

Briefing for London Councils Executive

A New Secure Children's Home for London and Pan-London Commissioning Vehicle

8 November 2022



A new London Secure Children's Home

To improve outcomes for London's most vulnerable children

Analysis and stakeholder engagement undertaken as part of The London Secure Children's Home Review, provided strong evidence of a significant requirement for secure provision with step down accommodation in London in order to better support and improve outcomes for some of London's most vulnerable CYP.

What is a secure children's home?

A home for children with particularly complex needs who have a history of absconding / are likely to abscond and are at significant risk of causing harm to themselves or others, including risk to life.

- Used when **no other type of placement will keep the child safe.**
- A locked environment where liberty is restricted.
- Children are supported through integrated care, health and education services.
- Aims to restore some stability to their lives.

London's children who require a secure welfare placement include those with the following complex needs:

- **Self harm**
- **Violence to others**
- **Having been sexually exploited**
- **Associating with dangerous adults**
- **Gang affiliation**
- **Mental health conditions**
- **Learning disabilities**
- **Substance misuse**
- **Offending behaviour**

A new London Secure Children's Home: Ambition / Vision

Smart Design



- High occupancy with young peoples' needs met
- Considered the details of the building
- Changed the way we make high risk decisions about young people
- Clear leadership and decisive decisions
- Improved outcomes for children

Clear goals and whole system ownership of risk



- The right children, in the right establishment at the right time, receiving the right interventions
- Design of the building meets needs with uniformity and is conducive to the child's needs
- The system build is not driven by worst scenarios
- Whole system collaboration and decision making

London children are close to home, family, professional



- Positive outcomes are achieved collaboratively by the SCH and outreach work
- We prevent secure placements and only CYP who absolutely need it are resident
- The system and pathways are improved – this is more than just the building
- All local authorities benefit and take ownership of the liability

A lasting and positive impact for children and their family



- Staff are motivated and happy - morale and retention is good
- Efficiency and effectiveness allows demand to be met and risk to be managed
- A flexible environment enables operational adaptability
- Step down is critical to continue positive progress
- Connected therapy inside and outside of the SCH

A London based secure welfare provision: Why?

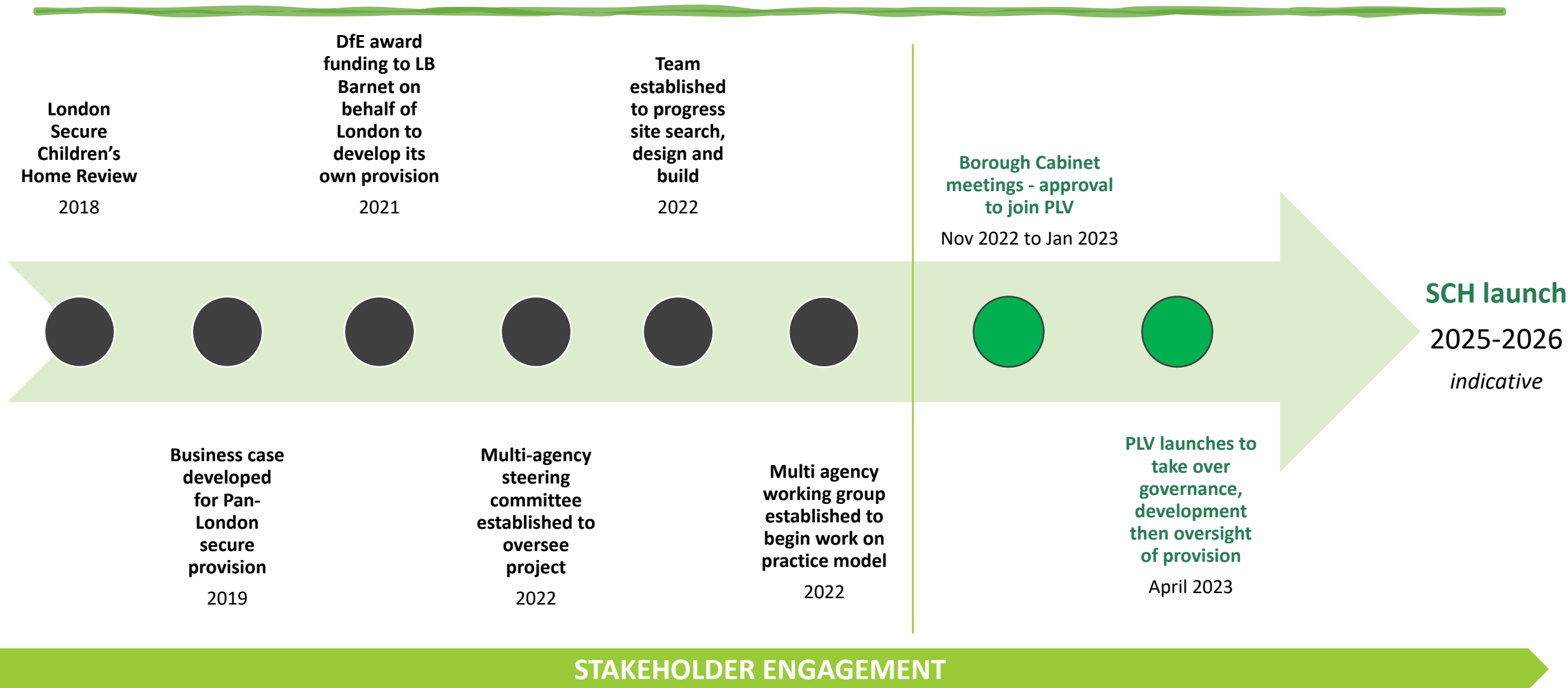
- There is **no secure children's home in London** and there is a national shortage of provision so places are often not available when referrals are made.
- Despite their complex needs, London's children who require secure welfare provision are often **placed the furthest from their home – on average 192 miles away**.
- Children lose regular contact with family, friends and their community.
- The London Secure Children's home Review identified that exit / move planning from secure placements is often rushed and options for transitioning out of secure care are limited, impacting on the outcomes that can be achieved for the child.
- Pan-London analysis pre-Covid (eight-month period October 2017 to May 2018) highlighted that **an average of 21 London children were in Secure Welfare provision at any one time**.
- Further analysis post-Covid has indicated a fall in numbers, with an average of 12 children placed in the eight-month period between December 2021 and July 2022 however, in the same period, 24 children were referred but not offered a place.
- Children who cannot be placed in a secure children's home are **often placed in less suitable and sometimes higher cost alternatives** - often in excess of **£10k per week and up to £50k per week**.
- Without a secure placement, some of these children are placed in **unregulated placements under deprivation of liberty orders**.

