

LONDON ADOLESCENT SAFEGUARDING AND YOUTH JUSTICE NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2024 ISSUE

Dear colleagues,

As always there is much going on in the adolescent safeguarding / youth justice space in London, much of which is captured in this busy edition of the newsletter. The London Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board (LASOB) continues to be an important forum for partners to come together to align our adolescent safeguarding ambitions and initiatives. You'll see below the output of our most recent LASOB and our plans for the coming year.

As I write, the HMI Prisons inspection report on [Wetherby YOI](#) has just been published. The concerns expressed by Chief Inspector Charlie Taylor reinforce the importance of the work we are doing in London on safeguarding children in custody. As part of this work, we are keen for Heads of Youth Justice Services to join key Youth Custody Service colleagues for a London roundtable event on 30th April (invites to follow). All colleagues on the ASYJ mailing list will also be invited to an event to promote the Reducing Criminalisation of Children in Care Protocol which we will be holding online on 17th April (see below).

As ever, the LIIA team are keen to hear about innovative work to address our adolescent safeguarding and youth justice challenges in London. Do get in contact if you have something to share with liiateam@londoncouncils.gov.uk

Florence Kroll, DCS Royal Borough of Greenwich, ALDCS Adolescent Safeguarding policy lead chair of the London Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board (LASOB).



As usual, if you would like to be added to the main LIIA newsletter circulation list please contact: liiateam@londoncouncils.gov.uk

THIS MONTH'S UPDATES

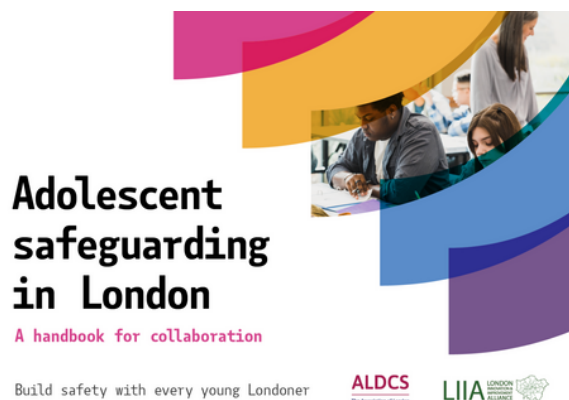
- The London Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board (LASOB) updates
- The London Accommodation Pathfinder Update
- Session on reducing the criminalisation of looked after children – 17 April
- Implementing changes to Working Together to Safeguard Children
- The State of Youth Justice 2022/23
- Custody numbers for December 2023
- London YCS/YJS Roundtable – 30 April
- Social Work England: Social work week events & joint LIIA sessions
- What Choice? Your Choice – MJ article
- Launch of The Pan-London Care Leavers Compact

THE LONDON ADOLESCENT SAFEGUARDING OVERSIGHT BOARD (LASOB) UPDATE

The February meeting of LASOB featured:

- An update on Metropolitan Police transformation activities and children and young people's strategy by Supt Iain Keating. The draft strategy is expected to be shared with partners in early March. Supt Iain Keating also discussed Commander Southworth's letter on the HMICFRS Child Exploitation Inspection findings – [which you can read here](#).
- Violence Reduction updates about the Safe Space conference in Glasgow by Luke Billingham. You can [access the Safe Space report here](#). Alima Qureshi provided an update about the launch of the [London VRU's Inclusion Charter](#).
- An update on the Adolescent Safeguarding Handbook 2nd edition project initiation by Ben Byrne, Jeanne King and Luke Billingham. [Access the current version of the handbook here](#).
- A demonstration of the new London Adolescent Safeguarding dataset and dashboard by Yee Au. LASOB members will be able to access the dashboard via the LIIA website.
- An overview of LASOB's [Adolescent Safeguarding Projects and Priorities for 2023/24](#) was provided.

[Read more about the work overseen by LASOB on LIIA's Adolescent Safeguarding page.](#)



THE LONDON ACCOMMODATION PATHFINDER UPDATE

The London Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP) has been open for 6 months and is now seeing the first of its children transition from the LAP home back to their parents or on to supported or independent accommodation. We have seen numbers accessing the LAP steadily increase and with this we have been able to broaden the offer over recent weeks with both Wipers and Street Doctors commencing their programmes with the children.

