Together for London's Children

LONDON INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT ALLIANCE

ALDCS

The Association of London Directors of Children's Services

LONDON ADOLESCENT SAFEGUARDING AND YOUTH JUSTICE NEWSLETTER

March 2026 ISSUE

Dear colleagues,

As ever there is much to going on in our adolescent safeguarding and youth justice work to relay to you in our ASYJ newsletter. I hope you find an informative and interesting read.

A new development which will occupy us in the coming months is the London Child Remand Project, which will bring partners together to address the acute issues in relation to London children who are remanded to custody.

One third of all children held on remand in England and Wales are from London and levels of racial disproportionality are pronounced. We know that custody should only be used as a last resort for children but because of a range of issues, most notably the availability of high quality community alternatives which command the confidence of the judiciary, this is not always the case currently in London.

With the backing of the MoJ for a renewed regional focus on child remands we hope to make significant strides through the London Child Remand Project to promote better outcomes for children and their communities. We will keep you updated through this bulletin as the project develops and let you know of opportunities to get involved.

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

THIS MONTH'S UPDATES

- **Updates from the London Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board (LASOB)**
- **Safeguarding Adolescents in London (SAIL)**
- **Update on the Reducing Criminalisation of Children in Care and Care Leavers Protocol**
- **MACE Protocol update**
- **LYPS Study & Your Choice – Report Published**
- **Practice Spotlight**
- **Recommended reading**
- **Youth Justice Legal Centre - Upcoming workshops & useful resources**
- **Upcoming Event: NCLCC County Lines, Missing & Exploitation Conference**
- **Updates from Partners**

UPDATES FROM THE LONDON ADOLESCENT SAFEGUARDING OVERSIGHT BOARD (LASOB)

The February LASOB meeting centred on the effectiveness of London's public health approach to violence reduction, alongside major programme updates from partners across the system. Highlights included:

👉 Public Health Approach & System Reflections

- Strong consensus that prevention must start earlier, particularly for children aged 5–11, where support is currently limited.
- Importance of whole-system responses, working across schools, health, social care and communities rather than relying solely on statutory thresholds.

👉 The London Young People Study and Your Choice Report

- Practitioners reported clearer structure, confidence and transferable skills; young people highlighted the value of relational, consistent support.
- Importance of building on the investment in Your Choice training and sustaining practitioner enthusiasm and professional development

👉 VRU Data, Insights & Local Delivery

- Updates on key programmes: hospital-based youth work, DIVERT custody interventions, ENGAGE youth support, MYENDS hyper-local prevention, FEST progress and evaluation, and the rollout of Young Futures Panels across pilot boroughs.

👉 Child Remand Reform Work

- LASOB discussed a London-wide project (with Ministry of Justice backing) to expand community alternatives, improve early decision-making and strengthen bail support.

👉 Vanguard Programme – Evaluation Headlines

- Over 1,300 young people supported so far, with average engagement of 12 months.
- 75% showed improvements on structured outcomes; 77% reported better mental health and wellbeing.

SAFEGUARDING ADOLESCENTS IN LONDON (SAIL) – A DIGITAL RESOURCE FOR MODERN PRACTICE

The Safeguarding Adolescents in London (SAIL) digital resource was launched in February 2026, representing a significant step forward in bringing coherence to adolescent safeguarding practice. The adolescent safeguarding workforce is vast, and whilst our roles and responsibilities differ, our purpose is shared – keeping children and young people safe.

The guidance represents London's collective commitment to enhancing adolescent safeguarding practice and keeping young people safer. It is a comprehensive guidance designed to transform how practitioners, managers, and service leaders work to keep young people safe across the capital.

Our latest SAIL Community of Practice brought together nearly 100 professionals from across London to deepen our thinking about what it means to work with parents and carers as genuine partners in safeguarding adolescents.

The session opened with reflections on the complexity practitioners hold in their work—balancing statutory responsibility, compassion, and the impact of historic and ongoing discrimination that shapes how families experience services. We explored the growing shift toward family-led practice, recognising that empowering parents requires us to hand back power, value lived experience, and build trust through consistent, human-centred relationships.

The session reinforced the importance of working with families rather than around them, and the collective commitment across London to improve how we do this.

If you weren't able to join us, you can watch the recording by clicking on the image below.

