**KHOG Teams Call Summary Meeting Notes – 22nd April 2021**

**Attending** – Stuart Clifton, Chair & Maidstone BC; Lora McCourt, Vice Chair & Canterbury City Council; Manpreet Bhupal, Gravesham BC; Gail Edwards, Mid Kent Legal, John Littlemore, Maidstone BC; Rav Kensrey, Sevenoaks DC; DSI Shaun White, Kent Police; Roxanne Sheppard, Swale BC; Elly Toye, Dover DC; Marie Gerald and Zsofia Imre, MHCLG; Ray Easdown, Medway; Pam Millington, Dover DC; Toni Carter, Dartford BC; Claire Keeling, TMBC; Sophie Valentine, TWBC; Raymond O’Shea, Ashford BC; Sam Spiller, Max Guest, Kellie Pettet-Steele and Rachel Westlake, KCC; Rebecca Smith, KHG

**Apologies** – Hazel South, KCC; Sharon Williams, KHG; Christy Holden, KCC; Victoria May, Gravesham BC;

**Actions & Key Points from March 2021**

Page 1 – Hospital discharge examples –

H&S Guide first meeting set up.

Page 4 – RS has not received any information about gaps in provision for health and support, if any information to share please contact RS.

Page 5 – Hardship Funding – discussed later on the agenda

**MHCLG Update**

The HCLIC stats have been released today, key headlines from Oct to Dec 2020, still in relief in terms of numbers approach, single homeless up families down, families in TA at lowest level since 2016, the measures in place and taken have worked and reflected in the stats, link to stats –

Launched the offender accommodation programme, this is for PRS access for offenders released form prison in last 12 months or moving on from AP, compliments the MOJ funding to look at TA provision. Working in partnership as part of this, there was a webinar on Tuesday this week, still getting authorisation on this so cannot confirm finer details, can be incentives, deposits, tenancy training, furniture anything to do with PRS access. Feedback to MHCLG is that PRS is difficult to access and another funding stream and process to work through. This isn’t national only for specific areas, could consider a regional or district approach or both, keen to hear from areas about this, or does Kent need a separate meeting to talk through a Kent process. ABC, F&HDC are interested currently.

ROS advised that ABC have an interest to explore, application form is light touch, similar to cold weather application form. Announcements due around July 2021. SC confirmed that co-production from 3rd May to the 14th with deadline for 17th May. MG encouraged colleagues to consider.

RSAP – capital programme for rough sleepers, currently only going, general feedback is Julys round of funding as opposed to April, there are a lot of northern authorities going for the April, it’s a fund that will decline as applications and allocations are made, a risk that the funding will be under pressure further down the line. Bids so far are around acquisitions with assumptions about cost of properties over the year, speak to your advisors for support. The deadline is one week today.

DA Bill is in the final stages of parliamentary process, clearing up confusion not every single person who approaches for DA is allocated a secure tenancy, if allocated social housing through the homelessness route it has to be a secure tenancy offered. For stock transfer authorities a secure tenancy cannot be offered, JL asked if an assured tenancy with a housing association is the equivalent, MG confirmed this as part of the guidance. It won’t be in effect immediately, provisions by commencement order for a minimum of two months following royal ascent. Changes to priority need will not affect how data is recorded via HCLIC. MG advised that her colleague Ellie can provide an update at a future meeting with more details on the DA work. JL advised MG that there is a new DA Local Partnership Board for Kent which a number of KHOG colleagues are representing.

Evictions ban ends May 31st 2021, interested to hear from those working with social landlords or activities being undertaken to prevent and understand the impact of the ban moving forward. MHCLG working with NHF on this. Expected to be a gradual impact as processes return to normal and MG to keep colleagues up to date about any changes. There was a court mediation pilot held for landlords and tenants to discuss how to manage the roll out of the eviction ban lifting, MG to share details via RS. The extension to the shared accommodation rate exemption criteria, extended to Care Leavers or those in a homeless hostel to those under 25 years if certain criteria has been met.

Pushing with RP’s the Commitment to Refer, to build relationships with RP’s with 200 signed up to date. What is the experience of working with RP’s and what support MHCLG can provide to enhance the working relationships? Review of HRA and slightly amended version of the Code of Guidance, MG to share link when this goes live.

