**Present**: Toni Carter, chair and Dartford, (V); John Littlemore, group mentor and Maidstone (M); Alex Clarke DLUHC (M); Natalia Merritt, Maidstone (M); Stuart Clifton (M); Nicola Conroy (M); Manpreet Bhupal, Gravesham and co-chair (M); Kylie Gillham, Canterbury, (V); Elly Toye, Dover (V); Lisa Grimes, TMBC (V); Robin Cahill, KCC (V); Ray Easdown, Medway , (V); Hazel South, KCC (V); Luke Edwards, KCC (V); Gay Larter, Dad’s Unlimited (V); Zoe Callaway, Swale (V); Max Guest, KCC (V); Vicky Hodson, Homechoice (V); Graham Urquhart, KCC (V); Chris Burgess, Porchlight (V); Helen Miller, KHG (M); (V = Virtual, M = at meeting room in Maidstone)

**Apologies:** Rachel Westlake, KCC; Rachel May, Sevenoaks; Bob Porter, Thanet; Claire Keeling, TMBC; Mel Anthony, KCC Commissioning; Caroline Lower, Sevenoaks;

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| Reference | Notes/Outcome | Who | Action/Decision |
| Matters Arising | All – identify a point of contact in your housing team for drug alerts and contact the service to show your interest in receiving drug alerts – if you haven’t done this yet then please do.  All Kent LHAs ask your communications team to follow Kent Housing Group on Twitter and Facebook and share COMF related posts – if you haven’t done this yet then please do.  HM circulate details of working group on Kent Homeless Connects to members. Done and meeting on 12 April  West Kent based colleagues requested to liaise with YH on addressing the lack of a rent guarantor. Done yet if anyone has good practice that addresses this issue please email HM with it for sharing.  SAV – KCC has formed a Domestic Abuse Coordinators group which will take this work forward (district coordinators). At this group there is a lot of support on working collectively to either gain DAHA accreditation or learn from the process of others (for those not ready, or who don’t have the resources to gain accreditation) – this group were happy to have a dotted line to KHOG to update on progress. SAV is still working with KCC commissioners and in contact with DAHA to fully understand costs and payment options and hopes to be able to update on this soon.  All respond to Canterbury CC’s email regarding tents - circulated  HM circulate legal update from JL – Done  Senior HOOs contact PM if you’d like to attend the Senior housing options officers group. Next one due on 22nd June. Contact PM for details. |  |  |
| DLUHC updates | AC from DLUHC gave an update;  RSI allocations have been announced to LHAs but under embargo. Public announcements will be made next month and then the information will be shared with KHOG.  For Ukrainian and Afghan settlement schemes the suitability order will change from 1st June in preparation for the impact on part 7. These changes include;  1. an expanded definition of what is not a B&B to include living in a private dwelling (to allow LHA to rematch persons with a sponsor when the arrangement has broken down)  2. The B&B six week rule will not apply to Afghan or Ukrainian households following a humanitarian incident  3. A relaxation of suitability for out of areas placements to address the challenges of finding accommodation.  If you take a part 7 application for Homes for Ukrainians the funding does go with the household but this does not apply to the extended family cohort. The extended family scheme does not require the relation to provide accommodation for them.  JL 95% of the homelessness families are coming from this cohort and as they cannot access all the help that is open for Homes for Ukraine household. AC aware of this issue and hope it can be changed.  When a LHA makes a final offer outside their area the funding goes to new area where household will be relocated. AC expects guidance to be provided. AC will check whether s 208 guidance will be updated.  There are still a large number of Afghan households in bridging hotels. LAs were asked to make offers of accommodation and Home Office have been matching families to these. HO is new to this task and so many offers are being refused. There is a new process where if household offers two suitable offers of accommodation they will be told to leave bridging hotel. DLUHC will redo matching process and will base this on a personalised housing plan to look at what is suitable and also looking at the support that should be given to that household. If the offer is refused the household will have 56 days to leave the bridging hotel. Bridging hotels are not evenly distributed across country. When household refuses accommodation they may be allocated to another LHA to spread the workload. Due to part 7 we cannot prevent them making an application to LHA of choice but this aims to share the workload. JL we must not look at each issue in isolation and see the services in the whole so understand the additional burdens in the round. AC the LGA will coordinate this and suggests those present feed into these conversations.  SC asked for the data to be shared on the number of households in bridging hotels in the south east.    NM asked for the points of contact in Home Office and bridging hotels be shared to allow checking of data.  HCLIC data Oct-Dec has been published with a performance dash board <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-october-to-december-2021> and [Microsoft Power BI](https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiZjE1ODI0ZTUtYzEwOC00N2E1LThhZDMtNDU0ZGE3OWFhNjU0IiwidCI6ImJmMzQ2ODEwLTljN2QtNDNkZS1hODcyLTI0YTJlZjM5OTVhOCJ9)  AC there will be a consultation on HPG, to cover formula on allocation, and timing of receiving data based on providing accurate data. AC suggests members look out for the consultation and respond. | **AC** | **Check whether S208 guidance will be updated** |
