**KENT HOUSING OPTIONS SUB GROUP (KHOG) MEETING - 7 February 2019**

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

**Present:** ; Marie Gerald, Chair, Dartford BC; Stuart Clifton, Vice Chair, Maidstone; Chris Burgess, Porchlight; Lora McCourt, Canterbury; Maria Love, Nacro; Lynn Wilders, Gravesham; Pam Millington, Dover; Elly Toye, Dover; Sylvia Roberts, Ashford; Mark Damiral, Folkestone; Helen Campbell Wroe, Pathways to Independence; Janet Galloway, KCC; Paul Stephen, KCC; Cynthia Allen, KSS CRC; Jo Mahieu, WKHA; Claire Keeling, TMBC; Keith Cane, TCHG; Vicky Hodson, Kent Homechoice; Zoe Callaway, Swale; Becky Waller, DWP

**Apologies:** Nina Colley, Sevenoaks; Jane Lang TWBC; Mike Barrett Porchlight; Vicky May; Deborah White, WKHA;

**Guests:**  Phil Aguik, Entitled to;

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| **Reference** | **Notes/Outcome** | **By When** | **Lead person** | **Action/Decision** |
| **Action log from Meeting**  **November 2018** | **KSAS Overview and KCC Update –** Rebecca Shared presentation  **PRS Access Fund –** Richard has said no announcements to be made until spending review has been completed.  **Rough Sleeper initiative** – deadline moved to 14th Feb  **Cold Weather Fund** – Closed  **Duty to Refer** – List of commitment to Refer Housing Associations which is voluntary. Those that have signed up are available at<https://www.housing.org.uk/topics/welfare-reform/homelessness/commitment-to-refer/>  **Pre Eviction Protocol** – Reviewing wording to ensure registered providers can refer in via the protocol and adding in a stage around prevention. No date as yet for a final draft.  **Government Website** – for homeless referrals. Each LA needs to check that their information is correct. https://www.gov.uk/homelessness-help-from-council  **HRA Workshop** – same as pre eviction protocol and feedback on prison releases to come later.  **S21 and Post De Regulation and Deposit Protection** – RW to update  **Rapid Rehousing Bid** – ongoing  **S198 Protocol** – pick up later  **Flexible Tenancies** – JM has advised that there is a move to discontinue flexible tenancies due to the amount of work involved in administering them. |  | **All** | **Colleagues to use website to check information is correct** |
| **Entitled To Update - Phil Aguik** | **Background to Entitled to** - Mainly known as a benefits calculator and provide KCC Revs and Bens calculator about income maximisation. They have developed an affordability tool/homelessness prevention tool.  Using income and expenditure it and working with national figures it can assess where housing costs are high and look at maximising employment opportunities/moving into work and looking at moving house to more affordable areas.  Some Councils are already testing but Phil needs feedback on how the teams are finding the tool. Dover and Dartford staff are using and like the tool. ET has asked if there would be some economies of scale if we went live with the tool in clusters rather than the whole of Kent.  KC asked if there was potential for Housing Association – PA, yes done on a per property calculation to see if the individual can afford the property. Possible demo of Housing Association part of the system at the next KHC Operational Sub Group. |  | **VH** | **VH to see who wants to go live on 1st April** |
| **MHCLG Update – Richard Williams, MHCLG** | **Rapid Rehousing Pathway** – outcomes for bids should be available this week. Some Kent LAs have been successful and some have not.  RW has asked whether any Local Authorities have concerns about the impact on homelessness if Fergus Wilson was to sell all of his properties. Any spikes in homelessness because of this should be raised to RW who will make the Secretary of State aware.  **Brexit Planning** - what are the concerns. Canterbury has identified TA as a concern as they have placed people out of borough. More concerns around infrastructure.  **Eligibility** – Local Authorities need to be setting up services to advise people about the ‘settlement scheme’. If people apply for and awarded their status then they are eligible and if they get ‘pre settled status’ for under 5 years they will have to satisfy the equivalent of treaty rights.  EU nationals who have not exercised treaty rights but have been here for 5 years may become eligible where they have not before.  Home Office have said this is a low threshold test i.e. registered with a doctor or bank statements. If they have not done it by 29th March 2021 then it will be more difficult to get status.  RW to share a link about how to advise clients  **PRS Access Scheme** – should be announced within this financial year.  SC asked if there is going to be a TA target – unable to confirm but is probable. | **As approp** | **ALL** | **To share data with RW as appropriate**  **RW to share a link** |
