

RESOURCES AND COMMISSIONING BULLETIN MARCH 2026

Welcome to the first quarterly edition of the Resources and Commissioning Newsletter.

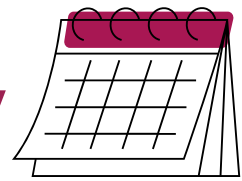
We're pleased to re-launch this update for commissioners, bringing together key developments from across the commissioning and resources landscape.

Building on our recent Show and Tell event, this bulletin offers a snapshot of current projects, collaboration across London, and upcoming events.

In this edition you'll find:

- Key dates for your diary
- Updates on national policy
- A range of project updates from across the team, including developments of London's RCA, Sufficiency Strategy updates, London's Accommodation Pathfinder and more.
- The launch of our new Practice Spotlight

Dates for the Diary



A series of engagement sessions have recently taken place, and have created valuable opportunities to discuss insights and connect with colleagues across the network. Find below upcoming network sessions to get involved:

Sufficiency Sessions (January-March) - Thank you to everyone who joined the sessions held throughout January to March.

If you would like copies of the slide presentations, please email [Marissa Kodikara](mailto:Marissa.Kodikara)

9 March 2026 - Practice Spotlight Launch, submissions open until Friday 24th April ([See page 7 for more information](#)).

20 March 2026 - Peer Support for Capital Bidders Meeting

See more about this network on page 6 of this newsletter.

26 March 2026, 14:00-15:30 - Pan-London Commissioning Network

This is a collaborative opportunity for commissioners to share best practice and concerns in their commissioning field. *This upcoming session will focus on professionalising our commissioning roles, and training opportunities.*

Early May 2026 - LIA Resources and Commissioning 'Show and Tell' Event

11 June 2026 - London Children's Homes Manager Network - IN PERSON meeting

11 June 2026 - Pan London SEND Commissioning Forum

This meeting brings together SEND commissioners and partners to discuss opportunities and challenges in the SEND commissioning field. *The next session will focus on therapies.*

Please email marissa.kodikara@londoncouncils.gov.uk if you would like to find out more or are interested in joining any of these meetings

LIA Resources and Commissioning Show and Tell Event

Thank you to everyone who attended our first 'Show and Tell' webinar last month. Your contributions were invaluable, and we greatly appreciate your time and engagement.

To see the presentation slides from the project updates, please contact marissa.kodikara@londoncouncils.gov.uk.

We are looking forward to welcoming you to the second session later this year and hope to tailor the event more closely to your needs.

If you attended the first session, please take a moment to **[complete this short survey](#)** - your feedback will help shape the next event. Alternatively, you can reach out to [Marissa Kodikara](mailto:Marissa.Kodikara) with any additional thoughts.

NATIONAL POLICY UPDATES

[Regional Care Arrangements](#)

The Department for Education has signalled its intention to accelerate the rollout of Regional Care Cooperatives (RCCs), with an Expression of Interest expected in Spring 2026. The Government has allocated £10 million to support this initiative, enabling the creation of up to six new RCCs with indicative funding of around £1.6 million per region. The full DfE Policy Statement (February 4th 2026) is [here](#).

[Family Based Placements](#)

The Government has set out its aspiration to support more cared for children to live in family placements, and has stated that it wants to create an additional 10,000 foster placements by 2029. To achieve this, it has announced several actions, including:

- A [consultation](#) and [call for evidence](#), closing 17 March 2026, seeking feedback on proposed changes to improve the assessment and approval of foster carers and the support carers receive if allegations are made.
- It has also committed **£12.4 million** over two years for innovation projects to test new fostering models, and **£12.8 million** to expand regional Fostering Hubs, which support carers from initial enquiry through assessment, training, and ongoing support.

[NHS Reforms:](#)

Integrated Care Boards and NHS England Regional Team are going through a number of organisational changes. There are major proposals contained within the NHS 10 Year Plan, including the establishment of Neighborhood Health Teams. This is taking place at the same time as significant changes are taking place or being proposed, such as the Family First programme, Multi Agency Child Protection Teams, and the SEND White Paper. We are working closely with NHS colleagues to coordinate approaches across sectors to meet these joint policy priorities.

£10 million for 6 RCCs

[Adoption and Kinship Care
Consultation](#)

£12.4 million for innovation

[Regional Care Cooperative's
Policy Statement \(DfE\)](#)

£12.8 million for fostering hubs

[Family Based Placements Policy
Statement \(DfE\)](#)

[Adoption and Kinship care consultations](#)

The Department for Education has launched a consultation on improving the adoption and kinship support system to make it more responsive, holistic, and evidence-based. This includes proposed changes to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund. [Please find the consultation here](#), closing May 5th 2026.

