**Draft Kent Housing Options Group LA Meeting Notes, 19 July 2023 via Teams**

DRAFT

**Present**: Toni Carter, Dartford and chair; Robin Cahill and Hazel South, childrens services commissioning KCC; Roxanne Sheppard and Zoe Callaway, Swale; Stuart Clifton, TWBC; Serine Anna-Veitch, KCC; Mel Anthony and Max Guest, adult services commissioning KCC; Nicola Conroy, Sevenoaks; Elly Toye, Dover; Duncan Berrington, Thanet; Kenan Dogan, Gravesham; Vicky Hodson, Kent Homechoice; Ray Easdown, Medway; Natalia Merritt and Holly Veal, Maidstone; Kylie Gillham, Canterbury; Kerry Turner, KCC; Amanda Drummond, KCC; Stephen Tingley DLUHC; Amanda Gill, Ashford; Stacey Clarke, KCC: Samad Nadimi, DLUHC; Graham Urquhart, KCC; Helen Miller, Kent Housing Group;

**Apologies;** Simon Mitchell, KCC; Manpreet Bhupal, vice chair and Gravesham;Claire Keeling, T&MBC;John Littlemore, Maidstone and KHG vice chair; Alison Simmons, Sevenoaks DC and chair of HHSC sub group; Pam Millington, Dover; Rebecca Smith, Ashford;Emma Harknett, Folkestone and Hythe;

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| Reference | Notes/Outcome | Who | Action/Decision |
| Matters Arising from May 2023 | This was a face to face meeting in May at Maidstone. Attendance we lower than at virtual meetings.  MBh Liaise with LW to clarify the attendance at MAPPA issue – from March – MBh not present.  HM Circulate FG’s presentation on TB – done  HM send FG a list of contacts for homeless service for each LHA – done  TC inform DA reciprocal group that a further webinar would be welcome – done and there is another catch up meeting in August.  TC Invite CK and PN to join Temporary accommodation placing protocol group – done and had meetings.  HM Send introductory email to RK, PH and NV to enable set up off group to Review Housing Pathway for criminal justice service users – done and meeting today on this.  Circulate questions from DS when made sense of them – TC and HM need to do more work on this.  RC Share Legal advice on clients who refuse to leave TA when available. RC is awaiting the legal advice so not circulated yet.  TC At TA meeting include do we want to have a TAAG – this is being discussed but not final decision on TAAG.  CK send HM Huume materials to circulate –done  ET Liaise with Vicky Hodson and DDC on whether a Kent wide video can be created on using Huume for costumers – VH said there is a Kent wide video that is almost completed showing how to apply.  ET send HM email on PTSD for circulation – done  NM Send details of MBC’s support for staff for HM to circulate - done |  |  |
| DLUHC update | Stephen Tingley showed a presentation which will be circulated. It covered;  LA Housing Fund which has closed for applications now.  Single Homeless Accommodation programme – capital and revenue funding available but not all Kent LAs in scope to bid.  CAS3 – open for applications in August 2023. 6 month extension for existing contracts. This is an MoJ led programme to give those leaving prison better opportunities for finding accommodation.  H-CLIC data last published data was Oct-Dec 2023. TA is up from previous year and thought to be highest level every records. Nationally the increases are mainly in provision to single people households. When looking at Kent data the use of TA has gone up overall but noticeably more in some areas than others. HCLIC data for Kent suggests that applications have dropped in most areas. This suggests the move on from TA is the issue.  Parliament is discussing the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) [Bill](https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3195) and the powers this is expected to include minimum standards for support, a new licensing role for LAs, a new supported housing strategy, creating a supported housing needs assessment, and the possibility of a new planning class for supported accommodation. It is not clear if the duty to provide a supported housing strategy will be with the upper or lower tier authority. KCC is currently required to do a market provision strategy but not clear yet who will be required to write the potential new strategy.  TC In Kent all Kent LAs moving from Locata to Huume. Is DLUHC aware of this change and possibility of the challenges this presents, short term, in data collection and H CLIC returns? ST said the department has not considered the change to Huume. Vicky confirmed that when the procurement was done the need for robust data was raised. ST said LB of Sutton made this change and had no loss of data validity.  NM MBC does KPIs monthly and quarterly. On Locata you can do last 3-6 months and then do comparable on Huume to give more robust reassurance that the data is sound or if shows significant differences in any parameters. | HM | Circulate ST’s presentation on DLUHC update |
