**Contain Outbreak Management Fund Update 16th March 2022**

KHG made a successful £2.5M bid to KCC for this project which aims to address financial hardship arising from Covid-19 leading to homelessness. It has two strands;

1. Funds to each Kent LHA to address financial hardship arising from Covid-19 leading to homelessness in all tenures
2. Funds to market the LHAs homelessness service to landlords using the website [www.supportforkentlandlords.co.uk](http://www.supportforkentlandlords.co.uk) and social media, press releases, etc.

Originally the project was to run to 31st March 2022 with any remaining funds to be returned to KCC. Each Kent LHA was sent £131,250, 75% of the allocation, in September to October 2021, with the remaining £43,750 to be sent later based on spend, making a total of £175,000 each. In late January KCC, using the spend data to date, advised that each Kent LA should be allocated the full £175,000, to spend by the new date of 30th June 2022, except Dover and Sevenoaks who would be allocated an additional £45,000 each as they appeared to be able to spend more, but with a deadline of 31st March 2022. Activity continues to vary between LHAs with the number of cases helped varying from 7 to 138, and spend varying from £35-189k at the end of February. Total spend was over £1.1M at the end of February.

Case studies have been sought from the perspective of private and social sector tenants and from landlords. These have shown the variety of people being helped and highlighted;

* how some had no understanding of the benefit system and not realised they were entitled to make a claim
* the strain the debts placed on relationships
* the negative impact debt has on mental health and the way that poor mental health reduces the ability to deal with debt
* that tenants in arrears avoid their landlord and so are unaware of their willingness to help

**Marketing**

The PR and marketing agency Maxim is continuing to promote the COMF funding and KCC has agreed the marketing can continue to the end of the project.

Relevant updates are being regularly posted on Kent Housing Group’s [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/VoiceofHousinginKent), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/kent-housing-group) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/KentHsgGroup) channels to promote the campaign and all LHAs are asked to share messages on their social media.

Several LHA have provided case studies and Maxim are using these to create more interesting social media posts and animations.

Maxim sent out a press release on the extension of the project and this resulted in Meridian showing interest in the project. They have asked for details of those who used the scheme but none have been available to interview so it is likely that this will not result in a piece on Meridian News.