**KENT HOUSING OPTIONS SUB GROUP (KHOG LA) MEETING – 31st October 2019, Maidstone BC Office, Maidstone House, Maidstone**

**Present:** Stuart Clifton, Chair & Maidstone BC; John Littlemore, KHOG Mentor & Maidstone BC; Marie Gerald & Rebecca Ireland, MHCLG; Vicky Hodson, Kent Homechoice; Ray Easdown, Medway Council; Claire Keeling, TMBC; Mark Damiral, F&HDC; Sarah Tickner, HHSC Sub Group of KHG; Nina Colley, Sevenoaks DC; Sylvia Roberts, Ashford BC; Elly Toye, Dover DC; Toni Carter, Dartford BC; Pam Millington, Dover DC; Roxanne Sheppard, Swale BC; Lynn Wilders, Gravesham BC; Victoria May, Thanet DC; Christy Holden, Robin Cahill, Jan Galloway, Melanie Anthony, KCC, Rebecca Smith, KHG

**Apologies:** Lora McCourt, Canterbury CC; Wendy Hogg, Tunbridge Wells BC; Rav Kensrey, Dartford BC

**Visitors**: Mark Janaway, Kent County Council; Thomas Fowler, Advice Aid; Ruth Trown, Ruth Trown Consultancy; Paresh Acharya, Help to Rent

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| **Reference** | **Notes/Outcome** | **When** | **Lead** | **Action/Decision** |
| **Minutes/Matters Arising Sept 2019** | Minutes agreed as accurate and matters arising –  PM advised the recent Seniors meeting was poorly attended despite topical agenda items including Locata Exchange and Care Leavers. Date of next meeting to be confirmed, host venue to be confirmed.  Marie Gerald and Rebecca Ireland to be the Kent MHCLG HAST representatives, will attend KHOG moving forward.  VH advised that the proposed G&T Allocation Policy/Strategy was presented at the recent KHC Operational Group meeting, JL and VH to have follow up meeting with KCC representatives and feedback outcome to KHOG colleagues. RS advised that draft strategy not available to share for comments currently.  Lora McCourt confirmed as new KHOG Vice Chair.  SC advised that he has a contract directory from KCC for schemes across Kent, this is for staff use only and will be shared in due course.  The Draft Pre Eviction Protocol and referral form has been shared for comment from KHOG and Kent Tenancy Management Group, final comments to RS by Friday 8th November. | **When Avail**  **By 8th Nov** | **SC**  **ALL** | **To share contact details when available**  **To provide comments back to RS** |
| **Advice Aid** | Advice Aid Presentation Summary Notes – Working on a project with Advice Aid, introduced Tom Fowler about a specific solution on offer, how to support ending rough sleeping and homelessness. TF is one of the co-founders of Advice Aid.  Advice is key to prevention of homelessness, should be there to empower decision making, it has to be accessible and at the right time, understandable and in the right language, to be consistent and up to date and of good quality and evoke a response, finally it has to be tailored to the need of the person or communities seeking it.  Advice Aid is a digital element that can sit on an existing website, which enables them to submit key points of information to result in advice, tenants’ rights, harassment, S21, mortgage arrears are typical areas of advice provided. Working with a team of legal experts to develop the advice and have consulted with Shelter on the advice. A tool for housing advisors has also been developed and can be linked to back office support/information.  Advice Aid keen to work with local authorities and provide the good specialist advice. TF advised that the pricing structure is driven to be low, it is banded. Each Kent LA for self service is £2,250 per year for the licence, Medway cost is £3,000. To have the advisor tool this would bring the price to £4,125 per local authority. If all local authorities wanted to use the tool there would be a discount on the pricing, so £1,750 for view only element or £3,000 for both tools, per local authority.  There is no feedback yet from Lewisham, who are currently using the tool, they have access to analytics. The key is to how much it is made available, for example on the bottom of emails, how you market the tool.  If individual local authorities are interested in taking forward then to contact Ruth, colleagues to confirm whether a Kent option is viable. | **When approp** | **ALL** | **To discuss & confirm whether countywide purchase of Advice Aid are required & contact TF/RT** |
| **Help to Rent** | PA advised that Help2Rent is a business solution, with more details provided on the slides shown.  Summary of slides/information include that the offer is similar to Zoopla and Rightmove where all details about properties are asked for in advance of a re let. Properties are only shown to applicants that can financially afford them, affordability matching is one of the criteria within the tool. Southwark Council are using the tool and site to match care leavers to properties through a referral process.  Insurances are ad hoc and pricing is based on what you use £334 for the landlord and £65 tenant liability. Rent deposits, bonds or guarantors are not required. The cost is £50.00 per let, there are no additional charges for changes to the interface or systems.  DBC is using this tool currently and applied for additional funding to employ a post to procure and add landlords, the target is to procure 300 insurances for landlords. There have been some difficulties with getting details on the system which PA thinks may be as a result of Firewall restrictions. SC urged colleagues to clarify DPIA details with DP officers within the local authority. There are flags on the system to advice when policies are due to come to an end, 6 weeks prior to the end.  To proceed there should be an SLA in place and users can be provided with live login details. PA is already working with some districts in Kent and would welcome discussion with others. | **With Notes** | **RS** | **To share PDF of presentation** |
