

# HOME FRONT



New board members:  
clockwise l-r, Amy Cheswick,  
Stuart Ilsley, Christy Holden,  
Clare Maynard



## IN THIS ISSUE

Board update  
**page 1**

News and events  
**pages 2/3**

Sub groups **pages 4**

Contact us **page 4**

## Welcome to new Board members

**The Kent Housing Group's Board has been strengthened with the addition of four new members, bolstering the leadership of the organisation as we continue to expand our work supporting the all-important housing sector in Kent and Medway.**

The new members join close on the heels of the appointment of John Littlemore as Vice Chair KHG this spring, while Brian Horton continues as our interim Chair until a permanent appointment is made.

The new recruits are Stuart Ilsley, Operations Director at Town and

Country Housing; Amy Cheswick, Executive Director, Customer Transformation, at MHS; Clare Maynard, Interim Strategic Commissioner, Kent County Council; and Christy Holden, Head of Strategic Commissioning Children & Young People's Services, KCC.

Brian Horton said: "I'm delighted to welcome Stuart, Amy, Christy and Clare. The work and influence of the Group continues to grow and we need professionals of their calibre and experience to ensure that the Board is in the best position to steer the organisation during the busy year ahead."

## NEWS

### Together, we can



An update on the Kent & Medway Interim Integrated Care Strategy was given to the KHG Board on 17 May by Mike Gogarty from Kent Public Health.

Mike said that the strategy is badged under the strapline

Together, we can. He outlined how a new approach is required locally as health challenges are increasing, and added: "We will work together to make health and wellbeing better than any partner can do alone and focus on key areas such as children and young families, healthy choices and hospital services."

He said that the pledge, Together, we can recognises that citizens' health, care and wellbeing are impacted by economic, social and environmental factors more than the health services they can access. The pledge is to bring the full

weight of our organisational and individual efforts to collaborate to enable the people of Kent and Medway to lead the most prosperous, healthy and contented lives they can.

As part of the consultation, Mike highlighted three questions that he'd like the KHG Board's views on and we will now work to respond to these:

- Does the strategy reflect our systems and your organisations high level priorities?
- Is there anything fundamentally missing that you would want to see in future iterations of our strategy?
- What do you feel we, the Integrated Care Strategy should do to mature and develop KHG's strategy in 2023/24 and what commitment could the Group make as system leaders to embed our strategy ambitions across the integrated care system?

For more information on the strategy visit: [www.kentandmedway.icb.nhs.uk/](http://www.kentandmedway.icb.nhs.uk/)

### KFRS fire safety webinar

Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) is offering a webinar on fire safety in purpose built flats on 27 June.

KFRS will provide an overview of the relevant guidance, outline the importance of compartmentation, and cover the importance of fire doors and the checks to be completed.

The session will also cover escape routes, give a summary of Automatic Opening Vents, and explain what Evacuation Alert Systems are.

The session has been provided to local authority teams at KFRS' shared learning day so local authorities are welcome to attend, however you should be aware it could be repetition. To book your place email [sharon.irvine@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.irvine@ashford.gov.uk)

### Money talks

Claudine Bell, the South East Regional Partnership Manager, from the Money and Pension Service, spoke at our 12 May KHG meeting about the services they offer. She highlighted the **Money Adviser Network**, already used by some KHG members, available to refer customers in financial difficulty to free regulated telephone debt advice.

Claudine introduced the **Money Guiders Programme** which is free to organisations giving money guidance rather than regulated financial advice or debt advice with modular e-learning giving staff the option to gain City and Guilds credentials.

She also discussed the mental health and money **guide**. If you have any questions about these services please contact [claudine.bell@maps.org.uk](mailto:claudine.bell@maps.org.uk)

## NEWS

### DEBUT FOR NEW EDI GROUP

**Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Working Group met for the first time on 15 May. The Group aims to be a safe space to discuss actions and share good practice, learning and ideas to address EDI across KHG member organisations.**



The **Housing Diversity Network** (HDN) researched and produced the **KHG Equality Diversity and Inclusion Baseline Report 2022**.

HDN Chief Executive Mushtaq Khan gave a presentation on the report and its recommendations at this inaugural meeting. KHG is an associate member of the Network, which has agreed to act in an advisory role to the EDI Working Group.

If your organisational lead on EDI has not yet joined the Working Group and would like to attend these meetings, please send your EDI lead's name and email address to [sharon.irvine@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.irvine@ashford.gov.uk)

### Focus on dampness and mould

Addressing dampness and mould in homes remains a high priority for KHG and invitations will soon be issued to attend a webinar on 15 September.

