

LIIA NEWSLETTER

December 2023 Issue

Dear colleagues

It's hard to believe but it's already six months since I took up the role as Chair of ALDCS. I am fortunate that my job was greatly assisted by the work of my predecessor, Martin Pratt, who had done so much to foster a culture of collaboration between directors and across London's children's services.



This collaboration is best exemplified by the work we do together through LIIA. As you can see from the areas covered in the latest newsletter, there is an enormous amount of activity going on across London to grip our shared challenges.

The list of tangible outputs is impressive. Amongst these are the London Pledge to manage the cost and quality of agency social work, the London Accommodation Pathfinder to support children in the community as an alternative to custody, and our London Care Leavers Compact to improve provision for young people who have left our care. As you'll see these are just a few of the London-wide initiatives we are pursuing together. We do so in the knowledge that in many areas of our practice we will have the greatest impact when we work together, combining our shared expertise and scale of our collective resources.

I hope you enjoy this digest of LIIA's work on behalf of ALDCS and I hope, like me, you can feel the benefit of our pan-London and our sub-regional endeavours.

Jane McSherry
DCS Merton & Chair of ALDCS

THIS NEWSLETTER

- LIIA's core activity updates
- A whistlestop tour of the 5 ALDCS priorities
- Resources and newsletters

LIIA'S CORE ACTIVITIES



Progress LIIA's annual plan

- [LIIA's Annual Plan](#) represents the ambition ALDCS have for tackling the most pressing issues for London's children, young people, their families and the diverse workforce that serves them. LIIA's core activities enable progress and carry [ALDCS Five Priority Areas](#), with Care Leaving being formally added this year.

Funding for London

- LIIA activity is funded from a combination of borough subscriptions and grants from DfE, other government departments and national and regional bodies. This means borough subscriptions currently account for just 20% of LIIA's operating costs and a much smaller proportion of funds which LIIA is able to attract on behalf of London boroughs, such as the £12.5m investment in the Your Choice programme.

Making Data Speak for London's Children

- Alasdair Smith, Director, Children & Families in Southwark will be assuming the role of ALDCS Lead for Intelligence, Data & Research starting in 2024. Alasdair will provide important challenge, guidance and direction to our work in the [data insights area](#) and help us to prioritise the work to best meet the needs of ALDCS and ensure we make data speak for London's children.
- We will be expanding the [CLD data](#) to include the Children's Social Work Workforce census, the SEND, the Child in Need (CiN) census alongside the SSDA903 return. This will enable us to support the Workforce, SEN, Adolescent Safeguarding and Care Leaving themes with even more useful data. CLD data also underpins the Sufficiency Analysis by the Commissioning Alliance.
- The TfL half-price discount for London care leavers is planned to start in 2024, IGfL have approved the IG documentation which is now being signed off by LAs. LIIA and London LAs are working together with TfL to enable our care leavers to claim this valuable discount.
- The REES centre will be conducting some research based on our child-level data (CLD) to explore 'Do journeys through care differ according to young people's ethnicity?'
- We have been working with our partner Social Finance to create a secure data sharing platform for London. During 2024 we will be using this platform to support all our projects that involve data sharing to ensure that we do so safely and securely. Working with Information Governance for London group (IGfL) we will also ensure we share data ethically and for valid reasons.

Peer Challenge, Review & Sector Led Improvement

- LIIA have run [Peer Challenge](#), Review and [Sector Led Improvement](#) events, opportunities and projects across a wide range of areas in the LIIA programme from SEND and workforce and of course annual peer challenge and review events that each allow for effective practice sharing, learning and improvement to contribute to better inspection judgements and outcomes for children.

"A great event and useful approach; present - challenge - reflect."

"This was incredibly helpful, great to have space to reflect and share new ideas and innovations."

Networks, Boards & Partners

- The [ALDCS Summit](#) held earlier this year spoke to the importance and power of working in partnership across the system.
- London's growing suite of [Networks, Boards and Partnerships](#) have become more established in their roles and their ambition, driving collaboration and innovation in key areas linked to the priorities.
- This has included the introduction of the multi-agency London Coordination Group who drive and influence the Care Review Implementation on behalf of London.