In February, we had confirmation that the LAP project funding via the YJB will be extended until April 2026. This funding also includes capacity to develop LAP provision for the South and West London sub-regions. This is excellent news and means that this offer to provide comprehensive, therapeutic support to children in the community, as an alternative to custody, will be available to all London children. If Local Authorities in the South and West are interested in hosting or wish to know more, please contact LAP@camden.gov.uk

ONLINE SESSION ON REDUCING THE CRIMINALISATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - 17 APRIL



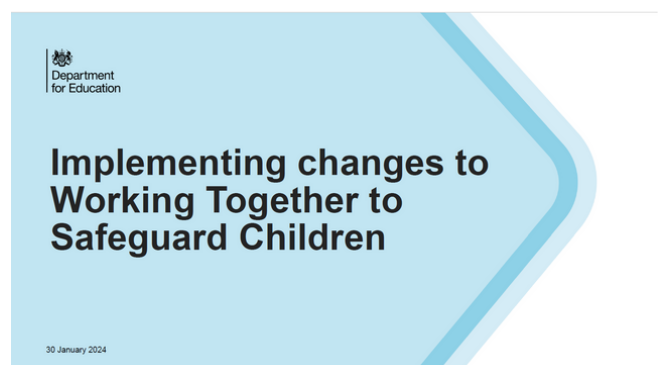
The problem of the over-representation of children in care in the criminal justice system is well-documented and longstanding. In response to this, the [Reducing Criminalisation of Looked after children and Care Leavers protocol](#) was developed by MOPAC and partners and was published in March 2021. The protocol outlines the roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in the care of looked-after children and care leavers in reducing unnecessary criminalisation.

To share best practice in how London partners are reducing the criminalisation of children in care, LiIA will be facilitating an online session on 17 April from 2:00 to 3:30 pm. This will hear both national and London perspectives on how to pursue this to achieve better outcomes for children in care. Meeting invitations have been circulated to the ASYL newsletter distribution list. If you have not received an invite please get in touch with Sunniva Minsaas (sunniva.minsaas@londoncouncils.gov.uk)

IMPLEMENTING CHANGES TO WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN

The Department for Education's statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children, has been updated and replaces the 2018 version. The linked presentation outlines the changes to Working Together 2023, what the changes will mean and what support can be accessed. The revised Working Together has implications for multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and on safeguarding children from extra-familial harm.

[You can access the presentation here](#)



THE STATE OF YOUTH JUSTICE - 2022/23

In January, the Youth Justice Board's publication of the [annual youth justice statistics \(for 2022/23\)](#), highlighted positive developments as well as areas of concern.

The Youth Justice Statistics considers the data for the youth justice system in England and Wales for the year ending March 2023. It looks at the number of children (those aged 10 to 17) in the youth justice system, their demographics, offences, outcomes, and trends over time.

Publication headlines

- Reduction in cautions and sentences for knife crimes involving children
- Decline in the overall number of children being sentenced or cautioned
- Lowest number of children in custody on record
- Rises in children being stopped and searched.
- Increases in the number of children being arrested
- Slight rise in the number of children entering the youth justice for the first time (FTEs)

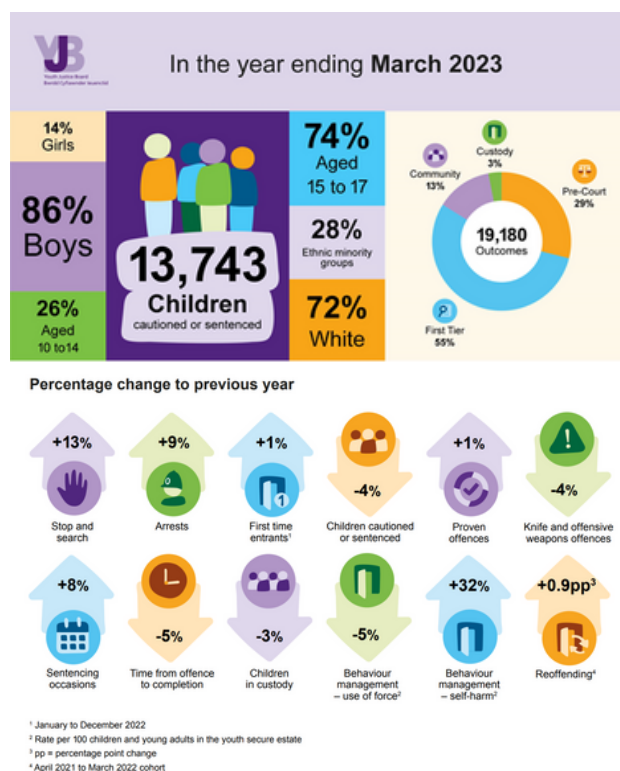
[Read more about the publication here.](#)

Custody numbers for December 2023

At the end of 2023 there were **397** children in custody in England and Wales, compared to **436** in December 2022 (Youth Custody Service, 2023, Table 1.1).

