**KHOG Teams Call Summary Meeting Notes – 29th October 2020**

**Attending** – Stuart Clifton, Chair & Maidstone BC; Rachel Westlake, Dean Lawrence, Timothy Berry, Max Guest, Hazel South, Robin Cahill, KCC; Lynn Wilders, Gravesham BC; Victoria May, Thanet DC; Roxanne Sheppard, Swale BC; Vicky Hodson, Kent Homechoice; Elly Toye & Pam Millington, Dover DC; Marie Gerald, Samad Nadimi & Zsofia Imre, MHCLG; Sophie Valentine, TWBC; Hayley Brooks & Mary Sturgeon, Sevenoaks DC; Claire Keeling, TMBC; Joanne Thorpe, Medway Council; Chris Hildrey, Proxy Address, Michael Bourne, Pathways to Independence

**Apologies** – Rav Kensrey, Sevenoaks DC; Lin Guo, Kent Public Health; John Littlemore, Maidstone BC; Lora McCourt, Canterbury City Council & Vice Chair;

**Actions & Key Points from 29th October 2020**

Page 3 – RS to chase up JL about the outstanding protocol.

LG did follow up the conversation with LG at Gravesham about testing in temporary accommodation.

RW shared the invitation about the DA event.

Page 5 – RS to check with MD at F&HDC about whether there was feedback to Kimba about the Hospital Discharge Protocol.

Page 5 – colleagues to contact RS if they wish to be part of the task and finish group for the IH protocol review.

Page 6 – SC advised that CA did raise the query about keeping a person in custody beyond their release date further to a positive test for Covid-19.

Page 6 – CK has had a form from VM/JB at Thanet on the rough sleeping deaths, ET advised that DDC have had an FOI about this, as have other districts.

**Proxy Address for Homelessness**

CH showed a short video, about the importance of having an address to provide a stable identity and address when homeless, through the use of a ‘proxy addresses’. This helps bridge a period of instability for a homeless person accessing assistance.

CH provided the group with an overview to his background and how to use his skills as an architect to assist with those who are homeless, including speaking to a range of people & professionals about the scope of homelessness. There has to be a way to intervene to support homelessness people, without extensive cost. Post is a small part of an address, the remainder and most important element of an address is the link and access to other services. All addresses are public information without ownership. Unused addresses in the UK currently – 500,000 vacant, with 250,000 6 months vacant and 11,000 over a decade vacant.

160,000 unused addresses just for the number 13, which aren’t used commonly due to superstition.

The proxy address will follow the individual. Post, public and financial services are linked to the proxy address. The address is a point of direction and correspondence can be redirected to follow the person. Anti-Fraud compliance underpins the whole system, currently using a pilot in Lewisham to partner with Barclay’s and two other banks, opening a bank using a proxy address meeting three current regulations. This is first stepping stone, will be rolling out to more councils to include postal, hospital discharge and helping with contactless payments for those who are working but homeless. Spoke with the TFL in London to set up with that anyone with a proxy address could use TFL for London, this was pre Covid-19 so will be picked up again in 2021.

**Questions** – SC questioned about when a property that is used for a proxy is then let or becomes occupied? There are three points to clarify, addresses are not sourced solely through vacant properties, only use addresses with explicit consent, sourced from local authority owned properties, house builders and housing association sites using ‘not yet used address – 18 months’ timeframe) and private donations, these alone would be alone to give every person facing homelessness in the UK their own a proxy address. The proxy address is given with a 6 month use which can be extended if possible, if their situation has improved/changed at the 6 month point this can be reviewed to take a decision about whether it is needed for a longer period of time or not moving forward.

SC questioned about the redirection of post – this does rely upon the person to update the organisation about movement and where to redirect post. CH advised that also working on digital access via a phone company and access to a smart phone if a proxy address is allocated, along with access to a library to access the internet.

