**KEG Meeting Notes 15th October 2020**

**Attending** – Lewis Kinch, Optivo; Helen Critcher, Golding Homes; Gemma Foster, Riverside Housing; Parmjot Pannu, Medway Council; Felicity Dunmall, GCHA; Emma Henry, WKHA; Nancy Cashford, Optivo; Lynsey Brogan, Hyde Housing; Vikki Perry, Ashford BC; Vikki Perry, Ashford BC; Rebecca Smith, KHG

**Apologies** - Steve Martin & Matt Smith, Southern Housing Group; Kathryn Harrison, ERHA; Ian Long, MHS Homes; Corrine Beech, WKHA;

**General Catch Up**

Colleagues introduced themselves and did a quick time travel icebreaker.

HC advised that the she has returned back to work from maternity leave to Golding Homes.

LK advised that this is an opportunity for colleagues to share good practice and learning and to support each other.

**What isn’t working/Challenging Currently**

HC advised that has recently undertaken a virtual survey of residents and also undertook some telephone calling, appreciated from the results and feedback about the disparity in access to the internet, which makes engagement difficult and isolating for residents. How to reach and tackle the hard to reach residents.

FD advised that GCHA are still sharing and sending resident’s newsletters, have about 17% of residents who are digitally excluded, still encouraging wellbeing calls to those who are at risk of isolation, how to keep the contact meaningful is a challenge, along with keeping staff morale up at the moment.

What is the non-digital platform offer for residents? How to provide the necessary support for residents? Hard to keep data about who needs what offer with regards to contact, who has access to the internet for example?

NC has undertaken welfare calls, currently undertaking income calls with some feeling isolated and having concerns about money, not just older residents but younger too. FD advised social isolation has impacted younger people, even working colleagues who are working from home currently. NC advised that the H&S contact at Optivo have advised it is ok to organise a ticketed event that is socially distanced to manage numbers and risk.

LK raised a concern from residents about post October and the impact on employment and the end of Furlough, would this be the right time to commence the wellbeing calls once more?

RS raised the issue of Christmas and what the offer will be for residents? Unlikely to be able to host anything in the communal area due to the restrictions/closures.

PP advised that has only been in the role for a few months, concerned about the impact of social isolation, loneliness and how to encourage residents to engage on a digital platform.

HC advised that have struggled with regards to the advice

VP advised that there have been an increase in safeguarding referrals, suicide attempts which are all impacts/consequences of the current situation, there can be an information overload and the use of all the different types of technology. Tolerance levels seem to be generally lower so problems escalate quicker than before.

**How are your organisations communicating with you?**

FD advised that they have a set up a coffee chat/catch up with the relevant team, only 10-15 minutes, to keep everyone engaged across the business and avoid the silo working and bring cohesion. These are working well so far. EH advised that they are having more frequent team catch ups, which is more of a challenge for bigger teams. In a few weeks there will be a staff stay focused week, with speakers and a bonding activities for teams (may be in person if rule of 6 still in place).

LK important that people appreciate how others work differently when working from home, to ensure the best possible output and achieving the tasks for the day/agreed period of time. EH agreed that this is an important message. GF advised that Riverside colleagues have been advised to put in their signature about the change in working hours and response to enable that flexibility.

LB advised that Hyde cover a very wide area of stock so not used to working alongside each other, were already working together via a digital platform and have a flexible approach to work and outcomes. Generally communication internally has been good, the CEX does live broadcasts, one team meeting each week, an overall calm and sensible approach to working.

LK moving forward need to find ways to keep morale boosted and morale high, especially challenging for the winter months ahead.

**Positive outcomes/outlook**

EH shared that WKHA have recently reviewed their DA Policy and getting accreditation on this and with engagement with residents, with a good response, with an online session with two external DA professionals/organisations. This was people sharing how the response from WKHA on DA could be improved and a powerful piece of work and will remain ongoing. RS to put EH in contact with a colleague at TCH about the accreditation experience.

HC advised that Golding Homes are looking at Community Chest decisions from April and this will be a virtual meeting, this will take place this afternoon.

FD advised that she has taken advantage of working from home to complete or move forward with substantial projects or pieces of work, also personally being able to have quality time at home for family.

GF advised that they have had 8 customers move on from supported accommodation since the end of May, providing accommodation for others now, 4 have gone into social housing in Thanet, and others across Kent, helping people live independently. In the supported schemes the staff have been expected as before Covid-19 and support residents, now a priority to move supported customers from this type of accommodation to independent living.

Important to celebrate the wins!

NC advised that Optivo pledged to plant 2020 trees throughout the year of 2020, with 500 planted in February, having more time to work out where the remainder will be planted and the impact on the environment. Optivo have also committed to Black Lives Matter month, which is a positive move away from just one day as previously.

LK advised that they are working on new ways of working through the whole business, which WFH has assisted with. Time spent travelling has significantly reduced, which is also a positive for residents and their commitment to working with organisations. LB advised that their involved residents have advised that they want to continue with digital meetings. LB to share details with PP about events. EH advised that residents with significant physical disabilities have found the digital contact liberating and enabled them to be more engaged with the involvement side of the business.

**AOB**

RS to set up a KEG chat via the Teams app and will share the link with colleagues.

Next meeting date is the 8th December at 10am. LK asked colleagues to share details about any non Covid related agenda items to let LK, HC and RS know. RS suggested a hot chocolate and mince pie for the December meeting ☺

Agreed to continue with regular catch ups via Teams moving forward.