

Pan-London SEND Commissioning Forum 2025-26 Year 1

DRAFT Terms of Reference

Purpose

The SEND Commissioning Forum will be a space for colleagues with direct responsibilities for SEND commissioning (including independent non-maintained placements, therapies, transport, short breaks, other SEND support services) to align practice, share data, and explore pan-London opportunities.

The Forum's purpose and function is underpinned by the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA) SEND 3-Year Commissioning Plan (2025–28), embedding all 17 recommendations in the LIIA commissioned "SEND Commissioning in London" (June 2025) report and the forthcoming White Paper when published.

Background

Local Authorities in London, alongside partner agencies, are facing increasing financial pressures due to rising demand for SEND provision. Recognising this need for collaborative action, the Forum will feed into the Pan-London Commissioning Programme and is directly accountable to the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS) SEND Steering Group.

The Steering Group provides the formal oversight and sign-off for the SEND Commissioning Plan as part of the wider ALDCS SEND Programme Plans submitted to DfE and reported on a quarterly basis. Updates will be submitted quarterly to the SEND Steering Group via LIIA.

Activity and Responsibilities

The SEND Commissioning Forum will:

- Facilitate and promote Pan-London collaboration by providing a shared space for boroughs and sub-regional partnerships to explore pan-London opportunities.
- Showcase SEND Commissioning Practice across London through dissemination of exemplary data, insights, and approaches in key focus areas.
- Provide an open forum through creating a supportive environment for colleagues to raise challenges, to seek advice, and co-develop solutions.
- Feed into the Pan-London Commissioning Network through reportage of developments and advancements within the SEND commissioning space.
- Provide a professional support space for members to seek advice, share resources, and build valuable networks.

Year 1 activity Focus:

The following are indicative areas of focus which is not an exhaustive list and will be shaped by the Forum membership:

- INMSS placements and Provider ID Tool pilots
- Sub-regional partnership alignment and support
- Identifying Commissioning tools to support SEND commissioning
- Data sharing
- Development of LIIA SEND Data Dashboard and insights to inform commissioning
- Cross borough arrangements for pupils living in one borough and educated in another.

Membership

- Membership is extended to Local Authority officers and partners with direct responsibility for SEND commissioning (including, but not limited to independent non-maintained placements, therapies, specialist support services, SEND transport, short breaks and other SEND support services).
- Boroughs will be expected to nominate the most relevant colleagues to attend the Forum.
- Membership is open to all London boroughs (32 boroughs and the City of London), and to relevant health/ICS partners where responsibilities for SEND commissioning overlap.
- Agendas will be shaped and informed by Forum members and the Regional Commissioners and Commissioning Co-Chairs for the Pan-London Commissioning Network.
- Post meeting, commissioners will be sent 'Useful Commissioning Takeaway' which may be a practical tool, insight or actionable learning to support operational and strategic commissioning.

Agendas & Forward Plan for Year 1 (November 2025-31 March 2026)

The Forward Plan of themes is a draft proposal for membership to review and amend. Themes are subject to member agreement and emerging priorities.

Date	Theme
Thursday 20 th November 2025 (inaugural meeting)	-Launch of Forum & Priorities Setting and update/ratify Terms of Reference. -SEND Data as standing item for all subsequent forum meetings.

Date	Theme
	Appetite for round robin email to enable members to get support from each other between meetings or ask for things like draft S75 agreements. Useful commissioning takeaway.
Thursday 22 nd January 2026	-Independent & Non-Maintained School Placements (INMSS) - report on INMSS Top 10 Pilot. -Population of INMSS tool by other boroughs to identify Top 10 INMSS providers and explore opportunities for joint commissioning at regional/pan-London level. -Report on cost drivers of INMSS analysis shared based on pilot led by MIME Consulting. -Useful commissioning tool takeaway.
Thursday 19 th March 2026	-Data Sharing Agreement (DSA)review and best practice shared; sub-regional commissioning engagement mapped; discuss opportunities for developing data sharing if required. -Sub-Regional SEND Commissioning & Training Needs – is there a need for training and workshop? -Sub-Regional Joint Commissioning opportunities identified to be taken forward. -Useful commissioning takeaway.
Thursday 14 th May 2026	-Sub-Regional Joint Commissioning opportunities- development of regional commissioning. -Explore and confirm a protocol around reciprocal arrangements for boroughs with children resident in one area, but receiving education in another area. -Forward Plan for Year 2 (April 2026 onwards) -Useful commissioning takeaway.
Thursday 9 th July 2026	-tbd by group discussions.

Network Support and Logistics

- The SEND Commissioning Forum will meet virtually via Teams for 90 minutes, every 8 weeks, commencing 20th November 2025.
- Support will be provided by the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA). Including a one page take-away pack to summarise key insights, tools and actionable learning.
- It is proposed that the Forum will hold a rotating self-nominating chair for each meeting.
- LIIA will explore establishing the appetite for an MS Teams group to enable Forum members to seek advice and peer support between meetings.

- Liia will work with London Councils, DfE, Pan London Commissioning Network and Regional Commissioning Leads to ensure alignment with other commissioning work that is taking place across London and act as a point of tracking what is happening in the London arena.
- The Forward Plan will be revisited in March