

# ALDCS SEND BULLETIN

JULY 2026 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](#).

## ***Dear Colleagues,***

We are pleased to bring you the July edition of the ALDCS SEND Bulletin. It has been another exceptionally busy period for Local Area Partnerships, marked by significant activity following the submission of Local Area SEND Reform Plans and the continued development of the national SEND reform agenda.

Since our last bulletin, all local areas have now submitted their SEND Reform Plans to the Department for Education and NHS England for review. Alongside the publication of the Schools White Paper, we have also seen further detail emerge around the requirements for Experts at Hand and the role this will play in supporting more inclusive, community-based systems of support.

The LIIA team has been working at pace to review and understand the key themes emerging from London's SEND Reform Plans and to support local areas as they navigate this next phase of reform - following the collection of Final Plan submissions we will continue to refresh these findings. We are working closely with partners to understand the implications of the wider reform programme and what this means for Local Area Partnerships in practice. To support this work, we have launched the Experts at Hand Community of Practice, creating a dedicated forum for collaboration, shared learning and the dissemination of effective practice across London.

In this edition, we share early insights from London's SEND Reform Plans and our wider 'Untangling the Reforms' work, alongside updates from across the ALDCS SEND Programme. This includes developments in workforce and inclusion, emerging findings from the Big SEND Conversation, updates on SEND commissioning and financial sustainability, new data and intelligence products, and opportunities to engage with pan-London networks and programmes.

As always, we hope this bulletin provides useful insight and practical support as local areas continue to respond to an evolving national landscape and work collectively to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

We have also included a calendar of upcoming engagement opportunities and events, and we encourage colleagues to stay connected with the many areas of activity taking place across London.

We hope you enjoy this edition and, as always, please do get in touch with the LIIA team if you would like to find out more or become involved in any of the programmes highlighted throughout this bulletin.

# Local Area SEND Reforms

## Local Area SEND Reform Plans

As part of our Reform Support Offer, LIIA, on behalf of ALDCS, collated draft plans and hosted a regional 'Listening to London' session in early June, sharing early insights and emerging themes. Through the Listening to London session in early June, several consistent themes have emerged from draft SEND Reform Plans across London.

### LISTENING TO LONDON EMERGING THEMES FROM SEND REFORM PLANS

- 1. SHARED PRIORITIES**
  - ✓ Earlier intervention & inclusion
  - ✓ Workforce development (including Experts at Hand)
  - ✓ Sufficiency of local provision
  - ✓ Stronger partnership governance

Strong alignment across London
- 2. COMMON CHALLENGES**
  - Creating a clear "golden thread" from priorities to outcomes
  - Meaningful data and KPI frameworks
  - Translating ambition into deliverable plans
  - Clarifying practical implementation models (including for EAH)

Turning ambition into achievable, deliverable plans
- 3. SYSTEM PRESSURES**
  - Rising demand and complexity of need
  - Workforce and capacity pressures
  - Pressure on specialist provision
  - Need for realistic, system-wide delivery approaches

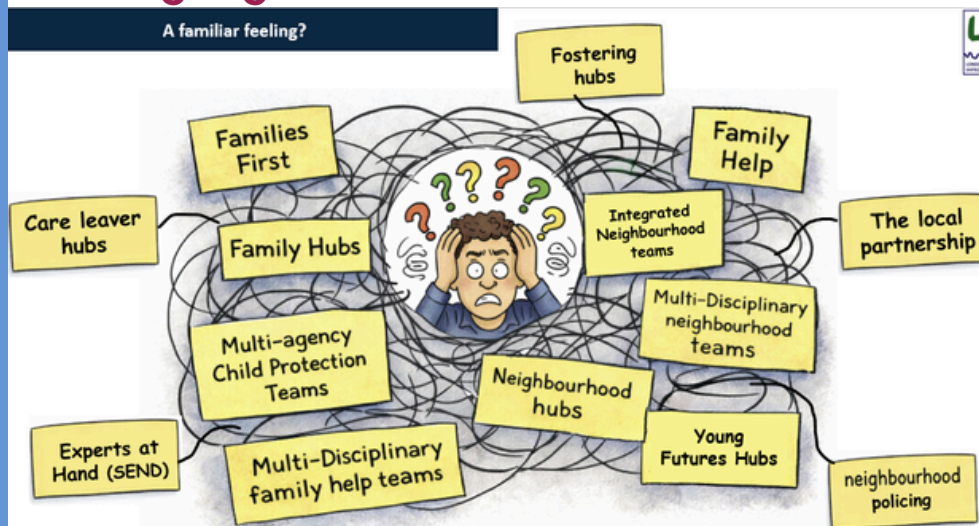
Capacity and pressures require collaboration
- 4. LOOKING AHEAD**
  - Deep dives into final plans and EAH delivery models
  - Shared learning and peer support across London
  - Better alignment with wider reforms (e.g. Family Hubs, neighbourhood working)
  - Continued collaboration and collective implementation
- 5. ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS**
  - ★ Strong leadership and accountability
  - Sharper data and performance frameworks
  - Effective implementation models (e.g. EAH, AP pathways)
  - System-wide partnership and co-production
  - ♥ Together we can deliver better outcomes

Two-thirds of draft plans have been collated and a thematic analysis was conducted.

