**Draft Kent Tenancy Management Sub Group Meeting Notes 5th July 2023, Teams**

DRAF

**Present**: Vitra Cummins, Town and Country Housing and chair; Dawn Walster, Louise Rayner and Jill Rodgers, Gravesham; Tom Harding, Folkestone & Hythe; Vicki Phippen, Golding Homes; Anthony Crossley, Ashford; Maria Huseyin and Nicola Bowen, Choice Support; Matt Eddy, MHS Homes; Soji Adenowo, Medway; Georgina Tippins, Moat; Helen Miller, Kent Housing Group;

**Apologies:** Julie Terry, WKHA and vice chair; Tina Dust, Sanctuary; Becs Wilcox and Chris Rourke, Medway; Andrew Johnson, Gravesham; Verity Johnson, Dover; Ben McGowan, Moat; John Gibson, Dartford; Brian Horton, interim KHG chair and SELEP rep;

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Reference | Notes/Outcome | Who  | Action/Decision |
| Matters arising from April 2023 | Jill Rodgers will be leaving her role at Gravesham Borough Council and Dawn and Louise will be attending from Gravesham. Jill was thanked for her contributions to this group.Helen – flag idea of having solicitor to speak on claims at dampness and mould event – doneHelen – forward Lisa Clarke’s presentation on joining the Domestic Abuse Reciprocal Agreement for Social Landlords – done and relevant papers available [here](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/protocols/a-protocol-for-social-landlords-to-address-domestic-abuse/)  |  |  |
| Update on fire safety campaign (SH2) | Vitra explained that creating the webpage, poster, press release, social media banners and animations is taking longer than hoped but is progressing. The animations have been drafted but need their sound track added. Tom Harding said that the animations are good and not something Folkestone and Hythe could have done on their own. Vitra said they may use the fire safety campaign resources for residents joining their organisations.Georgina Tippins CIH had highlighted issues with electric scooters and that there gives an increased fire risk. This wasn’t part of the original brief but items in communal areas is covered and we may be able to come back to this at a later date. The resources should be ready late July. All the organisations may not start at the same date but we hoped that we could also use it most in a three month window, perhaps August to October 2023. |  |  |
| Discussion on how to evaluate fire safety campaign | Vitra asked how we can measure any outcomes from the fire safety campaign. Anthony suggested that when doing inspections we notice whether there are fewer items in communal areas. Nicola suggested using the resources at tenant meetings or sending messages out ask if people are aware of the campaign. Helen offered to count number of hits on the [Fire page of the KHG website](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/fire-safety/) to see who followed to that from other materials.Vitra asked whether member organisations could compare the number of customer contacts on a fire safety matter in August- October 2022 to August –October 2023? The campaign encourages tenants to report problems with fire doors and we may see more reporting of neighbours leaving items in communal areas. Please speak with your teams and IT service on how it can be measured. At the end of the campaign we’ll ask each member organisation to write a note on how it seems to have worked for them – be it anecdotal or numeric.  | All | Please decide how to measure the effectiveness of the fire safety campaign in your organisation. |
| Discussion on how we put customers at the heart of what we do, considering EDI and the [Better Social Housing Review](https://s41584.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/BSHR_Report_FINAL_embargoed_until_Tues13thDec.pdf)  | Vitra asked what we do to make sure we meet our customers’ needs. TCH try to deal with the customers concern at their first call. Gravesham has a new head of service who is very customer focused and everything will be reviewed to improve customer service.Georgina; Moat had a whole organisation conference and talked through customer first and customer pioneers. The presenters were insightful. All staff are being training in communications and making sure that all letters have an approachable, friendly, style. They will do workshops with staff to support staff in the changes wanted and capture staff ideas on how to do this. They’d hope to get to the point where they do not need to evict anyone through this new emphasis on working with all. They use the phrase ‘Moments of Belief’.HM made a plea for organisations to use mixed methods of communication as those with hearing or speech difficulties can struggle using the phone. Anthony; Ashford have two new resident engagement officers, one focusing on ECO work and one working with NHS to bring health services into the independent living schemes. They aim to include rooms to allow health services to come into schemes to address basic health issues. This should provide an excellent customer experience and support the NHS.Vicki; Golding Homes have also been looking at communication and allowing multiple channels to allow people to communicate in the ways that suits the customer. Vitra; T&CH customers also value the face to face contact. They use Language line to help when tenants speak other languages. This is covered in a strapline on all letters. The tone of our letters do partly set our relationship with tenants and reviewing them can help.  |  |  |
| Roundtable on Understanding the [Renters Reform](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-deliver-new-deal-for-renters) with a focus on social housing | Vitra introduced the Renters Reform bill. This also impacts on private sector landlords and how no fault evictions will end but our discussion focussed on social landlords. It also helps landlords get possession when essential. Vitra asked how is this being considered in your organisation;Jill; the Bill allows tenants to request having a pet and landlords will generally be expected to allow this. T&CH has just launched a new pet policy and that recognises the benefit to mental health of the tenants. Tenants will need to request permission to have a pet and will not be denied without strong reason.Georgina; general needs tenants at Moat are likely to be allowed a pet in their new pet policy which is due to be released soon. They may limit the number of pets and have parameters about pet behaviour. Sometimes it’s more complicated with mixed tenure blocks. Moat had been refusing pets in flats and some tenants may feel aggrieved that they didn’t get a pet when they could.Vicki; Golding Homes policy on pets changed a while ago. Tenants still have to seek permission and they are asked to sign a good neighbour agreements. Tom ; Folkestone and Hythe has a relaxed approach for years and this hasn’t caused big problems. They do ask people to seek permission but it is likely that some people have not sought permission. They deal with nuisance as any other type of nuisance as it’s not the pet, it’s the owner.Nicola; a solicitor suggested that the changes around pets will not prevent nuisance issues being dealt with. Maria; Choice Support are managing agents for many RSL, and in the past they’ve had requests for pets turned down. They also consider the other residents in the same house and their safety and comfort. Some pets may still be refused with a good reason.Tom asked whether other landlords have asked whether they allow smoking in the flats. This can increase the fire risk, create complaints from neighbours. TCH does not have a position on smoking in flats but does require not smoking in communal areas. When smoking on the balcony must put cigarette out fully not throw it out still lit.Maria; they have a tenant who smokes inside a supported living unit in her bedroom but then leaves her door open to the communal areas. The smoke goes into the communal areas and some other residents don’t like it. KFRS will assess people who are vulnerable and can provide additional help like additional smoke alarms and fire retardant bedding. More information is available here [Home fire safety visits | Kent Fire and Rescue Service (fire-uk.org)](https://www.kent.fire-uk.org/hfsv)). KFRS also advice the landlords and tenants with those who hoard items. Louise they also work with Peabody for decluttering service. Not sure if this is the Home Straight service. Gravesham allow people to smoke in their flats but not in the communal areas. When considering issues from an ASB issue we need to consider the needs of both parties. TCH find both KFRS and West Kent mediation service to find a good compromise.  |  |  |
| Feedback on any KHG queries since April 2023 | This is for anyone who forwarded a question round via Helen to give feedback on the advice/guidance they received from the group.None raised this meeting. |  |  |
| AOB | Jill asked whether other organisations are using door knocking for TSM. T&CH and Folkestone and Hythe are not doing door knocking. Please let Helen know of future topics for meetings. Dates of next meetings are; 28 Sept; 12 Dec 2023; | HMHM | Add TSMs on Sept agendaAdd Renter Reform on Sept Agenda |