**Kent Police County Lines**

DSI Shaun White, lead for Kent for County Lines and Gangs, to introduce himself to colleagues, with 3 teams across Kent working closely with other agencies across the UK. Kent in July 2020 has 80+ county lines now under 40, want to work closely with Housing, Adult Safeguarding and Children’s Services moving forward. Do have young people in Kent who go across the country and are exploited to sell drugs and vulnerable adults who are cuckooed in their own housing. How can partnership working lead to sustainable solutions? How does Kent progress about those breaching tenancy agreements and ASB and involvement with serious crime and the eviction process to avoid further threat and harm to residents of Kent.

MG advised that in Surrey they are experiencing a lot of Closure Orders, as a result of this there is a pressure on homelessness teams. These are options and a quick solution to serious ASB but keen to see more planning with homeless teams before this process or decision making is undertaken. SW agreed and how Police, Housing and Public Health can work together to work with those using drugs to lessen demand on the supply chain. PM advised that in Dover housing options and management staff are attending meetings with Kent Police and Community Safety colleagues, working closely together and using the Vulnerability Panel and happy to continue in this way. From June there will be more staff in the team with SW, Safeguarding Officers who can create dialogue and be the conduit between all agencies.

RK echoed PM, can have details of the team so all other housing authorities can make those links and partnership working? SW advised that once new officers in post he will share details. **ACTION** – SW to share via RS when available. SC asked about London Borough placements into Kent and the impact this has, concerns and links regarding placements and the link to the Met Police? SW advised that short term if there are any concerns with regards to placements to email SW direct and he can follow up. Contact details for SW - Shaun.White@kent.police.uk Can SW also link to established groups and to also use SW as and when appropriate.

**Breathing Space -**

GE provided an update for the group about the new Breathing Space Debt Respite Scheme. The slides provide an overview about what the scheme includes, it is not a payment holiday. There are two types of Breathing Space, standard and mental health crisis as outlined in the slide pack. Sole Trader with business debts can be included in the ‘who qualifies’, information needed includes the usual residential address. Included within the slide is information about liabilities and qualification for the scheme. Cancellation of the scheme details are within the slide deck, this can be undertaken within 20 days of the start date based upon a couple of options.

Ending of the Moratorium – the creditor can undertake a number of actions, but before doing so the local authority should check the individual insolvency register to see if any additional elements that impact actions for recovering debt. The scheme starts on the 4th May, GE provided a number of considerations ahead of the 4th May, as identified in the slides. Useful links are all included in the slide deck.

JL advised that as only registered debt advisers can apply for the Breathing Space scheme, colleagues will need to refer clients to an organisation like the CAB who have the right staff could be the way forward. Landlords could serve a s21 for possession even if the reason behind the notice is arrears, this breathing space does not prevent landlords from serving a notice? GE advised that potentially a landlord could still use a s21 to end a tenancy despite being part of the Breathing Space Scheme. SC confirmed that need to be aware of anyone granted Breathing Space for those where debts unable to recover for TA example and the impact upon households where granted Breathing Space but the LA is the creditor. RS to share slides with the notes.

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

**Adults Homelessness** – MG thanked colleagues for attending a mini forum for the re-procurement exercise, KCC colleagues continuing to work on this feedback. MG is going to set up a project team and will have a representative from each lot of the KHC contract, and would like a housing representative, to consult on the specification, to support engagement in areas and involvement in the evaluation panel for future bids. **ACTION** - If colleagues would like to be involved or have a colleague who could help to contact MG. JL asked about bidding for the services being commissioned for rough sleepers and if you have to be a preferred provider, MG advised that thinking broadly and where funds available how to use the funding and respond to needs across the county, working on with prime providers Look Ahead and Porchlight on this and how to allocate funding. KPS advising that any recommission would include a whole market approach, so would not exclude a LA bidding.

Further funding internally in relation for infection control fund and contain outbreak management fund – working on how to bolster the outreach work for rough sleepers. Quarterly contract meetings for KHC taking place next week and will share any feedback following these.

**YP Services** – SS provided an update, YPSAS recommissioning has started with meetings early next week and seeking feedback from colleagues. Slight uptake in UASC entry into the UK, this is in line with expectations. Looking to start work to update the KCC website to represent what the local housing offer for all YP moving from YP to adulthood, will be reaching out to colleagues for what can be shared/updated and useful for those accessing.