| Dad’s Unlimited | DA services for Men, Gay Larter.  GL of Dad’s Unlimited gave a presentation which will be circulated by email. The services supports dads through separation to have a good relationship with ex partners and their children.    They have set up Kent’s first DA service for male victims. They provide an IDVA service. The DASH was written for female victims of DA and doesn’t suit male victims as well. The suicide risk does stand out for men. Their service has decided to support all male victims at all levels of risk. They provide a holistic support and also make referrals to external agencies as appropriate. DA is service is open to all men, not just dads.  They have more than 130 clients and this shows there is a need for the service.  There can be unconscious bias that men cannot be victims of DA and they will challenge that. Men do not present for help until the very last moment and the service wants to encourage people to seek support earlier. They are researching what is driving the suicide ideation.  Contact details are on the presentation. Gay’s own details are for LHAs not to be given to clients.  TC numbers appear to have dropped at the one stop shop so could GL work with them to encourage male victims to step forward? GL sometimes one stop shops do not welcome men entering. Also many of the men are working so would need to seek help outside of working hours.  GL willing to visit your team to give a short presentation so please contact her if you’d like to invite her.  GL explained that when men mention DA to other men they may be told to ‘man up’ and this increases the isolation.  NM Is there an alternative to the dashboard for men? GL not at the moment but GL would like to see a new DASH for men. GL hopes to work with ManKind or Respect may be able to help create a new DASH. TC the authors of DASH are SafeLives - may be worth working with them. KIDAS posters do show male victims. | **All** | **Contact GL if you would like to invite here to give a presentation to your team** |
| Commissioning Updates | Luke Edwards of KCC shared a presentation which will be circulated.  The KHC public consultation will continue to 6th June. They also have public and closed consultation events with good participation. Insights will go in there report to KCC Cabinet on 21st July.  On transitions planning, KCC is aiming to understand needs of current services users, so around DA, D&A, Care Act assessments, etc. There are grateful for all help on transition planning and KCC recognise how difficult the process has been.  Live Well Kent and Medway has been successful in helping people improve their MH and wellbeing. The service is provided by range of providers. It will be recommissioned and will go live in 2023.  Community Based Wellbeing  KCC commissioned new services on 3 year, or longer, contracts and this replaced annual grants to give more longevity. It uses a person centred approach and aims to help people to live independently for longer. It uses a no wrong door approach  **KIDAS**  KCC and KHG are running a virtual domestic abuse awareness event 20th June from 10-12.30. Over 100 places are booked. If you haven’t booked yet please email HM to book your place.  DHR 34 gave food for thought and will be actioned.  Kent Police will set up a DA hub which will be circulated later.  A consultation on updated draft Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, sometimes called Clare’s Law, is open until 2nd July. Please visit [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-guidance)  Lisa Rogers is new colleague to KCC’s commissioning service. |  |  |