Engagement

- Communicating effectively is central to progress and we've been delighted to introduce several new [data and intelligence dashboards](#), two new [newsletters](#) so far this year to drive engagement; Care Leaving and Resources and Commissioning, along with a new London Social Work for Children Bulletin.

ADOLESCENT SAFEGUARDING



PRIORITIES

- Refreshing and disseminating the Adolescent Safeguarding Practice Handbook.
- Supporting the evaluation of the Your Choice programme, which has transitioned from the Pilot stage to a full-scale Efficacy trial that will run between August 2023 - December 2024.
- The MACE Review and Implementation work will become a new protocol in 2024.
- Developing a data dashboard outlining high-level adolescent safeguarding and youth justice data.
- To collate and analyse rapid reviews related to adolescent safeguarding.
- Supporting inclusion to promote safeguarding adolescents in education.

Adolescent Safeguarding Practice Handbook

- As the [Adolescent Safeguarding Handbook](#) was published over a year ago the LIIA team and partners have explored how to make the handbook more accessible and practical.
- In November 2023, partners in Northeast London met to revisit the handbook and explore ways to integrate it into safeguarding systems. [Read about the event here.](#)
- In 2024, the LIIA team will work with Colin Michel and other partners to revise the Adolescent Safeguarding Practice Handbook. This will involve engagement in consultation processes with partners across London and collecting examples of practice from each sub-region.

Your Choice Programme

- The [Your Choice](#) Pilot trial, which started in April 2022 and involved 32 London LAs, was successfully completed in March 2023.
- [The Pilot report](#), published in November, concluded that the programme and its evaluation showed sufficient promise to merit further funding.
- In August 2023, a full-scale Efficacy trial involving 30 of London's LAs started. The trial will run until December 2024 and the full report will be released in August 2025. [Read our briefing to lead members here.](#)
- Our Practice Lead, Dr Karla Goodman, introduced LIIA's work on the Your Choice programme in her MJ commentary piece [What Choice? Your Choice.](#)
- Going forward, LIIA will support LAs to deliver the Your Choice programme and participate in the London Young People Study.



MACE Review & Implementation

- The Task & Finish groups have reviewed London's multi-agency child exploitation (MACE) arrangements and are in the process of completing their work.
- The next edition of the Multi Agency Child Exploitation Protocol should be shorter and linked closely to the Adolescent Safeguarding Handbook and London Safeguarding Children Procedures. Work on the new protocol will start early in the new year.

AS Data Dashboard

- LIIA is currently working on producing a high-level data dashboard for adolescent safeguarding and youth justice in London.
- In September, LIIA's data team presented an initial overview of the available Adolescent Safeguarding data to members of LASOB. [You can access the slides for LASOB here.](#)

Rapid Review of Adolescent Safeguarding cases

- A thematic analysis has been undertaken of rapid reviews from the last two years involving extra-familial harm. As a result, amendments are being taken forward to how information is collated and shared within these rapid reviews and there will be annual analysis of all rapid reviews in London undertaken through the London Safeguarding Children's Partnership Executive.

Adolescent Safeguarding in education

- In September, Maureen McKenna, and CJ Burge from the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) presented their work on the inclusion charter. [You can access their slides for LASOB here.](#)
- Work is underway with the Strategic Education Leads for London Network to identify our shared adolescent safeguarding priorities in education.

PRIORITIES

- Reset the tone of the SEND agenda
- Hear and act on the voices and experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families
- Best practice and collaboration to improve outcomes and efficiency
- Responding regionally to the changing landscape

London SEND Leadership programme

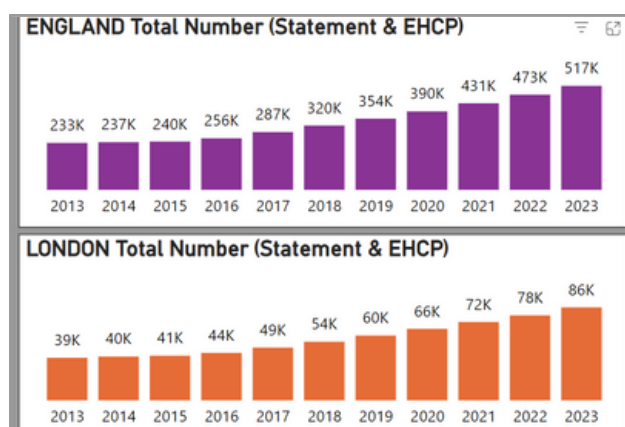
- We will be running an exciting London SEND Leadership Programme from Spring 2024 for current and aspiring leaders, in partnership with Health and Parent/Carer representatives.
- Supporting 90 leaders across three cohorts, the programme will enhance leadership capability and capacity within local authorities, NHSE, Integrated Care Systems, Health Provider Collaboratives, and the London NNPCF.

