

LIIA NEWSLETTER

December 2024 Issue

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to share with you the December edition of the **LIIA newsletter**. This has been a year where change has been in the air, with the formation of a new government and the prospect of significant reform in children's services, and my appointment as the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS) Chair in May. To our valued colleagues who are moving on to their next chapter, we extend great thanks, to Chris Munday, DCS Barnet, for his leadership of our Resources and Commissioning programme and Debbie Jones, DCS Croydon, for her leadership role of our Care Leaving programme.



In this edition, you'll read how the **London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LIIA)** has remained committed to its core priorities while innovatively pushing forward our pan-London objectives.

We recognise that there is brilliant practice taking place across London, so we are thrilled to have recently launched the London Children's Services Practice Spotlight to highlight the amazing work happening within Local Authorities and we invite London LAs to submit their most innovative and impactful practice. To learn more please visit the LIIA website to access the Practice Spotlight area and resources.

Very best wishes,

Florence Kroll

DCS Royal Borough of Greenwich, ALDCS Adolescent Safeguarding policy lead and chair of the London Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board (LASOB) chair of the ALDCS

THIS NEWSLETTER

- LIIA's core activity updates
- A whistlestop tour of the 5 ALDCS priorities
- Resources and programme newsletters

LIIA'S CORE ACTIVITIES

ABOUT THE CORE ACTIVITIES

- LIIA 24/25 Annual Plan
- Making Data Speak for London's Children
- Health
- Leadership in Colour
- Practice Spotlight & ALDCS Summit

Review of LIIA & 2024/25 Annual Plan:

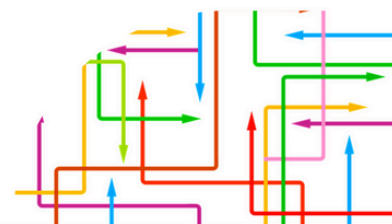
- [LIIA's Annual Plan](#) represents the ambition ALDCS have for tackling the most pressing issues for London's children, young people, their families and the diverse workforce that serves them. LIIA's core activities enable progress and carry [ALDCS Five Priority Areas](#).

Making Data Speak for London's Children:

- **Early this year the Q1 and Q2 2024/2025 benchmarking data** was published on the [LIIA members area](#).
- **Other dashboards have been updated and further developed;** Agency dashboard, SEND dashboard, Education disproportionality, Ofsted inspections outcomes (now includes SEND inspections), CLD Episodes.
- **New dashboards being moved from the preview to the live folders are;** OC3 Care Leavers dashboard, CLD OC2 (about the strengths and difficulties questionnaire collected for children looked after each year).
- **The data in the CLD (Child Level Data) dashboards is being refreshed with the data from 2022/2023** - which is almost complete and will feature a further refresh when completed.
- **The transfer of the Dynamic Sufficiency Tool to the LIIA d&i team** has been completed and we have released a 2.0 version of the dashboard, including the 2022/2023 CLD data already mentioned. Further iterations of this dashboard are planned.
- **The ALDCS Intelligence, Data & Research steering group** met in July, September and December.
- **The secure data sharing platform is nearing completion after some further delays** (projected to be completed in January). We will be embarking on a series of tests to allow us to start using this the platform in February.
- **The Breaking New Ground Health and Social Care data sharing project is entering a new phase** with the Social Finance involvement being phased out. Health colleagues from Imperial presented at the LIIA team meeting on 30th October to mark the start of an engagement process to get the remaining NW London DCS' signed up to extending the project to include their data. The MoU for this project has gone through sign-off and funds to accelerate the work are being released.

Data Insights: Making Data Speak for London's Children – Members Area

This area is for members of the London Information Exchange Group and their DCSs.



[Home](#) > [Members Area Dashboard](#) > [Data Insights](#)

[LIIA Quarterly Indicators Dashboards](#)

[London Pledge Dashboard](#)

[Access Power BI dashboards](#)

[LIIA Preview Dashboards \(early access\)](#)

Quarterly Benchmarking Data

You can review the **Quarterly Benchmarking Data** for London by individual local authority and the four London sub-regions. LA's provide quarterly data on the condition that it is used by the benchmarking group for internal reporting only. As the dashboards contain information relating to individual LA's, please **DO NOT share the link** with any external partners or the public.

