**Draft LA Kent Housing Options Group Meeting Notes, 21 March 2023 Microsoft Teams Call**

DRAFT

**Present**: Toni Carter, Dartford and chair; Manpreet Bhupal, Gravesham and vice chair; Mark Damiral and Emma Harknett, Folkestone and Hythe; Christy Holden, KCC; Claire Keeling, T&MBC; Ashley Jackson, Thanet; Elly Toye and Pam Millington, Dover; Kylie Gillham, Canterbury; Stuart Clifton and Vijay Sirohi, Tunbridge Wells BC; Kenan Dogan, Gravesham; Zoe Callaway, Swale; Natalia Merritt, Maidstone; Hazel South KCC; Graham Urquhart, KCC; Ray Easdown, Medway; Emily Oates, KCC; Max Guest KCC; Fran Anderson and Christa MacIver, Just Life; Lisa Clarke, Clarion; Vicky Hodson, Kent Homechoice; Katie Simmons and Stacey Dean, Tenancy Sustainment Officers; Helen Miller, Kent Housing Group;

**Apologies;** Amanda Gill, Rebecca Smith and Sylvia Roberts, Ashford; Alison Simmons, Sevenoaks; Robin Cahill, KCC; Sofia Serenelli, KCC; John Littlemore, Maidstone;

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| Reference | Notes/Outcome | Who | Action/Decision |
| Matters Arising from Jan 2023 | Protocol review prioritisation - meeting held on 20th March  TC to chase DLUHC rep to seek successful practice on ways round credit checks and guarantors for Ukrainians and feed back to KHOG. TC did discuss this with Steve who said there are discussions being had, but no decisions made yet. The District Councils Network have set up focus meetings and these could help – if you need an invite email TC and she’ll forward hers. Also KCC were having discussions on being rent guarantors but no decision made yet.  All check whether your LA is receiving KAAs and if not email Vicky Hodson. Complete  All Email ET with any advice on how to deal with the volume of medical information. Complete  HM circulate VH presentation on Huume – done  All Email Vicky with any further FAQs to add to the list in her Huume presentation. Complete  All respond to Vicky Hodson’s email about renewing Entitled to. Complete and send your POs to VH.  MBh – circulate amended Mental Health protocol for comments. Done by email 14 March comments to HM and MBh by 28th March please.  RC Present to KHOG in March on joint funding options for the Joint YP assessments, including costs – being done by Hazel South and Christy Holden.  All - Contact Natalia to volunteer to create the IH training resource. Complete.  HM Circulate RW presentation on DA and sanctuary scheme – done  All - Email PM with any costs or advice on agency staff. Completed | All | Email TC if you’d like the invitation to the District Councils Network forwarded. |
| Commissioning Updates | TC explained that we’re short of discussion and decision making time at these meetings. TC suggests that commissioning changes to written papers to be circulated with the agenda a week in advance and questions at the meeting. Papers to be marked as for information or for decision. If you have any concerns on this please email TC or HM.  **Emily Oates gave a commissioning update on Domestic Abuse services;**  They are looking forward for preferred options for the KIDAS contract extension. Any concerns please email them on [domesticabusecommissioning@kent.gov.uk](mailto:domesticabusecommissioning@kent.gov.uk)  The domestic abuse needs assessment is available at [Domestic abuse - Kent Public Health Observatory (kpho.org.uk)](https://www.kpho.org.uk/joint-strategic-needs-assessment/health-intelligence/population-groups/domestic-abuse#tab1)  The media campaign website provides comms materials we can all use.  The sanctuary scheme will be called the Safer Scheme and commissioning will begin soon.  The HIDVA is signed off and will begin in April in Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells hospitals  Emily will ensure introductions for the HIDVAs and relevant LAs happen.  Tenancy workers from Clarion, representing the KIDAS tenancy support workers, Stacey Dean and Katie Simmons gave a presentation. The service has run since April 2022 and they’ve been learning as they go and updating referral forms and working with clients early to sustain tenancies. The aim is source long term safe affordable accommodation. The tenant support officer makes a referral that helps to identify the right timing for moving home. This helps free up spaces in the refuges. Their support plans cover housing, finances, and resettlement.  Stacey covered a case study to illustrate their work including discovering the client’s needs, gathering evidence, liaising with relevant professionals, helping the client to create a successful move on from refuge plan. Financial support and counselling were arranged. They seek feedback on their service to inform their work going forward.  The referral pathway has a phone number that anyone can use. This is triaged and a support provider is allocated. The risk assessment is reviewed every 6 weeks, or when there is an incident.  Hazel South gave a presentation on **YPSAFS and shared accommodation services** that will be circulated. This is based on guidance from OFSTED which was long awaited and now timescales are short. Both extended contracts will run to end May 2024. All 16-17 year olds will now be given additional support on top of current provision. Those 18+ will have their PAs only.  The presentation outlined the new proposed services from 2024 and from 2028. The new pathway from 16-19+ was highlighted on slide 9. The timelines for procurement were outlined on slide 10. The new service begins in April 2024.  NM we need to talk about how this will work for the YP protocols that are being worked on for 16-17 and care leavers. We will need to consider how support for care leavers will help ensure that care leavers are well prepared. Christy Holden all the issues are interlinked with the YP protocols and the ask around care leavers and the need to local connection.  A written update on Kent Homeless Connects circulated before meeting. They have begun the Care Act process. | HM  HM  HM  All | Email KCC commissioners to request this change  Circulate Stacey and Katie’s presentation  Circulate presentation from HS  Please feedback any thoughts on the new contract, and related issues, to RC and HS at KCC |