The infographic on the left displays a high level summary of key thematics shared as part of the session in June. These will be reviewed and adjusted on receipt of final plans.

Looking ahead, further deep-dive work is planned, including on EAH delivery models alongside submitted SEND Reform Plans, to build a stronger shared understanding of what effective implementation looks like across London. Insights from this work will be shared across the summer through an extended series of Listening to London sessions - taking place across July through to September.

## Untangling the Reforms



We recognise that SEND reforms do not sit in isolation. Across London, local areas are navigating a wide and evolving landscape of related reforms, including Family Hubs, Neighbourhood Health, Families First Partnership Programme and wider public service reform, many of which share common aims around early intervention, prevention, and multi-disciplinary working.

Through LIIA's "untangling the reforms" work, we are supporting greater clarity on how these agendas connect in practice, highlighting opportunities to align workforce, governance, delivery models and local provision, rather than creating parallel systems. This work emphasises the potential for a more integrated, community-based approach, with shared workforce models, co-location of services and stronger multi-agency teams helping to provide coordinated, earlier support for children, young people and families. Over the coming months, LIIA will continue to build on this work alongside SEND Reform Plans and EAH deep dives, helping local areas translate national reforms into joined-up, deliverable local models.

[Slides to support this thinking are available here.](#)

If you'd like to discuss this work further please contact [Kirsty Reed](#) & [Kate Kewley](#).

# Programme Updates: SEND Workforce

## Experts at Hand (EAH) Community of Practice

LIIA recently launched the EAH London Community of Practice. Since its launch, two sessions have been held, bringing together 250 colleagues from local authorities, health partners, DfE, parent/carer representatives and SEND organisations across London. The sessions have focused on reflecting on the newly published EAH guidance, exploring emerging themes from SEND delivery plans, and identifying opportunities for collaboration as local areas develop their approaches.

Key messages from the discussion included:

- EAH is a capacity-building model, supporting schools and settings to develop skills, confidence and capability – not replacing statutory services or introducing new case-holding roles.
- Local areas are building on existing practice, using established cluster, locality and team-around-school approaches.
- Workforce capacity remains a key challenge, particularly across educational psychology, speech and language therapy, and occupational therapy, with interest in more flexible models and growing the pipeline through apprenticeships, trainees and support roles.
- Multi-disciplinary and transdisciplinary working is critical, with stronger collaboration across education, health and wider services underpinning delivery.
- Strengthening the “middle layer” of support between universal and specialist provision is a shared priority, alongside early intervention and mainstream inclusion.
- Ongoing questions remain around sustainability, outcomes, joint commissioning, and how to better embed wider professional input and lived experience.

LIIA will continue analysing emerging SEND delivery plans across London, alongside further fieldwork and practice deep dives to understand local approaches, challenges and opportunities. Future Community of Practice sessions will focus on workforce, sustainability, data and intelligence, inclusion, and the links between EAH and wider system reform. The next meeting will be on 16<sup>th</sup> September.

[Register your place at the next Community of Practice here!](#)



## The Big SEND Conversation: Early Insights

The Big SEND Conversation provides valuable multi-agency insight, workforce data and demographics with analysis underway from nearly 600 responses across local authorities, education, health and partner organisations. A full report will be published shortly, with a draft shared with key partners in advance. Early findings highlight eight key themes shaping workforce experience, including workload, wellbeing, system complexity, early intervention, multi-agency working, and SEND reform.

A clear message is that rising demand, workforce shortages and statutory pressures are making current approaches increasingly difficult to sustain. Many describe a system that is becoming reactive and crisis-led, with time focused on managing gaps and navigating complexity rather than delivering early support.

Despite this, there is strong evidence of a committed and motivated workforce, with a shared focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and families. There is broad agreement that early intervention, stronger multi-agency working and more sustainable workforce models will be critical to delivering SEND reforms. The findings will help shape regional workforce priorities and ensure workforce voice remains central to ongoing system improvement and national reform.

## The London Pledge for Educational Psychologists: LPEP

The LPEP continues to support greater confidence in local negotiations and improved transparency in agency Educational Psychology (EP) arrangements. The third round of Managed Service Provider (MSP) data collection has now been completed. A new dashboard, developed by LIIA's Data & Intelligence team, is enabling London-wide, sub-regional and local trend analysis, strengthening the evidence base for benchmarking and price cap discussions.