Next steps is to review the outcome of the pilot in March, continuing conversations about the next phase between now and then. Contact details - chris@proxyaddress.co.uk or <https://www.proxyaddress.co.uk/>

**MHCLG**

MG provided a general update – waiting on the outcome of the spending review and funding allocations, pushing for an announcement pre-Christmas Break, this is likely to be January 2021. The old prevention grant – MG interested to find out from colleagues about the use of this grant for those who can access it ACTION – feedback to MG. Funding allocations will be based on data currently that has been shared via HCLIC, please ensure you get your HCLIC stats in. RSI funding – what interventions have been funded already and what will be included on your action plan, there is a shift required to prevention, routes to the street through data collected, MG has been working through data tables with some colleagues. What can you do to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping? Local authority accountability is a focus for the Secretary of State.

HCLIC working on changes to the system, some may be aware of these, considering an API to DELTA as one change and also to reflect what has happening from March 2021. All advisor teams looking at the QA’s for HCLIC data so there may be queries on data around YP and also families in B&B.

The EU Transition – slides have been shared by advisors, if not seen please let MG know and she can share wider, still unclear if leaving with or without a deal and the impact on the work through MHCLG. MG suggested having this as an agenda item for 2021 and encouraged colleagues to explore all those who will need settled status and the impact for those with regards to access to benefits.

There is currently a legal challenge by Brighton taking place about accommodating NRPF, MHCLG has been named as part of this but MG can share the outcome of this when available.

SN advised that he part of the Youth Homeless Team at MHCLG and across DfE with regards to Care Leavers, preventing homelessness. Care Leavers are high on the Government agenda currently, developing and improving the offer for Care Leavers. Specifically work at how Children’s Services, Leaving Care Services and Local Authorities can work together to plan for this cohort, ensure the join up working can prevent homelessness and address where it does. Good Practice Guidance has been published by MHCLG recently and will continue to highlight the importance of the joint approach and Corporate Parent role across organisations. DfE as part of the Rough Sleeper Strategy is to fund a number of LA’s to look at improving housing outcomes for Care Leavers, Kent are one of these local authorities, looking at how to intervene at an early stage, intensive support provision and joint targets and approach and how homelessness can be designed out of the pathway for Care Leavers. Also prevention of access to unsuitable accommodation for this cohort of young people. Kim Davis at MHCLG has provided feedback on the protocol developed by KHOG, SN made the offer to share good practice and support through a facilitated workshop session.

**Housing Options for any Young Person Leaving Care**

TB introduced himself and DL, who are both working under Seb Blythe at KCC. The slides shared an overview of the challenges and how to overcome these and the opportunities to work together and reduce the number of people accessing homelessness support. 1800 care leaver’s current with a range of complexities and challenges, about 50/50 on UASC and those with citizenship, all transitions for young people are difficult. There is a duty to provide accommodation to those in higher education outside of term time or do not have status and do refer and access to supported accommodation. Currently there are a lot of young people approaching or over 21 years old who are still being accommodated by KCC, some of these numbers are impacted by Covid-19 but overall reducing the access overall for other young people. These young people have been provided with 6 months’ notice to secure move on accommodation and where possible avoiding homelessness approaches to local authorities (approximately 250 currently).

Also working on the challenge about the perceptions of young people about what they are entitled to with regards to accommodation, the expectations about sustaining accommodation through employment and location of accommodation, through the development of personal plans with these young people.

DL provided an overview of the work over the last 18 months with young people, now undertake a housing plan as part of the transition process, these are in depth including barriers and stigmas and the reality of ambitions around housing, aided by income and expenditure budget planning. DL very keen to work with local authorities locally with regards to the young people and move on and has established this with some already.

Care Leavers are given a final offer, supported with regards to accessing white goods (setting up home allowance), a rent deposit/rent in advance if required. DL would like to explore funding options to support a Care Leaver around the rent deposit/rent in advance. Private Rented Referral Scheme was started last year, working with local private landlords to offer move on accommodation, currently have contact with a number of landlords in Kent and London, if deemed suitable and sustainable a referral is made and the process is commenced. KCC now provide a rent guarantee for a Care Leaver if the application is approved (all dependent upon their employment and financial situation). DL is East Kent TB is West Kent working with these Care Leavers.