**DA Update –** RW will be holding Q4 performance meetings over the next two weeks so feedback for providers, a survey has been distributed for partner feedback so please complete and welcome views. Still awaiting outcome of 2 PCC funding bids, delays to announcements. Hospital IDVA service is still in place in two hospitals in Kent (William Harvey and Darent Valley). The DA Bill is back with the Lords today, expecting Royal Ascent by the end of the month. The Kent DA Local Partnership Board has been formed with the first meeting on the 11th May, JL will be the Deputy Chair for this. The PH Observatory will be in touch with regards to HCLIC data, SC has set up a template and can use anonymised data, it covers the hold period since the HRA came into effect, covering all cases and specific to approaches on DA, to add field of case open date. A workshop was held in March and RW happy to share slides if colleagues haven’t see these. Any communications from housing providers with regards to the DA Bill and expectations? RW and colleagues can attend future meetings if necessary. Also to make RW aware of any organisations setting up refuges that are not usually a provider of this type of accommodation but taking advantage of the new burdens funding. RK advised that hoping to recruit a part time DA Advisor moving forward, to make a link with RW if necessary.

**Rough Sleepers & Covid /Health Response**

Any feedback on the mass vaccination programme back on the 12th April. JL advised that went well, some issue with transport to the centres, JL thanked colleagues for mobilisation on this and for the work locally. If there are concerns about this agenda still JL can take back to the CCG. JL had an email from Sarah Barlow from the CCG about GP engagement with each DC for the rough sleepers and waiting for Sarah to come back on this item and a decision on progressing this. Kent PH have appointed a new colleague who is doing work in Kent for KPH and will be in touch with all colleagues/districts. No details about numbers vaccinated yet, CK advised that about 12 in TMBC and about 10 in Swale RSh advised. KPS encouraged continued conversations and how to use the CMO Funding could be used to assist the work to engage GPs.

**KCC Hardship Funding Update** –Meeting held to discuss the opportunity for an application for funding through KCC to respond to and to link to recovery from Covid-19. RS has collated data, information missing from Canterbury, Dartford, F&HDC, Sevenoaks, Thanet and TMBC **ACTION** - colleagues to share data by Tuesday 27th April. **ZC** from KCC attended KHOG in March to discuss the funding options available through KCC to support homelessness prevention. Within Helping Hands to discuss the potential within the fund to support those adversely impacted by Covid, and the uncertainty about the PRS and the full impact or recovery. Discussion about how to submit a bid and using data pre, during and post Covid. From all data received to date there is an expected 27.5% differential between 2019-20 and 2020-21. Want to look at communications and digital engagement with tenants and landlords and to reach cases through prevention plus approach to prevent street homelessness or in secure housing. There are good lines of communication between districts and landlords but this could be a way to improve this position. SC has commenced a draft bid for this funding. SC advised that could use funding for digital videos, webinar type information for landlords to myth bust about local authorities and advise to tenants, options available to tenants to avoid eviction, to use funding to prop up the work already undertaken, payment plans and payment of arrears. **ACTION** – RS to notify those not yet providing data to do so. RS advised that the funding is available whilst recovery is in existence and recovery is required. Once a full draft bid it would be shared, if not interested in being included within the bid to please notify RS/SC. MG keen to remain engaged in the process of the bid. Also need to agree how much to bid for, timescales and costing for getting the digital elements completed.

**KHG/KHOG Protocol Updates**

**YP Protocol** – Launched in March 2021, need to agree when and how to review and who will be involved in this as a live working protocol. This would be through a small working group. ACTION – to notify or nominate a colleague to be part of the review group for first meeting in September and then potentially February 2022.

**IH Protocol** – first meeting of the T&FG on 31st March, with the next meeting scheduled for 9th June at 2pm, where anonymised case studies will be used to review the protocol and to help shape the format and content of the new protocol. Actions included - RS to contact MHCLG specialist advisor for any examples that can be shared or referred to; KCC colleagues to identify appropriate leads for sign off of the protocol when complete; KCC Bryony to share framework example and Rav to liaise with a contact outside of Kent about useful examples or best practice. **ACTION** – RS to share reminder of the data request as part of the notes.