SEND Strategic Managers and Parent Carer Network

- In 2023, LIIA worked with the SEND Strategic Parent Carer Network by co-designing and co-delivering collaborative sessions with the Alternative Provision Network, conducting a focused session on supported internships, and featuring speakers from Ofsted, NHSE, Local Authorities, Parent Carers, and Young People with SEND.

SEND Data dashboard

- We have continued to develop the [SEND Data dashboard](#) to understand and present key insights and trends in SEND services.
- Recent data reveals a significant 23% increase in EHCP requests across England and an 18% rise in London.
- Our ongoing analysis is set to continue, and we will be sharing key findings at regional DCS meetings to support understanding of the data at a local level.



ICB Workshops

Across the year we have hosted a series of successful workshops for LA colleagues and their NHS equivalents on how we can work best together to meet the health needs of children and young people with SEND, in the context of the new ICS structures.

In the coming year, we will continue to build on this success, supporting continued collaboration and knowledge exchange to meet the health needs of children and young people with SEND.

Ofsted SEND Inspections

- In light of the new Ofsted Inspection Framework, LIIA organised a [workshop for London Authorities and SEND Partnership colleagues](#).
- We will continue to support local authorities in their preparation for inspections by tracking outcomes and highlight key themes and best practise across outcome reports.

SEND Workforce

- This year LIIA has launched surveys to understand challenges in recruitment and retention across SEND and Children's Homes. It is vital for us to understand the challenges LAs are facing in recruitment and retention across these areas to help us explore where London can collectively target further work to enable a positive impact.
- Initial findings of these surveys have indicated significant challenges relating to Leadership and Management - detailed findings will be shared in the new year.

London SEND Summit

- 2023 saw the [second SEND summit](#) take place, and we are pleased to announce the 3rd SEND summit will be held on 18th March 2023, details will be circulated to DCS in the new year.



RESOURCES AND COMMISSIONING



PRIORITIES

- Address the shortfall of provision for children requiring high-cost low incidence placements.
- Improve outcomes for London's children.
- Secure better value for money.
- Build a strong understanding across London of the factors which are putting pressure on commissioned services.
- Build an evidence base in support of collaborative commissioning as a solution to the pressures London is facing.
- Strengthen partnership arrangements for specific commissioned services across London and the sub-regions.
- Open new, high quality London provision for London's children.

Regional Care Co-operative Pathfinder bid

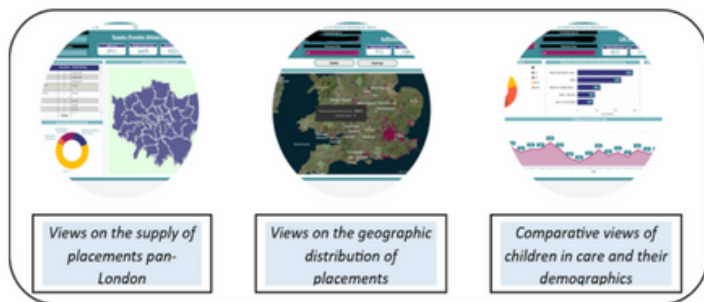
- London has submitted [a bid](#) for £3 million revenue and £5 million capital, developed collaboratively with all 33 Local Authorities. The outcome, expected in January 2024, will set the stage for future initiatives, and will be overseen by ALDCS and the Pan-London Vehicle for Complex Children's Commissioning with a targeted focus on High-Cost, Low-Incidence needs.

Collaborative Commissioning for ASD/SEMH

- Following NCB's first report, [Collaborative Commissioning](#), [Creative Support](#), we are developing a London-wide business case for new commissioning approaches, including pilots.
- The report will show that strategic investments and improved commissioning can cut costs for authorities, while boosting outcomes for children. The business case will be completed by February, and pilots are set to launch in April next year, subject to securing Regional Care Co-operative funding.