**Questions/Comments** – SN reinforced that it is very important to explain and plan with young people about their housing options when they are considering move on, assisting with managing the expectations of the young person. SN advised that other authorities have considered how the protocol is being applied across an area, annual reviews built in with operational reviews built in to understand how it is rolled out to front line/operational staff as well as at a strategic level. SC confirmed that there is consideration about the launch and training around the new YP Protocol recently published.

TB asked at what point would a local authority like confirmation about when to make a Duty to Refer if a Care Leaver is unlikely to have a move on accommodation option and be at risk of homelessness? Do the PA’s wait for 56 days prior to or an informal email to each relevant district? **ACTION** – local authorities to confirm with DL/TB about their preference on the approach.

DL confirmed that the setting up home allowance is provided to a Care Leaver in tranches but each case is judged on individual’s scenarios. **ACTION** – colleagues to contact DL and TB about their view on the partnering regarding rent in advance/deposits. MS advised that SDC have their PSL scheme and provide a loan for the rent in advance which is paid back by the prospective tenant.

SC advised that the protocol does say that referrals can be made up to 6 months in advance, being proactive where possible, others who are more at risk of homelessness to use the statutory 56 days’ notice. The protocol also refers to joint assessments between the local housing authority and KCC representative. SN advised that useful to share data around care leavers to assist with planning for transition and move on, agreed to have as a standing item on the full KHOG agenda.

**Prison Update** - MG advised that working with the MOJ about prison leavers, funding highlighted in the recent CSR and considering how to allocate, whether this will be a bidding process or individual allocations. MG advised that there are instances when arrangements are made between the NPS and local authority it is not recorded as a DTR, also work taking place around female offenders and their complexities. MG interested to have feedback on the DTR data and experiences with female offenders. MG has also been highlighting the offender bed issue for Kent as part of these conversations. **ACTION** – colleagues to make contact with MG for this and if a ‘deep dive’ on the data is required. SC did feedback that the number of options for data entry is extensive and may have caused confusion. Within the data and HCLIC potentially DTR are being received after another application or self-referral so you can’t record as a DTR, it cannot be recorded as a multiple DTR. ET advised that on Locata that if your referral is from a pubic body the drop down lists organisations that are not a public body which prevents sign off and the process more complicated. MG advised that HCLIC are exploring the use of ‘other’ and what is falling into this category as this should only be used in the exception. **ACTION** – VH to take back to Locata.

**Commissioning Updates (Adults, YP and Domestic Abuse)**

**Domestic Abuse** – RW reminded that the last day of the KIDAS conference today, 4,500 overall coverage of the conference and pre videos released prior to the conference. KIDAS have received additional MOJ money to assist with food provision and providing stalking training for staff. Voids across the county in respect of refuges, this may increase after Christmas. Referrals into community services are high, still focussing on the virtual access to one stop shops. Hospital IDVA proposition is being taken to the CCGS for a K&M offer, more details to be share as available. RW will be setting up a training/information session in the New Year around the impact of the DA bill for organisations.

**Adults Homelessness** – MG provided an update from Kent Homeless Connect, looking to take on 7 unit property in Sevenoaks, final details to be confirmed, also linked to Kings Colleague NHS Trust to provide a Hep C support unit for Kent. Waiting list for numbers for support overall is high, there is a new officer in post to start tackle these waiting lists. 80% increase of people being supported in the homelessness pathway in comparison to March 2020. 30% increase in number in supported accommodation, expecting this to continue to rise. MG has been conducting an impact assessment on the KHC Framework, considering continuing funding of the service, developing a business case and design of future provision, case studies, user voice and will be distributing a survey to key stakeholders on this service, likely to come via KHOG distribution list.