119 children and young people from London were in youth secure estates (including some 18 year olds) in December 2023. This compares to **106** at the same time the year before but accounts should be taken for the fact that there are a greater number of 18 year olds retained in the youth estate (Youth Custody Service, 2023, Table 1.10).

[View the full statistics on GOV.UK](#)



LONDON YCS/YJS ROUNDTABLE - 30 APRIL

Since the ALDCS visit to Cookham Wood in November, work has been ongoing with that establishment and more widely with the Youth Custody Service to identify activities, which local authorities can support that will help to promote safety in custody.

To develop this work it has been agreed to host a London roundtable for YJS heads of service with Cookham Wood, Feltham and other senior YCS staff. This will take place at London Councils offices on the **30 April from 1-3pm**. All Heads of YJS will receive a calendar invite but if other members of the ASYJ group wish to attend please contact

liiateam@londoncouncils.gov.uk



SOCIAL WORK ENGLAND: SOCIAL WORK WEEK EVENTS & JOINT LIIA SESSIONS



Social Work England have curated an exciting week of learning, connecting and influence to celebrate Social Work Week 2024, beginning on Monday 18th March.

There are an incredible range of topics and speakers across the week, and amongst them you'll spot two joint sessions from LIIA together with London's LAs and other partners, taking place on Thursday 20th March.

Purposeful, positive and promising: making a difference to practitioners and young people affected by violence - hear how the pan-London Your Choice programme has brought together best practice in adolescent safeguarding and cognitive behavioural therapy principles to support young people affected by youth violence in Hillingdon's 'Outstanding' Children's Services.

The public perception and voice of child and family social workers (Big Listen) - this workshop will explore themes raised from research conducted with 52 local authorities on the practical solutions in recruitment and retention of children's social care and how working together as a profession and address the image of social work.

Explore the week of activities and events here!



You can find LIIA's sessions in the 'Independently Delivered' section on Thursday 21st March.

WHAT CHOICE? YOUR CHOICE

"Responding effectively to violence affecting young people can feel overwhelming. Politicians, practitioners and service leaders alike are often left feeling impotent and frustrated; with only well-worn words of comfort for grieving families and numbed communities"

In her MJ commentary piece, Dr Karla Goodman discusses the challenge of addressing violence affecting young people and explains how the Your Choice programme is being tested across London.

The Your Choice programme brings together current best practice in adolescent safeguarding and CBT principles to support young people affected by youth violence.



Read the full news story here.

LAUNCH OF THE PAN-LONDON CARE LEAVERS COMPACT

On Tuesday 5 February, the Pan-London Care Leavers Compact was launched. The Compact is a city-wide support offer for care-experienced Londoners, developed by the London Innovation & Improvement Alliance (LIIA) who work on behalf of Association of London Borough Directors of Children’s Services (ALDCS), alongside Partnership for Young London, who host the London Children in Care Council.

- Free prescriptions
- Half price bus and tram travel
- Local authority housing support
- Training and employment opportunities in healthcare



The Pan London Care Leavers Compact

The launch event, attended by DCSs, local authority colleagues, elected representatives, partners and care-experienced young people, featured engaging table and panel discussions, highlighting the importance of pan-London collaboration.

The offer provides free prescriptions, discounted travel and a range of housing support for care-experienced Londoners.


Jacqui McShannon, Strategic Director Children’s Services and ALDCS Strategic Lead for Care Leaving, Hammersmith and Fulham said, *“London’s Directors of Children’s Services share the strong commitment to an enhanced and consistent offer to support all care experienced young people across London. We are proud to be part of the pan London partnership led by care experienced young people, and to be working so effectively with London Councils, the GLA, voluntary, statutory, and business partners to deliver our joint ambition to improve the lives of all of London’s cared for children and young people.”*

[Read more about the offer and access the full press release here.](#)

[Learn more about LIIA’s Care Leaving priority here.](#)

MEMBERS AREA ACCESS

As always, [you can click here to register for access](#) to our dedicated Adolescent Safeguarding and Youth Justice Reports area.



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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