| COMF | TC explained that 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.   COMF funding is for preventing homelessness primarily in the private rented sector but can also be used in the social rented sector and for mortgage arrears. It is for households adversely financially affected by COVID. The project was to run to 31st March 2022 but KCC extended it as some councils were not going to be able to spend the funds in time.  Sevenoaks and Dover councils were allocated additional funds of £45,000 each, so a total of £220,000 which they spend by the end of March 2022. All other Kent councils were allocated £175,000 and given an extension to the end of June 2022 to spend it. Spend continues to vary across the county and it is likely that some funds will be returned to KCC as 5 councils had spent less than £100k, and 5 had spent more than £120,000 by the end of April.  LAs are asked to continue to submit their monthly data returns to HM by 14th of each month. Each LA is asked to send in at least one case study so we’d urge those who haven’t done this yet to do it now. Please share the social media messages on Twitter and Facebook on your organisations social media accounts.  KCC have said that cases started before 30th June, but not yet completed, can continue but must be prioritised to be completed as quickly as possible.  **QUESTION;**  A question was added to Locata to help flag households who cannot stay in their home, or have accrued rent arrears as a result of Covid. We did intend to remove this when the project ended. KHOG would like the question removed from Locata at the end of June  **QUESTION;**  KCC is allowing councils who have started a case by 30th June, but not complete it, to continue it and use COMF funding for it, but say it must be completed as soon as possible after 30th June. KHOG asked how long is ASAP? They have 56 days to investigate cases. HM asked to ask KCC if LHAs can have 56 days from 30th June to determine a case and make payments and if not then aim for 28 days.  **Maxims marketing update.**  A press release has been drafted and recently issued to the local media on reaching £1.5 million spend. It was also added to the Support for Kent Landlords [website](https://supportforkentlandlords.co.uk/) and shared on Kent Housing Group’s social channels and [website](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/news/).  The advertising campaign with KM Media Group (on KMfm and KentOnline) proved successful so the online element has been extended until the end of June.  A new page has been created for the Support for Kent Landlords website which includes anonymised case studies from people who have benefited from COMF. These case studies have been used in a new animation. Paid for promotions on Facebook have greatly increased the views and this activity will shortly be replicated on YouTube. | **VH**  **HM** | **Please remove the question at the end of June**  **Seek clarification from KCC on how long they can work on cases after 30th June.** |
| Protocols update | **DA reciprocal agreement in social housing**  A written update, from Lisa Clarke, was circulated with the agenda and is pasted below;  Review meeting rescheduled for the 16 May due to project team availability. Progress has been made on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and we are in the process of finalising the referral form and a document to accompany the MOU which has further clarity on key considerations such as tenure type, arrears etc.  The next meeting is scheduled for the 8 June where we will focus on the final document which is the monitoring log. The main issue currently is identifying how the local coordinator role will work. We don’t expect this post will be full time but it is difficult to ascertain this until the scheme is up and running. We are hoping that one of the representatives from the project team, organisation can absorb this or we enter into a rota which is not ideal due to consistency.  A presentation of this project will be given to the Kent Housing Group event on the 20June. We are aiming to launch this scheme late summer and in the interim will be deciding the most appropriate way to advertise this to the social landlords within Kent.  SC asked whether the coordinator could be done by the DA coordinator for each LA?    **IH/Families with complex needs - John Littlemore**  At the end of March HM circulated a draft from KCC for comments. Some LHAs voiced some concerns regarding the document and that a more practical agreement was needed. JL discussed this with KCC and said it could be broadly accepted as a start but an operational document was also needed. KC of KCC said that KCC has approved the strategic document and wanted it to go to KHG for sign off. JL has explained that any document is signed off by KHG members.  JL sought KHOG feedback on whether we should seek sign off now or wait for the operational document too. The group suggested we should not sign off until the operational document is available too. JL will take this feedback to KCC.    **Kent Agency Assessment Form - VH**  VH explained that, following the last KHOG meeting a working group had been set up. The outcome of this was for VH to speak to each LA to see how they used the document and seek consensus on how it can be updated. VH found it was used very differently and so very hard to rewrite to suit all. Unfortunately they all use if differently so v hard to rewrite. VH also felt that as it contained much personal data it would be better done online for security.  To make the form online it has to be attached to a system and there will be a cost. VH asked to look into costs.  