**KENT HOUSING OPTIONS SUB GROUP (KHOG) MEETING**

**14 SEPTEMBER 2017**

**Held at Maidstone BC Office, Maidstone House, Maidstone**

**Present:** Marie Gerald, Acting Chair, Dartford BC; Lesley Clay, Kent JPPB; Sylvia Roberts, Ashford BC; Lora McCourt, Canterbury CC; Lynn Wilders, Gravesham BC; Elly Toye, Dover DC; Vicky Hodson, Kent Homechoice; Stuart Clifton, Maidstone BC; Pam Millington, Dover DC; Vicky May, Thanet DC; Andrew Kefford, Sevenoaks DC; Ray Easdown, Medway Council; Mark Dormiral, Shepway DC; Sowei Smith, Tunbridge Wells BC; Jill Pells, KHG

**Apologies:** Sarah Robson, Shepway DC; Jane Lang, Tunbridge Wells BC;

**Guest:** Robin Cahill, KCC; Sarah Peacock, Supporting People; Emily Matthews, Supporting People; Mark Gillmore, East Kent Services; Sara Spark, EKS;

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| **Reference** | **Notes/Outcome** | **Timescale** | **Lead person** | **Action/Decision** |
| **Action log from Meeting 15 June 2017** | Notes of the meeting held on 15 June 2017 agreed with the following matters arising:  Reconnection Policy to be re-circulated as it needs to be reviewed (to be picked up later in the meeting).  Cost of TA need updates from Medway, Shepway and T & M.  New code of Guidance – MG has been involved in the development of this and can speak about it but not circulate information. Will be out for consultation in October.  ET previously asked for the number of cases per officer in each LA. She has received some information from partners which has proved useful. | ASAP  ASAP | **RE/MD/JS** | Provide TA costs ***(18.10.2017 some information received from Medway but Shepway and T & M still outstanding)*** |
| **Digital Universal Credit Rollout** | Mark Gillmore, Payments Manager for EK Services (Benefits Manager for all three LAs) attended the meeting with Sara Spark, a Senior Assessment Officer whose work is more project based.  EKS has been in existence since 2011. UC Full Service roll out – digital approach for everyone with some exceptions.  Ask NM Sub Group to consider more consistency regarding rent in advance which cannot be paid until there is a liability for housing costs in UC. ET mentioned that EKH is considering charging two weeks RIA because of impact of UC.  VM has issues at TDC regarding completion of proof of rent for TA and problems identifying the client when payment is made.  Any questions can be addressed to Sara at [sara.sparks@ekservices.org](mailto:sara.sparks@ekservices.org) | ASAP | **JP/RS** | Presentation circulated.  For NM Sub Agenda |
| **Supporting People** | Sarah Peacock advised about re-commissioning homeless services for adults including short term accommodation, floating support, etc. Visiting districts to establish needs and interest in co-designing services.  Paying around £4M pa in homeless services.  Gathering and analysing data including workbook information, P1E data, etc.  All contracts ending September 2018.  There will be a big public consultation to identify barriers, etc.  New Service in place from 1 October 2018.  Currently undecided as to whether there will be one or two main providers or several. |  |  |  |
| **Update on Specialist Children’s Services** | Robin Cahill updated on Specialist Children’s Services. HRS is being re-commissioned in adult and YP services.  Future YP services will be for care leavers, homeless 16/17 year olds and potentially young offenders from institutions. Those 18+ will be signposted to Adult Services. £1M will go to 18+, £500,000 from YP Services. All YP contracts end in March 2018. There will be no more efficiency savings in YP services. Recently had Children’s services Ofsted and 16/17 year olds in B & B were highlighted as an issue in report. Advised that YP services are to assist Districts and Boroughs to prevent 16/17 year olds coming into supported housing if they cannot return home.  In the last 4 months there have been 123 voids so Panels have been successful in moving people on. 188 KCC statutory referrals and 228 from non statutory. Placed 97 people in voids so some overprovision in some areas. Need to address shortfall in areas such as Thanet and Sevenoaks.  Looking at 1 October 2018 for new service. | ASAP | **LC/JP** | Presentation circulated |
| **Protocols (SI)** | Reconnection protocol requires reviewing as it is becoming more and more important. Group to be established **SC, VM, LC, PM, MG** to be involved. MG to convene a meeting.  Medway is not part of this which needs to be addressed as it would be beneficial to all. RE To advise Mark B that Medway need to be involved.  LC advised about a meeting regarding the YP Protocol. A document was written by KCC without consultation with housing although it is was agreed that it is good to have something on paper. This was sent by KCC to Anna Whalen at DCLG for comments. Document was “tweaked” so it now resembles a working protocol although MG to include a section on Homeless Reduction Act. Intention is to sign off at Kent JPPB on 5 October. Document will be circulated for comments.  KHOG to monitor the YP protocol together with specialist Children’s Services.  Need to include something about those found to be intentionally homeless. | ASAP  ASAP  ASAP | **MG**  **JP**  **RE**  **LC** | ***Existing Protocol circulated***  Advise MB of importance of Medway involvement  Circulate document for comments |
| **Homeless Reduction Bill (SI)** | MG shared the presentation recently made to Kent Chief Officers.  LC suggested sharing the recent Audit Commissions’ report on homelessness to Chief Executives. | ASAP  ASAP | **MG**  **ALL** | Share power point  Share AC report with CEs |
| **National Policy (SI)** | Covered in previous item. |  |  |  |
| **Recent Case Law (SI)** | Covered in previous item. |  |  |  |
| **Training opportunities (SI)** | Andy Gale training/consultancy on the Homeless Reduction Act – five separate days so that LAs do not have to release all staff on same day.  DBC offered out free Andy Gale training for other agencies and has had take up from 50 people so far. Still spaces available. AG also assisting with setting up of DBC’s multi-agency hub.  Lime Legal Conference coming up.  CIH Homelessness Conference in November.  CCC has asked Mediation Service to quote for some training on prevention and enabling people to return home. |  | **ALL** | To note |
| **AOB** | SC asked VH – what are dates for Locata retendering. VH updated that this has stalled unfortunately as there was concern that partner(s) may wish to pull out. Existing contract does not end until 2019 so now need to resolve legal situation. VH has asked procurement to reissue the tender document. Should be able to get a contract in place before the new one expires.  ET – Someone raised concerns with Information Commissioners Office that information requested for Housing Register is excessive. Got a redacted decision – all justified and proportionate.  CCC raised issues with Less Homeless –need to be careful what information is given to them.  Locata conference on 6 October – can see what the new system will look like.  New online form launches tomorrow  TDC are being scrutinised - new to homelessness model on Locata – need to know what systems people are using to work out money coming back in to establish how much is in deficit. Spreadsheet or what, eg Finance Teams or Northgate?  MD reported that Shepway will be part of the East London reviews of the HRA reviews. Will share information with this Group when available.  Discussion around levels of salaries for Housing Options staff. | ASAP  ASAP | **ALL**  **ALL**  **ALL/SC** | Advise VM of how calculations made  For information  Members are requested to provide updated details of HO staff salaries to SC to collate. |
| **Next Meeting** | Full Meeting, **2 November 2017** at 10 am (MBC) |  |  |  |
| **2018 Meetings** | All to be at MBC and to start at 10 am prompt.  **15 March** (**Full Meeting**);  **21 June** (**Local Housing Authorities only meeting**);  **13 September** (**Local Housing Authorities only meeting**);  **1 November** (**Full Meeting**);  **13 December 2018** (**Local Housing Authorities only meeting**) |  |  |  |