Secure Children's Home (SCH) and Pan-London Vehicle for Children's Complex Commissioning Ltd (PLV)

- The PLV has been incorporated, with support from 31 Local Authorities who have agreed, in principle, to join.
- This year, the SCH project successfully passed several critical DfE decision milestones, demonstrating the department's approval of the project's progress to date.
- The most recent decisions were taken in November and December - giving the go ahead for the project to commence a period of consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders within the area of the proposed site for the SCH. This consultation process is expected to begin in early 2024.
- Throughout the year the project has engaged and consulted sector experts from across the SCH estate, health, and London LAs on the development of the SCH's architectural design and future practice and operating model - this collaborative development will continue in the new year and will include children and young people with lived experience.
- Based on the current timeline, the construction phase of the project is anticipated to reach completion by the end of 2027 - subject to reaching relevant milestones.



The diagram includes additional examples of how this tool can support your understanding of placements in your local authority.

Pan-London Dynamic Sufficiency Tool

- The Commissioning Alliance, and Social Finance, has developed the Dynamic Sufficiency Tool. This resource provides valuable data for London Local Authorities, to support sufficiency planning and enabling them to make well-informed commissioning decisions.
- The tool is a significant leap forward in ensuring that London's commissioning decisions are well-informed, equitable, and responsive to the evolving needs of children in care across the city.

London Accommodation Pathfinder

- The LAP offers a psychologically-sensitive alternative to custody for at-risk children, providing 10 additional beds across North Central and East London.
- In 2023, the London Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP) opened centres in Newham and Barnet. Ongoing engagement promotes LAP accessibility via various referral pathways.
- Funding bid to 2026 and enabling centres in South and West London has passed first stage - suitable properties will then be needed.

Residential Parenting Assessments - Pan-London Framework:

- In 2023, the PLPCP identified disparities and opportunities in Residential Parenting Assessments across London, spurring a business case for change.
- We established a Framework with 12 service providers, operational through [Atamis TM](#), offering unified terms and potential block commissions. Local authorities are encouraged to sign up, access improved services at reduced costs, fostering London-wide collaboration.



PRIORITIES

- Consistent approach to agency engagement to improve quality and stability and influence the national agenda.
- Reduction in the experience of racism and disproportionality, with a culturally competent workforce.
- Establish a strong platform to represent London social work careers and the profession to enhance recruitment.
- Build a strong understanding across London of the factors which are putting pressure on commissioned services.
- Consistent engagement with a specialist agency supply chain to support permanent recruitment.
- An evidence base for a regional workforce development strategy to strengthen local and sub-regional ambitions.
- Improved data and strong evidence case to enable targeted workforce improvements.

Leadership in Colour at the heart of anti-racism

- The [Leadership in Colour Summit](#) was held at the Guildhall on 24th May. The day was powerful, inspiring, and productive, with a deep dive into themes of workforce, youth justice and early years.
- Data - LIIA has produced a workforce disproportionality dashboard mapping grade by ethnicity across London's Children's Services. We are currently developing an updated children's disproportionality dashboard that will look across a wide range of children's outcome measures (including CSC, YJ, and education). This, in turn, will support work to enable 'whole system' regional responses to children's experiences of racism and disproportionality.
- Responding to the [Big Listen](#) - The Workforce Steering Group and [Leadership in Colour Reference Group](#) are developing a series of proposals to respond to issues identified by the Black & Global Majority workforce through Big Listen. Activities will include engagement and joint planning with London's system leaders in children's services.

London Pledge to improve agency engagement

- In 18 months, London's commitment to the [London Pledge](#) has begun to stabilise the agency social work market in terms of cost and churn, achieving a 30% reduction in over-cap spend, and influencing national policy.
- London's agencies pay rate data collection has had a 100% response rate from all 33 London LAs, with a detailed LA dashboard that underpin governance and reporting. In 2024 we aim to align with the statutory returns outlined in the DfE's national agency proposals.
- London is actively working with other regions across England and Wales, and launched an 'MoC Alignment' project with the South East, East of England and East Midlands to strengthen regional agreements and cross-regional working for London. This links into the national statutory guidance development and Research in Practice's workforce contract aimed to support implementation.