Please click the button below to access our emerging set of interactive dashboards. The dashboards are hosted via the Power BI app. Please contact one of the members of the team in the **Contact Us** box below if you require access.

The Power BI Dashboards are hosted for LIIA by LB Waltham Forest whose support and technical assistance are greatly appreciated.

Health:

"Improving engagement between LA DCS and health systems in London"

Further to the discovery and insights work undertaken earlier in the year, in November ALDCS agreed that the LIIA leads for health will focus on three key areas:

- **Strategic collaboration with London Councils, relevant health:** DCS liaison roles in Local Authorities, and other key stakeholders pertinent to the health : DCS relationship.
- **Input into LIIA transformation programmes** (currently Commissioning and Continuing Care)
- **Ensuring ALDCS representation at key strategic regional meetings** - along with relevant follow up.

Ian Lewis and Kate Kewley continue their focus on key relationship and insight building, with additional resource to support core LIIA work from a health perspective. Information from key meetings attended will be circulated to DCS on a quarterly basis, and saved online in the LIIA Resources Area.

Leadership in Colour:

This year saw a major expansion of the Leadership in Colour ambition, with ALDCS deciding to 'bake in' anti-racism and disproportionality activity into all its priority areas. Each of the five priority workstreams will use data and their strategic planning and delivery abilities to identify and tackle racism and disproportionality where it exists. Those leading the workstreams will work with the Leadership in Colour Reference Group to co-ordinate efforts.

In other news:

- We have begun the process of recommissioning a leadership development programme for black and global majority members of the children's workforce.
- Each of the sub-regional 'pledge' meetings dedicated a session to ARD workforce issues, sharing their challenges and responses with their immediate neighbours
- Whilst we were unable to run a Leadership in Colour Summit this year, planning has started for an event to bring London children's services together on this theme in 2025.

Practice Spotlight & ALDCS Summit:

London Children's Services

Practice Spotlight

- **LIA will soon prepare the annual London's Children's Services Summit.** This will be an important opportunity to bring all the strands of regional work together to shape the direction of the priorities and enable collective regional influence on the national agenda.
- **We have also been delighted to launch the London's Children's Services Practice Spotlight**, inviting all London LAs submit their most innovative and impactful practice.

The purpose is to shine a light on London's most innovative and impactful practice;

1. **To identify the practice that is making a difference**, often around very complex and challenging areas of work.
2. **To boost opportunities for sharing and learning** across London's LAs, which underpins a positive culture of collaboration.
3. **To recognise and celebrate the individuals and teams** who have done this work and raise awareness of London's amazing work with broader audiences.

9 Categories

1 Reducing racial disparities and tackling racism, sponsored by the Leadership in Colour Reference Group

2 Impact for children with special educational needs and disabilities, sponsored by the London SEND Steering Group

3 Building safety for young Londoners, sponsored by the London Adolescent Safeguarding Oversight Board

4 Supporting and strengthening the workforce, sponsored by the Workforce Steering Group

5 Delivering excellence for care leavers, sponsored by the Care Leavers Trust Board

6 Improving outcomes for children with complex needs who are in care or on the edge of care, sponsored by the Pan-London Placements Commissioning Panel

7 Delivering together with health services, sponsored by the Children's Social Care Practice Leaders

8 Making data speak for London's children, sponsored by the Intelligence & Data Research Steering Group

9 Delivering positive impact through early intervention, sponsored by the London Early Help Network

The deadline for submissions is 20th December 2024.

ADOLESCENT SAFEGUARDING

The Adolescent Safeguarding workstream, led by Florence Kroll, focuses on the following areas:

- Refreshing and disseminating the Adolescent Safeguarding Practice Handbook.
- Supporting the evaluation of the Your Choice programme, which will run until December 2024.
- Delivering the LA component of MOPAC's CYP Violence and Exploitation Support Service.
- Supporting inclusion to promote safeguarding adolescents in education.

Adolescent Safeguarding Practice Handbook (ASIL):

- **The ASIL project is progressing** with current priorities focused on finalising content, hosting user engagement sessions with multi-agency partners and developing the practice handbook as a digital resource. The official ASIL launch has been deferred to 2025, with timelines subject to review as current and pre-launch activities progress.
- **Feedback from colleagues in the two engagement sessions** held has been invaluable in contributing to progress, with a high level of interest and commitment to staying involved in next steps.
- **If you'd like to be an ASIL Champion** please get in touch with [Mei Ho](#). There has already been a high level of interest, with a significant number of sign-ups, indicating strong engagement from participants.

