**KENT HOUSING OPTIONS GROUP**

**NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON**

**27 October 2016**

**Maidstone BC, Maidstone House**

**Present:** Marie Gerald DBC, Vicky Hodson KHC, Jane Smither TMBC, Rebecca Reynolds FNP, Mark Breathwick MDC, Michelle Franks KSSCRC, Paul Billard NHAS, Elly Toye DDC, Wendy Labrum TWBC, Marion Money NLA, Sylvia Roberts ABC, Lara McCourt CCC, Damien Olley CCC, Emily Matthews KCC, Vicky May TDC, Andrew Kefford SBC

**Apologies:** Jill Pells KHG, Lesley Clay JPPB, Jane Griffiths BPHA, Bev Jackson Shepway DC, Jo Mahieu WKHA

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| **1.** | **RBLI** | Presentation to be sent out with notes. KHOG raised some further questions and ZK confirmed that the divorced partner of a serviceman or woman would still qualify for assistance. They offer both bonds and rent deposits on a 3 year term and that they are also able to contribute towards funeral costs, usually in the region of £750. |  |
| **2.** | **Family Nurse Partnership** | Presentation to be sent out with notes. |  |
| **3.** | **Minutes and Matters Arising** | The notes from the previous full meeting held on 3rd March 2016 were agreed.Gravesham Homelessness Triage tool is to go on as an agenda item at the next meeting. |  |
| **4.** | **Amended Terms of Reference for Adoption** | KHOG reached agreement that Terms of Reference can officially be adopted. |  |
| **5.** | **Domestic Abuse Update** | EM advised that the Domestic Abuse Service contract is now out to market. KCC had initially proposed a County Wide integrated service but following feedback from consultation they have amended the model to be integrated but on a locality basis. The 4 area based integrated service areas are as follows:* Thanet and Dover
* Canterbury, Ashford and Shepway
* Maidstone, Swale, Dartford and Gravesham
* TW, T&M and Sevenoaks

Tender closes on 5th Sept and awarding contracts in January for service to go live in April 2017. KCC had Initially asked for training, education and awareness within the contract but now putting out a separate county wide tender; they will be looking for an innovative and hard hitting approach. There will be exceptions to this which are TW, T&M and Sevenoaks along with Maidstone who will be making their own arrangements for training, education and awareness training. The contracts will be let initially for 5 years with a view to renew in 2 years followed by a further 2 years, the view is that this will provide a period of time and stability for the service provider and will enable the model to evolve over time to be effective. EM confirmed that there is not perpetrator work in tender document, they will be looking into options for a service to deliver early intervention services.MG advised that she had been contacted by a senior IDVA to say that a victim of serious abuse was advised that one of the Local Authority partners couldn’t carry out a homeless appointment out of the office. All Local Authorities confirmed that they do have the ability to visit at home.Once the Domestic Abuse contract has been awarded, the service provider will be invited to attend the KHOG wider partner meetings. EM to update at next meeting. | **EM** |
|  | **Homelessness Reduction Bill** | MG advised that the Homelessness Reduction Bill is looking at homelessness legislation, giving consideration to the Welsh model which is more preventative and which has had good results.The 2nd reading is on 28th October 2016, the proposed legislative changes are that anyone stating that they are homeless will be accommodated for 56 days regardless of priority need. A County wide operational group are meeting regularly to look at ways of mitigating the likely increased demand because of the requirement of LA’s to produce personal housing plans for individuals.LGA has released a briefing which MG has circulated.MM raised that changes in favour of landlords has been removed from the Bill and advised that ABC have developed a useful leaflet for landlords. SR to send Ashford leaflet to VHo to circulate to KHOG.Local Connection for care leavers will be based on County rather than borough or district.Homelessness Reduction Bill to be added as a rolling agenda item |  |
|  | **Help to Buy Update** | JG was unable to attend the meeting but provided a summary: * Cover 89 LA areas and have 45,000 applicants looking for LCHO
* Cap changed in January and is now £80K.
* Government has now removed all priority groups for assistance with the exception of Armed Forces personnel
* Any grant funded schemes with the exception of rural exception site need to follow the above priority only.
* Purchasers can now purchase a property of any size and bedroom size is no longer limited to plus one more than need

KHOG queried whether it is possible to staircase down |  |
|  | **Recent Case Law** | <http://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28435%3Acouncil-loses-homelessness-appeal-over-application-of-mohammed-test&catid=60&Itemid=28> | **MG** |
| **6.** | **Training Opportunities** | Review training had been booked for 30th November for LAs being held in Dartford but his is going to be amended to a December date. MG to update on new date.Affordability workshop on 8th November. | **MG** |
| **7.** | **AOB** | DCLG have launched a Homelessness Prevention Programme to address rough sleeping and have set aside £20Mil to establish ambitious homelessness trailblazers, £10Million for rough sleepers and £10Mil of social impact funding through personalised support plans. The money is for a 3 year period. KHOG are interested in putting together a Kent wide joint bid for funding. MG arranging a meeting for next week. MF KSSCRC CLS commissioned a housing brokerage service, advocacy and support working with service users. Ex-prisoners all now receiving a year’s probationary support when released in Kent, Surrey and Sussex. Their case worker will support them with housing applications. SC raised S 198 referrals and whether LAs are recharging and being reimbursed for costs for removals and storage. SC says that guidance says that TA costs can be reimbursed but Maidstone are having difficulty with this. Consensus is that it will be difficult to get costs reimbursed as areas may not accept. Rough sleeper estimate – 14th November using local knowledge and information for count. Homeless Link will be verifying the lists produced. | **MG** |
| **8.** | **Next Meeting** | Next Full Meeting is March next KHOG LA only is 15th December 2016 |  |