**Draft Kent Tenancy Management Sub Group Meeting Notes 19 April 2023, Microsoft Teams Call**

DRAF

**Present**: Vitra Cummins, T&CH and chair; Jill Rogers, Gravesham; Anthony Crossley, Ashford; Nicola Bowen, Choice Support; Tom Harding, Folkestone and Hythe; Verity Johnson, Dover; Georgina Tippins , Moat; Helen Miller, KHG;

**Apologies:** Tracy Chambers (left the group and a new Medway rep is Becs Wilcox); Helen Ayers, Dover; Vikki Perry, Ashford; Julie Terry, WKHA;

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| Reference | Notes/Outcome | Who | Action/Decision |
| Update on Fire Safety Campaign SH2 | Vitra explained that the poster and letter have been drafted and sent to group members contributing to the campaign for comments. Thanks to all for their feedback. The email banner, social media messages/graphics and general animation another for communal areas to be produced soon and then circulated for feedback. We’ll also create a webpage that will be here [Fire Safety - Kent Housing Group](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/fire-safety/)  Our contact at KFRS had advised Vitra, Julie and Helen we could use their logo. However, when ABC comms team ran the materials passed KFRS comms they gave useful feedback but advised we couldn’t use their logo. Vitra will talk with them again to see if we cannot the logo she will seek a phrase we can use to show that we have taken advice from KFRS. We don’t know the wording for that nor where we can use it.  JR still feels campaign useful. VJ agreed good to have a phrase we can use in materials.  The group was asked to speak with their comms team on when the campaign could be launched and how long to run the campaign for. It would be good to get broad agreement on the timings. The toolkit should be ready for comments mid May and probably to start end of May. | Vitra  All | Liaise with KFRS to seek a phrase that can be used  Let Helen know when you’d like to launch and how many months you’d like to run it for |
| Dampness and mould; are your processes working well and any learning. | Anthony explained that it is hard to find the resources to deal with No win No fee claims. This is very time consuming.  Helen said this has been discussed at asset management and that some clients are not using their complaints process which gives landlords an opportunity to address the issues.  Vitra explained that customers do not have to use the complaints process. The legal claim route is more complicated as landlords can find it harder to get into the home to assess and fix any problems.  Jill said they are also getting a high number of disrepair claims. There is also a radio advert encouraging people to make claims. Some customers do not wish to give access. They have a new online dampness and mould hotline but some customers go straight to the legal route.  Nicola could we ask a solicitor to come and give advice to a KHG event. We can also look at why people are looking for transfers – perhaps spotting issues via a different route.  KHG is planning a dampness and mould event in September.  Verity said they had had a solicitor leaflet dropping to seek more clients. Surveyors are very busy with surveying for dampness and mould issues. Whenever any member of staff visits for any purpose they flag any dampness or mould.  Anthony their cases don’t seem to be coming from local solicitors. They now have additional inspectors to help with case load. Central government is also encouraging tenants to expect and demand a good service.  Tom a small number of people are having ‘claim remorse’ and it’s hard for them to leave the case.  Georgina said that Moat is also training all staff on damp and mould and are recruiting more for this issue. She is not aware of many claims. Fuel poverty will make any condensation cases more severe.  Vitra reiterated that these are our customers and we need to maintain a good relationship with them.  Vitra is keen that landlords encourage tenants to come to them rather than solicitor.  Please see a contact to send to Helen on solicitors who can be invited to speak. Anthony will find a contact to send to Helen. | Helen | Ask that planning group to consider whether they would want to have a solicitor to speak. |
| Encouraging organisations to consider signing up to Domestic Abuse Reciprocal Agreement (HW7) | Vitra highlighted the scheme that social landlords can join up.  Vitra asked that members find out what they organisation intends to do on this. | HM | Forward Lisa Clarke’s presentation on this. |
| Roundtable; Access and increasing demand on services – has your approach changed? | Vitra said her organisation is struggling with access for gas safety and fire door safety with some tenants that makes it hard to ensure compliance on it.  Jill works very closely with their gas safety service and they highlight vulnerabilities and also the third parties, like support or social work as needed. They will get a warrant if needed.  Tom they are finding it hard to gain access for gas and oil safety. Sometimes the tenant does not understand the contractors approach to getting access – perhaps need simpler communications to tenants. Perhaps need to work with contractors and tenants on how to communicate better. Their new contractor offers an online portal to rebook an appointment and that may help.  Anthony ABC have a very strict process on this and if the tenant does not give access they seek a warrant two weeks before the gas safety certificate expires.  Vitra advised they do not seek a warrant until the year of the gas safety certificate has expired.  Verity advised Dover does not apply for warrants as they break in if needed. This is explained in their tenancy agreement. They have several letters seeking access first. They attend with housing officer, gas engineer and a locksmith. This has not been challenged legally yet. Dover do not yet recharge for costs.  Tom advised F&H are similar and rely on tenancy agreement, risk of explosion, etc. and they have a careful process to force entry. They then fit a key safe so tenant can regain access. F&H do recharge for costs.  Georgina in a previous HA they had differing advice from two different solicitors. They did choose to seek entry if needed. At Moat they tend to cap gas supply rather than force entry but with cold weather that can be challenging and they consider vulnerability. Capped residents are highlighted on their database and they carry out welfare checks. They have got injunctions, limited or life long, to help check on the welfare of tenants.  Vitra said that if no credit on the gas meter they cannot service the boiler.  Anthony said they ask their contractors to top up pay as you go meters to allow for services to be carried out.  Vitra suggested that the group revisit this topic. |  |  |
| Feedback on any KHG queries since Jan 2023 | Helen explained that we will ask people who send queries to the sub group to then feedback on what they’d learned at the next meeting. Helen to encourage people requesting information to share their learning at the next meeting. | HM | Keep feedback from KHG queries as regular item |
| Encouraging nominations for KHG [Awards](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/kent-housing-group-excellence-award-2023/) by 19 May 2023 | Please do nominate your team for the fantastic work they do. It boosts their morale and gives a potential good news story for press releases. The 2023 awards should be in person and Helen promised snacks! | HM | Attach the forms for it. |
| Planning for next meeting | Would people prefer to discuss Understanding [Renters Reform](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-deliver-new-deal-for-renters) or The [Better Social Housing Review](https://www.bettersocialhousingreview.org.uk/) at future meetings?  The group agreed to;   * Talk about access for gas safety * Invite a solicitor on claims * Continue campaign so discussions on fire safety   The group decided we did want to meet in person in Ashford on 5th July so the meeting will be face to face, not virtual nor hybrid.  Committee Room 2 is booked at Ashford Borough Council.. If you’d like to request free parking please email Anthony. Some ABC colleagues would like to network so there may be more people present. Ashford will provide tea and coffee. Please consider bringing some snacks to share | All | Let Helen know your preference |