

WORKFORCE NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2023 ISSUE

Dear colleagues,

I am really proud of London's collective progress and unrelenting drive to address the many diverse challenges that impact on our children's workforce. It's fulfilling to lead this complex policy area for the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS), who have curated an ambitious programme of work that offers something for everyone to support workforce development efforts locally.

In a politically and financially turbulent time, London has held firm to their workforce collaboration, which is providing benefits to all.

The shared mission to improve the workforce environment for staff and the children and families we serve underpins all aspects of the programme and this year has seen the launch of several exciting initiatives, impressive data developments and increased shared learning that ultimately benefits us all. London continue to prove that working in partnership in this space can begin to tackle some of the most complex issues.

The last year has seen a period of substantial progress, powered by all those that have worked tirelessly to support the workforce programme which continues to grow its array of projects. Each have already and will continue to make an impact as interlinking pieces that form part of the developing workforce strategy for London.

The workforce programme and the strategy for London is maturing and I have every confidence that with ALDCS' visible commitment and the Workforce Steering Group guiding the way, London will progress towards sustainable change for the better.

Wishing you all a restful holiday period and a very Happy New Year!

Nigel Chapman

DCS Brent and Workforce Policy Lead for ALDCS

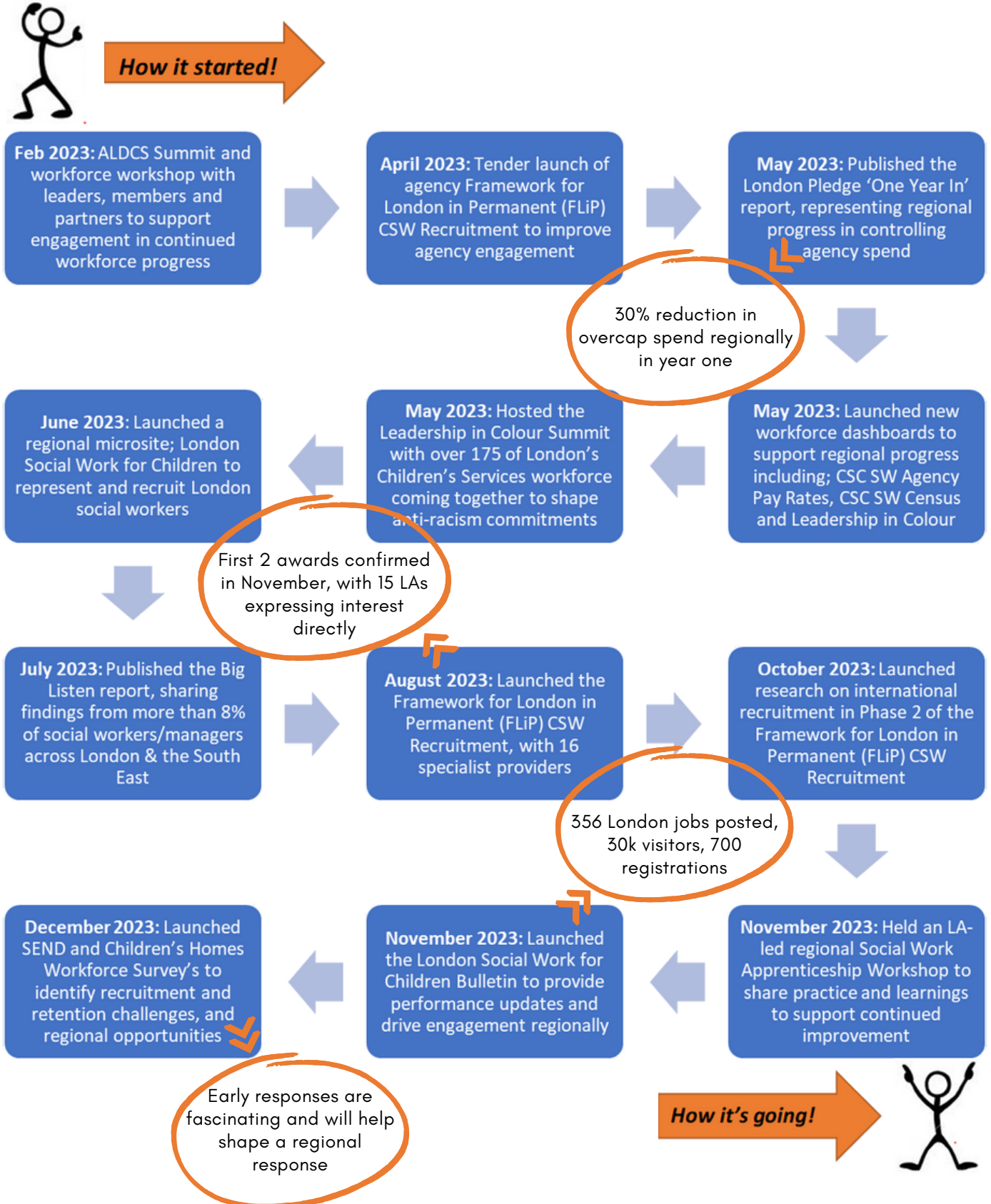


SOME OF THIS MONTH'S UPDATES

- London's Regional Workforce Journey: Distance travelled this year
- Workforce Research Update: Completed and coming up
- Regional Apprenticeship Workshop: Key Takeaways
- London Social Work for Children: Performance Update

LONDON'S REGIONAL WORKFORCE JOURNEY: DISTANCE TRAVELLED THIS YEAR

The ALDCS Workforce Programme continues to move at pace, with this year bringing to life many of last year's ambitions. From launching FLiP; a first of its kind specialist permanent recruitment framework, hosting the Leadership in Colour Summit; which brought together 175 of London's workforce to shape anti-racism ambitions, to launching the London Social Work for Children microsite; a developing asset and opportunity to raise the image of social work! Our workforce are the bedrock of all of our shared ambitions, and whilst there is much still to do, we are proud of the distance London have travelled together this year.



WORKFORCE RESEARCH: COMPLETED AND UPCOMING RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Over the last 2 years ALDCS have initiated research across a range of topics with the aim of better understanding the root causes of recruitment and retention challenges, and there's more coming up! **Below is a snapshot of the key research pieces we've completed and what to keep your eye out for in 2024;**

Completed in 2023