In the meantime VH to update the contact details on the form and send to HM to put up on KHG website.  **KMPT and the old Joint Protocol for planned discharge for homeless people from mental health in-patient facilities - MBh**  A small working group have been liaising with KMPT to update an old protocol. We hope to bring a new draft to KHOG for comments this summer.  **Duty to refer protocol – signing off and contact email/phone numbers**  Thanks to all who’ve sent in the details requested. HM still needs;  An electronic signature, or email stating their sign up from a couple of LAs.  **Young Persons Protocol – Robin Cahill**  KCC recommended we wait until they get the decision from OFSETD on requirements for accommodation for 16-17old before reviewing this protocol. DLUHC has suggested breaking protocol into care leavers and YP, but also that this is for us to decide. MW also suggested this at KHG on 25th. HM, RC will meet DLUHC to discuss this on 30th May and then feedback to KHOG. HM to invite NM to give a housing officers perspective. .  **How to prioritise the protocols that need reviewing**  HM explained that KHOG has a very large number of protocols, many marked for annual review. The Board had asked KHOG to take a pragmatic approach and identify which will be reviewed in 2022, 2023, 2024, etc. A sub group of MBh, NC, JL and TC will meet to decide the order for reviewing. TC will coordinate the meeting by the end of June. | **TC**  **JL**  **VH**  **HM**  **TC** | **Ask Dartford coordinators to liaise with LC to understand the task.**  **Liaise with KCC over document and explain that KHOG members need to see operational document before sign off.**  **Seek costs for putting form online**  **Put updated form back on KHG website**  **Arrange a meeting with NC, JL and MBh to decide how the reviews will be done** |
| How KHOG delivers the K&M Housing Strategy | MBh gave a presentation that is circulated with these notes.  It highlighted the five themes of the [K&M Housing Strategy](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/protocols/kent-medway-housing-strategy-2020-2025-a-place-people-want-to-call-home/), the objectives under each theme that would be delivered by KHOG and highlighted how the strategy can help use strike a balance between urgent matters and those that matter but are more ongoing, less urgent. He explained that the KHG Board is taking an interest in the strategies delivery and that there will be a delivery and implementation group for the strategy. He asked the group to identify which 1 or 2 objectives they’d like to address first. Other sub groups have started with the 1-2 they felt most relevant to current situations or most interested in.  Please have another look at the presentation and let MBh and HM know of any areas you’d like prioritised.  The KHG Board have been discussing how government funding often comes with very short time frames and how sometimes organisations lack the time to decide which other organisations they would want to bid with and the projects they would like to deliver. The Board has asked each sub group to identify the projects they may want to deliver, the data they’d need to support such a bid, and then to ask the Board for any help them may need to prepare to be bid ready. | **All**  **All** | **Read the presentation and identify the objectives that KHOG should look at first.**  **Consider projects that you may wish to do with other organisations. Discuss this with partners. Let the Board know of any help needed, particularly around data.** |
| National Policy and case law updates | AC highlighted that the duty to provide TA is immediate and it is not lawful to run a waiting list. [Elkundi, R (On the Application Of) v Birmingham City Council [2022] EWCA Civ 601 (04 May 2022) (bailii.org)](https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2022/601.html) and [Landmark judgment on the main homeless duty: R (Elkundi) v Birmingham and R (Imam) v Croydon | Doughty Street Chambers](https://www.doughtystreet.co.uk/news/landmark-judgment-main-homeless-duty-r-elkundi-v-birmingham-and-r-imam-v-croydon)  NM highlighted a case on allocations and not worsening your circumstances. [Roman v Southwark.pdf](file:///C:\Users\helen.miller\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\NRA1T7LK\Roman%20v%20Southwark.pdf) |  |  |
| DA event | There is a domestic abuse awareness event on 20th June from 10-12.30. If you or your colleagues would like to attend and haven’t booked with HM yet please email her. | **All** | **Contact HM to book your place** |
| AOB | Nominations have opened for the KHG Excellence Awards. Please send yours in to HM by 26th August.  Elly Toye will circulate a query about how LAs manage TA.  Date of next meetings;  LA only 7th July 10-12.30  Full 15th Sept 10-12.30  LA only 10th November 10-12.30 | **All** | **Nominate your colleagues for the** [**KHG awards.**](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/kent-housing-group-excellence-award/) |