**s.208 Notifications**

PM has had a conversation with NHAS, had a challenge on a recent case, assisting a family to permanent accommodation outside of the area and was asked for a s208, DDC checked the Act and with NHAS, PM wanted to flag that a s208 should be issued regardless of what type of accommodation going into. SC advised that the wording within statute about placement, his view is that if someone finds their own or is assisted to find accommodation is this a placement? Is everyone sending 208 notifications on discharge of duty? MG has contacted Jo Beck at MHCLG for some update on this and will feedback accordingly. Response form Jo B: it is very clear that any placement under homelessness duties require S208, so the answer is yes. MG confirmed from the Code: 7.60 Where a housing authority places an applicant in accommodation outside the district under any part of the Act, section 208(2) requires them to notify the authority in whose district the accommodation is situated of the placement. The notification requirement applies to all out of district placements and not just those arranged under interim accommodation duties or the section 193(2) main housing duty.

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

Changes around eligibility, RNQ v Brighton was a case mentioned previously at KHOG, this challenge has identified that LA do have certain powers to accommodate those with no recourse to public funds, no duty or power under part 7 of the housing act, also confirmed section 1 and 2 of the Localism Act could not be used if other legislation being used. It did say under s.123 of the Local Government Act to have additional measures and powers in an emergency or disaster to enable to accommodate persons who are otherwise no recourse to public funds.

An appeal from County Court on a county injunction, rough sleeper with no recourse to public funds, as part of everyone in was granted a self-contained flat with a licence, the challenge was the applicant had been granted a tenancy or licence which could be secure, the issue was not adequately addressed and will go to appeal, one to keep a watching brief. Ensure that under local government act/power rather than under localism or housing act provisions.

Changes to immigration rules, any person rough sleeping who applied for rough sleeping would have their application declined, re worded so that only those who are rough sleeping refuse continued offers of support or are persistent ASB will be refused.

202 appeals – non priority appeal and ending duty, the appeal was successful as the LA gave equal weighting to both medical reports and didn’t explain why this weighting was given, especially when you have two competing views. The second appeal was ending of relief duty in Hackney, who failed in their needs assessment or PHP failed to reference medical needs and therefore they failed to consider what would be suitable accommodation and how to secure, Hackney couldn’t discharge their relief duty as a result. It also noted that the implementation of the reasonable steps, if any form of delay between accepting relief duty and starting the 56 day clock and taking the steps around assessment, the 56 days should start from the commencement of the assessment process commencing.

LGO decision against Bredford Council – complaint received by the landlord of the applicant, once was the LA advising not to leave the property before the warrant executed and not accepting a homelessness action. The LGO found no fault with the first issue but with the second part in that it failed to follow the code of guidance following the possession hearing and outcome and for when it became unreasonable for tenant to remain in the property and the financial impact for the landlord. The LGO made a compensation award to the landlord.

**AOB**

RS advised colleagues that has accepted a job role with Ashford BC and therefore the post of KHG Partnership Manager is now being advertised. RS to commence transition work and training with Ashford BC from mid may, have committed to support KHG through recruitment process on key areas but will not be able to take on new project work and will work with new recruit when appointed on handover.

MG working with colleagues in Sussex about protocol document – there is a missing element about the relief duty referrals and when the households placed in another areas within the last five years. **ACTION** - MG to send to SC. Also to look at a section when rough sleepers are moving areas, how to manga rough sleepers who will not move area and the partnership approach between agencies for this cohort, what about the support element for the rough sleeper, common ground for the person and support is needed. When work in Sussex completed MG to share outcomes.

 ET thanked colleagues to her email about triage, having conversations at Dover DC around recovery plans for the return to the office, asked by Head of Service about other recovery and delivery plans for LA’s look like. ACTION – if any LA colleagues would like to have a call outside of KHOG please let ET know, from the chat the following LM, MB, RSh and RK.

CK raised TA and the cost of nightly rate and paying for damages. Does anyone have any information or process to share, indemnity charges or information would be gratefully received. RK advised that SDC do not pay charges for damages, but drafting an SLA for nightly TA providers. Any additional feedback directly to CK at TMBC. SC mentioned the insurance provided by Help to Rent.

**NEXT MEETING – 24th June 2021, 10am Microsoft Teams (Full Membership CALL)**