide and support the development of RIASS.
- Monitor compliance with the IASS National Minimum Standards.
- Review, scrutinise and agree all practice, proposals, policies, and promotional materials.
- To offer practical advice and support regarding any publicity/promotional and training requirements.
- Ensure that the views of children, young people, parents, and carers are shared with the Local Authority when appropriate, to promote change in local policy and practice.
- Monitor RIASS' engagement with all relevant partners locally, regionally and nationally.

The Steering Group meets once a term and up to four times a year. The meetings are held during the day and are around 2 hours long. There may be times outside of the meetings where we may ask for your support and opinions on the service through paper correspondences.

We have 3 Steering Group Parent Rep vacancies for parent/carers of those with SEND living in Redbridge.

If you are interested in supporting RIASS, please email the service with a short statement (no more than 500 words) on why you would like to join the Steering Group and the support you can provide the service.

If you would like further information about the Steering Group, then please contact the service.

riass@redbridge.gov.uk or the manager Emma Bell Emma.bell@redbridge.gov.uk

Please note that at this current time we only have 3 vacancies and you may be placed on an attendance list for the future.