| Renters Reform [Bill](https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3462) | Roundtable discussion  TC Giles Peakers did a two part blog on this which can be found here <https://nearlylegal.co.uk/2023/05/renters-reform-bill-the-good-the-potentially-good-and-the-ugly-part-1/> and <https://nearlylegal.co.uk/2023/05/renters-reform-bill-overview-part-2/>  NM Biggest concern on part 7 is dismissal of 2 year reapplication duty. She has responded to the consultation to recommend this is revisited. This could lead to LAs placing in Kent and then that person/household has a local connection. Back door evictions from grounds 1-3 are also a risk and we need to identify and respond robustly to landlords.  TC share NM concerns on the forming of local connections.  SC On the local connection rules we can still refer back within 5 years if they make a homelessness approach. He fears the potential increase in illegal evictions. The Bill was a framework for other legislation that could mean more requirements coming in quickly.  LA can impose civil penalties which could raise burdens in very small private sector housing teams.  SC provided <https://www.justicefortenants.org/2023/06/22/what-the-section-58-renters-reform-bill-statutory-duty-means-for-local-authorities/>  Some parts of the Bill are more relevant to private sector housing and Toni will raise this with the Dartford rep for that group. |  |  |
| K&M DA strategy consultation | Serine Annan-Veitch and Stacey Clarke shared a presentation. The K&M DA Strategy 2024-29 consultation will go live 24/07/23 to 9/10/23. It was covered in the KHG Home Front [newsletter](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/home-front-khgs-newsletter-summer-2023/).  They have worked with many partners on aims and themes of the strategy. There is a focus on early intervention and prevention, immediate needs and then supporting recovery.  The Safe Accommodation – this is based on data to understand the needs, feedback from those experiencing domestic abuse which sometimes highlighted housing needs. The partnership identified commitments on access to housing and KCC would welcome KHOG members responses to this in the consultation.  SC at the moment West Kent has KIDAS but not a refuge. This may be why some go into TA not a refuge as very few refuge spaces. Adult commissioning is at procurement for extending SAFER provision.  SC and SAV to catch up after the meeting to share learning.  TC as frontline officers struggle to find refuge but the client may decline – so need to understand why clients do not want to go to refuge.  NC West Kent struggled to find refuge spaces on the national help line. They need to place in TA whilst seeking a place. The local DA contract has indicated they cannot do refuge searches for professionals so LAs need to call the national womens refuge line.  TC not experiencing this issue in North Kent.  KG Clients who have gone to TA often prefer to stay there than going to refuge and refuge spaces can be too far from support networks  The word “refuge” may be a barrier. Safe accommodation may be more attractive.  NC CK and SC have used an IDVA to seek spaces.  KCC will gather data on activity indicators, highlighted in their presentation. | HM  SC & SAV | Circulate presentation on DA consultation  Discuss provision of services and challenges in west Kent |
| Any questions from the commissioning documents circulated? | The following updates have been posted online here [KHOG LA only - Kent Housing Group](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/events/khog-la-only-2/)   * Childrens services commissioning from Hazel South * DAHA update * Domestic Abuse update from Rachel Westlake   Mel Anthony was unable to send an update in time. There is a restructure in the KCC commissioning services at the moment. They will complete recruitment and slotting in August. Please raise interim issues.  Supported living placement team is experiencing delays but you can flag with Mel.  They are procuring Integrated Community Equipment Services  Will announce SAFER contractor soon  Accommodation Strategy is being refreshed which will include extra care and supported living  They will be recommissioning services in the next year for Older persons residential, learning disability, physical disability and mental health residential contract, care and support in the home and supported living.  RC new supported accommodation model was presented to Kent Finance officers and will go to Kent Joint Chiefs around change of age for care leavers and changes around OFSTED requirements.  They are looking at options for legacy placements including adding another year to assist move ons for those 19+. Immigration Bill is still going through but the guidance is not available yet. |  |  |
| Protocols | * Domestic Abuse Reciprocal – Lisa Clarke – written and circulated with agenda. We’re seeking social landlords to sign up to this. No questions were raised from LC’s update.   Samad Nadimi from Homeless Advice and Support Team in DLUHC shared a presentation on Support for Homelessness 16-17 year olds and Care Leavers. They seek to support consistent good practice and for partners to work together for good outcomes for young people. They are keen to avoid the placement of 16-17 in B&Bs. The Government’s response to the Care Review and Implementation Strategy shows they are keen to remove the need for a local connection for care leavers and changes to remove intentional homelessness for those under 25. They will be seeking views from Childrens services and LHAs.  