

# LONDON ADOLESCENT SAFEGUARDING AND YOUTH JUSTICE NEWSLETTER

July 2026 ISSUE

Dear colleagues,

It's a pleasure to introduce the latest ASYJ newsletter and to introduce myself as the relatively recently installed policy lead for youth justice for ALDCS.

Having cut my teeth as a youth justice practitioner and managed youth justice services, it has always been an area of our work which I have sought to champion through my changing leadership roles within children's services.

It's a fascinating time to take up the policy lead role for youth justice, with a newly published white paper promising 'once in a generation opportunity for reform' of the youth justice system; likely to be the most significant since the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 established YOTs and the system we currently work within. This will see changed roles for the YJB and MoJ supported by an ambition to transform youth custody and the youth court.

It is heartening to see recognition in the white paper of the value of the work done through and with youth justice services at a local level. YJS' have been central to driving the many positive changes in youth justice in recent years and they are clearly going to remain critical to further transformation of the system. As part of the next wave of reforms, YJS' will need to be adaptable to the new conditions in which they will operate. The history of our local partnerships and YJ services suggest they are well-equipped to continue to drive improvements in the coming years.

The launch of the London Child Remand Project provides evidence of the commitment of London partners to bring about change, which delivers for children and our communities. This is demanding and sensitive work, where partners will need to demonstrate a high level of trust and confidence in the wider system, and relationship management to make the best decisions for children who are at risk of remand. The launch event, which featured senior representation across all our key partners, offered real encouragement that London has the capacity to deliver much improved outcomes for children at risk of remand in custody and for their communities.

I look forward to keeping in touch with you through this newsletter in the coming months as we enter a period of reform of youth justice and social care. We know that youth justice and adolescent safeguarding are intimately related, working together I know that we can help to ensure we deliver the best outcomes for children and the public.

**Stuart Collins**

DCS London Borough of Croydon and Youth Justice Lead for ALDCS



## THIS MONTH'S UPDATES

- **Updates from the London Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board (LASOB)**
- **Safeguarding Adolescents in London (SAIL)**
- **London Child Remand Project (LCRP)**
- **Your Choice Framework update**
- **MACE (Multi-Agency Child Exploitation) protocol - update**
- **Recommended reading**
- **Training opportunity - Child sexual abuse in the context of exploitation**
- **Updates from Partners**

# UPDATES FROM THE LONDON ADOLESCENT SAFEGUARDING OVERSIGHT BOARD (LASOB)

The May LASOB meeting focused on strengthening cross-system responses to vulnerability and violence, alongside key updates on new protocols, research insights and pan-London priorities. Highlights included:

- 👉 **MACE Protocol Launch & System Alignment**
  - The new MACE (Multi-Agency Child Exploitation) protocol is now live, with borough implementation underway.
- 👉 **London Child Remand Project**
  - Continued concerns about high custodial remand rates in London and the need to strengthen community-based alternatives to custody.
  - Work is ongoing to clarify governance and reporting arrangements, with closer links being developed across London safeguarding and youth justice structures.
- 👉 **Joining the Dots: Violence, Domestic Abuse & Youth Justice with Dr Jade Levell**
  - Research highlighted strong links between domestic abuse, children's exposure to violence, and later serious youth violence.
  - Discussion emphasised earlier intervention, stronger links between domestic abuse and community safety work, and increasing parental awareness of the impact of violence in the home. Particular interest in approaches to supporting boys and young men.
  - You can read the policy brief [here](#).
- 👉 **Children Missing from Care - System Priorities**
  - Recognition that missing episodes should be treated as indicators of vulnerability rather than isolated incidents.
  - Concerns about over-reliance on police responses and the need for more consistent, multi-agency safeguarding approaches.

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

SAIL continues to grow as a shared digital resource bringing together theory, policy and practical tools to support work with adolescents.

Our Community of Practice sessions have engaged partners across London, most recently focusing on safeguarding adolescents in our care.



We encourage colleagues to sign up to the SAIL restricted area, where you can find session recordings, resources and the noticeboard for upcoming dates.

