**Draft Kent Housing Options Group 23 April 2024 on Teams**

**Present**: Matt Muddell, co chair and TWBC; Natalia Merritt, co chair and Maidstone BC; Robin Cahill, vice chair and KCC Commissioning; Elly Toye and Pam Millington, Dover; John Littlemore, Maidstone; Dan Hill and Ray Easdown, Medway; Zoe Callaway, Swale; Kenan Dogan, Gravesham; Vicky Hodson, Kent Homechoice; Stephen Tingley, DLUHC; Hazel Quennell , KCC Adults Services; Toni Carter, Dartford; Sam Spiller, KCC Commissioning; Graham Urquhart, KCC; Connie Stickings, Thanet DC; Nicola Conroy, Sevenoaks; Florentina Bela, Gravesham; Emma Harknett, Folkestone and Hythe; Helen Miller, Kent Housing Group;

**Apologies received before the meeting;** Serine Annan-Veitch – new contact is Iona Hunter-Whitehouse, Claire Keeling, T&MBC; Alison Simmons, Sevenoaks DC; Amanda Gill, Ashford;

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| Reference | Notes/Outcome | Who | Action/Decision |
| Welcome, introduce newsletter and Kent Quiz | Matt explained this is the first of the new style KHOG meetings. These will be shorter, with more discussion and less information sharing as that’s being done via the newsletter.  Natalia summarised the newsletter. Including Huume, task and finish groups, commissioning, protocol updates including the bite sized training offers, DHLUC update including changes to Ukraine visas, keep eye on your 6 week rules, data for housing register etc. and hopes to use this to identify trends in future.  [KHG nominations](https://www.kenthousinggroup.org.uk/excellence-awards-2024/) for the Excellence Awards are open to 1st May.  Matt ran the Kent Quiz. | HM  HM | Attach referral pathway for domestic abuse  Provide forms for nomination and categories |
| Steering for T&F groups | The group went into facilitated breakout sessions and each gave feedback for the task and finish groups;  **Training**  We need training for in-house and external colleagues for KCC teams including Childrens Services, Early Help  Could all training be stored in one area?  What are costs for county wide training? Could group do a costing exercise?  Steve from HAST mentioned London academy model  Duty to Refer – do we need different training for different partners?  East Kent Health and Housing Forum has requested training  **Suitability and reviews**  Outcomes were considered to be very challenging to achieve for this Task & Finish Group.  Particularly when Review Assessments now require a Senior Manager sign-off.  It was felt this needed exploring as smaller authorities might struggle to resource this requirement.  Could the Task & Finish Group which level of senior manager would be needed.  To explore commissioning out the requirement to manage the review requests.  Would this require one office or a team (how much funding would be needed) therefore, joint commissioning to be consider especially for those geographically next to one another.  Concern was that there might not be a market of suppliers wishing to do this.  Medway have a designated officer to review requests however, the demand outstrips this individual’s capacity.  Difficult to identify best practice nationally.  **Rough Sleeping**  Group felt the first update from the Task & Commissioning Group was comprehensive and like the ‘ideas pool’.  Would be good to review what is currently working well and how each authority was using the third year of Rough Sleeper Initiative funding.  Explore if joint working across the authorities would be practical in supporting entrenched rough sleepers.  For those complex cases where the normal interventions/options had been exhausted to explore what happens next, are there any other incentives could be considered.  Medway gave an example of the multi-disciplinary team they have brought together to work with entrenched complex rough sleepers.  This group included a rough sleeper nurse and professionals from mental health services.  It was felt that when rough sleeper incentives were discussed they often did not considered the psychological issues some rough sleepers experienced.  Medway also noted that they had seen a lot of brain related injuries associated with some of the most complex rough sleepers therefore, it would be good for the Task & Finish Group to discuss what therapies would be needed to address this cohort.  Issues with relocation. Where a rough sleeper is placed in another area and this placement ends, sometimes the applicant becomes a rough sleeper in that borough.  **Temporary Accommodation**  To review the impact of placements from outside authorities particularly those from London.  To explore why there is a lack of Section 208 notifications being completed.  Would be good to look at implementing fixed rates across the borough. This will reduce the competitive nature of procuring temporary and avoid providers upping their rates (taking advantage of lack of resources).  Section 208 notification currently filed away but could make better use of these. For instance, look at swapping where LAs have applicants placed in each others boroughs.  Homeless Prevention Grant being returned to host borough  Sharing information on inspections to done once  LGO happy to speak with KHOG about their role and how we interact with them. | ST  JL | Send link to this resource  Provide introduction so LGO can be invited to future meeting |
| Case Law Updates | Natalia highlighted Chapter 17 of Code of guidance updated. An email was circulated about this in February and will be attached emailed with the notes.  Appeal Kyle v Coventry City Council was a half ways house same as refuge? It was not. [Intentional homelessness from a half way house - Nearly Legal: Housing Law News and Comment](https://nearlylegal.co.uk/2024/02/intentional-homelessness-from-a-half-way-house/) | HM | Provide email |
| Sharing good practice | Matt TWBC have approved family incentives, similar to the Dartford model, where the family are no longer willing to accommodate. They are creating documents for officers to ensure process right. Cabinet Paper in on [TWBC website](https://democracy.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50034530&Opt=0). Around 25% people in TA were from families unable to accommodate.  Zoe Swale gave an update on how Swale process housing register applications. They have turned off a lot of automated features on Huume. This helps them be clear which queue each case is in. She has instructions on how they carry out the process.  Vicky H the Huume training should clarify the process and that may well help us all. Queues can be confusing and will be clarified. Please encourage your staff to attend the training. | ZC | Send your instructions |
| AOB | Helen asked if any comments on the ToR circulated on 16th April. None were raised so the group agreed them. If needed we can review them once the new way of working has settled in.  If your organisation wants to join Mystery Shopping please contact Matt Muddell  Nicola Their SAFER scheme referral was declined as not for emergency referrals. Toni they have also found it does not do emergencies and so Dartford does its own lock changes. John L had thought this was to give a service across the area. John will take this back to the Local Partnership Board  Sam Spiller KCC the SAFER scheme does respond quickly, often within 48 hours, but cannot be considered an emergency scheme. Nicola and Sam to communicate outside of the meeting.  Nicola Probation advised that KAS2 referrals only made if the Duty to Refer is done. NM will reach out to Niki Verdenik to clarify. Not clear whether applies to KAS3 yet.  Elly T does SAFER cover temporary accommodation? Matt yes for s193 accommodation. Not for nightly paid but yes for a main duty placement. It could be a difficulty around phrase ‘TA’ interpretation. If anyone gets a firm answer on this please share with ET.  Sam Spiller 247locks should have been to all LHAs to explain the service. They could come speak at this meeting or provide written update. They are presenting to main KHG in May. Matt, Natalia and Robin will liaise on what is needed and may have a one off meeting on this topic. | JL  NC & SS  NM  MM, NM & RC | Clarify remit of SAFER with Local Partnership Board  Discuss parameters for use of SAFER in separate meeting  Liaise with NV to clarify this matter  Decide whether to invite 247 locks to KHOG, a dedicated meeting, or address another way. |