**KENT HOUSING OPTIONS SUB GROUP (KHOG) MEETING – 12th September 2019, Maidstone BC Office, Maidstone House, Maidstone**

**Present:** Marie Gerald, Chair, Dartford BC; Stuart Clifton, Vice Chair, Maidstone BC; Pam Millington & Elly Toye, Dover DC; Mark Damiral, F&HDC; Rebecca Smith, KHG; Vicky Hodson, Kent Homechoice; Zoe Callaway, Swale BC; Jan Galloway, KCC; Victoria May, Thanet DC; Helen Campbell-Wroe, Pathways to Independence; Wendy Hogg, Tunbridge Wells BC; Toni Carter, Dartford BC; Lora McCourt, Canterbury City Council; Claire Keeling, TMBC; Jayne Collier-Smith and Pal Sandher, KCC; Tracy Partridge and Franky Roma, Medway Council; Manpreet Bhupal, Gravesham BC; Abbie Gardner, KSS CRC; Rebecca Goldring, Porchlight; Penny Miller, Riverside; Bally Majhail, NPS; Sylvia Roberts, Ashford BC; John Littlemore, Maidstone BC & KHOG Mentor; Jo Mahieu, WKHA; Lisa Webb, Sevenoaks DC

**Apologies:** Nina Colley, Sevenoaks DC; Ray Easdown, Medway Council; Ray O’Shea, Ashford BC; Melanie Anthony, KCC; June Heslop, Southern Housing Group; Deborah White, West Kent HA;

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| **Reference** | **Notes/Outcome** | **When** | **Lead** | **Action/Decision** |
| **Minutes/Matters Arising June 2019** | Minutes agreed as accurate and matters arising –  Page 1 – PM advised that the Seniors Meeting was pushed back, will update at a future meeting.  Page 6 – MG advised that the new MHCLG contact for KHOG is likely to be Rebecca Ireland, MG to confirm with RS so an invite can be shared.  Page 7 – RS to invite Help to Rent to October meeting of KHOG. RS to chase colleagues about funding information to share at October KHOG meeting. | **Oct**  **ASAP**  **By end Sept** | **PM**  **MG/**  **RS**  **RS** | **To provide update when avail**  **MG to update RS when details known & RS to invite**  **RS to invite Help to Rent and send request for funding info again** |
| **Pitch Allocation & Site Management** | JCS and PS from KCC provided an overview to colleagues about the new policy for G&T with regards to registration and allocation, to ensure parity for this client group. KCC currently own and manage 8 sites and also manage sites on behalf of Maidstone BC, a total of 131 pitches. Currently applicants are apply and are placed onto a waiting list, they receive points based on their circumstance but the wait for pitches can be extensive and those on the waiting list can be waiting for between 3 and 5 years. There are currently two policies in draft for consideration, one around pitch allocation and site management, the second is fee setting (the latter consultation will be out for December 2019).  KCC are considering the use of KHC and the same process as used by local authorities and registered providers for registration and letting of G&T pitches, this will ensure that applicants are more aware of their position as they would be banded or pointed and able to bid for pitches as they become available. KCC are also considering how to provide more support for this client group, providing a holistic approach and overview of the applicants.  There was a discussion covering a number of areas, including how to support applicants who may be illiterate, the impact upon housing options teams should the registration function move to local authorities, how to manage cross boundary vacancies, obtaining information from applicants to support their application. JL advised that for Maidstone the issues raised by colleagues as part of their initial feedback haven’t occurred for them and the sites that are managed on their behalf by KCC.  It was agreed that KCC would share the draft document for consultation and then attend the next Kent Homechoice meeting (25 September). | **When avail** | **RS/JCS** | **RS to share contact details with VH. JSC to share draft document for circulation to KHOG** |
| **KCC Commissioning Update (Adult & YP)** | **Adults** - MA unable to attend the meeting today. General discussion about referrals being pushed back as not meeting complex needs, additional feedback to the referrer is required as the reason behind the refusal is not clear. Porchlight confirmed that they are working to clarify the referral process and the definition of complex needs, they are also working to compile good practice case studies. Guidance from KCC with regards to the contract not specific about the complex needs definition, it was agreed that this does need to be addressed within KCC as they have commissioned the contract. Any work undertaken by Porchlight will be in consultation with Riverside and Look Ahead to ensure consistency. Need further discussion and confirmation about the definition as there remains confusion. Porchlight agreed to have a district representative to be part of the discussions about finalising the definition and would be happy to return to the October LA meeting of KHOG to update on progress.  