Early insights also confirm that MSP data reflects only part of the market, with many local authorities using alternative commissioning routes. In response, a Phase 2 data collection pilot is underway with a small group of authorities to capture a more complete picture of EP provision, including task-based and statement-of-works models.

At a national level, alignment is growing, with other RIAs adopting similar approaches and shared principles. Work is also ongoing with NAPEP, AEP and ADCS to strengthen collaboration and consistency.

*If you'd like to discuss this work further please contact [Rula Tripolitaki](#) & [Madeline Oakes](#)*

## Programme Updates: Inclusion

### **LIIA SEND Inclusion and Learning Conference - 9<sup>th</sup> July**

Final places remaining for the LIIA SEND Inclusion and Learning Conference (9 July 2026) - a London-wide event designed specifically for practitioners working within schools and Local Authorities, supporting Children and Young People with SEND.

This conference will bring together school leaders, SENCOs, Health Partners and LA teams for an engaging day focused on:

- Sharing effective practice
- Strengthening inclusive teaching, learning and school cultures
- Exploring approaches to targeted support and improved outcomes

The day will include expert keynote speakers, practical workshops, LA and school-led panels, and a marketplace showcasing innovative approaches to inclusion.

[Register your place at the conference here!](#)



### **Call for Effective Practice Examples of 'Inclusion bases'**

Following the recent Department for Education guidance on Mainstream Inclusion bases, LIIA will be developing an 'effective practice' hub to draw together scalable examples of operational bases pan-London and beyond.

The purpose of this activity is to draw on existing experiences, models and strategic oversight of resource, or inclusion base developments that could be scaled across a range of settings across London. We will be calling for examples on both a regional and individual setting basis through Local Authority endorsement. Applications will assess the strategic delivery of the base, alongside impact, resource implication, and scalability. Successful applications will be invited to showcase their practice in virtual resource, workshop, and network invitation.

***Our call for effective practice examples will go live on Monday 13th July 2026 at 9.00am.***

### **Investing in Inclusion Programme**

Over thirty educational settings and five Local Authorities have taken part in this year's cohort of the 'Investing in Inclusion' programme. All of this year's cohort will be showcasing their inclusion work at the LIIA SEND Inclusion and Learning Conference to network and share their expertise and experience on implementing impactful inclusion projects on a local and regional scale. Early Education providers, Primary, Secondary and Post 16 providers are all represented.

We have also brought together their learning and experiences to form a 'What works well in Inclusion' guide which will be featured within the London Children Services Practice Spotlight. This rich hub of scalable practice will be an effective tool for both Local Authorities and educational settings to access on a thematic basis.

The programme will continue in September 2026 with the launch of applications for Cohort 2

*If you'd like to discuss this work further please contact [Andy Higgs](#)*

# Programme Updates: Intelligence & Insight

## Just Launched: Updated London SEND Data Page

To make our data products more accessible and easier to navigate, we have created a [\*\*Making Data Speak for London's Children: SEND page on the LIA website.\*\*](#)

This provides a short description of each of the dashboards containing SEND data, guidance on who may find the data most useful, and instructions on how to access the dashboards. There is also a section outlining our upcoming projects - look out for updates!

Currently available SEND Dashboards

- ▶ SEND Data Dashboard
- ▶ Outcomes for Children in Need Dashboard
- ▶ Specialist Provider ID Tool
- ▶ Disproportionality in Education Dashboard
- ▶ Quarterly SEND Dashboard
- ▶ Ofsted Inspection Outcomes Dashboard
- ▶ D2i SENz Visualisation Tool

[\*\*Access the Updated London SEND Data Page here!\*\*](#)



## Updates to SEND Dashboard

Please do also look out for forthcoming updates to our SEND Dashboard which will reflect the latest SEND statistical releases published by the Department for Education in June 2026.

## Launch of SEND Quarterly Data Collection (Pilot)

In May, LIA launched a SEND quarterly data collection. This gathers a range of SEND-specific data items from local authorities, covering the journey from initial requests for assessment through to details of the placements of children with active EHCPs.

Eight local authorities submitted data for the first voluntary pilot collection (Q4 2025-26 data).

The return will be rolled out to all local authorities for Q1 2026-27. The dashboard, which is now available through the members area of the LIA website, enables benchmarking and regional comparisons.

*If you'd like to discuss this work further please contact [Teigan Berre](#) & [Sherian Bateson](#)*

# Programme Updates: SEND Commissioning

## INMSS Tool Pilot and Wider London Engagement

The LIA Independent Non-Maintained and Independent Special School (INMSS) Tool has been piloted with Greenwich, Enfield, Southwark and Wandsworth. The pilot explored how a shared dataset could support boroughs in understanding patterns of specialist provision across a sample of commonly used providers.

