

ALDCS SEND BULLETIN

DECEMBER 2025 ISSUE

The ALDCS SEND Bulletin highlights events and news for colleagues across London who work with children and young people with SEND.

Find out more about LIIA's work in SEND [here](#).

NEWS AND UPDATES

The ALDCS SEND Programme continues to move forward at pace, with partners across London working together to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

As we look ahead to the Schools White Paper expected early next year, this Bulletin offers a snapshot of current activity across the programme. We hope it gives you a clear view of the breadth of pan-London work, highlights opportunities to get involved, and keeps you connected as we prepare for the White Paper.

In our December Bulletin, you'll find updates on:

- **Commissioning & Data:** Launch of the SEND Commissioning Forum and the London Specialist Provider Identification Tool.
- **Workforce Development:** Insights from recent recruitment and retention workshops; details on the upcoming Top Tips webinar, the London EP Pledge, Cohort 4 of the SEND Leadership Programme, and December launch of Practice Spotlight, Version 2.
- **Inclusion & Early Years:** Progress on Investing in Inclusion funding, and upcoming workshops focused on 0-5 emerging needs and mapping pathways across London.
- **Regional Diagnostics:** Progress on the State of the Capital report and new 'Listening to London' sessions.
- You'll also find **Key Dates**, including: the London SEND Summit on 17 March; 2026 SEND Strategic Manager Parent Carer Network events; "AI in SEND" workshop; and the links for the Listening to London sessions.

As we approach the end of 2025, we thank everyone across London who has supported our work at LIIA. Your collaboration has been key, and we look forward to continuing this work with you in 2026.

SEND COMMISSIONING

PAN-LONDON SEND COMMISSIONING FORUM LAUNCHES

LIIA has launched the Pan-London SEND Commissioning Forum, a new space for all 33 London boroughs to jointly address pressures in commissioning, share intelligence, and explore opportunities for regional collaboration in relation to SEND.

The Forum is a direct response to one of the 17 recommendations in the [LIIA-commissioned **SEND Commissioning in London report \(June 2025\)**](#), which called for a formal London-wide mechanism to strengthen commissioning practice, reduce duplication, and build collective influence with providers and partners. This forum works with the Pan London Commissioning Network and reports to the ALDCS SEND Steering Group.

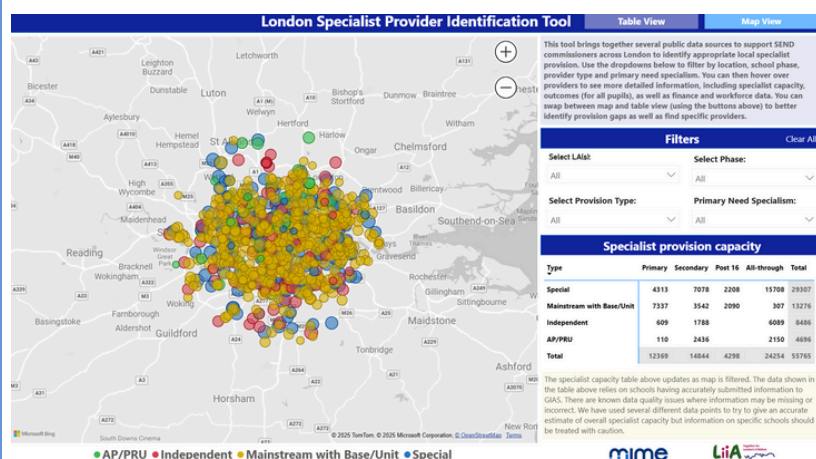
The inaugural meeting took place on Thursday 20 November 2025 (3-4:30pm, MS Teams) and was positively received. It covered:

- Purpose and function of the Forum
- Draft Forward Plan and Terms of Reference
- Live poll: top commissioning pain points
- Overview of the 3-Year LIIA SEND Commissioning Plan
- Look at the LIIA SEND Data Dashboard

It was decided the Forum will meet termly, and following the meetings, boroughs will be provided with a "Useful Commissioning Takeaway" tool or insight after each session.

If you are interested in joining please get in touch with [Marissa Kodikara](#).

LONDON SPECIALIST PROVIDER IDENTIFICATION TOOL - AVAILABLE NOW VIA LIIA WEBSITE!



We're pleased to announce the launch of the London Specialist Provider Identification Tool, which LIIA has commissioned Mime to develop.

The tool is designed to support SEND commissioners across London by bringing together several public data sources to help identify appropriate local specialist provision.

How to Access the Tool via the LIIA Members Area:

1. Click on LIIA Data Insights.
2. Once logged in, open view the list of Power BI dashboards.
3. Under the Commissioning Dashboards tab, select the London Specialist Provider Identification Tool.

Issues with access? Please contact [Sherian Bateson](#) or [Teigan Berré](#), our SEND Data Intelligence Analysts, who will be able to support you to access the tool.