Item 5 An innovative approach to secure welfare provision

developed and managed by London LAs and partners through a Pan-London commissioning vehicle (PLV)

- DfE has awarded funding for the development of a **24-bed secure welfare provision with step down facility in London.**
- Circa **£3 million for development.**
- **£50+ million for capital costs.**
- The overall responsibility for this project, with its associated risks, is currently held by one LA – Barnet.
- It is proposed that **a company, owned by London local authorities (Pan-London Vehicle),** should be established to **oversee the development and running of the new provision and share the associated risks and benefits.**
- In the long term, it is intended that **the PLV's remit will include other key pan-London commissioning arrangements** that will improve the lives of London's children and young people.
- **London LAs are being asked to seek approval from their Cabinets to join the PLV** for a five-year period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2028. Once the provision has launched, it is proposed that membership of the PLV will be charged at a fixed cost of £20K per year, subject to inflation adjustment. During the development phase, member LAs will explore alternative models for funding the cost of running the PLV that does not require annual subscription.

Timeline / progress to date



Stakeholder engagement

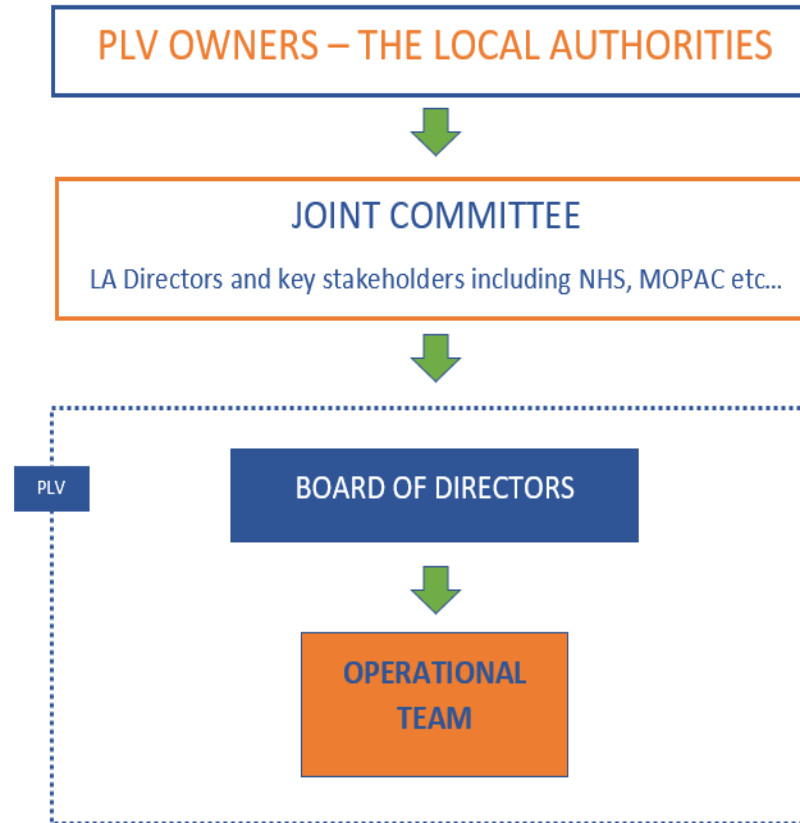
Engaged throughout the development of the business case / recent proposals