Following the pilot, boroughs have been invited to express interest in a wider roll-out, with initial feedback being positive, and authorities identifying potential benefits in developing a stronger shared evidence base to support planning and commissioning activity.

[\*\*Complete the survey here!\*\*](#)



Subject to governance approval, future phases will explore opportunities for broader participation and the development of aggregated London-wide insights.

# Programme Updates: SEND Commissioning

## Financial Sustainability & Value for Money

Piloting of the SEND Financial Resilience Tool is ongoing through Ealing's Best Value Challenge work. This item was featured on the June agenda of the SEND Finance Network which focused on Financial Implications of the SEND Reforms. Discussions took place around Safety Valve at Hounslow, Experts at Hand funding and DfE guidance, and LIIA's Targeted Support offer.

## Pan-London SEND Commissioning Forum

The latest termly Pan-London SEND Commissioning Forum, took place in June bringing together more than 70 commissioners, NHS colleagues and parent representatives. This forum explored challenges and implications of the emerging SEND reforms for paediatric therapy provision, including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

Commissioners heard perspectives from both NHS-commissioned and independent providers on service delivery challenges, workforce pressures and opportunities for collaboration. They also received a briefing note summarising legal principles and case law relating to funding responsibilities, also available on the SEND Commissioning Hub.

[Access the SEND Commissioning Hub here!](#) 

Following the forum, LIIA undertook a survey to understand current arrangements for paediatric therapies and identify opportunities for shared learning. To date, 27 boroughs have responded, highlighting common challenges including workforce availability, access to specialist expertise, market visibility and consistency of information. The findings will inform future discussions on strengthening collaboration, improving market intelligence and supporting access to therapy provision for children and young people with SEND.

## Joint Commissioning with Health

We are continuing to work closely with colleagues in the NHS England (NHSE) London Region, to develop a set of clear joint funding arrangements for children, initially across the North East London Integrated Care System. The ambition is to arrive at arrangements that will cover Children's Continuing Care, Section 117 of the Mental Health Act and exceptional cases of children in complex situations; supported by one set of policies, Standard Operating Procedures and data. Progress will be shared with colleagues, with the aim of sharing the approach across London.

## SEND Sufficiency in Relation to ASD-SEMH Commissioning

Reports commissioned from Newton relating to autism and SEMH provision, alongside Independent Non-Maintained and Independent Special School (INMSS) collaborative commissioning analysis, are nearing completion.

The findings are intended to support boroughs' understanding of emerging demand, market trends and potential areas for future collaboration. Outputs will be shared following completion of stakeholder engagement and review processes.

## Looking Ahead

Across these workstreams, the focus remains on supporting London boroughs to share learning, strengthen partnerships and develop practical approaches to addressing rising demand, workforce challenges and ongoing SEND reform developments.

LIIA will continue to work with commissioners, finance colleagues, NHS partners, parent representatives and providers to facilitate collaboration, share intelligence and support improvement activity across London.

*If you'd like to discuss this work further please contact [Catherine Kane](#) & [Marissa Kodikara](#)*

# Upcoming Activity

## \*EVENTS\* Network Meetings & Upcoming Workshops

LIIA continues to deliver a varied programme of networks, support offers, and practice-sharing workshops as part of our Pan-London Innovation and Improvement activity. The table below sets out the upcoming calendar, including themes, key focuses, and contact points should you wish to get involved.

Session	Date	Contact Point
ALDCS London SEND Steering Group	6th July	<a href="#">Bethan Evans</a>
SEND Inclusion and Learning Conference	9th July	<a href="#">Bethan Evans</a>
London SEND Heads of Service/AD Network	14th July	<a href="#">Marissa Kodikara</a>
London SEND Strategic Manager Parent Carer Network	16th July	<a href="#">Bethan Evans</a>
Experts at Hand: London Community of Practice	16th September	<a href="#">Maddy Oakes</a>
In-Person: London SEND Strategic Manager Parent Carer Network Meeting	24th September	<a href="#">Bethan Evans</a>

*Help us to improve to improve the LIIA newsletters!*

*We are reviewing our suite of LIIA newsletters and would really value your feedback. This short survey should take less than a minute. [Complete our survey](#)*

## THANK YOU!

Thank you for your continued support of the ALDCS SEND Programme. We recognise the scale of activity currently underway across the system and are grateful for your continued engagement.

As always, we welcome feedback on this bulletin and would be pleased to discuss any of the programmes referenced above in further detail.

Please visit our website: [liia.london](https://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](#)

*Links not working for you? To access some of our dashboards you will need to login to your account on the [LIIA Website Members Area](#). Or if you do not already have access you can register via the [LIIA website](#). Still experiencing problems, then please email our website [administrators](#).*