| **KCC Safeguarding Update** | MJ provided and overview of the safeguarding agenda for all agencies. Some of issues finding from serious case reviews, a couple recently where significant evidence of neglect in the home and appropriateness of the home they are provided with. MJ advised that the board is aware of analysing all the information provided from the families involved. MJ advised that he can share case studies of recent examples where issues have been identified to reduce misuse of the accommodating provided, and to ensure that all agencies are communicating at appropriate times to identify issues at the earliest time possible.  MJ working with social workers to ensure that housing are included within the multi-agency partnership meetings. MJ advised that this will include all forms of housing, permanent, temporary accommodation and with placing authorities who are placing out of area when this occurs. Need to have a collective understanding of the family’s needs and the most appropriate accommodation to assist with meeting these needs.  It would be necessary to have the appropriate housing representative at a multi-agency meeting, depending on the type of accommodation that is being used. Feedback included was how contextual information can be shared to ensure that the appropriate housing representative is identified, MJ has already had this conversation with social workers about this. There is also work to complete about working through local authority safeguarding leads to help establish who should be invited to attend a multi-agency meeting.  SC mentioned the out of area/TA Protocol work being undertaken by the LGA, to ensure that the Children Authorities in both areas are liaising with regards to out of area placements.  MJ advised that KCC can provide free wider understanding of safeguarding training, there is a non-attendance fee associated with this training. | **With Notes**  **As req’d** | **MJ/RS**  **ALL** | **MJ to share link to Serious Case Review for colleagues to view**  **To contact MJ about training requirements** [**mark.janaway@kent.gov.uk**](mailto:mark.janaway@kent.gov.uk) |
| **CJD&LS Item** | GMcS provided an overview of the service provided by her team and the request to have a SPOC for each individual local authority to assist with the services provided for clients leaving custody who have an identified vulnerability and a housing need.  Have data about housing need per area if needed but aligned by custody suite. Medway have allowed a SPOC person/team to enable conversation with relevant officer or representative within custody and housing to devise a way to proceed for the client, for example are they known to both agencies, with an information sharing agreement. It is not anticipated to have a huge number of clients  Not looking for preferential treatment for those in custody or fast tracking but would like to enable partnership working to have outcomes of settling accommodation to help reduce reoffending. Working with a cross section of client groups currently.  Would like more understanding of IH decisions and share information with partner agencies to better understand a client’s situation or background.  MG advised that a lot of work on going about how to assist with offender accommodation and overcome barriers to this cohort of clients. London are looking at a Pan London arrangement with their Liaison and Diversion Teams, authorities encouraged to consider a way of working to assist offenders.  Partnership working and liaison between agencies can assist with sentencing timeframes. This team is not just focused on mental health and covers all agencies. GM advised that currently representatives are referring through the ‘normal’ referral process to individual authorities.  The role of the team working with offenders is time limited around intervention and will assist to commence a process or refer into housing. Currently this service works with clients who are pre conviction or not charged therefore outside of the ‘Duty to Refer’. Agreed to have the list of custody suites that are worked from, GM to provide this. There were questions raised about how this service fits or is working with the role of Probation and CRC.  GM can gather data about those who are homeless and have a housing need regarding clients working with. The team currently is about 30 colleagues, alongside with community based staff. Other support offered covers a wide scope that includes anything related to health or social well-being. |  | **RS** | **RS to share details with meeting notes** |
| **MHCLG Update** | RI and MG worked through a series of slides regarding announcements and updates in relation to the Homelessness Reduction Act. The next RSI Tranche for 20/21 has a deadline of 6th December, this will be co-production. RRP will not exist from next year so colleagues will need to consider how to include within RSI funding allocation moving forward.  Cold Weather Funding – 3 opportunities to claim funding. MHCLG will be exploring underspend of this and all funding streams.  MHCLG planning to continue communication out regarding timing of allocation of funding, responding to queries, colleagues urged to continue two way communications.  MG agreed to share contact details for a speaker who could attend KHG and KHOG regarding S21 consultation.  RI to provide contact details for the Local Government Ombudsman representative to enable a conversation for Kent colleagues, understand their role.  There is now a year of H-CLIC data, this is experimental but useful to use.  Colleagues urged to ensure that they have strategies in place and if not provide MHCLG with a timeline for when one can be expected. Always continue to keep MHCLG informed of progress.  Additional information provided in the MHCLG slides (PDF version shared with notes) | **ASAP**  **ASAP** | **MG/**  **RS**  **RI/ RS** | **MG to share contact details with RS**  **RI to share contact details with RS**  **RS to share PDF slides with notes** |
