

HOME FRONT

Build more homes more quickly



200 housing professionals attended the KHG Conference

"Build more homes more quickly" was the rallying call at the Kent Housing Group Conference 2025, as the housing sector in Kent and Medway was urged to rise to the challenge which has seen the supply of new homes fall short of targets by 24% in past five years.

Delegates were told that the Government has committed to building 1.5m homes and is digging deep to provide more money so now is the time for the housing sector in Kent and Medway to "stop moaning about a lack of resources, embrace the opportunities and rid us of the collective shame as a nation of failing to build enough decent affordable homes for our people to live in."

The case for "good plan-led growth" was made to more than 200 of the region's most senior housing

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professionals when they attended the Kent Housing Group (KHG) Conference 2025 at the Clive Emson Conference Centre in Maidstone on Thursday 19 June.

KHG Chair Brian Horton said the failure to build enough homes means that the lack of available quality homes to buy or rent has pushed more vulnerable households into either living in substandard accommodation or into homelessness.

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"In June 2025 across Kent and Medway there were 3,339 children living in temporary accommodation like bed and breakfasts, with significant negative impacts on their development, wellbeing, education and health as a result," he said.

"The huge turnout at this event shows that we have a coalition of the willing in the county. The power to make a difference to the lives of our people is in your hands – we must all rise to the many challenges, seize the opportunities and get building again in Kent and Medway.

"By putting the right homes in the right place, we can help revitalise our local communities and enable our residents to be able to afford to rent or buy the home of their choice, without having to compromise their safety, security or their health."

This must-attend event for those involved in the housing industry in the region brought the sector together to launch the refreshed **Kent and Medway Housing Strategy for 2025-30** – [for details see Kent and Medway Housing Strategy 2025-2030, Better Homes: Growth, Wellbeing and Choice](#).

In a series of lively, sometimes passionately worded debates, delegates discussed the challenges, solutions and opportunities involved in accelerating housing delivery, improving housing conditions and creating sustainable communities.

BBC TV News Home Editor Mark Easton chaired the event, and was an enthusiastic cheerleader for better homes to be provided – "you all have the ability to shape the future of housing in Kent and Medway in a positive way. Get it right and the benefits can be huge," he urged.

Attendees included a mix of professionals from organisations involved in the delivery of public and private sector housing, KHG members, developers, housing associations, planners, architects, policy-makers, and special interest groups, all coming together to drive progress.

The conference programme reflected the themes of the new **Kent and Medway Housing Strategy for 2025-30** under the headings Accelerating Housing Delivery; Infrastructure First; Affordability;

Working Together for Safer Homes; and Health and Wellbeing. [For details of the programme visit https://indd.adobe.com/view/98b90bca-22d1-45ba-aa7d-25ec0a80a1b2](https://indd.adobe.com/view/98b90bca-22d1-45ba-aa7d-25ec0a80a1b2).

As the KHG launches its refreshed strategy for 2025-2030, the conference played a key role in convening and tasking a coalition of the willing to deliver this exciting plan-led growth agenda.

Sponsor's view

KHG delivered the annual event in association with law firm Birketts, who also delivered an eagerly-anticipated workshop on the Renters' Right Bill which is due to come into law this autumn, with Birketts calling it "the most fundamental change in the private rented sector in 35 years".

Steven Kay, Joint Head of Residential Development at Birketts, said: "The future of housing is an important issue for the county, given Birkett's strength and depth in real estate as well as a number of other areas of law, including infrastructure and all aspects of property development, we bring expertise to the conference and be part of the conversation about the region's housing future."

Other sponsors were Case Management Solutions Group, Cenergist, ControlFlow, DHA Planning, Lee Evans Partnership, London Fire Solutions, mhs homes, Potter Raper, Quinn Estates, South East Consortium, Team Safety Services, and Wave Community Bank.



A packed programme led to much thought-provoking debate



KHG Chair Brian Horton and Tracey Kerly, Chief Executive Ashford Borough Council with the new housing strategy



KHG Chair Brian Horton



NEWS & EVENTS

Awards countdown

The entries have been judged, the trophies have been ordered and the venue has been booked – it's the final countdown to the much-anticipated KHG Excellence Awards 2025.