Adolescent safeguarding in London

A handbook for collaboration

Build safety with every young Londoner

ALDCS

LIIA



Your Choice Programme:



- **We are in the final stretch of the YEF-funded period of the Your Choice programme in London** and its associated London Young People Study. With the addition of LB Camden into the trial, there are 31 London local authorities delivering Your Choice with over 1,300 young people across London aged 11-18 at medium to high risk of extra-familial violence already participating in the Study. Well done London!
- **This means the London Young People Study is already the largest one of this cohort in England and Wales** and will provide an opportunity for London's young people and practitioners to make a significant contribution to the evidence base.
- **We continue to hear positive anecdotal feedback, with improved practitioner and child well-being**, alongside tangible financial savings, which we expect will be confirmed via the final Report publication, expected late autumn of next year.

Violence and Exploitation Support Service (VESS):

- **The Violence and Exploitation Support Service was launched in June** and aims to reduce violence, violent victimisation and harmful behaviours.
- **In November, the team brought together representatives from Children's Social Care, Youth Justice Services and Community Safety** to deliver a pre-engagement workshop at London Councils to begin developing our understanding of how best the VESS Local Authority Coordination team could support the service delivery and help with the pan-London coordination of Local Authority partners.
- **Moving forward, further links will be established with all London Boroughs and other partner agencies** to ensure that the current design, test and learn phase of LIIA VESS delivery produces a clear mandate for how LIIA can be successful in providing meaningful support as part of our joined-up response to violence and exploitation.

MACE Review & Implementation:

- **There was a MACE protocol review at the Septembers London MACE chairs Network** meeting led by Jeanne King. The upcoming fifth edition of the protocol aims to refine its focus, stripping unnecessary content to create a streamlined document that promotes genuine collaborative working rather than procedural meetings.
- **Key areas of focus include violence, exploitation, prevent, and radicalisation.** Members emphasised the need for precise data sharing and analysis, underlining the importance of using intelligence effectively to measure and benchmark progress.
- **Partners are working towards a publication date in early 2025.**

Adolescent Safeguarding Data Dashboard:

- **During the November LASOB meeting, Ben Byrne presented the data dashboard** to the members, providing a brief introduction to the data and highlighting key insights.
- **This sparked a discussion among members about what the adolescent safeguarding dataset** reveals regarding disproportionality.

If you'd like to access the dashboard please contact Mei.Ho@londoncouncils.gov.uk.

SEND

The ALDCS SEND Programme is chaired by Elaine Allegretti, and works across four cross cutting priorities:

- Enhancing Provision and Support for Children and Young People with SEND.
- Supporting pan-London Collaboration and Joint Working.
- Building Capacity and Capability within the SEND Workforce.
- Supporting Developments and Sharing Learning across SEND.

London SEND Leadership programme:

- **The London SEND Leadership Programme has progressed significantly**, with the first cohort completed and the second launched in October 2024. Designed in January 2024 by Newton Europe and nasen (National Association for Special Educational Needs), the programme was shaped with input from SEND Leads to Team Managers to address key needs and preferences.
- **Widely praised for its relevance, 100% of the first cohort found the training met their needs**, improved peer networks, and 95% recommended it to peers. Evaluations indicate increased confidence among participants in leading local change.
- **At the programme's conclusion, 78%** of participants agreed with the statement: *"I am confident in delivering a SEND change programme in my local area"* compared to just 36% at the programme's start.
- **All 33 London Local Authorities, and 5 ICBs**, now have representatives attending the programme.



Ofsted SEND Inspections:

- **The Ofsted SEND inspection framework has provided valuable insights** into the performance of LAs. Since the framework's introduction in Jan 2023, 43 inspection reports have been published nationally, including eight from London Boroughs. LIIA continues to monitor outcomes, analysis shows that London is performing above the national average, with 38% of boroughs achieving Outcome 1 compared to 26% nationally.
- **LIIA also hosts a bank of Local Authority SEFs on our SEND Members area**, if you have recently completed a SEF for your Local Area and would like to add this to our bank - [please get in touch!](#)

SEND Commissioning:

Following [Treow's report on SEND Commissioning across London](#), Mime Consulting has been commissioned to implement key recommendations.