| Exempt Accommodation (HW8) | Toni Carter explained that the APPG report on exempt accommodation had been flagged by Carrie Simmons, serious organised crime contact at KCC, and partners have begun a conversation on what LAs do around standards in exempt accommodation. Nationally some gangs have targeted this type of accommodation as they clients are vulnerable to exploitation.  MBh explained that PSH will be looking for how many units accommodation are provided in their area and how many have been inspected for housing conditions.  Supported accommodation providers were recognised as a valuable resource, supporting vulnerable adults. They all have referral systems and seek the information they need to ensure the client is suitable for their service and risks assessments are carried out.  It is possible that there are supported housing providers in each area that the housing options colleagues do not use and so do not know about. It is possible that there are supported accommodation providers that other LAs could be placing clients into. | TC & MBh | Feed the groups views into the exempt accom meeting on 3rd April |
| Temporary Accommodation Action Group? | Fran Anderson and Christa MacIver from Just Life showed a presentation. Just Life are an organisation that works to make temporary accommodation healthy, safe and the stay short. They support temporary accommodation action group (TAAG) and can feed up into the APPG’s TA group. TAAGs are multi-disciplinary teams based on research on what residents of TA had advised would help them. Living in TA can have an adverse impact on clients and the longer they are there the worse the impacts can be. TAAGs are a cross sector group of LAs, landlords, public and voluntary sector groups and residents. They identify the challenges and ways to address them. Just Life helps support these groups using their Network Development Workers. They create collaboration, inclusion and are solution focused.  Fran highlighted the achievements of other TAAGs, including a standardised licensee agreements, minimum standards Charters, and landlords providing Wi-Fi etc. They highlighted their national TA network newsletter that members of KHOG are welcome to sign up for and also a conference later in the year (see website on their presentation).  TC there is a big problem with affordability in Kent. A large TA provider in Kent has contacted TC to express concerns over the complexity of client needs.  NM provision of TA itself is an issue and MBC do have standards of accommodation but it’s a hard balancing act. London Boroughs do place in Kent and that places pressure on the sector. FA they do work to raise the challenges from LAs to MPs and will be sending a survey to LAs to say what the main issues are for them to create a briefing for MPs. The link for this survey is <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeKW1UlBAhhGrbCq4_4GgyOOGlljfwrHyZg4vL8clRlEVRQ7A/viewform>  PM supports TAAGs to share good practice. She would welcome to attend other TAAGS. TC, NM and MBh would also appreciate an invitation to another and hear about their governance. | HM | Circulate Just Life’s slides |
| YP leaving care and local connection | TC opened a discussion that came from the main KHG in February discussion. CH explained that the ask was for district LAs to allow young people leaving care being able to seek housing without needing a local connection. As a corporate parent the Social Care review does put more responsibility on LAs. KCC would also benefit from understanding what the messaging for YP leaving care should be. NM is on the care leaving panel in Maidstone and questions whether all PAs are clear on the options available for Young People leaving care. The allocations scheme for each LA would need to be changed if care leavers did not need a local connection and those schemes would need to go the Councillors to sign off, so not something those present today could guarantee. CH explained that Councillors who are KCC and LA Members have been asked to consider this but not had a firm answer yet. NM explained there are massive pressures on housing for all, particularly for 1 bed accommodation, including those leaving care and changing the local connection criteria could create an inequitable burden on some LAs. NM asked what the gap in housing provision is? CH some YP are moved around and then are not in the new area long enough to have a local connection in that area.  RE explained that in Medway the pressure to meet the needs of their own YP is high. There is provision within homeless legislation that allows them to apply to any LA. Each case is assessed on its own merits so a YP with roots in an area but no established local connection would be considered. Each LA allocations scheme would give own views on local connections.  GA from KCC they do not want the care leavers to be seeking a homelessness application. They do advise on all the housing options. They talk about the budgeting options and do aim to prepare care leavers to make planned exits with the housing pathways team.  TC there is quite a lot being done for care leavers and we may need to provide better info to care leavers.  TC write to all Kent districts to understand current offer in their Allocations Policy and HM to circulate it. If this highlights areas with lower offers then KCC can discuss it with them | All  CH | Respond to the questions HM sends out so the info on allocations policies can be collated swiftly  Use that learning to target relevant CExecs. |
