

Association of Directors of Children's Services
Children and Young People's Continuing Care South East Regional Network
Regional Action Plan and Terms of Reference

1 Introduction

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) exists as a voluntary agreement between the 19 councils in the South East region. The MoU describes how Directors of Children's Services (DCSs) want councils to work together co-operatively to help lead improvement of children's social care services.

In January 2025 ADCS and LGA submitted a joint response to the Law Commission Review on Disabled Children's Social Care, including concern with the inconsistent national approach to Children's Continuing Care funding, and lack of statutory basis:

We support proposals to codify in legislation the dividing line between social care and health care in respect of children, mirroring the approach for adults. Too often, support for children (including but not limited to disabled children) is affected by difficulties in agreeing responsibilities and funding across partners, particularly in a context of high needs and limited finances, and we must find ways to ensure that children's needs are always at the centre of discussions. We would also like to see work across Government on pooled funding and other options to improve how this works locally. This could helpfully start with a review of the children's continuing care framework.

This Network is intended to support regional CYPCC improvement and intelligence-gathering, linking to national ADCS goals for implementation of the position paper's recommendations.

2 Terms of Reference

2.1 Aims

- To provide Directors of Children's Services in the region with up-to-date information relating to local and national frameworks and policy for Children & Young People's Continuing Care.
- To continuously improve the quality of Children & Young People's Continuing Care management through sharing up-to-date information.
- To provide a regional forum for discussion and action in respect of CYPCC and issues arising from central and local government policy initiatives across Children's Social Care. To include:
 - Clarification and interpretation of legal changes and strategic and policy guidance;
 - Sharing of successes and difficulties in the implementation of CYPCC;
- To enhance the ability of SE ADCS to influence national developments by engagement with national CYPCC networks, DFE, DH&SC, LGA, NHSE&I.
- To liaise with national CYPCC leads, working toward a consistent LA approach to CYPCC across the country.

2.2 Working arrangements and frequency of meetings

- Meeting will take place on a two monthly basis initially. Frequency to be reviewed in April 2026.
- Meetings will include matters of common interest, a mixture of sharing challenges, opportunities to work together and best practice examples.
- The meetings will be co-chaired by DCS Lin Ferguson and Liam Doherty RBWM.
- The agenda will be agreed by the above.
- The detailed work programme of the group will be delivered through individuals on the group and work groups as agreed by the network's membership.
- Where appropriate for the delivery of the work programme, short task groups may be formed on an ad hoc basis to allow for more in-depth work, drawing together ideas, evidence and proposals to be presented at other forums.

- Agendas and notes of the meeting will be agreed by the chair.
- An annual face to face conference will be held to enable SE regional leads and other relevant stakeholders to share good practice and take forward specific pieces of work
- A joint workshop with key SE ICB colleagues will be arranged, the aim to be determined and agreed by the CYPCC network.

2.3 Reporting and Monitoring

- The CYPCC Network chairs will provide feedback to the South East AD Safeguarding Network every six months.
- Each member authority is expected to report back to its own management team as appropriate.

2.4 Review

- The Terms of Reference will be reviewed as required but as a minimum annually.
- Chairs of the Group will be reviewed on an annual basis.

3 Draft action Plan

Action/ Theme	Objective	Detail	Lead	Timeline
Intelligence gathering	Gather and share intelligence on CYPCC issues across the South East region	Gather intelligence to better understand what is happening to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy arrangements - Disputes and dispute resolution - Shared funding arrangements - Training - Existing data collection - CYPCC practice concerns. Questionnaire and subsequent analysis will detail issues		
Legal limits of LAs.	To develop clear legal guidance about provision that is beyond the jurisdiction of social care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage with progression of Law Commission report on reform of Disabled Children's Social Care Legislation - Progress with legal review of CYPCC Framework - Develop shared interim guidance on LA legal limits 		
Guidance and procedures	Consistency of approach by LAs.	Share best practice in policy and procedures across the region to develop common LA approaches to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CYPCC referral and assessment - Dispute resolution - Shared funding - Personal Health Budgets 		
Data	Improve understanding of available benchmarking data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build awareness and understanding of LA CYPCC and associated data. - Provide a regular opportunity to interrogate differences and links to different approaches. 		