Upcoming Community of Practice
📅 Friday 27 March 2026
🕙 10:00am – 11:30am
📘 Topic: Safeguarding Adolescents who are in our Care

If you'd like to contribute to the next Community of Practice or help shape the SAIL Guidance, we'd love to hear from you – whether that's providing written content, sharing useful resources, or taking part in our Talking Head Series. Contact the SAIL team **here.**

CLICK HERE TO EXPLORE THE SAIL GUIDANCE

Visit liia.london to learn more

UPDATE ON THE REDUCING CRIMINALISATION OF CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS PROTOCOL

We'd encourage all readers to ensure you are familiar with the shared principles and partner commitments within the reducing criminalisation protocol. Sector-wide awareness of the principles and commitments in the protocol will act as a foundation to delivering practical change. You can read the protocol **here.**

Work is now focused on putting the principles of the protocol into practice.
This will be occur regionally (across London) as well as locally (LA's, BCUs, Court areas).

At a regional level, the London Safeguarding Children Executive is the accountable body with LASOB providing ongoing oversight supported by the regional Implementation Group, which comprising of all key partners to the protocol.

At a local level, Corporate Parenting Boards (CPBs) will play the key role.

LIIA and MOPAC are drafting guidance for CPBs and would like to refine this with interested local authorities before sharing it London-wide. This includes the fit with the extension of corporate parenting duties to all government departments and public bodies that is expected in the upcoming Children and Young People's Wellbeing Bill. Several local authorities have expressed interest, and there is an opportunity for others to join.

In addition to the above, there is a regional working group focusing specifically on care leavers, reflecting that there is currently less structure in place around reducing their criminalisation compared with children in care.

For updates on the group's activity, or if you are interested in joining this activity, please get in touch **here.**

UPDATE ON THE MACE PROTOCOL

The final version of the fifth edition of the London MACE Protocol is currently being formatted and will be published to coincide with National Child Exploitation Awareness Day on 18 March.

This edition reflects the continued development of partnership responses to child exploitation across London and places particular emphasis on recognising and addressing disproportionality within safeguarding systems. It also strengthens governance and accountability, placing clear responsibility on Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships to oversee implementation and learning.

The updated protocol has been shared with local partners, who have begun using it to inform practice and identify borough-specific adjustments that may be needed. There will be ongoing work to embed and strengthen processes, with continued support through linked resources in SAIL including guidance materials, templates and supporting tools, and through engagement and learning shared across communities of practice.

The protocol includes a foreword by Ade Adetosoye, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Bromley and Chair of the London Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive, and by Matt Twist, Assistant Commissioner at the MPS.

It will be updated periodically to reflect learning and structural developments, allowing for minor amendments without requiring a full rewrite.

LYPS STUDY & YOUR CHOICE – REPORT PUBLISHED

The long-awaited publication date for the London Young People Study report has finally arrived! We've distilled the key takeaways here in our special Your Choice Bulletin edition, below or you can access the full report using this link: https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/funding/evaluations/

Thank you to everyone involved in the Study - all 32 London boroughs were involved in the Study at some stage 🙏

There was lots to celebrate - and lots to learn! Both the qualitative and quantitative findings were positive, but the size of the difference made and the confidence in outcomes identified by the Randomised Control Trial were limited.

The valuable learning captured through the Implementation and Process Evaluation will stand us in good stead as we build on the positive platform established over the last five years of Your Choice implementation across London.

In this week's bulletin

Welcome to this week's LYPS & Your Choice bulletin. With The London Young People Study Report now published, we've reached an important moment for everyone involved in the programme.

To find out more about the Your Choice, **click here.**

If you have any questions, you can contact us via the **Your Choice inbox.**

PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

OPEN

Practice Spotlight

Practice Spotlight shines a light on practice that is happening across London's children's services and is making a difference to children and families.

The London Children's Services Practice Spotlight is open for submissions, we are inviting London local authorities and partners to share innovative and impactful practice from across the system.

2026 THEME: NEW & EMERGING PRACTICE

This year the focus is on New and Emerging Practice; enabling developing areas of practice to benefit others through shared learning at the earliest opportunity.

We also want to hear how your practice is shaping or responding to key areas of national reform across the Children's Social Care and Special Education, Needs and Disabilities spectrum with effective partnership working and multi-agency collaboration as a central feature.

SUBMITTING YOUR PRACTICE

Who can submit?

Applications are open to all individuals and teams working in a London Local Authority or multiagency partner. We welcome both single and group Local Authority applications as well as collaborative multi-agency partnership submissions. All submissions must be submitted in partnership with at least one London Local Authority to qualify.