- ALDCS
- London Councils' - Executive and Leaders' Committee
- Society of London Treasurers
- Local authority children's social care and youth offending teams
- Department for Education
- The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime,
- OFSTED,
- Ministry of Justice
- Health
- Third sector organisations
- Children and young people with lived experience

Key briefings – September / October 22

- ALDCS
- Local authority commissioners
- CS Portfolio Lead - Cllr Ian Edwards
- Shadow CS Leads - Cllr Grace Williams and Cllr Penelope Frost
- London Lead Members for Children's Services
- Letter to Council Leaders
- Society of London Treasurers

PLV: Structure



PLV: Benefits and costs - first 5 years

	2023 to 2028	
	Pre-SCH launch service development phase	Post SCH launch service delivery phase
Cost to member LAs	No cost to LAs – covered by DfE grant	£20K p/a <i>(unless alternative model for funding the PLV is agreed during the development phase)</i>
Benefits for member LAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pan-London collaboration to develop provision • Project governance • Input into refreshed business case • Develop / agree practice model and operating model including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ approach to working with children, young people and their families ○ safeguarding and risk management arrangements ○ quality assurance arrangements ○ commissioning approach / staffing model ○ service pricing structure ○ process for managing referrals and placement allocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved outcomes for LAs most vulnerable children • LAs vulnerable children placed closer to home, family, community • Priority access for LA to secure welfare and step-down / transition placements - at a lower cost compared to non-member LAs • Reduced need for future high cost placements • Reduced travel time for LAs social workers and other professionals involved • Reduced spend by LA on secure transport • Reduced reliance on private care placement market including for high cost and bespoke and / or unregulated arrangements • Service governance • Ongoing development • Delivery of other priority commissioning projects

SCH project: Key risks / mitigation

Low occupancy levels

- ✓ Robust management and oversight of occupancy levels
- ✓ Available places added to national pool to be purchased by out of London LAs

Unsatisfactory outcome from statutory inspections

- ✓ Recruitment of experienced Registered Manager and sufficient levels of relevant experience in similar provision across SCH team
- ✓ Regular and robust monitoring and quality reviews

Child serious injury or death

- ✓ Robust practice model, risk management policies, procedures and training
- ✓ Rigorous performance reviews and effective management oversight
- ✓ Adequately experienced SCH managers and staff

Adverse publicity / reputational damage due to inability to effectively manage aforementioned or other risks

- ✓ Effective communication management strategy
- ✓ Robust practice model, risk management policies, procedures and training
- ✓ Rigorous performance reviews and effective management oversight
- ✓ Adequately experienced SCH managers and staff

Recommendations to Cabinets

(Nov 22 to Jan 23 meetings)

To agree that **XXXX** local authority:

Part 1

- **Becomes a member of a not-for-profit company**, limited by guarantee, provisionally to be known as the Pan London Vehicle, to:
 - a. **develop and then oversee the running of London's secure children's home provision for a five-year period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2028**, with a break-point after three years once the refreshed business case has been developed to include service pricing structure, commissioning approach, practice model and location. Once the provision has launched, membership will be at a fixed annual cost of £20K (subject to inflation adjustment), unless an alternative model for funding the PLV is agreed by members during the development phase *and*
 - b. **collaborate with other PLV members on future joint commissioning programmes.**
- **Commits in principle to joint oversight and risk/benefit sharing, through the PLV**, of the secure children's home provision, for a five-year period to 31st March 2028 (*with three year break point*), including the build, service development and service commissioning phases, subject to ratification after the revision of the SCH business case, and renewable on a ten yearly cycle thereafter, with break-point after five years.

Part 2

- **Delegates authority to XXXX**, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Council's Monitoring Officer to:
 - a. **finalise the legal documents** required to set up, join and run the PLV and
 - b. **make the final determination on the Council's membership of the PLV**, following completion of the revised SCH business case and, if appropriate, enter into all the legal agreements, contracts and other documents on behalf of the Council required to implement and run any aspect of the PLV arrangements.

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