DLUHC published good practice guidance on developing protocols for young people. They are keen that protocols are monitored to ensure they work for young people and all parties. Suitable training is needed to ensure all those involved understand them and any rough edges are addressed. Senior support for these areas of work help. Maidstone BC works well with KCC in early intervention and prevention making services work for young people and those working in the services.   * Young Persons (focus on Care Leavers) - Natalia Merritt/Robin Cahill   RC a final draft has been circulated to KHOG full. They have had some comments and RC and NM will consider all comments and make amendments. Please do continue to send your amendments to RC and NM by 4th August. The housing rep at the Kent Board is Sharon Williams and each LHA in Kent sits on that group. Maidstone’s SPOC is very useful and we hope to roll out across the country. There is a K&M Data Sharing Agreement and that will be mentioned in protocol. There is an information leaflet that will be updated for new protocol. GBC and TWBC covered budgeting around this and it needs to be explored in the protocol. There will review the local connection part for social housing and for homelessness. NM this is a difficult topic and probably needs to go back to each organisation for their agreement to balance needs of care leavers and all others seeking social housing.  SN said the joint panel between KCC and Maidstone BC works very well and he recommends that that can be embedded across the county. NM they are on the second MoU for this panel now and the joint panel does work well for them, reducing care leaving approaches. Communication is much easier and it takes less time than expected.  KG Canterbury also hold panels and find these very helpful   * Young Persons (focus on 16-17 year olds) - Toni Carter and Hazel South   HS this is being finalised with specification for services. They hope to bring a draft version back in August.   * Temporary Accommodation Placing Protocol – Toni Carter   This has been started and the group has struggled to meet. The previous protocol is completely out of date. They hope to circulate a new one in September. SC there is an LGA out of area [protocol](https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/local-government-out-area-placements-guidance). Are we at risk of duplication here, would we want to adopt that as a county wide approach. ST there is work between London Boroughs and Essex on out of borough placements and a protocol to share relevant data.   * Reviewing Housing Pathway for criminal justice service users.   The first meeting is scheduled for tomorrow. | HM  All  ST | Circulate SN presentation  Send comments on draft Care Leavers protocol to RC & NM  Please share info on how LB work with Essex on out of borough placements |
| Any Urgent National Policy, Case Law Updates | None raised. |  |  |
| Vice chair arrangements | Natalia and Robin both kindly volunteered to be vice chair. There have been discussions on having a joint chair arrangements. Robin may be unable to step up as chair as possible clashes of interest.  TC suggested that NM, RC, TC and MBh meet in next couple of weeks to agree the way forward and place that in front of KHOG. | HM | Arrange this meeting |
| AOB | Roxanne Sheppard asked whether Locata was being extended for a month?  VH it was agreed at Board meeting to extend contract with Locata to end of August and the price has been agreed. VH is working with finance and procurement at Dover for this. Documents are coming over and the notes attached to them are also due to come over from Locata. VH is arranging storage for historical data.  NM Thank you to Vicky for her hard work. Can we check whether Locata has breached its exit agreement? Vicky does not think so unless documents are not received at the end of July.  SC The extension should help. He’s concerned that Locata of potential of data being lost if the contract is not extended to end of August. VH Huume is beginning to load what they have and so we will know whether the documents have their attached notes soon. If they have not we will request them. SC testing and checking will take time so any break down from Humme would be welcome, if the extension does not go ahead.  SC sent an email to local authorities on that the way Huume currently holds the statutory assessment that LAs are required to carry out, outside of a homeless application part. If LAs don’t do that assessment everything else they do under an application, every duty, isn’t necessarily lawful and they can’t discharge their duties. Please reply to SC’s email.  VH the changes to Huume around DLUHC requirements for Afghans and Ukrainians is done.  ET how we manage charges on TA. Where you hold info on TA as no space on Locata and Huume. Please respond to Elly’s email.  TC raised the Requested from Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board with housing and homelessness expertise. HM to circulate request seeking volunteers.  Dates of next meetings; 7 Sept Full;22 Nov LA;  Topics for next time;   * Huume update requested in Sept meeting. * Modern Slavery * Local connection for care leavers | VM  All  All  All | Circulate the exit document with Locata.  Please respond to SC’s email  Please advise ET how your organisation records TA charges.  Please see the invitation to be rep for this group and email HM if interested |