

Title: Collaborative Commissioning
Report authorised by : Ann Graham, Corporate Director of Children's Services

Lead Officer: Dionne Thomas Director of Safeguarding & Social Care

Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** For Information and Noting

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 This report provides a strategic update on collaborative commissioning initiatives across North Central London (NCL) and Pan-London, with a particular focus on market management and placement sufficiency.

1.2 The report outlines key developments, emerging opportunities, and Haringey's active contributions to regional efforts aimed at improving outcomes for children in care and children with complex needs.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

N/A

3. Recommendations

3.1 That Members note contents.

4. Reasons for decision

4.1 This report is for information only.

5. Alternative options considered

N/A

6. Background information

6.1 Pan London and Sub Regional Commissioning Activity

6.1.1 Local authorities across London are under increasing pressure to meet the needs of children with complex needs amid rising demand, limited provision, and escalating costs. In response, both North Central London (NCL) sub-region and Pan-London through the wider London Integrated Improvement Alliance (LIIA) who are leading collaborative commissioning initiatives aimed at improving placement sufficiency, quality, and value for money.

6.1.2 Haringey is actively engaged in shaping and delivering these initiatives.

6.1.3 Key Pan-London (Regional) Activity projects:

- Secure Children's Home (SCH) & LARP: Development of a new Pan-London secure children's home with reintegration accommodation. A legal entity (Pan-London Vehicle) is being established to host this and future regional commissioning projects.
- London Accommodation Pathfinder: Expansion of supported accommodation across London, including recommissioning for 2026. A North London property is already operational.
- ASD/SEMH Commissioning: Five regional projects to improve early support, crisis response, short breaks, and local care options for children with autism and SEMH needs. Includes scoping for residential schools or networks.
- Parent and Child Residential Assessment Framework: Now fully operational across London, providing a consistent model for parenting assessments.
- Commissioning with Health: Development of Pan-London principles for jointly funded placements, particularly for children with complex needs.
- Capital and Market Engagement: Seven successful capital bids supported. Ongoing engagement with providers to stimulate development aligned with the London Sufficiency Plan.
- Top 330 Analysis: Regional analysis of high-cost, low-incidence placements to inform sufficiency planning and reduce reliance on expensive out-of-borough provision.
- Government Engagement: Ongoing lobbying with MoJ, DfE, and DHSC to address placement costs, funding models, and national policy reform.

6.1.4 North Central London (NCL) Sub-Regional Activity

- Joint Funded Placements Review: A task and finish group are reviewing complex care, continuing care, and Section 117 placements to identify commissioning inconsistencies and develop standardised protocols.
- Fostering Hub Development: A DfE-funded bid has been submitted to establish a North London fostering recruitment hub to increase in-house carers and reduce reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs).
- Residential Sufficiency Strategy: NCL boroughs are working to improve occupancy of in-house residential homes and shape the private market through block contracts and shared protocols.
- Data and Intelligence: A sufficiency needs assessment is underway using DfE, LIIA, and local data to inform future commissioning.
- Market Engagement: Engagement with P&V providers to align provision with local needs and improve cost-effectiveness.

6.2 Haringey Commissioning Activity

6.2.1 London Accommodation Pathway

6.2.1.1 Agreement in principle to continue to block a bed for 16–17-year-old male children in care as a direct alternative to being remanded or sentenced to custody and support resettlement. This is a pan-London project, led by Camden.

6.2.2 NCL Complex Needs Children's Home

6.2.2.1 The provision will provide additional local provision for children in care with complex mental health needs and challenging behaviours, and the aim is for the home to be ready by 2026/2027. Haringey have expressed an interest in blocking a bed to meet the needs of children in care with complex mental health.

6.3 Fostering Hub and Capital Projects

6.3.1 Haringey is strategically investing in fostering capacity through capital projects.

6.3.2 Haringey Children's Services have also looked to increase its fostering capacity through capital projects. One such project is the Fostering Families project, where children's service has worked closely with the Housing team to acquire a 4-bed property for the purposes of relocating one of Haringey's existing foster carers. By moving the foster carer to larger accommodation, this will allow them to increase their fostering capacity. This will support larger sibling groups to stay together within the borough and reduce Haringey's reliance on high-cost out-of-borough IFAs. It is anticipated that the first iteration of this scheme will be delivered in October 2025.

6.3.3 As part of Haringey's drive to recruit foster carers / increase fostering capacity, the capital projects team have aligned this priority with the Overnight Short Breaks project, which will create a 3-bed Overnight Short Breaks Centre for children with high physical or neurodevelopmental needs – target open date Spring 2026. As part of this alignment, the capital projects team are developing a package of support to foster carers of children with high needs, which will entitle them to a set number of nights to access the Overnight Short Breaks centre. It is hoped the guaranteed offer of respite will entice more prospective foster carers to be placed with children with high needs.

6.4 Market Management

6.4.1 Haringey continues to strengthen market relationships and commissioning flexibility:

- Quarterly Provider Forums to build collaborative relationships, to promote good practice, share key updates and drive improvements in quality.
- Commissioning led the development of a new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) and Children's Residential Homes, enhancing both commissioning flexibility and provider engagement. To date, eight IFAs, including the UK's largest fostering agency, have joined the DPS.

6.4.2 We have been working collaboratively with IFAs to expand placement capacity through:

- Weekly vacancy tracking to monitor available foster placements.

- Developing bi-weekly and monthly engagement meetings with providers whom we place the most children in care with to discuss upcoming needs, enable early matching, and proactively respond to placement requests.
- Currently, Ten Ofsted-registered children's homes operate in Haringey, including the council's own provision, offering a total of thirty-eight beds. So far, four residential homes have joined the DPS.

6.4.3 Planning permission has been granted for four new children's homes in Haringey, which are now pending Ofsted registration. These homes will provide an additional sixteen beds. Commissioning is actively engaging with these new providers to secure:

- A Haringey-first offer for placement vacancies.
- Reduced placement fees

Of the four new homes:

- Three homes will be registered for Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD).
- One home will be registered for Learning Disabilities (LD).

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-2024 High level Strategic outcomes

N/A

8. Carbon and Climate Change

N/A

9. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)

N/A

10. Use of Appendices

None

11. Background papers

N/A