[Changes to Child Remands](#)

The MoJ has announced a programme of changes to reduce child custodial remands. This will involve extra funding to project manage a clearer focus on improving practice, to fund custodial alternatives and consider pooled budgets. London is likely to bid for this work, which will link into the LAP - please contact william.willson@londoncouncils.gov.uk for more information

[Schools White Paper & SEND Reform Proposals](#)

The Schools White Paper, published by the DfE on Monday 23rd February, outlines reforms affecting schools, SEND support, and children's social care, promoting closer integration between education, health, and care services and supporting RCC developments to strengthen cross sector collaboration.

For a brief summary and slides on the SEND reforms, [please see here](#).

To contribute to the ALDCS consultation response, please contact David.Garland@londoncouncil.gov.uk.

PROJECT UPDATES

LONDON REGIONAL CARE ARRANGEMENTS (RCA)

The ALDCS Policy Leads are Tim Aldridge (North), Robert South (West), Jonathan Williams (South) and Tara Geere (East)

Regional Co-operation Arrangements (RCA) - preparing for change

The forthcoming *Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act* will introduce legislation mandating Regional Co-operation Arrangements (RCAs) across England. Once enacted, the Secretary of State will have powers to direct local authorities to form regional commissioning arrangements. These may cover functions, such as:

- Forecasting and sufficiency planning
- Commissioning provision
- Recruiting/supporting foster carers
- Developing new accommodation for cared for children

Whilst there is some uncertainty about timing and implementation of these arrangements. However, current national policy indicates:

- £10m funding to support additional 6 RCC regions (Expressions of Interest expected in Spring '26)
- Requirement for RCCs to 'absorb' existing Fostering Hubs
- Significant emphasis on increasing family-based placements.

In November 2025, ALDCS endorsed **six RCA priority areas** and **a pan-London RCA, delivered through a hub-and-spoke model**. Work is now underway to explore what this could look like for London and how boroughs could collaborate to commission care across these priorities, informing a future business case for ALDCS.

Read more about RCCs and the national policy context in our [monthly briefing](#).

If you want to find out more or get involved? Please visit the [LIIA Resources and Commissioning webpage](#), or email Jonny.Woodthorpe@londoncouncils.gov.uk

Additionally to join our mailing list to keep updated, please fill out this [form](#).

JOINT COMMISSIONING WITH HEALTH



Following the Pan London workshop on Joint Funding last November, we have agreed a Project across London based on the example of positive practice presented on the day from Thames Valley. The project will be jointly led by a local authority consultant, Kevin Gordon and Helen McDonald from NHSE London Region. The Project is aimed at achieving a streamlined and transparent decision-making process. The project will work on each ICS footprint in sequence. Work has already commenced in North East London.

For further information about this project, please contact ian.lewis@londoncouncils.gov.uk

LONDON ACCOMODATION PATHFINDER

The LAP contract is currently finalising a tender process to award a new contract. In the meantime we are as a partnership considering workstreams around improving the practice set out in the LAP manual, ways we can expand the LAP in a more sustainable way, and the development of a care model for children who are on remand.

For more information about this project please visit <https://www.liia.london/the-london-accommodation-pathfinder-lap/> or contact: David.garland@londoncouncils.gov.uk

PAN LONDON SUFFICIENCY

What is the Pan London Sufficiency Strategy for?

Ensuring that London is aware of its collective needs for sufficient, good quality homes for children in the care of London boroughs is at the heart of this work. It has involved seeking the views of children, the views of providers and the views of DCS.

The project has three core elements:

1. The development of a pan-London sufficiency strategy using the wealth of data and insights available in the capital,
2. This will be support by both a theory of change document which enables the Council's in London to identify those things required to be successful, and
3. The creation of a document to support providers to understand what we, in the capital, need and want for our children.

What progress has been made?

- The LIIA data team has updated the [Dynamic Sufficiency tool](#) to enable greater insights into the needs of children cared for by London Boroughs.
- Workshops have been held with DSCs, practice leaders and experts in the field focusing on family-based placements, residential provision, supported accommodation and disproportionality; chaired by the four DCS leads, Tim Aldridge, Jonathan Williams, Robert South, and Tara Geere. These have supported the development of recommendations and the theory of change.
- Looked at best practice across the country and in the devolved authorities to see what will work best in London.
- Considered all of the recent announcements from central Government around fostering hubs and regional care collaboratives and how they impact on any recommendations.