| **Protocols – Standing Item**  **- Discussion about review of existing protocols, progress to date** | MG and SC looking at Protocols.  **S198 Local Referral Protocol** –circulated by Rebecca – ensuring that we have a common approach, referring where subject to relief duty and ensuring timescales and commitments that the process is sped up.  **Duty to Refer Protocol** – explaining the referral process and ensuring everyone knows how we want this to work  Everyone to respond to SC by 1st March 2019  Everyone will need to sign up at KHOG level – trying to get commitment across Kent around who will pay for TA via KHG. Next meeting is on 15th May.  **Intentional Homeless Families** **Protocol** – a few meetings have been held but have realised that need to start from the beginning and get buy in across all levels. New Act tries to limit the number of intentional decisions made by putting support in place. The best agency would be ‘early help’. Had a meeting with front door team leader at KCC who was interested in development of this.  Tenancy sustainment used to work with these families but we are looking for involvement from ‘early help’. SC says looking at 3-stage approach. How many intentional decisions as have been made from April to date and in the previous year as well 17/18?  Split into ‘prevention’ ‘relief’ and ‘main’. Medway also want to be involved as families are placed in Medway and challenges with referring between service areas. | **1/3/19**  **End of Feb** | **All**  **All** | **Provide responses to SC by 1/3 for sign off on 15/5/19**  **All to forward intentionally homeless figures to Rebecca Smith by end of Feb** |
| **Duty to Refer and Offenders, update from recent meeting** | **Duty to Refer/Offenders/Prisons** – Meeting has been held to discuss how we are going to manage referrals from Prisons. We would like earlier referrals. Understand difficulty in accessing offenders in prison and no access to online. Possible that we might not be able to speak to the offender until they are released. VH has converted online referral form into a paper form. This to be circulated to KHOG  Advised there is a ‘through the gate’ service being developed to improve access. Need some consistency on who is being approached. MG to forward SPOC list to ML  SC advised that also need information about what work has also been done when they are referred in so this needs to be captured on referral form. Another meeting planned for end of Feb.  LMCC advised that Canterbury have put in funding for workshops to be run within prisons.  SC advised that the referrals they receive are stating that they are priority need and this is causing challenges with officers, as they have not yet assessed whether or not they are priority need. NHAS guide for frontline staff is a good tool. ML has been looking into NACRO team going into shadow housing options officers.  Trown have created a factsheet for prisoners.  NACRO also looking at funding opportunities to provide housing for a short-term period for those that are not eligible for assistance. | **ASAP** | **VH/RS**  **SC/MG** | **Word form to be circulated to KHOG**  **SC/MG to circulate paper version of referral form**  **MG to send SPOK list to ML** |
| **Homelessness Commissioning Update/Progress – Jan Galloway, KCC** | **Young People’s commissioning.- Jan Galloway**  KCC have commissioned three providers – Look ahead, Sanctuary and YMCA – East Kent Resolved but West Kent still competing – do not know who the sub-contractors will be.  Trinity Foyer will not be used – all those that can access the services will be taken over by the new YP providers. No one will be evicted and looking at what they can do to provide support, which will include some floating support after April.  LAs advised they are still unsure about who can access the service. Clarified that it will be KCC children in care, 16 and 17, children that are homeless and Kent Care leavers up to the age of 25. Jan’s understanding is that everyone was involved in service design and specification and involved in the scoring of the tenders.  LAs had not yet been officially advised and KCC advised that this has been because primes have been running mini competitions for sub-contractors and this has made it difficult to be clear.  Local Authorities feel that they have not had time to plan and are unsure of demand for move on for young persons and adult commissioning. KCC negotiating with all stakeholders to see what support can be put in place.  Canterbury raised issue about Canter Care that seems to fall between the gaps.  