- **These include developing a pan-London commissioning framework**, a shared data system for Independent Non-Maintained Special School placements, and tools to streamline SEND placements.
- **The project will address rising placement costs, insufficient specialist provision, and increasing service demand** while improving data management and commissioning practice. A key goal is to explore collaborative commissioning at the ICB and London-wide levels.
- **The data system will identify gaps in provision and high-cost placements**, supporting better value for money and improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Supporting Networks and Sharing Practice:



- **We continue to support the SEND Strategic Manager Parent Carer Network**, hosting focused sessions on Inclusion and Social Care, and Measuring Outcomes.
- **The London SEND Finance Network**, featured insights from the DfE and Local Authorities on savings programmes like Delivering Better Value and Safety Valve, along with innovative case studies from Local Authorities.
- **If you would like to be added to the distribution lists** for either of these networks, [please get in touch!](#)

SEND Workforce:

- **The SEND Programme is working with the Workforce Programme to address key challenges in the London SEND workforce.** Local Authority case studies are being developed to map challenges faced by SEND Teams. Four studies are complete, with five in progress. Early findings highlight shortages and high costs of EPs, alongside successes like improved retention through training and career pathways. The findings from these case studies will be used to inform action to address recruitment and retention challenges'
- **The programme is also engaging with other regions, and we recently attended the South East SEND Workforce Summit**, to explore shared challenges and scope for next steps, including a SEND 'Big Listen' to gather workforce insights, and the development of SEND Caseworker Apprenticeships.

SEND Data dashboard:

- **LIIA is continuing to develop the London SEND Data Dashboard** as part of the SEND programme to support Local Authorities. The dashboard offers valuable tools for London Authorities to facilitate both local and regional monitoring of SEND Services. [You can access the Dashboard here.](#)

RESOURCES AND COMMISSIONING

The Resources and Commissioning Programme, focuses on the following areas:

- Increasing financial pressures on placement budgets.
- High cost low incidence provision and lack of suitable local provision resulting in placements at great distances from the home local authority.
- Pan-London collaboration with local authorities to improve sufficiency, value for money and outcomes for children.

Capital Round Announcement:

- **The DfE has announced a new £60m capital funding programme**, confirmed in the Autumn Budget, to support up to 200 placements for children with complex needs at risk of deprivation of liberty. LIA has set up a network to support local authorities developing bids – ***please get in touch*** if you plan to apply for funding.

London Accommodation Pathfinder:

- **The London Accommodation Pathfinder (LAP) has been operational for over a year**, making substantial progress since its launch. A significant milestone has now been reached with the ***first evaluation of the project now published***.
- **The aims of the LAP are to provide an alternative to custody** for some of London's most vulnerable children, and while it has not been without its challenges, as illustrated in the report, it has also demonstrated growth and resilience in its first year.
- **Since its launch in August 2023, sixteen children have used the LAP as an alternative to custody.** Three were remanded back due to new offences or breaches, and one received a custodial sentence, but the others all avoided time in youth offender institutions or similar provision in line with the aims of the LAP.

"The support has stopped me wanting to do bad"
Young Person placed within the LAP

Secure Children's Home (SCH) & Pan-London Vehicle for Children's Complex Commissioning Ltd (PLV):

- **The London SCH project, which is near the end of the pre planning application stage**, has been on hold since August '24. Since then, the project team has been working with the Department for Education to review and make changes to the project delivery approach in order to give this complex project, and the future planning application for the SCH, the greatest chance of success.
- **Boroughs will be updated, via their DCS, should there be any significant changes** to the status of this project before the next bulletin.
- **For more information about this project, *contact the Project Lead*** or find out more on the ***LIIA website***.