To request access, register via the Members Area and select “SAIL Restricted Area”, or, if you already have an account, log in and submit a request. Access is approved by the LIA team.

If you haven't already signed up to become a **SAIL Champion**, please contact [HelloSAIL@liia.london](mailto:HelloSAIL@liia.london) to register your interest to help shape and strengthen the platform and support engagement across services.

**Safeguarding Adolescents in London (SAIL) Guidance**

SAIL brings together the principles and practice that underpins the work of all agencies working with vulnerable young people, shaping how practitioners, managers, and service leaders work to keep young people safe across the capital – a digital resource for modern practice.

Search Handbook

**SAIL Table of Contents: full list of topics**

**SAIL Notice Board: events and updates**

**FOUNDATIONS:**  
[Our shared principles](#)

**PRACTICE:**  
[Information, tools and guidance for practitioners](#)

**RESPONSES:**  
[Innovations and developments in how services support vulnerable young people](#)

**SYSTEMS:**  
[The protocols, policies and statutory guidance that underpin our work](#)

**SAIL Talking Heads: videos and interviews**

**SAIL Useful Links: research and resources**

[Visit Practice Spotlight Digital Area](#)

[Visit Main LIA Website](#)

## If you don't already have a Members Area account:

- Go to the [Members Area registration page](#)
- Complete the registration form.
- When prompted to select which pages you need access to, choose “SAIL Restricted Area”.
- Submit your request.

## If you already have a Members Area account:

- Log in to the [Members Area](#)
- Navigate to the list of restricted areas.
- Select “SAIL Restricted Area” to request access.

Your registration will be sent to the LIA admin team for approval. Please note there may be a short delay before access is granted.

If you experience any issues, please contact: [administratoreliia.london](mailto:administratoreliia.london)

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](#)

# LONDON CHILD REMAND PROJECT (LCRP)

London has been awarded just under £2.5m from the Ministry of Justice to deliver the London Child Remand Project, a new regional programme focused on reducing the use of custodial remand for children and strengthening community-based alternatives.

The project brings together local authorities and youth justice partners across London to improve pathways for children to be safely supported at home or within their communities. This includes developing more robust bail packages, improving practice at court, and investing in alternatives to custody that better meet children's needs while maintaining public safety.

There is strong evidence for change. London accounts for a significant proportion of children remanded to custody, and many of those children do not go on to receive a custodial sentence. The project aims to address this by building confidence across the system in viable, high-quality alternatives.

The project was formally launched in partnership with Transform Justice at a practitioner and policy conference on 2 July, with contributions from national and London leaders, including Minister Jake Richards. The event brought together a strong and engaged audience from across youth justice, local government, policing, the voluntary sector and wider partner organisations. Attendees heard from expert speakers, shared emerging practice, and explored opportunities for collaboration to help reduce the use of child remand across London.

The positive turnout and high level of engagement reflected the sector's shared commitment to improving outcomes for children and creating effective alternatives to custody.

**The London Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP) Evaluation**, published on 02 July 2026, provides evidence of how potentially risky children can be effectively supported and kept safe within the community.

You can access the event slide deck [here](#).

**[Click here to read more about the project.](#)**

*For more information please email [David Garland](#) or [William Willson](#).*



The launch was accompanied by a new data briefing from **Transform Justice**, which reinforces the case for action and the need to ensure custody is used only as a last resort for children. You can access it [here](#).

# YOUR CHOICE FRAMEWORK

London's collective effort in delivering and evaluating the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF)-funded Your Choice framework has led to a major milestone: the award of the British Psychological Society (BPS) Quality Mark for its training.

This recognition highlights the framework as a high-quality, evidence-led CPD offer, grounded in cognitive behavioural approaches and designed for those working with children and young people.

Developed by LIA on behalf of the Association of London Directors of Children's Services, and supported by the Mayor's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), Your Choice equips practitioners with practical, psychologically informed tools to support young people at risk of harm. The framework focuses on building skills, strengthening relationships and helping young people work towards goals that matter to them.