It was identified that there will be a major impact with Adult Commissioning and Provider of Offender services. Helen Campbell-Wroe of Pathways to Independence advised that they have been given 6 months of further funding. Negotiations are ongoing between KCC and Criminal Justice service.  In Nov, a direct business case was put forward which has been unsuccessful from KCC and MOJ so offender services in Kent will be closed. Consequence is that landlords have served notice and are counting down to an eviction period. There is uncertainty about who will provide this service.  Cynthia Allen KSSCRC advised National Probation Service manage high risk and CRC manage those that are low risk. Put in a business case for funding which has gone to the NPS commercial team but have heard that this has been turned down due to affordability. CRC do not have responsibility to fund housing support and they have invested in contracts with housing brokerage service.  JG at KCC has extended contracts a number of times to try to facilitate this however, KCC are not responsible for support for high-risk ex-offenders. There is a possibility that they will be recalled, as they do not have responsibility for rehabilitation.  There 77 Offender beds in total however we are only aware of Pathways serving notice at this time.  Local Authorities to work with HC-W to determine where the beds are. LAs advised that it is almost impossible to house a MAPPA client.  KCC are trying to work with everyone to transition these clients. Concerns were raised about public protection. HC-W has said have an exit plan for their 37 clients but they need a contact at each Local Authority.  Porchlight advised that they have been awarded a contract for East and Mid Kent, Canterbury, Thanet, Dover, Folkestone, Hythe, Maidstone and Ashford. They have met with everyone and are running workshops. They will be providing an integrated support model, which includes floating support. Porchlight will ensure that everyone is aware of who can access this service. There will be an increase in the available supported accommodation. The Porchlight Service is for Homeless with additional complex needs  Some discussion had around whether Porchlight should be supporting the high-risk ex-offenders that Pathways to Independence support but they would not be supporting this client group.  Concern raised that if young homeless people cannot access supported housing unless they have complex needs then numbers of street homeless will increase and they will develop complex needs. This is being raised at a higher level from KHG. |  | **MG** | **MG to organise emergency meeting to discuss further.**  **MG to discuss with RS at how to feed in to KHG** |
| **Standing Items for Discussion –**  **National Policy; Recent Case Law; Training Opportunities, Incl local training** | Samuels v Birmingham City Council (Appeal) - Whether a local authority can decide that an individual is intentionally homeless when to have been able to pay the rent they would have had to have used money from other benefits. Decision was upheld  Alibkhiet v Brent LBC and Adam v Westminster - Out of borough placements where accommodation closer to their borough was bypassed – outcome was that this is lawful. |  |  |  |
| **AOB** | Welfare, Housing and Homelessness round table conference attended by MG. Looking at raising concerns around spending review. Manage migration to be completed by 2023. Payment frequency being looked at. Timeliness of claims has improved.  CAB was awarded Personal Budgeting Support Contract but there is concern that everyone will still go to Local Authority for advice.  In addition, concerns raised about how difficult it is to speak to DWP because of GDPR.  RW advised that Government want to reduce the number of funding streams although not the value of the funding.  The Round Tables are continuing and we have been asked to produce anecdotal evidence for the impact of out of area placements. Evidence required.  TA stats for Rebecca by 11th February.  ET – Travel warrant query whether they are issued and how.  ET – move on fund – will anyone be bidding. Porchlight have advised that they will be picking this up and contacting Local Authorities in the areas they are working in.  CB – Porchlight – more detail on single point of access coming out soon.  SC – request from legal team with own housing stock and own legal team that carry out evictions and possessions.  JPPB Complex needs forum – benefit cap with HB it was taken from HB entitlement. With UC does that come out of their housing benefit? Becky to clarify and confirm. | **ASAP**  **11th Feb**  **ASAP** | **MG**  **ALL**  **ALL**  **ALL**  **BW** | **MG to provide a briefing paper.**  **All to provide to RS**  **All to respond to ET**  **Respond to SC**  **BW, DWP** |
| **Next Meeting** | LA only 4 **April 2019** at 10 am (MBC) |  |  |  |