Collaborative Commissioning for ASD/SEMH:



- Phase 3 of the ASD SEMH project is currently underway, key activities include seeking partnership agreements in sub-regions to validate the pan-London business case and exploring opportunities for specialist residential provision, including options for new Residential Schools.
- Collaborative work is underway across ICBs, Local Authorities, and provider collaboratives to design pilot projects, building on existing innovations. Each ICB is supporting work on identifying local needs, cohort data, and potential interventions, with scenario modelling and securing funding being key steps.
- Across London, a residential school is also being scoped with potential providers. Workstreams will cover delivery models, capital works, and integration across health, education, and social care, with service user wherever possible, and provider input when necessary. To find out how work is progressing in your Local Area, ***please get in touch***.

Pan-London Dynamic Sufficiency Tool:

- **The Dynamic Sufficiency Tool is now available in the LIIA Members Area** on the LIIA website, alongside other centralised reporting. This interactive tool provides Commissioners with valuable insights for commissioning and strategic planning.
- **LIIA aims to use data and intelligence to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, young people, and families in London.** Access is restricted to professionals working with the 33 London LAs, nominated by the DCS or senior leaders. To access the tool, please obtain authorisation from a senior leader in your LA and ***register via the LIIA portal***.

Supporting Networks and Sharing Practice:

The Commissioning Programme supports collaboration across London through networks.

- **The Pan-London Commissioning Network**, for commissioning leads, shares experiences and addresses challenges. Co-chaired by Dave Borland (LB Greenwich) and Julia Mills (LB Camden).
- **The London Children's Homes Managers Network**, launched after research on recruitment and retention, supports managers from LA-owned homes.
- To find out more, and join the networks, ***please get in touch***.

WORKFORCE

The ALDCS Workforce Programme is chaired by Nigel Chapman and works across six strategic objectives;

1. Drive sufficiency and supply; increase the supply of talent and develop a forward-looking professional roles across children's services.
2. Strengthen and model leadership at all levels; culturally competent leadership, first line management training and amplify the voice of leadership.
3. Ambitious London offer and increased stability; bold London offer that responds to changed expectations.
4. Empower and develop talent; listen to the workforce, a transparent progression pathway and prioritise wellbeing
5. Tackling racism and disproportionality; ensure anti-racism is 'baked in' and LAs are supported.
6. Sustainability; a workforce strategy is owned and delivered with the workforce, incorporating the voice of the child.

First London Children's Services Workforce Partnership:

- **November marked a significant milestone for London's Children's Services** hosting its first Workforce Partnership Conference bringing together all CSC Social Work market players.
- **We heard powerful messages** about the importance of "listening to our workforce", "working together to provide psychological safety", "taking the time to say thank you".

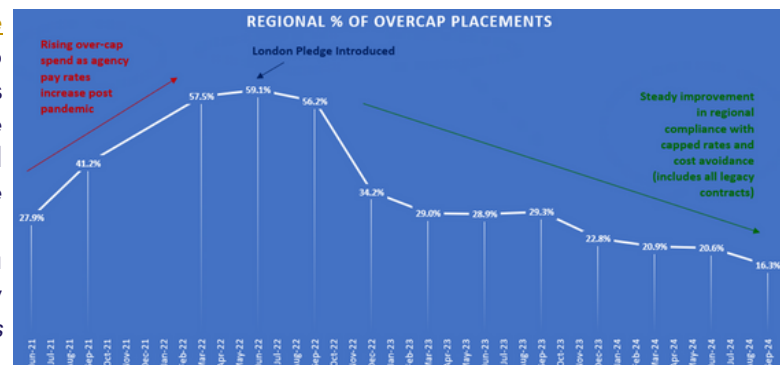
"We talk often about collaboration, but it's powerful to see and feel it here in this room" - DCS

"What a great gathering of minds to deliberate some of the key issues across London's Children's Services workforce. Such an insightful session" - LGA



National Statutory Guidance on Agency Use of CSC Social Workers:

- **New Rules:** The DfE [published the statutory guidance for local authorities on the use of agency child and family social workers](#) and updated [data and price caps operational guidance](#).
- **New Resources and Tools:** [Research in Practice launched a range of new resources and tools](#) to support employers to meet the employer standards and the implementation of the statutory guidance on the use of agency child and family social workers. London directly contributed to the resource content.
- **New Best Ever:** Over-cap spend has reduced by a further 4.3% to 16.3% in the last quarter, a new best ever for London (includes all legacy contracts and AWR).