Preparations are being made for the annual celebration of 'the best of the best' individuals, teams and organisations who work in Kent and Medway's housing sector. Awards hopefuls will be making their way to Eastgate Centre at Northfleet on Thursday 25 September to find out whether their work has been recognised by the judges.

Those who have been shortlisted have been invited to attend so if you haven't already done so, please RSVP to kenthousinggroup@ashford.gov.uk

Full details of the event, including a photo gallery, will be included in the next edition of *Home Front*. See you there!



Health and Social Care subgroup relaunched

We have relaunched our Housing, Health and Social Care subgroup to strengthen the integration of housing, health, and social care across Kent and Medway. This renewed focus supports KHG's revised housing strategy, ensuring health and well-being are central to housing solutions.

Key priorities from the relaunch meeting included defining the subgroup's purpose, identifying key stakeholders, and establishing a strong governance and communication framework. Emphasis was placed on the critical role housing plays in health outcomes, with evidence showing that 80% of health outcomes are influenced by social factors like housing.

The subgroup committed to collaborative working, reviewing existing infrastructure, prioritising activities, and inviting expert speakers to inform future actions. A revised terms of reference was agreed to align its mission and ensure clarity of roles.

By fostering cross-sector collaboration, the subgroup aims to tackle local challenges such as overcrowding and poor housing conditions, ensuring healthier, more sustainable communities across the region.



Domestic retrofit in action as Ashford Borough Council invests £2.2m in ground source heat pump technology in Appledore

Who's who at KHG

Want to speak to someone at the Kent Housing Group but not sure who you need to approach? Here's a quick reminder about who's who...

Helen Miller supports the main KHG, the Executive Board, and the sub groups Kent Housing Options (KHOG), Private Sector Housing, Domestic Retrofit and Asset Management.

Sharon Irvine supports the following sub groups, Engagement, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Tenancy Management and the Events sub group.

Bede Uzoegbo supports the following sub groups, Housing Strategy and Enabling, Housing, and Health and Social Care. He also helps to plan and run events and the annual Excellence Awards.

Renters Rights Bill

Following the presentations on Renters Rights at the main KHG event and our webinar on 13 March (which can be found here [Renters' Rights Bill webinar - Kent Housing Group](#)), a task and finish group with representatives from the KHOG and Private Sector Housing subgroups was established.

The group's purpose was to help Kent and Medway prepare for the introduction of the Bill by:

- Sharing information regarding upcoming changes and challenges associated with the Bill.
- Drafting protocols and information sharing agreements for use after the Bill's implementation.

- Understanding each organisation's role in delivering the duties associated with the Bill.

Here are links to more sources of information [Guide to the Renters' Rights Bill - GOV.UK](#) and [The government aims to have the bill passed by the summer recess on July 22, 2025, with implementation expected shortly thereafter.](#)

While the sector awaits information on dates for Royal Assent and the implementation of the Bill, we continue to monitor the situation. If you'd like to join the task group contact Helen Miller at helen.miller@ashford.gov.uk.

Stronger Together making progress

The Kent Housing Group Stronger Together initiative to find new ways how partners could work for best outcomes for vulnerable adults in Kent and Medway continues to make progress.

More than a dozen partners met on 20 May to review progress since the initiative was launched in February and several early results were reported. These included action to convene a group of KHG and Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board (KMSAB) colleagues to ensure all parties are aware of the Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM) Framework and that we use it.

Led by Ashford Borough Council's Tracey Kerly and Alison Oates and Medway Council's Becs Wilcox, the group ran a highly successful [MARM workshop](#) in Ashford on 3 June for more than 50 people. The workshop ran through the MARM process in detail.

KHG is also working with Kent County Council to support a market position statement, akin to an adult social care accommodation strategy, with Aecom. A report will be presented to KCC in September. A Mental Health and Housing Strategy is being developed and a symposium is due to run this summer.

The meeting heard that local government reorganisation (LGR) could be an opportunity to strengthen the links between housing and health. Integrated Care Boards are aware of the changes and they are open to all possibilities to doing things differently in Kent and Medway. Partners may wish to liaise with government to encourage them to see opportunities for joining local government and health services as part of LGR.

The next Stronger Together meeting takes place on 14 July.



The Stronger Together initiative was launched in Chatham in February