

One Customer Strategic Development - Sector-Led Project Consultancy

Background

The London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA) support collaboration across London's local authorities to improve outcomes for children and young people. Through London's Regional Care Co-operative (RCC), boroughs are working together to strengthen sufficiency, improve market management and maximise the impact of London's collective investment in children's placements.

London authorities currently spend approximately **£750 million annually on care placements**, yet commissioning, procurement and brokerage arrangements remain largely fragmented across the capital. A core ambition of the RCC is to establish a **"One Customer"** approach, enabling London to act collectively where it adds value, strengthen its influence within the market and improve outcomes for children and young people.

LIIA is seeking sector-led project consultancy to undertake a time-limited programme of work that will help establish the foundations of London's One Customer model.

This is a senior project-based consultancy role requiring strong expertise in children's services commissioning, procurement, market management and organisational change. The role will involve working with senior leaders, commissioners and operational teams across London to develop practical proposals that support greater collaboration, alignment and integration.

Purpose

The One Customer Strategic Development Sector Led Project Consultancy role will support the development of London's One Customer approach, helping the RCC move from a fragmented commissioning landscape towards a coordinated pan-London model for market management, commissioning and procurement.

Working across all 33 boroughs, the consultant will establish the foundations for collective commissioning and market shaping, supporting London's ambition to maximise the impact of its £750 million annual placement spend and increasingly operate as a single strategic customer.

The role is focused on strategic development, option appraisal, stakeholder engagement and business design, producing a series of recommendations and implementation plans that will inform the next phase of RCC development.

Key Responsibilities

1. Development of a Pan-London Procurement Model

The individual will lead the initial development of proposals for pan-London procurement arrangements for children's placements, with a particular focus on:

- Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) provision.
- Residential care provision.

This will include:

- Reviewing current procurement arrangements across London.
- Engaging commissioners, procurement leads and placement teams.
- Identifying opportunities for alignment and collaboration.
- Developing outline commissioning specifications.
- Mapping existing framework arrangements and procurement cycles.
- Identifying legal, operational and market considerations.
- Exploring opportunities for joint procurement with neighbouring RCCs, particularly the Southeast RCC.
- Developing a phased implementation roadmap.

Key Deliverables

- Pan-London procurement options appraisal.
- High-level IFA procurement specification.
- High-level residential procurement specification.
- Procurement roadmap and implementation timeline.
- Assessment of opportunities for cross-regional procurement and collaboration.

2. Commissioning Integration Review

The individual will undertake a comprehensive review of existing commissioning, quality assurance and brokerage arrangements operating across London.

The review will consider:

- Current commissioning structures.
- Staffing arrangements and capacity.
- Governance and decision-making arrangements.
- Brokerage functions.
- Procurement responsibilities.
- Market management functions.
- Existing collaborative arrangements.
- Areas of duplication, variation and opportunity.

The individual will then assess how these arrangements align with the RCC's development timetable and future operating model.

Key Deliverables

- London commissioning baseline assessment.
- Functional review of existing sub-regional commissioning arrangements.
- Gap analysis against the emerging RCC model.
- RCC integration roadmap.
- Recommendations regarding future operating arrangements.

3. Internal Market and Placement Utilisation Review

The individual will lead early development work to support creation of a pan-London internal market for local authority provision.

This will include:

- Mapping current approaches to vacancy monitoring and utilisation.
- Reviewing arrangements for sharing local authority provision across borough boundaries.
- Exploring options for "selling" and purchasing local authority vacancies.
- Developing options for vacancy tracking and reporting.
- Identifying operational, governance and commercial requirements.
- Exploring alignment with the RCC Dynamic Sufficiency Tool and common data model.
- Supporting development of approaches that maximise utilisation of existing local authority capacity.

Key Deliverables

- Internal Market Options Appraisal.
- Vacancy Tracking Framework.
- Outline operating model.
- Recommendations regarding governance and implementation.
- Phased implementation plan.

4. Development of a One Customer Operating Model

The individual will support the development of London's future One Customer operating model.

This will include:

- Engaging borough commissioners and commissioning leaders.
- Engaging providers and representative organisations.
- Reviewing current approaches to provider relationship management.
- Exploring opportunities for collaborative market management.
- Supporting development of a pan-London supplier engagement model.
- Identifying opportunities to strengthen London's collective commissioning leverage.
- Supporting development of proposals for future governance arrangements.

Key Deliverables

- One Customer operating model.
- Provider relationship management framework.
- Recommendations regarding market management and supplier engagement.
- Proposed governance arrangements.

5. Stakeholder Engagement and Consensus Building

The individual will work extensively with stakeholders across London to build support for the One Customer agenda.

This will include:

- Building relationships with commissioning leads, procurement leads and senior managers.
- Engaging Directors of Children's Services and Assistant Directors.
- Facilitating workshops, design sessions and stakeholder discussions.
- Capturing stakeholder views and identifying areas of consensus.
- Supporting development of a shared vision for the future RCC commissioning model.

Key Deliverables

- Stakeholder engagement programme.
- Summary findings and recommendations.
- Agreed priorities for future RCC activity.

Skills and Experience

Essential

The successful individual will demonstrate:

- Significant experience within children's services commissioning, sufficiency or placement commissioning.
- Significant experience of working in partnership with multiple local authorities – either regionally or sub-regionally (ideally in London)
- Experience leading large-scale commissioning reviews, operating model development or transformation programmes.
- Strong understanding of public sector procurement and commissioning arrangements.
- Strong understanding of children's placement markets and market-shaping activity.
- Experience developing business cases, operating models and implementation plans.
- Excellent analytical, facilitation and report-writing skills.
- Ability to engage credibly with Directors, Assistant Directors and senior commissioners.
- Strong stakeholder engagement and consensus-building skills.

Desirable

- Experience of Regional Care Co-operatives or regional commissioning arrangements.
- Experience of children's placement procurement.
- Experience of shared services or commissioning integration.
- Knowledge of fostering, residential care and sufficiency planning.
- Knowledge of London's children's social care landscape.

Working Arrangements

- It is anticipated that the assignment will be for 2-3 days per week (although there is some flexibility)
- The total duration of the assignment is up to a maximum of 3 months.
- **Staff from London local authorities are actively encouraged to apply and will be prioritised.** The RCC will work with the employing local authority to formalise this arrangement.
- If the position cannot be filled through a secondment, the equivalent day rate for external consultants will be £550 (outside IR35).
- LIA Lead Contact: Head of RCC Delivery.
- Operating model: Hybrid, with attendance at meetings across London as required.

Expected Outputs

By the conclusion of the consultancy, the RCC will have:

- An assessment of opportunities for cross-regional commissioning and procurement.
- A proposal and timeline for developing pan-London procurements for IFA and residential care
- A functional review of existing commissioning and QA arrangements across London and an accompanying proposal for future alignment/integration of these functions.
- A proposed model for vacancy management and internal market development.
- Recommendations regarding future market management and provider engagement arrangements.

Expressions of Interest

- To express interest in the opportunity please send your CV and a Supporting Statement (maximum 500 words) to jonny.woodthorpe@londoncouncils.gov.uk by 17:00 on **Friday 4th September 2026**.

The statement should set out your relevant skills/experience and an overview of how you would approach the work.

Shortlisted candidates will then be invited to interview (date tbc)