London Social Work for Children (LSWC):

- **Since its launch in June 2023, LSWC website has had more than 153,000+ visitors**, 998+ specialist job postings from 100% of LAs, grown a community of 1,557+ registered LSWC candidates and has an active social media following of 1,674+ (LinkedIn).
- **The quarterly LSWC engagement report allows for detailed performance reviews**, the [monthly LSWC Bulletin](#) supports LA User engagement and the LSWC Dashboard visualises new data collected through the platform.
- **Regional content, case studies and video campaigns have celebrated social work in London** through the voice of our workforce across the year.

Children's Home Workforce:

- **The London Children's Homes Managers Network was launched in the summer** and has brought together Registered Managers, Deputy Managers, and Responsible Individuals from LA-owned and run children's homes, as well as those involved in the opening of new homes.
- **From 2025 it has been agreed that the LSWC platform will expand its remit** to include Registered Manager and Deputy Manager posts.

"This well attended new network has been a valuable opportunity to build links with managers of other homes and to discuss the unique challenges related to the challenging RI and RM roles" - Network Member

SEND Workforce:

- **Following SEND workforce research and case study development, four key proposals are being considered in January.** This includes exploring the development of SEND London Pledge to address growing agency market challenges and developing a SEND Big Listen. We expect to commence activities in Q4.

Visit liia.london to learn more

Follow LIIA on LinkedIn

CARE LEAVING

The ALDCS Care Leaving Programme is led by Jacqui McShannon, Stephen Kitchman and Debbie Jones. It works to meet care leaver needs across six priority areas:

- Housing
- Health
- Relationships
- Education, Training and Employment
- Immigration
- Criminal Justice

Pan London Care Leavers Compact Launched in March:

- **Young people, national and regional government, and partners including the NHS, Transport for London, the Care Leavers Covenant, and Catch 22, came together** at the Guildhall to launch the Pan London Care Leavers Compact.
- **The Compact has brokered support packages across partners** including free prescriptions, discounted TfL travel, and strengthened housing positions within Local Authorities.
- **We continue to develop new, practical, support offers** under the banner of the Compact.



Beyond the Compact:

There is collective determination that the launch of the Compact is just the start of the journey to better support care-experienced people in London.

Key milestones this year include:

- **Undertaking a wide-scale survey of LA care leaving practice and views.** This, along with DfE data, gives a detailed map of the London position which can be used to grow best practice and make business cases for change.
- **The Health group has focussed on increasing/improving mental health provision.** Our lead DCSs have secured a commitment from the regional NHS team that care leavers needs will be flagged as a priority in the regional mental health strategy (Dec 2025). We have also brokered a partnership with a major optical firm to provide discounted eye tests/glasses.
- **The Housing group has focussed on improving the offer and partnership with Housing Associations,** with a best practice pilot underway between Bromley/Clarion. They are also looking at the development in several boroughs of small-scale provision bespoke to care leaver needs.
- **The ETE group has focussed on the HE/FE offer, with a London Vice-Chancellors session being planned** for the new year. They will also look at the potential of developing a 'family firm' standard in ETE offers across LA's and statutory partners.
- **An increased focus on care leavers in the MOPAC review of the Reducing Criminalisation of Children** in Care and Care Leavers Protocol. Including the potential for London to adopt the West Mids pilot scheme to identify and support care leavers at the point of arrest.
- **A workshop around the immigration needs of care leavers** is being planned for the new year.
- **We held a PA Briefing session, which connected 190 London PA's with the support offers available** from the Compact, the CL Covenant and the GLA. Following positive feedback, we will now run this event quarterly.
- **We are also linking London's Care Leaving Activity with that of other regions, ADCS, and the LGA,** both in terms of sharing best approaches and joint lobbying for national positions.

MEMBERS AREA ACCESS

As always, [you can click here to register for access](#) to our dedicated Members Areas.



OUR NEWSLETTERS

LIIA produces several newsletters to keep partners updated. You can read these on our website or click the below links to access the latest editions:

[Adolescent Safeguarding and Youth Justice Newsletter](#) (September Issue)

[Workforce Newsletter](#) (November Issue)

[Resources and Commissioning Bulletin](#) (December Issue)

[SEND Bulletin](#) (December Issue)

[Care Leaving Newsletter](#) (September Issue)

GET IN TOUCH

Please visit our website: 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.

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