Key findings from the data:

- Too many London children are placed at distance from their homes
- There has been a reduction in the use of family-based care over the past nine years
- There is significant issues facing the capital in terms of the disproportionate impact of care on global majority children.

The documents will be shared with DCS for consideration and comment in the near future.

For more information about this project, please contact: Chris.Munday@londoncouncils.gov.uk

DYNAMIC SUFFICIENCY TOOL

The [Dynamic Sufficiency Tool](#) provides London Local Authorities with secure access to child-led data through an interactive platform that gives commissioners a wide range of meaningful, real-time insights.

It supports stronger commissioning decisions and more informed strategic planning to better meet the needs of children and young people.

Access the tool: <https://www.liia.london/pan-london-dynamic-sufficiency-tool/>

The dynamic sufficiency tool is within the members area, to access it you must register. For more information on how to do this please see [here](#).



COMMISSIONING FOR ASD/SEMH:

Pilots in North Central and North East are due to go live in April, with the remaining elements of funding and recruitment between the provider collaboratives and local authorities being finalised under the 2000 Tomorrows banner with Newham and Camden councils, delivering highly skilled MDTs in the community across several boroughs each to reduce the likelihood of hospitalisation and distant placements, linked to children's homes in each area. Wider scope of other pilots and projects being considered – including links to proposed SEND Reform, and the focus on early years and needs led assessments.

For more information about this project please visit the project webpage or contact David.Garland@londoncouncil.gov.uk.

PAN-LONDON SECURE CHILDREN'S HOME & PAN-LONDON VEHICLE FOR CHILDREN'S COMPLEX COMMISSIONING LTD (PLVCCC LTD) with Community Reintegration Service

This project fully remobilised in November 2025 – workstreams include development of business cases; development of legal agreements; land transaction; service design, commissioning and implementation; PLVCCC Ltd development / implementation and building design / construction.

An important milestone in 2026 will be LAs taking the next key decision on the project, based on the next stage business case, legal agreements and other project developments – the project team will continue to engage with LAs in preparation for this.

For more information about this project please visit <https://Londons-secure-childrens-home-and-ply> or contact: Queensley.Uzomba@londoncouncils.gov.uk

CHILDREN'S HOME PEER SUPPORT UPDATES

The Peer Support group for successful children's home capital bidders has continued to meet on a monthly basis to help commissioners and project managers develop their practice, and learn from existing experience from those who have recently built, commissioned or developed children's homes. We have recently expanded the group to include Local Authorities who are developing homes outside of the Capital round, and welcome any new entrants, as well as strengthening links with the Children's Homes Managers Network.

As well as regularly meeting to work through issues we're experiencing, we are at the early stages of looking to use the group's expertise to build a resource base for Local Authorities considering building a children's home.

For more information or if you are interested in joining the group please email David.Garland@londoncouncil.gov.uk.

LONDON CHILDREN SERVICES PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT

Practice Spotlight 2026 is now live – and we want to put your new and emerging practice in the spotlight!

Across London, your teams and multi-agency partners are transforming the lives of children, young people and families every day. This year, we're shining a light on new and emerging practice – the ideas taking shape right now, the sparks of change, the early innovations that deserve to be shared, celebrated and scaled.



Whether you're shaping responses to national reform, testing new models of integrated working, building safety for young people, strengthening our workforce, or unlocking the power of data – **your developing practice could inspire the whole region!**

“What inspires me most about the Practice spotlight is that ideas don’t need to arrive fully formed. They grow in conversation, collaboration and curiosity. They take shape when people share their experiences, their frustrations, their hopes. And when we create the space for ideas to flourish, we unlock the creativity and potential that sits within every member of our organisation – it turns possibility into progress.”

Bev Hendricks, Director of Children’s Services, Merton

Submit your practice!

Choose from **nine categories** ranging from racial equity to early intervention, SEND to care leavers, multi-agency safeguarding to placement innovation – all areas of practice are relevant and you can submit more than one example.

This is your moment to:

- *Showcase your team’s impact*
- *Boost shared learning across London*
- *Gain regional recognition*
- *Shape the future of children’s services*

Get started here: [Welcome to Practice Spotlight 2026.](#)

Submission deadline: Friday 24 April 2026

We look forward to reading all of the submissions with the support of our regional sponsorship group and look forward to shining a spotlight on the practice that’s making a difference.

Learn more about the [Practice Spotlight 2026](#) here.