London Social Work for Children to enable representation

- In July 2023 [London launched a regional website](#) representing all 33 London LAs, social work careers and the progression, raising the image of social work through local updates and career case studies provided by members of the London workforce.
- In 5 months, the microsite has achieved; 30k visitors, 356 London jobs posted, 20k job views, 8k 'Apply' clicks, 679 candidate registrations and 500+ followers on social media. A LSWC Bulletin was introduced as a resource tool to strengthen engagement.
- LSWC is a news outlet and additional promotional tool with a growing target audience and a recruitment support team to support local campaigns.
- LSWC is generating an exciting new regional dataset that can provide unique intelligence to support local recruitment campaigns and initiatives. In the new year we will develop this new dataset further and host shared learning events.

London Social Work for Children
396 followers
5d · 🌐

There are 3 exciting social work recruitment events taking place in London over the next few weeks! 🗓️

London Borough of Newham - 21st November, 7pm
Enfield Council - 25th November, 10am
London Borough of Tower Hamlets - 30th November, 5:30pm

These events provide a relaxed environment to discuss each borough's unique offer to you as a social work candidate. Read more, and register for each, on London Social Work for Children 🌐

Practice social work in an innovative and supportive environment

Register today for the latest social work career opportunities in London

London Social Work for Children

November's London Social Work recruitment events
london-social-work-for-children.com • 2 min read

Permanent Recruitment Framework (FLiP) to bring consistency

- London launched the [first of its kind specialist regional permanent recruitment framework](#) in August 2023, awarding 16 specialist suppliers to bring LAs consistency in agency engagement for perm recruitment.
- In 4 months, FLiP has achieved its first two awards with almost half of London LAs in the region enquiring to use the framework. In early 2024 a 6 month performance report will be published.
- Phase 2 of FLiP is live, with market research ongoing to support international recruitment.

CARE LEAVING



PRIORITIES

- Develop new support offers for London's care leavers.
- Increase the consistency of support offers and connect these with care leavers.
- Establish a 'community parenting' approach across statutory, VCS and business partners.
- Identify and enact regional measures to improve care leavers' experience of health, ETE, housing, and relationships.
- Ensure that our work is properly supporting care leavers with immigration needs.

Pan London Care Leavers Compact

- The [Pan London Care Leavers Compact](#) provides a framework for developing consistency and quality in the support offered to London's care leavers. The Compact brings together statutory and other partners via a Care Leavers Trust Board to develop offers for London's Care Leavers. These offers are grouped together under the umbrella of a Compact, effectively a set of commitments to London's Care Leavers.
- Every aspect of the Compact and wider programme development is co-designed with London's Children in Care Council.
- The partners have secured, or are near to securing, the following offers for a first version of the Compact.

Mayor of London / TFL

- 50% reduced travel costs on buses/trams.

London's ICB's

- Exemption to prescription charges
- Education Training and Employment pilots in North Central and North West London.

Local Authorities

- Housing offer including council tax exemption, rent deposit, 'intentional homelessness' avoidance, priority need to 25 and joint Children's/Housing protocols.
- Becoming Signatories to the Care Leaver Covenant.

Wider ambition; Care Leaving as an ALDCS priority area

- The Care Leavers Trust Board wants to harness momentum from the Compact to do more to improve Care Leaver outcomes.
- ALDCS's showed its determination by adopting [care leaving as a strategic priority area](#) in May '23 and colleagues in Health, the Mayor/GLA, Business, and the Voluntary Sector are equally engaged.
- The DfE have agreed additional funding to develop a more ambitious regional work programme to improve outcomes.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

- The number of former Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children that are part of London's cohort, and the complexities of supporting them, mean this group needs specific consideration within the four themed areas.
- We have begun the process of bringing together stakeholder groups with expertise in each of these areas and welcome contributions to these groups.

London Activity to support Care Leavers



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*Four themed areas: **Health, Relationships, Housing, and ETE** have been identified by young people, LA's and partners as having the greatest potential for impact.*

MEMBERS AREA ACCESS

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



OUR NEWSLETTERS

LIIA produces several newsletters to keep partners updated. You can read these on our website or click the below links to access the latest editions:

[Adolescent Safeguarding and Youth Justice Newsletter](#) (December Issue)

[Workforce Newsletter](#) (December Issue)

[Resources and Commissioning Bulletin](#) (November Issue)

[Care Leaving Newsletter](#) (November Issue)

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.



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