**YP Services** – HS updated that have issued notices to young people, approximately 50, some have moved on. KCC are also continuing to take UASC until capacity doesn’t permit this. YPSAS offer and E Bed Offer is being developed by HS for users and for professionals, including expectations of both.

**KHOG Protocol Updates**

**YP Protocol -** completed and now on the KHG website and the internal document store for KCC. How to launch this protocol and other protocols moving forward? SC asked colleagues to feedback on how colleagues would to see these launched and ensure that the protocol content is shared more widely with colleagues. There was a suggestion from SC about a recorded webinar that can be used for training purposes. DL advised that KCC should be making front line staff aware of the new protocol content. RC advised that paramount to have a launch of the protocol and joint training for KCC and LA’s with Samad/Kim from MHCLG to facilitate this event in the New Year. **ACTION** – RS to make contact with MHCLG about assisting with a launch.

It was agreed that it would be useful, as per a suggestion by Rav at Sevenoaks DC to have a guide for the undertaking of assessments across all protocols for when face to face meetings/assessments can be undertaken, to support the aim of protocols and working practices. **ACTION** – to add to future agenda

**Intentionally Homelessness Families Protocol** – **ACTION** -RS to set up T&FG meeting for early 2021 to move this forward. Colleagues to remind RS if you have volunteered for this previously and want to be part of the T&FG. VM advised that working locally with their teams, localised service level agreement around early intervention and working jointly with these families, avoiding crisis and can share this when completed to help shape the new revision of the countywide protocol.

**Any Urgent National Policy, Case Law Updates**

Changes to the EU Transition and eligibility regulations – slides to be shared. VH advised that some of the eligibility forms and processes will need to change from the First of January 2021, so in hand and working with a consultant at HQN about review and updating questions. If the consultant is unable to work with KHC on this LG at Gravesham is happy to lead a Kent wide working group on this issue, VH to follow up on this via email. SC advised that homelessness decision letters will need updating.

DA Bill should be in place from April 2021. SC asked if there any training to be arranged around either and if capacity to share across colleague’s areas, or any in house training contacts/information that can be shared?

Bullale v Westminster – a homelessness applicant had not been in settled accommodation following an earlier finding of intentional homelessness – to be “legally flawed”. <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/litigation-and-enforcement/400-litigation-news/45482-court-of-appeal-quashes-legally-flawed-decision-by-review-officer-that-applicant-was-not-in-settled-accommodation-in-period-after-earlier-finding-of-intentional-homelessness>

LB of Bromley v Broderick, overturned and original decision upon appeal. <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/housing-law/397-housing-news/45412-court-of-appeal-rules-for-council-in-dispute-over-single-offer-of-accommodation#:~:text=In%20London%20Borough%20of%20Bromley,available%20at%20a%20later%20date>.

**AOB**

ET advised that document upload enhancement opportunity within Locata system which identifies the documents that are being shared, VH/ET to share the specification for this, there is a support cost which would be reduced with a higher number of authorities interested in this enhancement.

Does anyone have any temporary accommodation placements from out of the area, where the placements come to an end and the household are then approaching Dover DC for assistance? SC advised that Maidstone do experience this, including boroughs ending main duties. This is covered slightly in the s.198 protocol under the 5 year rule and Maidstone BC do use this to refer back to the placing authority.

PM asked if colleagues had a TA suitability checklist that they would be happy to share, CK to share with PM.

RSh raised the issue of Caravan Parks and being used as main residence, identified 67 households that are at risk of homelessness from January 2021 when sites close, with a mix of pets, families etc. Does any other authority have this issue? SC advised that there has been correspondence from MHCLG to park owners to give advice about not closing and engaging with local planning authorities and a relaxed enforcement to use of the sites for over the usual 10 months. ET advised that there is a Park Dean site in Dover, who have been contacted about not taking action over January and February if they need to remain.

SC asked colleagues to share thoughts about future agenda items for 2021, presentations or new initiatives.

Thanks to all colleagues for their continued commitment to the group over this last 9 months.

**NEXT MEETING – 21st January 2021, 10am Microsoft Teams.**