Building on this momentum, the first VRU-funded Train the Trainer sessions will take place on 17 and 20 July at **London Councils**. These in-person sessions are designed to build local capacity, equipping eligible participants with the skills and confidence to deliver the training and embed the approach more widely across services, such as those services who were unable to access Your Choice in the Your Choice RCT due to their important contribution as the Control arm. supported by ongoing clinical networks.

To find out more about Your Choice, including ongoing clinical networks and trainer prerequisites, by [clicking here.](#)

[Click here to book your place on the VRU-funded Train the Trainer sessions.](#)



## MACE (MULTI-AGENCY CHILD EXPLOITATION) PROTOCOL - UPDATE

The MACE (Multi-Agency Child Exploitation) protocol is now live, with boroughs expected to begin implementation, alongside plans to introduce an annual reporting template feeding into LASOB later this year.

There is a growing focus on strengthening disruption activity and governance, alongside recognising differences in how local arrangements operate across boroughs. This highlights the importance of clearer expectations, stronger connectivity between panels, and better alignment across safeguarding partnerships and related areas such as Prevent.

# RECOMMENDED READING



**Cutting Youth Crime.  
Changing Young Lives.**  
The youth justice system reform  
and delivery plan



Youth Justice White Paper on cutting youth crime and improving outcomes for young people.

**[Cutting Youth Crime. Changing Young Lives.](#)**

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## Piloting a Child First approach in police custody

Home > Programmes and Strategies > Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) > MOPAC news and publications > MOPAC publications > Piloting a Child First approach in police custody

### Key information

Publication type: General

Publication date: Thursday 11 June 2026

Find out how a Child First approach is being piloted in police custody to better support young people in London.

**[Piloting a Child First approach in police custody - London City Hall](#)**

# TRAINING OPPORTUNITY - CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN THE CONTEXT OF EXPLOITATION

The Department for Education is funding the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse to deliver a free, national training programme focused on improving how professionals respond to child sexual abuse linked to exploitation.

## What's on offer

2-day online training delivered between July 2026 and March 2027

## Covers:

- Understanding sexual exploitation and contexts of harm
- Identifying and responding to children at risk
- Multi-agency working to disrupt harm and support recovery
- Insights from policy, practice and lived experience



## Who should attend:

This training is primarily aimed at staff **working in Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs) and these colleagues should be prioritised.**

## It is also highly relevant for:

Staff moving into or planning MACPT roles

## Practitioners in:

Family help teams, specialist exploitation teams, adolescent services and anyone involved in responding to child sexual exploitation and extrafamilial harm.

## Get involved

Places will be limited due to the short delivery window, so teams are encouraged to prioritise relevant roles and promote the opportunity widely.

**For more information or to express interest: [csetraining@csacentre.org.uk](mailto:csetraining@csacentre.org.uk)**

Visit [liia.london](https://liia.london) to learn more

# UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

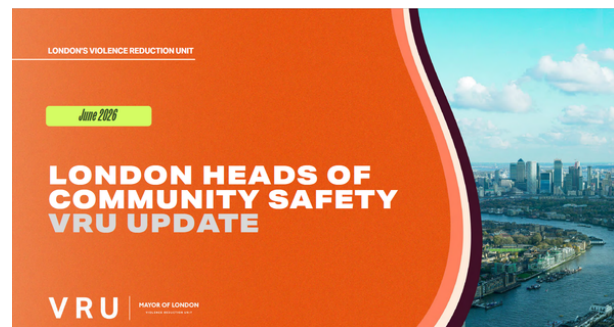
Take a look at these standout newsletters from our partners - a great way to stay informed and inspired by what's happening across the sector.

## VRU Update - June 2026

This edition shares the latest progress from London's Violence Reduction Unit, including impact data, programme updates, and new work across education, youth services, families and community-led prevention.

### Highlights include:

- New research, tools, and evidence published, including work on online harms, homicide prevention, and youth violence interventions.
- Investment in positive opportunities such as sport, internships, and early intervention programmes to reduce risk and support young people's futures.
- Expansion of education-based prevention work, including mentoring programmes reaching over 2,000 young people and improved wellbeing for 74% of participants.



## MOPAC Update - June 2026

This edition shares key updates from MOPAC's programmes, partnerships and governance activity, including commissioning, funding, research, and oversight across policing and community safety.

