**London Children’s Social Care Practice Leaders Group**

**Terms of Reference**

This document sets out the core functions of the Group and arrangements for:

* Membership
* Meetings
* Programme management
* Links with other networks

**Core functions**

The Group provides a forum to discuss and engage partners on strategic issues relating to children’s social care, share best practice, identify opportunities for further collaboration between London Boroughs and partners. The Group’s core functions are to:

* Promote and develop the professional practice leader role
* Improve children’s social care practice to secure better outcomes for children and young people.
* Promote anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice practice.
* Develop and support people working in children’s services so the people in senior and leadership roles better reflects our workforce and communities.
* Strengthen strategic partnerships, regional arrangements and practice for protecting children including looked after children.
* Provide a strong voice on strategic and policy developments affecting children’s social care.
* Provide peer support and mutual aid.

In carrying out these functions the Group will use data, analysis and research on the London picture and contribute to sector led and the London Innovation and Improvement Board.

**Governance, programme management and membership**

The core members are Practice Leaders who are qualified social workers with day to day responsibility across the whole system for child and family social work practice.

They have a range of job titles and portfolios but are at Assistant Director level or equivalent. Children’s social care leaders who report to the Practice Leader may deputise for the business part of the Group’s meetings.

The Association of London Directors of Children’s Services (ALDCS) leads regional policy development and service improvement through the Group, other regional networks and the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA). The Steering Group raises issues for ALDCS with the ALDCS link. ALDCS delegates work to the Group through the ALDCS link or ALDCS policy leads.

There are sub-regional leads who form a steering group sharing responsibility for chairing the meeting, agenda setting and reviewing the work of the group.

The steering group will hold an on-line agenda planning meeting between Practice Leader Group Meetings.

ALDCS expects that Practice Leaders prioritise attendance at meetings and engagement with regional development and improvement:

* The steering group sub-regional lead will communicate with peers who have not engaged in meetings
* Practice Leaders will contribute to regional innovation and improvement work (for example by contributing to policy development, taking a lead on regional task and improvement activity and represent the group on regional bodies)
* Practice leaders will assure responses to regional requests for information or surveys sponsored by ALDCS

The Group is supported by an independent consultant who provides programme management, wider support to the Group and acts as a point of contact for the Group.

The Group has an annual business plan setting out its objectives for the year and the actions to be taken to achieve them.

**Meetings**

* Meetings will be on-line until it is permissible to hold meetings at London Councils. Practice leaders will review the feasibility of hybrid meetings enabling people to meet in person and join digitally, and the proportion of meetings that will be on line, hybrid or in person.
* Meetings are scheduled for the year ahead on alternative Mondays through to Thursdays avoiding any clashes with other regional meetings.
* Meetings take place for two hours in the mornings starting at 9.30 am except the December meeting which starts at 3pm.
* The meeting is chaired by a practice leader who is a member of the steering group.
* The meetings have a business and development section.
* Deputies may by exception attend the business section of the meeting.