All submissions must be approved by the LA's Director of Children's Services (DCS) or Practice Leader/Assistant Director in order to be accepted

"Practice Spotlight increased the drive of our area of practice across the Local Authority, and the drive in partnership meetings encouraging the engagement of partner agencies. Other London Local Authorities have also reached out to discuss and learn from our approach"

👉 Click on the image to find out more information about submitting your practice

Click here to start your submission

❗ Submission Deadline - Friday 24th April 2026

Practice Spotlight

Practice Spotlight shines a light on practice that is happening across London's children's services and is making a difference to children and families.

Welcome to Practice Spotlight 2026

Background

Local Authority Children's Services in London are working to transform the lives of our children and families across the capital, both locally and through regional collaboration. This motivation binds us together and cements our connection to one another and the children, young people and families we serve.

Launched in November 2024, Practice Spotlight received over 100 submissions of practice, each hosted in the Practice Spotlight digital hub. The initiatives served to raise awareness, catalyse shared learning opportunities across the system and inspire creativity and change.

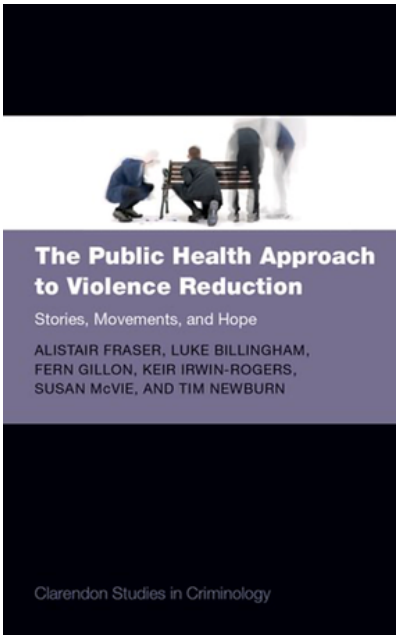
The Practice Spotlight initiative is championed by the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS) and the London Social Care Practice Leader Network, and delivered by London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LiiA).

If you'd like to discuss this work further please contact Rula Tripolitaki or Matthew Raleigh.

Visit liia.london to learn more

RECOMMENDED READING

This edition's recommended reading is The Public Health Approach to Violence Reduction: Stories, Movements, and Hope, newly published by Oxford University Press.



The launch took place at the LSE on Friday 30 January and is the product of a major collaborative research project involving Alistair Fraser, Luke Billingham, Fern Gillon, Keir Irwin-Rogers, Susan McVie and Tim Newburn, drawing on years of fieldwork, policy analysis and community-based research. Led by Professor Alistair Fraser, the project brings together a range of perspectives that contribute to the broader narrative the book explores.

The launch event featured a packed programme with discussions spanning violence reduction policy, community-based youth practice, and the wider social conditions shaping violence and its prevention.

Speakers and panellists reflected on themes such as crisis and social suffering, the role of diverse actors in driving change, and the importance of storytelling in reframing public and policy debates. The day also saw engaged contributions from researchers, practitioners and those working directly with young people.

In addition, the book is available open-access and can be read in full **here.**

You may also be interested in the team's previous open-access book, **Preventing Violence (2023)**, which likewise draws on findings from the Public Health, Youth and Violence Reduction research project. Both books examine violence-reduction policymaking in Scotland and England, with a particular focus on Glasgow and London.

Further information about the research programme can be found on the project website: https://changingviolence.org/

YOUTH JUSTICE LEGAL CENTRE - UPCOMING WORKSHOPS & USEFUL RESOURCES

Upcoming Online Workshop

Safeguarding First: Protecting Children in the Criminal Legal System
- Date: Wednesday 20 May 2026, 14:00 – 16:30
- Click here for more details and to book your ticket

Related Resources

Legal Guide: A detailed guide aimed at criminal practitioners and Youth Justice Services.

Video Explainers: A series of short 'talking head' videos for professionals on safeguarding children in the criminal legal system.

Court Bail & Remand in Practice

A dynamic, facilitator-led workshop designed to help Youth Justice practitioners
- Date: Tuesday 12 May 2026, 14:00 – 16:30
- Click here for more details and to book your ticket

Visit liia.london to learn more

UPCOMING EVENT: NCLCC COUNTY LINES, MISSING & EXPLOITATION CONFERENCE

In support of Exploitation Day, the National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC) will be hosting a full-day online conference focused on county lines, missing children, and exploitation.