There have been no outcomes or information about the newly commissioned services and this was raised at consultation stage. JL to raise at KHG meeting next week as Adult Commissioning will be attending and providing an overall update.  SC has asked MA and Christy Holden if a directory of schemes for Adults and YP can be shared, especially when considering options for those approaching the districts. MA has agreed but would only be for internal use only and not for customers, JL commented this would be useful for out of area placements from London. Porchlight are open to conversing with appropriate colleagues in local authorities about potential sites or schemes.  JG provided an update on the YP Commissioning and confirmed that YP commissioning have produced their directory information and it is with Adults to finalise, it is spreadsheet with relevant information. JG advised that it is important to remember that some services have been designated as low, medium or high needs and therefore this may impact on the referral process and success. YP don’t have a complex need criteria, consideration is made about risk to the YP or those living around them or supporting them. New commissioned service in operation for 5 months, number of units reduced and this has focused work on move on, monitoring is underway, with the first quarterly report to be produced in the short – term, to include level of support needs, number of referrals as examples of two elements.  YP workshop taking place today to look at many elements and will inform the YP commissioning work over the next six months, ensure the services are robust and effective monitoring. JG advised that Rachel Britt is no longer the lead for YP, Christy Holden is, Robin Cahill is currently Senior Commissioner at KCC, looking at currently at the overall YP commissioning service. JG leaves her role in December 2019.  SC raised those YP who are excluded from accommodation or support by a particular provider? YP accommodation Floating Support service only commissioned to pick up **15%** of all children that they have a duty to house, this is only 189 places, there are other services for the remainder of YP. The YP commissioned service is only one element of an offer for YP. There is a balance of risk about a YP to others in a service. YP in this situation would go back to the Total Placement Service, who have to source alternative accommodation outside the YP service. The role of the YP commissioner is to monitor and evidence the number of refusals and present the identified unmet need, currently refusals are about no vacancies. | **ASAP** | **MA** | **For October 2019 agenda, further discussion required.**  **Agreed for Porchlight to attend October meeting of KHOG to update.** |
| **KHOG Vice Chair** | Two colleagues who have put themselves forward for role of Vice Chair, with the two nominees to provide a short overview about why they would like the role, RS will share via email and ask LA colleagues to vote and RS will then confirm the result. | **ASAP** | **RS** | **RS to contact nominees and share info and deadline for vote** |
| **Seniors Meeting** | The July meeting was pushed back to October, PM will feedback at the October meeting of KHOG. | **Oct 2019** | **PM** | **PM to note for October KHOG** |
| **Protocols – Standing Item** | **S.198** – A referral protocol between local authorities. Under HRA making more referrals at Relief Stage an how to manage to get more cohesive working around timescales. The protocol has been shared and commented upon previously, it was agreed to sign off as final and to be published.  **IH Protocol** – To be reviewed to reflect the HRA 2017, should no longer be making as many IH decisions and how to intervene at an earlier point, and who does it sit with now within the services involved. KCC do understand the benefits of early intervention, it has been delayed due to restructure and the implementation of the newly commissioned Homelessness services. The next stage would be to draft a new IH protocol to reflect the new ambition, and to engage with how the Front Door service.  **TA Placements Protocol** – Circulated for relevance, SC advised that LGA are looking at this at national level, agreed to hold this until the LGA conclude their workshops and SC to feedback progress and then next steps for a Kent protocol. MG advised that out of area placements is an area of focus moving forward, SC has fed back into the LGA workshop about information other services (such as Children’s services) when placing outside of a borough, and then how this information is cascaded appropriately between services.  **Reciprocal Protocol** – Final Draft circulated for comment. MG commented on how each area manages or bands reciprocals between authorities, to ensure that allocation policies take into account reciprocals, this is covered in the draft circulated. It was agreed to have this as a standing item on the agenda for monitoring to understand the impact, SC will share his template for monitoring of reciprocals internally. Medway Council have questioned whether it can be a ‘take it in turn’ process, which was advised as complex to manage and the more appropriate response would be to monitor and raise at KHOG. If colleagues agree to adopt the template used by SC and this could assist with how they are managed.  LM raised about reciprocal requests from London Boroughs, how is this being managed across Kent and Medway, it was agreed it would be useful to have an agreement on this. MD advised that less amenable to a reciprocal is the local authority is non stock holding, in this case SC advised that this can create more communication but not necessarily a barrier, can depend on where an RP has stock.  **Duty to Refer** – need to revisit as useful to have an adopted referral form for when assisting offenders. | **ASAP**  **ASAP**  **ASAP**  **ASAP**  **By Oct KHOG** | **RS**  **ALL**  **RS**  **SC**  **RS** | **RS to share final version on KHG website, via KHG EXB for information.**  **Colleagues to contact RS/SC if want to support SC and RS in moving this forward.**  **SC to feedback on LGA progress, to have on agenda as standing item until resolved**  **RS to share on website once signed off by KHG EXB**  **SC to share template for consideration of LA colleagues**  **RS to check last action point** |
| **Standing Items for Discussion –** | **National Policy (update from MG)** – Brexit Preparation - A main message to check if an applicant is registered in the EU Settlement Scheme, if not they could lose entitlement to benefits. If they have pre settled status the EU Treaty Rights will apply, guidance due out shortly.  Future Funding – likely to be rolled over, £54m is still under consideration for allocation, colleagues advised to look at allocation of last year as guidance to a new allocation. Haringey Council were challenged on Personal Housing Plans, a DA case and were challenged that not addressed all members of the households support needs, also looking at why she needed to go to a specific post code area. This was a first challenge and review, the PHP was robust but failed on these two latter points.  NPSS will do an audit for benchmarking, one point at the recent conference was about a decision on the 57th day of the relief duty, for those in PN you have to make the decision on the 57th day, for others it can be rolled over.  MG reminded colleagues that if a household is in TA for over 5 years it creates local connection. The last quarter of H-CLIC data should be released today. MG advised that MHCLG are undertaking a HRA Review, including an admin burden but this does need to be evidenced clearly as part of any feedback.  There is no movement on the frozen LHA rates currently.  **Case Law** – SC attended the AHAS General Meeting which was based on the Samuels Judgement (Samuels v’s Birmingham), there are slides and notes that SC can share upon request. The main impact is the proper assessment and evidence of Income and Expenditure, and the needs of any children with regards to expenditure, that these are all addressed.  **Training** – ET advised that there is a need for eligibility training, DDC are going to create a training plan for Housing Options Officers and colleagues to share any templates at their discretion. The plan will be used to track when, by who and the quality of training. |  |  |  |
| **AOB** | MD updated colleagues about the successful work with the independent advocacy Young Lives for F&HDC.  The agreed date for the Rough Sleeper Count is over two dates 18th and 26th November. Some authorities are counting, some will continue with estimates. Having a staggered set of dates enables Homeless Link verification.  ET raised Brexit and more specifically to Housing. Local authorities do have their individual governance and the Kent Resilience Unit at KCC are leading on it. From Housing Options perspective it is the EU Settlement issue.  MG thanked colleagues for support recently, colleagues congratulated MG on her appointment.  Colleagues also noted thanks to Deborah White for her support and commitment as KHOG Mentor. |  |  |  |
| **Next Meeting** | Thursday 31st October 2019, 10am Maidstone (Local Authority only). RS to invite Porchlight representative to this meeting to an update on progress. |  |  | **RS to note for October meeting** |