SEND WORKFORCE

INTRODUCING THE LONDON PLEDGE FOR USE OF AGENCY EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

ALDCS have been working collaboratively with key regional and national networks, particularly our colleagues from the National Association of Principal Educational Psychologists (NAPEP) in London to co-produce a London Pledge for Educational Psychologists – the LPEP.



We are pleased to announce ALDCS have now unanimously voted to introduce the agreement across all 33 London LA in the new year. This decision comes in parallel with confirmation that the Schools White Paper will now be released 'early in the new year'.

The LPEP recognises the need for Local Authorities to respond collectively and in cooperation to address shared challenges, with clear protocols and mechanisms of control, rooted in collaboration.

The LPEP is one part of a wider regional SEND Workforce programme focused on understanding and responding to root cause issues through direct research with the SEND workforce and strengthening collaboration through practice sharing.

Please contact [Rula Tripolitaki](#) and [Maddy Oakes](#) to discuss this work further.

LA LED WORKSHOPS ON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

London's SEND workforce continues to be a shared priority across the region, and recent activity has brought local authorities together to reflect on challenges, share solutions, and strengthen collaborative approaches.

In September, London's SEND leaders participated in a workshop on building a sustainable SEND workforce, co-led by colleagues from Hillingdon, Merton, Brent and the Bi-Borough. The session explored practical approaches to improving recruitment, retention and workforce wellbeing, with local authorities showcasing what is working in their areas. The workshop reaffirmed the value of regional collaboration, with strategic insights from the discussion already informing ALDCS's wider workforce activity across London.

Building on this momentum – and responding to strong interest in recruitment practice – LIA is hosting a follow-up online session on Thursday 27 November, Recruitment that Works: Practical Strategies for SEND Recruitment and Agency Engagement. The workshop was led by experienced LA colleagues from the ALDCS Workforce Programme and covered:

- Key steps for successful permanent recruitment campaigns
- Effective candidate attraction approaches
- Working confidently with the agency market, including implementing the London Pledge at a local level.

LONDON SEND LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Applications for Cohort 4 of the London SEND Leadership Programme have now closed – thank you to all who submitted nominations. Cohort 4 is now at full capacity with reps from Local Authorities, ICBs and Parent Carer Forum leads. Preparations for the fourth cohort are underway and participants have received confirmation ahead of the Cohorts launch in January.

PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT SUBMISSIONS OPEN AGAIN SOON: NEW & EMERGING PRACTICE

London Children's Services

Practice Spotlight

Launched in November 2024, [Practice Spotlight](#) has quickly become ALDCS's platform for recognising and sharing the most innovative and effective examples of practice across London's children's services.

'NEW & EMERGING PRACTICE' THEME

With over 100 examples of practice shared in 2024/25, we are now preparing to open submissions for **Practice Spotlight in 2026 with this years theme of *New & Emerging Practice*** generating excitement about the opportunities for shared learning and improvement during a period of significant change.

Whilst you consider which examples of practice you may wish to share to represent your Local Authority, **we encourage you to think closely about this years theme and consider the role of effective partnership working and multi-agency collaboration in all submissions.** Partnership bids, on local, sub-regional or other regional footprints are encouraged!

PURPOSE

- To **discover the practice that is making a difference**, often around very complex and challenging areas of work
- To **boost engagement opportunities for sharing and learning** across all of London's LAs, which underpins the positive culture of collaboration
- To **recognise and celebrate the individuals and teams** who have delivered this work and raise awareness with broader audiences

WHY IT MATTERS

Practice Spotlight is more than a showcase – it's a catalyst for change across London's children's services. By shining a light on effective local practice, it:

- **Accelerates improvement** through shared learning and replication
- **Breaks down silos** between SEND, social care, health and education
- **Celebrates frontline innovation**, bringing unseen work to wider attention
- **Strengthens professional networks** and builds confidence to innovate

PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT MILESTONES



If you'd like to discuss this project further, please contact [Rula Tripolitaki](#) or [Matthew Raleigh](#).

SEND INCLUSION

'INVESTING IN INCLUSION' FUNDING PROGRAMME

Following a fantastic response to the 'Investing in Inclusion' programme, the panel will now convene to discuss the diverse range of applications from both Local Authorities and educational settings. Thank you for taking the time to submit an application and we will be announcing the successful bids shortly.

Funded projects will have an opportunity to showcase their learning and findings with pan-London colleagues in the summer term and we look forward to sharing some fantastic opportunities to further enhance inclusive practice in mainstream settings.

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH ON INCLUSION

At LIA we are exploring impactful models of inclusive educational systems across Europe and beyond, particularly in comparable countries. If you would be interested in getting involved in foundational international connections, or if you already have international links, please let us know as we begin to shape our early research, by reaching out to [Maddy Oakes](#).

EARLY YEARS

PAN-LONDON EARLY YEARS SEND PATHWAYS WORKSHOP

On 5 December, LIA will be hosting an in-person workshop exploring how London's Local Early Years Offers support children aged 0-5, with a particular focus on emerging SEND needs. The session will bring together partners from health, education, social care and the voluntary sector to review mapped pathways across London, discuss opportunities for improved integration, and consider real case studies of children's journeys through the system.

