

Maple Rise, Stakeholder Meeting

9th October, 2pm

MS Teams Meeting

Agencies and Services in Attendees
KCC, UAS Children's Service
Kent Police
ABC, Councillor
KCC, Councillor

Kent County Council (KCC) – Ashford Borough Council (ABC) - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UAS Children)

Welcome and Introductions
Introductions made and agenda shared with attendees.
Update
<p>A KCC representative updated that Maple rise is now fully open and has been a positive experience. At the end of the first week, the home was at full capacity. Currently there is 9 out of 10 rooms occupied.</p> <p>The average stay has been 9 days. However, a couple of children have moved on within a couple of days and one child has been there since the beginning.</p> <p>The majority of children are from Turkey or Afghanistan.</p> <p>There have been positive relationships forming between the children and adults. The pool table and PlayStation have been a good way of everyone coming together to enjoy themselves.</p> <p>It has been lovely to see how quickly bonds have formed between the children and the home is always filled with laughter.</p> <p>The weekly house meetings have commenced, there have been no concerns raised by the children. The house meetings are positive, and the only feedback they received was the children would like 18+ rated video games for the PlayStation, this was refused.</p> <p>Previously, concerns have been received from residents which involved staff beeping their car horns. This has now been addressed and rectified. A KCC representative advised since opening there have been no further complainants.</p>

Compliance – Reg 44 and Fire inspection

A KCC representative advised the Reg 44 occurred within the first week of opening, this was to see how the children are safeguarded within the home. It was a positive visit, with no improvements raised. The children all feel safe in their environment. Staff advised that previously there was an incident where an unknown male arrived at the gates asking for one of the children. Therefore, there was a concern for a potential trafficking incident, however it transpired that the male was a relative of one of the children. A full incident report was completed which was praised by the Reg 44 inspector.

A KCC representative advised Kent Fire and Rescue have completed a visit, there was only one improvement required which was to add additional signs. A KCC representative advised this is in the process of being completed.

Local Contacts

A KCC representative explained that the relationship between the GP's and the home is positive. The home is now able to register the children with a GP and book in immunisations.

A KCC representative mentioned for the next community meeting a local police officer will be joining. This will help break down those barriers with authority that the children may have.

Activities/education opportunities for the children

A KCC representative advised that the higher-level teaching assistant has started and is doing a couple lessons a day in the home. This will be increasing over time; the teaching assistant is very impressed with the children's progress. The higher-level teaching assistant programme is to be complemented by the My – Ed training, however the home is waiting for tablets to arrive.

The children have also started doing independent cooking.

The children are participating in lots of activities. They have really enjoyed going bowling and they are due to go swimming soon. There have been regular football games. In the future, there is a plan to have potential training sessions with the local football and cricket club. Furthermore, there is the potential for joining in with the next Holiday Inn Litter Pick.

A KCC representative asked the members if they had received any communication from the local community and whether the members have any questions.

A KCC councillor representative advised that they haven't received any concerns from the residents. The representative advised they have been trying to reach out to the Holiday Inn regarding the litter pick.

They advised that the Kennington Community Council Clark is a good point of contact for reaching out regarding the litter picks. Email address was provided and advised there is a 'contact us' page on the website.

Stakeholder Questions

A KCC Councillor representative asked if anyone had reached out to the Stour Centre? As it would be a good place for the children to visit and a way for the children to join in with local activities.

A KCC Councillor representative asked if the children have the opportunity to go on field trips to visit a local Sainsburys or McDonald's? How often are the children allowed out of the home? As it is important for the children to have the opportunity to integrate into society.

A KCC representative answered that a reception centre is in contact with the Stour Centre and has linked Maple Rise with them. The children often go to Sainsbury's with their support workers to buy ingredients for independent cooking and there is plenty of opportunities for field trips. The children often go bowling and are soon going swimming.

A KCC Councillor representative explained there could be a good opportunity to visit the Local Nature Reserve, and they are happy to organise a visit.

An ABC representative mentioned that it all sounded very positive. They advised that the Local Nature Reserve would be a good field trip for the children, however there is lots of ponds therefore there will need to be adults.

A KCC representative advised that support workers would attend with the children for all field trips.

An ABC representative mentioned that the cinema in the local town is now managed by ABC and they are happy to enquire regarding potential block bookings for films. Congratulated KCC representative on the work so far.

A KCC representative advised they'd like to take the children to the Local Nature Reserve and the cinema if this was possible.

An ABC representative questioned in terms of the bonds the children are forming with each other, do they have the ability to stay in touch when they leave Maple Rise?

A KCC representative advised that they often take each other's phone numbers before they leave the home. They are also provided with a memory photo album to take with them. KCC representative advised they try to encourage ongoing communication between the children when they leave.

An ABC representative asked is there a reason why there has been a child at Maple Rise for longer than the average timeframe?

A KCC representative advised that the child was previously allocated to move to York with another child from a different reception centre and share a room together. The social worker advised it was an inappropriate placement. However, he is likely to have another move allocated to him soon.

A KCC Councillor representative asked if the NTS is working well? Does the NTS tend to run at full capacity? Does KCC feel that the NTS is working for them?

A KCC representative advised that the NTS and Home Office discussions are ongoing. The incentive scheme for local authorities to take placements offered by the Home Office is due to finish at the end of October. The average stay is 10 days which is manageable at the moment.

A KCC representative advised that there are some cases that social worker will push back on moves due to it not being suitable for the young person, which does delay the process. However, the focus is the wellbeing of the young person.

A KCC representative advised that Maple Rise is often at full capacity, but another home in Ash is opening which is a 22 Bed. This home will likely run at a high capacity as well.

A KCC representative advised that the NTS programme is working, however once the incentive for local authorities finishes there may be changes in the average stay. KCC representative advised they are continuing to communicate with the home office for a permanent solution.

A Kent Police representative advised to continue to invite Police to house meetings. No other concerns to raise.

A KCC representative advised they will reach out about the nature reserve and visiting the cinema.

A KCC representative brought the meeting to a close.

AOB

None Raised