- **Agency Push & Pull Factors** - exploring the push and pull factors driving social workers to move into the agency market. *This research directly influenced the London Pledge and inspired the Big Listen!*
- **Permanent Recruitment Market Research** - understanding routes to market and barriers for both providers and local authorities to better understand need and effective solutions. *This research led to London developing the FLiP recruitment framework with access to specialist providers.*
- **The Big Listen** - of the 12,694 children's social workers employed in London and the South East, over 8% (1035) took part in this research through participation in the Big Listen survey and/or taking part in focus groups. *This research provided a 'Questions for Leaders' toolkit, and a formal response to the Big Listen is due to launch early next year.*
- **International Recruitment Market Research** - expanding on the permanent recruitment market research this next phase of FLiP seeks to understand best practice and need to enable improved engagement with the best providers in the market. *This research is live but ongoing.*

Upcoming in 2024

- **Agency Push & Pull Factors (Phase 2)** - next year we aim to repeat the previous research to revisit the push and pull factors of agency working to support workforce development initiatives and improve working conditions. *This forms part of the formal response to the Big Listen findings relating to addressing disproportionality and understanding agency drivers.*
- **SEND Workforce Research** - a SEND specific recruitment and retention survey has been launched to better understand the challenges and needs in order to identify next steps to support workforce improvement. *We expect to take learnings will be taken from the social work workforce programme to accelerate progress.*
- **Children's Homes Workforce Research** - a Children's Homes recruitment and retention survey has been launched with a focus on LA owned and run Children's Homes, to understand recruitment and retention challenges aligned to both existing placement and future capacity across London. *We continue to work closely with the Placement Sufficiency team to ensure learnings and solutions are attuned to national developments.*
- **Social Work Supply** - we aim to undertake deeper research into social work supply routes in order to better understand the key sources of future social workers and identify targeted regional opportunities to accelerate progress. *This research links to ALDCS' primary ambition to drive a sufficiency and supply.*

If you'd like to discuss any of these research projects to learn more, or to get involved, please reach out to [Rula Tripolitaki](mailto:Rula.Tripolitaki@aldcslondon.org).

APPRENTICESHIP WORKSHOP: KEY TAKEAWAYS



In November Islington, Greenwich, Hillingdon and Tower Hamlets led a regional Apprenticeship Workforce with the region to support shared learning and improvement.

With universities, teaching partnerships and DfE colleagues in attendance there was helpful discussion about the challenges and learnings from different approaches, areas for improvement locally and the possibilities on regional collaboration.

Key Takeaways



Please contact [Rula Tripolitaki](#) if you'd like to access the presentation and recording of the session.