The event runs from 09:00–16:00 and is open to all professionals working in safeguarding, community safety, policing, education, and related sectors.

The conference brings together expert speakers to share insights, good practice, and emerging challenges, with opportunities throughout the day for participants to engage in discussion and Q&A via the chat function.

Confirmed Speakers

Lee Cromwell – Missing People: Safeguarding responses for children and young people who go missing
Paul Olaitan – Director, Akani Ltd / Who Works!: Missing from Care & the Philomena Protocol
Paul Nelson – Anglia Ruskin University: Unregistered children's homes
Alastair Smith – Crimestoppers: Anonymous reporting & public intelligence

DS Paul Connelly – Metropolitan Police Service, Project Alpha: Social media intelligence & online harm
Kristel Campbell Bobb – Anti-discriminatory practice specialist: Adultification & reflective practice
Cath Goodwin – Neurodiversity specialist: Understanding and supporting neurodivergent children and young people

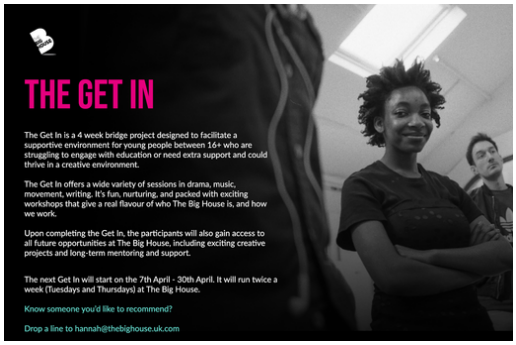
🔗 **Click here to register.**

To stay informed about future free training, events, awareness campaigns and national updates from the NCLCC, professionals can subscribe to updates via WhatsApp and the NCLCC Partner Newsletter.

The latest edition of the newsletter can be read **here.**

THE BIG HOUSE: GET IN PROJECT – OPEN FOR REFERRALS

The Big House is now accepting referrals for its upcoming Get In project, a four-week creative programme running from Tuesday 07 April to Thursday 30 April. Sessions take place twice a week, every Tuesday and Thursday, in Islington.



Get In is designed for young people aged 16+ who may be finding it difficult to engage with education or employment, or who would benefit from extra support in a creative, nurturing environment.

The project blends creativity and wellbeing through a range of workshops, which in previous years have included drama, yoga, music production, and more.

Participants also gain access to ongoing opportunities at The Big House – from future creative projects to long-term mentoring and support. All young people taking part receive £15 per session to cover travel and lunch.

Referrals are welcome from any borough, as long as the young person can comfortably travel to Islington two days a week, with a particular focus on those from North London.

For more information or **to make a referral**, please contact **hannah@thebighouse.uk.com**

Visit liia.london to learn more

UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

Take a look at these standout newsletters from our partners – a great way to stay informed and inspired by what's happening across the sector.

VRU Update – March 2026

This edition highlights the latest developments from London's Violence Reduction Unit, including updates on violence trends, major programme milestones, new research and evaluation outputs, and progress across our youth and community-led partnerships.

Highlights include:

- Significant long-term reductions in violence since 2019, including a 46% fall in hospital admissions of under-25s for knife assault and continued declines in violence with injury and personal robbery.
- MyEnds continues to scale its community-led model, reaching more than 26,800 participants this mayoral term and extending delivery to March 2027.
- Youth leadership strengthened through YPAG and YPAB activity, including national consultations, mentoring programmes, and work shaping Met Police strategies and youth sector development.

MOPAC Update – March 2026

This edition shares key updates MOPAC's programmes, partnerships and governance work, including funding, safeguarding, scrutiny reform, and oversight activity.

Highlights include:

- Publication of the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan 2025–2029, setting priorities for policing, crime and community safety in London.
- Ongoing development of the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation (DASA) commissioning model, ahead of £19m annual funding from 2027, following extensive engagement with boroughs, VCS partners, housing providers and survivors.
- One year on from implementation, the Appropriate Adult Service for Vulnerable Adults has supported over 18,000 vulnerable adults, responding to 33,775 referrals with an average call-out time of 42 minutes.

Visit liia.london to learn more

MEMBERS AREA ACCESS

As always, you can click here to register for access to our dedicated Members Areas.

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.

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

THANKS FOR READING!

FOLLOW LIIA

Linkedin