### Highlights include:

- Ongoing delivery of the Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation programme, with new commissioning phases launching in 2026 ahead of services going live from April 2027.
- Over 12,700 young Londoners engaged through the latest MOPAC Youth Survey, with findings due to be published in summer 2026.
- Development of a new Risks and Needs Framework to improve how services identify and respond to girls and young women affected by violence and exploitation.



# UPDATES FROM PARTNERS



## What's included in this news update:

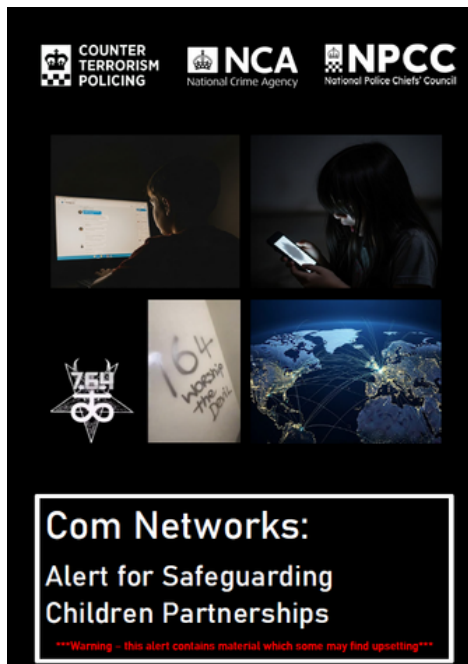
- [Children's services and violence prevention guidance](#)
- [VAWG funding round](#)
- [Tender opportunity](#)



## New Resources: Com Networks and Com Groups

Partners may wish to review two new safeguarding resources highlighting the risks posed by online Com Networks and Com Groups.

The documents provide an overview of emerging threats, indicators of exploitation and victimisation, and guidance to support safeguarding professionals in identifying and responding to concerns at an early stage



### Com Groups: Early Threat Identification Notice

This notice is for safeguarding professionals only. It is not designed to be shared with children, young people, parents or carers. Should this threat evolve, the NCA will issue further guidance.

Please be aware this notice contains sensitive and distressing information, which is shared strictly for safeguarding purposes. Engaging with information of this nature can have a psychological impact. Please follow your organisation's wellbeing processes if support is required.

The [National Crime Agency \(NCA\)](#), [National Police Chiefs' Council \(NPCC\)](#) and [Counter Terrorism Policing \(CTP\)](#) are notifying children's safeguarding professionals of harmful online groups called 'Com Groups', who may target children and young people.

#### What are Com Groups?

Com Groups are online networks of individuals who carry out serious, high-harm offences including child sexual abuse, serious violence, cybercrime, and extremism. Com Groups are dynamic and often overlap across these threats, although not every case will involve all. Within these groups, offenders may compete against one another to cause the highest harm to gain status and notoriety. Offenders may do so by creating and sharing harmful and extreme content, for example, Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), or by coercing victims, often under 18 year olds, to commit harmful acts towards themselves or others, such as inflicting injuries.

Com Group offenders may use grooming and extortion tactics to coerce a victim, with the aim of obtaining intimate images to humiliate, degrade or control them. In extreme cases, victims have been coerced into self-harm or attempting suicide; including the ingestion of toxic/harmful materials, or burning themselves. Victims may also be forced to record or livestream these acts, which are then shared within the groups to increase the status and notoriety of the perpetrator.

#### Relevance to your role

This notice is in the interest of awareness raising and early identification, to prepare safeguarding professionals should this threat evolve. In which instance, the NCA will issue further guidance.

#### Why are we telling you this?

It is possible you may come across children and young people who are involved with, or a victim of, Com Group offending. Based on the cases identified, a large proportion of individuals enacting Com Group offending are males under 18 years old. These groups can target individuals of all ages and genders, however, females under 18 years old are being disproportionately targeted by offenders to groom, extort, commit child sexual abuse, and coerce self-injury and suicidality.



## 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](http://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](mailto:liiateam@londoncouncils.gov.uk)

**THANKS FOR READING!**

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