The webinar will see Victoria King from the Housing Ombudsman provide an update since the original report was published. She will address the issues they see and outline the next steps for the Ombudsman on tackling dampness and mould.

Paul Clarke from Kent Public

Health is also due to give a briefing on the health impacts of living with dampness and mould. Breakout sessions will cover reactive to proactive, taking responsibility, focusing on the fabric and zero tolerance to dampness culture.



Data and monitoring are also on the agenda. Invitations to register for the event will be sent out in June. The webinar follows KHG's **statement** in December 2022 addressing dampness and mould in homes.

### Join our DA scheme today

Members are being invited to join a reciprocal scheme for social landlords to support households fleeing domestic abuse.

As we reported in the last issue of Home Front, KHG wrote to all housing associations and heads of housing services in stock-holding local authorities to brief them about the scheme. They were invited to an event on 3 April. If you missed it the presentation is available [here](#).



The multi-agency initiative is being led by Lisa Clarke of Clarion Housing, who said: "The aim is to reduce the risk of homelessness for survivors. The scheme will help landlords move survivors into another local authority area if they cannot find suitable within their own stock. The survivor will not lose their social tenancy.

"This scheme fits within KCC's Domestic Abuse strategy to help survivors accessing help to end the abuse, ensuring that there is a flexible approach to housing solutions and access to services for all."

Please sign up for this scheme today – to find out more visit our [website](#).

### STOP PRESS – Award deadline extended!

The deadline for nominations to the KHG Housing Excellence Awards 2023 has been extended until Tuesday 30 May. Don't delay – get your nominations in today. See our [website](#) for details of the 12 categories and how to nominate a colleague.

# NEWS FROM THE SUB GROUPS

## Events

With three new members on board, the group is planning a number of future events, including Exempt Accommodation and a HSEG event around housing/planning and developers. The group is also busy preparing for the 2023 Excellence Awards, working on details of the venue, format, confirmation of date and sponsors. For the one day conference, the group is in discussion with events management companies about staging the event, while work is ongoing about potential topics, guest speakers and more. See the next edition for an update on these two key events.

## Private Sector

Better Care funding has been confirmed for the next two years, so the Hospital Discharge Schemes continue to operate well. Phase 3 of Solar Together is open for registrations, while new legislation is being monitored and shared with partners.

## Kent Homechoice Operational

Work is gathering pace on preparing for the switchover to the Huume system with training sessions ongoing into June. Work on data matching from Locata



to Huume is commencing and it's confirmed that Homechoice new online applications are suspended from 1 June to 1 July. Reported that there was a 7% rise in new applications in 2022/23, from 24,826 to 26,673.

## Housing Health & Social Care

While still looking for a Vice Chair, the group continues to help and update the Kent Fuel Poverty Strategy and understanding how to refer clients to sources of help for insulation and finance. It is also providing a current protocol on supporting homeless people having TB treatment. Reviewing the Housing with Care for Older People document was raised and volunteers have already held a first meeting with Kent County Council to discuss updating the data sets.

## Asset Management

A presentation from Clarion on the retrofit of properties in Tonbridge focussed on how delivery took place and the use of the SHDF. Procurement routes and opportunities were discussed. KCC's Bethany Pepper said the new Strategic Domestic Retrofit sub group for KHG focuses on retrofit on owner occupied homes and recognised some topics relevant for both the asset management group and SDR group. The new group reports to K&M Environment Group and the KHG Board and looks at data modelling, building the installer market, and providing trusted advice and support. A paper will be taken to the K&M Environment Group with a request for resource. Matthew Williams will lead the new group.

## CONTACT KHG

### INTERIM CHAIR OF KENT HOUSING GROUP

Brian Horton  
07970 141718

[brian@hortonstrategic.com](mailto:brian@hortonstrategic.com)

### VICE CHAIR OF KHG

John Littlemore

[john.littlemore@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:john.littlemore@maidstone.gov.uk)

### KHG PARTNERSHIP MANAGER

Helen Miller

[helen.miller@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:helen.miller@ashford.gov.uk)

### PARTNERSHIP ASSISTANT

Sharon Irvine

[sharon.irvine@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.irvine@ashford.gov.uk)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE NEWS: [kenthousinggroup.org.uk/news](https://kenthousinggroup.org.uk/news)