| Huume update | Vicky Hodson updated on the transition from Locata to Huume. The pre assessment part is mainly built. The housing register form is built and each LA is asked to check that it is as they need. The homelessness side is being worked on. The comms campaign to customers has begun to cover the register closing down for a short period. The single sign-on is now working. The HAs will be set up on this. VH has fortnightly progress meetings with Huume and a weekly review with each LA. VH has asked to meet with each project lead each week now.  All LAs log in directly and creating accounts and then will be done with AH colleagues.  VH has fortnight project meetings with Huume and weekly review meetings with LA to ensure all going to timescales  Some councils are slipping behind on configuring the system so additional resource can be put to that. Configuration training sessions are running this week.  Running train the trainer sessions at end of April and then those trainers can role training out in May so ready to go live. There is a meeting in April meeting with ICT teams for historic data coming over.  NM Thank you to Vicky for providing an enormous amount of help. Seconded by ZC, TC, and PM. Your patience and understanding is outstanding and appreciated. TC has sought help from Dorset and found that useful and contact TC to find out more. |  |  |
| Protocols (A4 and HW8) | TC, MBH and HM reviewed the existing protocols and prioritised what needs reviewing. This highlights the TA placing protocol and the Housing Pathway for criminal justice service users need updating by November 2023. Next would be the Kent High priority rehousing reciprocal scheme and the Kent and Medway Duty to refer protocol by June 2024. Moving on and moving in, pre-eviction protocol and K&M Homelessness Local Connection Referral Protocol would be by Dec 2024, unless there are problems with any before then that bumps them up the priority. TC & MBH will use this to flag those that we need volunteers for.  We are seeking volunteers to review the Temporary Accommodation Placing Protocol, completed in Oct 2017. [Temporary Accommodation Placing Protocol - Kent Housing Group](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/protocols/temporary-accommodation/) ET, PM, KG   * Domestic Abuse reciprocal – Lisa Clarke   The launch is on 3rd April. All RPs were invited to then event and 18 have signed up to the webinar that explains the process and invites RPs to sign up. To attend the webinar book with Lisa. We have a local coordinator in place, arranged by Serine Annan-Veitch. We will review after a couple of months to see how it’s working.   * Mental Health Protocol, MBh is working on the recent feedback on this. * Young Persons (focus on Care Leavers) - Natalia Merritt   Robin has drafted the review and it is circulated to core group who’ve been working on it and then will be circulated to all KHOG.   * Young Persons (focus on 16-17 year olds) - Toni Carter and Hazel South   TC this needs a bit more work than expected. They will meet again and keep going on this. Will need updating in line with commissioning updates.   * IH/Families with complex needs guidance document, Natalia Merritt   This protocol is signed off. HM email NM who volunteered at last meeting. They will then build the training officer. NM sent an email on Communities of Practice – be great if could get a rep from each LA. | TC  HM | Convene this group to begin the review  Circulate the letter inviting organisations to the webinar. |
| Urgent nation policy/case law updates | NM flagged possible changes needed eligibility letters around those who were victims of modern slavery. HM circulate letter from DLUHC dated 31st Jan. | NM | Send to HM for circulation |
| AOB | ET asked whether any LAs have a penalty households refusing a home that they view? MBh if there is no reason for refusal they are suspended for 12 months.  ET On DAHA accreditation, the pack sent suggested the resource needed was 2.5 days a week. Does this timescale sound right? TC also struggling with this timescale and may need to go slower.  PM Dover has been advised to use excluded licenses for TA and would LAs share their documents on this. KG They would like to see what is shared.  MBh to seek feedback on the email from Lindsey Wafula to attend case conferences for MAPPA. He is trying to arrange a meeting to find out what her expectations are. It appears to be senior managers to attend meetings for 2 days a month and some LAs lack capacity to do this. RA Medway has told LW they will attend for the cases where Medway has an interest and cannot advise on other LAs cases. Medway feels the request goes passed the Duty to Cooperate. Medway attends MAPPAs regularly and cannot provide senior staff for an additional 2 days. ET agreed Dover can attend just for the cases where Dover was needed. There seems to an option to attend just for your cases – however that is not what the first message said. CK you are invited to the whole day and just attend the cases you know. You dial in 5 minutes before your case and just stay for your cases. RA it sounds like the matter would benefit from clarification.  TC Grant from Paramount has been in touch as concerned about the complexities of people coming in to TA. Would colleagues welcome him coming to KHOG, or separate meeting, to speak on TA issues? PM and KG supports an extraordinary meeting on this.  HM reminded people to nominate for KHG Excellence awards by 19th May.  TC will send email to coordinate who bring which foods.  25 May Full; 19 Jul LA; 7 Sept Full; 22 Nov LA; All virtual except 25 May that is in person in Maidstone. | All  All  All  MBh  PM  HM  TC | Email ET with how your LA addresses this.  Email ET to let her know how you are approaching timescales for DAHA accreditation  Please share the licenses you use for TA with PM and also KG  Liaise with LW to clarify the attendance at MAPPA issue  Set up an extraordinary meeting with Paramount on this issue to be held in April  Circulate the nomination forms & categories.  Coordinate who to bring which foods to share for 25th May |