This workshop is the first of a series, and forms part of LIA's wider work to align Early Years activity with Best Start in Life, Family Hubs, and national SEND and social care reforms. While this event is now fully booked - to engage in further sessions, [please register your interest here!](#)

REGIONAL DIAGNOSTICS

STATE OF THE CAPITAL REPORT



As part of the LIA SEND Regional Diagnostics Offer, the LIA SEND Team is developing the State of the Capital: SEND report. This work brings together data held within the LIA data dashboard and across parts of the London's SEND system to create a regional benchmark, helping to identify the key pressures, challenges and trends shaping the system. The final report will provide a London-wide picture of current priorities and will be published in the new year.

Current activity is focused on conducting detailed thematic data deep dives to strengthen our understanding of emerging issues, supported by engagement with partners across the sector. To ensure that the voices and experiences of those working within the system inform the analysis, we will be hosting a series of Listening to London lunchtime sessions. These discussions will explore a number of themes included in the report and gather your reflections and interpretations of the data.

Details of the sessions can be found below. For further information, please contact [Kirsty Reed](#), [Programme Lead for Innovation and Targeted Support](#)

DATES FOR THE DIARY

LISTENING TO LONDON SERIES - BOOK YOUR PLACE

To support development of the State of the Capital: SEND report and to inform our wider targeted support work, LIA is hosting a series of informal **"Listening to London" lunchtime sessions**. These one-hour drop-ins offer a space for colleagues across London to explore key themes in the data, share reflections on challenges and strengths within the system, and contribute to the emerging analysis.

Each session will begin with a short overview of the relevant data before opening up to group discussion. Insights gathered will directly support the State of the Capital report and shape our work going forward - colleagues are encouraged to register for the thematic sessions via the links below!

Upcoming sessions (all 12:30-13:30):

- Wednesday 10th December: [SEND Systems and Workforce](#)
- Monday 15th December: [Achievement and Access for Children and Young People with SEND](#)
- Tuesday 16th December: [Early Support and Intervention for Children and Young People with Emerging SEND Needs](#)
- Wednesday 17th December: [SEND Commissioning and Resourcing](#)
- Thursday 8th January: [Belonging and Pathways for Children and Young People with SEND](#)
- Monday 12th January: [Next Steps for Young People with SEND: Post-16 Pathways and Preparing for Adulthood](#)
- Tuesday 13th January: [Disproportionality across London's SEND System](#)
- Wednesday 14th January: [Health System for Children and Young People with SEND](#)

We hope you are able to join us at one or more of these sessions - if you have any questions or would like to know more - please contact [Kirsty Reed](#).

LONDON SEND SUMMIT 2026 - SAVE THE DATE

The London SEND Summit will take place on Tuesday 17 March and will focus on Inclusion. This will be our fourth summit and a brilliant opportunity to bring partners from across London together to discuss how we can continue to support children and young people with SEND.

The summit is an excellent chance to connect senior leaders across the SEND partnership in London, including Local Authority SEND and Education Leads, Health professionals, Parent Carers, and Young People.

Tickets will be launching soon, so keep an eye out and save the date!

DFE NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON SEND

The DfE has launched a national engagement programme on SEND, designed to place parents and families at the heart of reforms. Minister for School Standards, Georgia Gould, is hosting nine in-person events across the country, alongside five online sessions, run in partnership with the Council for Disabled Children. These events will gather views on the five key principles of reform, including early intervention, local provision and fairness in the system.

Parents, carers, professionals and sector colleagues are encouraged to take part and share their insights. You can register for [regional events](#) and [online sessions here](#).

SEND HEADS OF SERVICE NETWORK - 27TH JANUARY

Following strong interest, LIA is supporting the facilitation of a London SEND Heads of Service Network. The first meeting of this group will take place on Tuesday 27th January, where the Terms of Reference and future agendas will be agreed.

If you would like to attend, please contact [Marissa Kodikara](#) to register your interest.

SEND STRATEGIC MANAGER PARENT CARER NETWORK

The London SEND Strategic Manager Network brings together strategic leaders in SEND from Health, Local Authorities, and Parent Carer Forums. The network provides a space for thematic discussions, practice sharing, and collaborative problem-solving, supporting SEND leaders across London.

Upcoming meeting dates:

- Thursday 11th December 2025
- Thursday 5th March 2026
- Thursday 14th May 2026
- Thursday 9th July 2026

To attend, please contact [Marissa Kodikara.](#)

ACCESS THE LIA SEND DASHBOARD



LIA is continuing to develop the London SEND Data Dashboard as part of the SEND programme to support Local Authorities. The dashboard offers valuable tools for London Authorities to facilitate both local and regional monitoring of SEND Services.

[You can access the Dashboard here.](#)

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

[EXPLORE THE ALDCS SEND 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 LIA Head of SEND, [Frank Offer.](#)

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Together for
London's Children

LONDON INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT ALLIANCE

ALDCS

The Association of London
Directors of Children's Services