| **Help with Homeless Tool** | Homeless Triage Tool build by a digital tool at TWBC, has been shared with the Seniors Group. Helpwithhomelessness.info Ruth Trown has written all the advice sheets, at the end of the form it takes you to the referral form to the KHC or the advice sheets. The analytics are available, VH to share details with those who are not using the tool but also to explore whether it should be reviewed. SC advised that Maidstone BC do use the tool but unsure of the results from the analytics. It was agreed that there should be more clarity on the analytics and whether people are accessing the tool but not then using the form. VH advised that difficult to analyse if not configured on a website correctly. | **ALL** | **By 8.11** | **If colleagues are not using the tool and require more information to contact VH. Or to contact VH about being part of a working group to review and take a decision on moving it forward.** |
| **KCC Commissioning Update** | YP – workshop held in September, notes shared and action plan developed and shared. Looking for volunteers to be part of task and finish groups to undertake the actions. Looking to combine the 16/17 year old and Care Leavers Protocol, the role of the housing panel and name, the commissioning of the advocacy services and referral panels for supported accommodation service with a focus on prevention. The suggestion is to use the next KHOG meeting to focus on the YP Protocol and between now and then consider the task and finish group participation.  RC advised that may need to consider revising the timeline for the review of the YP protocol. Need to have lead responsibilities from both KCC and LHA’s to set a new timeline. KCC Operational Teams can lead on the drafting of a new protocol, will need input from colleagues from districts on this, to include knowledge and experience to inform the protocol.  Adults – Concerns expressed at the last KHOG meeting, MA has met with SC since. Eligibility and how to capture information on the referral forms, appeals/reviews, progress of referrals and agreements about protocols between the YP and adult services.  Eligibility – need to understand where concerns are arising from, colleagues to share examples, there is a process to ensure consistency of decision making. There has been a request for the eligibility criteria to be clearer, keeping it broad should not end up excluding anyone.  Appeals/reviews – there is no formal process, there should be and this will be taken forward. MA to circulate contact details (Holly Jones) for where appeals or review requests should be sent within KCC  Progression of referral – looking at currently, so in the interim need to understand at what points colleagues want the progression update opportunity.  Protocols between YP and Adults – looking collectively internally at KCC, will then come to the wider group to consider. Is there a rep from KHOG who would like to volunteer to be involved in the work streams identified, rather than focus on solely working with the provider.  There is no data to share today, however since the new commissioning there are approximately 1865 being supported by the service to date, 862 being supported through floating support. If not the experience of colleagues then asked to please share back with KCC colleagues.  Wellbeing Services Consultation is out currently – closes mid-December  Care and Support In the Home tenders have gone live, specifically around support that goes into other supported housing. Hospital IDVA service money comes to an end in March 2020, currently looking at ways to extend this post 2020 without Government funding. | **AS Avail**  **ASAP** | **ALL**  **MA**  **ALL** | **To share case study or appropriate information with MA or adult commissioning colleagues**  **MA to share contact details**  **To contact MA about volunteering**  **RS has shared web link** |
| **Protocols** | Pre Eviction Protocol – has been to the Kent Tenancy Management Group for consideration, no feedback on this from the group, a referral form has been developed. If colleagues are ok with the protocol to have signed off at KHOG and KTMG.  Still need to progress the IH Protocol, to remain on agenda.  Reciprocal Protocol to be put on the KHG website. |  | **ALL** | **To share comments by 8.11** |
| **AOB** | VM raised the DA Safe Accommodation letter from MHCLG to CEX, KCC Would like to champion this work through the Kent and Medway DA Group, need to understand what support or evidence is needed to support KCC in this work.  VM advise that the Police are piloting DARA currently, Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment – VM to share the link via RS.  ET shared a recent FOI received as a heads up for colleagues asking to see policies on procurement of TA, TA Placement Policies.  RC advised that KCC do commission an advocacy service for Young People, RC to share all the information with RS for colleagues, its commissioned for up to 200 clients, this will be monitored and explore a collective commission of this increased use of this service moving forward. | **ASAP**  **ASAP** | **VM/RS**  **RC/RS** | **To share information with notes**  **To share information with notes** |
| **Next Meeting** | Thursday 12th December 2019, 10am Maidstone (Local Authority only). Meeting date to be rescheduled due to General Election. | **RS** | **ASAP** | **RS to share new date** |