- **Recruiting Social Work Apprentices from existing non-social work qualified staff can garner lots of interest** with positive retention rates!
- **Maintaining a close relationship with universities** is really beneficial!
- **Don't underestimate** the work apprentices need to do!
- **Finding the right amount of stretch** for experienced staff on a new journey can be challenging!
- **Apprenticeships can be an important part of planning for the future workforce** and provide an opportunity to utilise the existing skills of talented professionals!
- **Responsibilities and identities can get blurred where an existing role is ongoing** whilst training to be a Social Worker!
- **Budget for backfill and long term funding** can be a challenge!
- **Identify Practice Educators for apprentice placements** and maintain training, recruitment and retention of PEs!
- **A coaching approach from an early stage** as part of the Social Work Apprenticeship Degree can strengthen the talent pipeline and encourage increased uptake!

SOCIAL WORK ENGLAND'S ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL WORKERS' DIVERSITY DATA IN RELATION TO ITS FITNESS TO PRACTICE PROCESS



The initial analysis of the diversity data of social workers in relation to its fitness to practise processes indicates that social workers who are; aged 40 and over, males or people of Black, African, Caribbean and Black British ethnicity are overrepresented in the referrals they receive, as well as in cases that reach the hearings stage.

The data will allow Social Work England to identify how social workers might be impacted by inequality or discrimination and will show if there are any areas where it needs to address bias in policies and processes. Colum Conway, Chief Executive at Social Work England commented: *"The report represents a significant first step on a longer journey towards a comprehensive understanding of fairness in our processes and the actions we must take in response."*

Monthly engagements with Social Work England form part of London's workforce programme and commitment to partnership working. The Workforce Steering Group and Leadership in Colour Reference Group will take an active role in contributing to SWE's response to these findings.

London Social Work for Children was launched officially in July 2023 by ALDCS, with all 33 London Authorities collectively representing Children's Social Work in the capital.

Performance so far...

- **30k** Visitors
- **356** Jobs Posted
- **20k** Job Views
- **8k** 'Apply' clicks
- **679** Registrations
- **500+** Followers

Despite its infancy, LSWC is quickly developing into an exciting tool that is attracting impressive traffic, growing a community of social workers, and gathering a wealth of new data to give meaningful learning and improvement to support recruitment and retention. It's more than just a platform, it's a service and your very own press outlet to help promote local opportunities and drive engagement.

Read the latest LSWC Case Study.



FOLLOW 

 [@LondonSWC](https://twitter.com/LondonSWC)

 [LSWC LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/london-social-work-for-children)

The LSWC Offer...

- **A consistent London Jobs Board**, with roles promoted to a growing community of registered candidates
- **Additional promotion of your LA's vacancies**, including a new 'Featured Job' campaign offer
- **A news outlet for your LA's social work news stories**, sharing your local news and updates directly with a London-specific audience
- **Dedicated recruitment support from the LSWC team** who provide content and case study development, campaign support and partnership engagement

We've also introduced a monthly London Social Work for Children (LSWC) bulletin, which provides a resource for LA Users on performance engagement and new developments. Please reach out to [Eliana Neyhus](mailto:eliana@london-sw.co.uk) if you'd like a copy.

Please keep sharing your content, feedback and impact with the LSWC team and if you need any support you can contact; [Rula Tripolitaki](mailto:rula@london-sw.co.uk), [Eliana Neyhus](mailto:eliana@london-sw.co.uk), or [LSWC Support Team](mailto:lswc@london-sw.co.uk)

REMINDER: ACCESS THE WORKFORCE DASHBOARDS

LIIA continue to develop Workforce Data Dashboards as part of the workforce programme to support LAs, with two live dashboards available, including;

- **Children's Social Work Workforce Census Dashboard (as at 30 Sept 2022)**
- **Leadership in Colour Dashboard (as at 30 Sept 2022)**
- **Children's Social Work Agency Staff Dashboard (London Pledge, quarterly collection)**

Together these dashboards provide London Authorities with valuable tools to support both local and regional workforce development and ensure that progress can be monitored.

Not working for you?

To access the dashboards you will need to login to your account on the [LIIA Website Members Area](#). Or if you do not already have access you can **register via the [LIIA website](#)**. Still experiencing problems, then please **email our website administrators**.

GET IN TOUCH

Please visit our website: liia.london for more detailed information on each of the ALDCS priorities, or contact the team directly to discuss anything in greater detail.



Please let us know your feedback on this newsletter [via email](#) so we can keep improving future editions.

[Explore the ALDCS Workforce Priority Area!](#)

If you would like to discuss any areas of the programme in more detail or support a particular area of work, please reach out to our LIIA Workforce Programme Lead, [Rula Tripolitaki](#).

MEMBERS AREA ACCESS

As always, [you can click here to register for access](#) to our dedicated Workforce Members' Area.



**WISHING EVERYONE A RESTFUL
HOLIDAY PERIOD AND A
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!**

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