

## Maple Rise, Stakeholder Meeting

28<sup>th</sup> April 2026 at 10:00 am

### MS Teams Meeting

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

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

Welcome and Introductions
The meeting commenced with introductions, and the agenda was shared with all attendees.
Update on Operations
<p>A KCC representative provided an operational update, advising that since the previous meeting, 13 children had moved into Maple Rise and 13 had moved on, with an average stay of approximately 15 days, which was noted to be slightly longer than usual under the National Transfer Scheme. It was explained that movement had slowed towards the end of March, likely due to the introduction of a national payment incentive in April, although placements were now beginning to progress more quickly again.</p> <p>Further updates were provided regarding ongoing work with Uprising to improve the garden area at Maple Rise and create a more child-friendly, forestry school-style environment. Initial ideas and quotations had now been received and were being reviewed with senior management, with the intention of involving the children in the development process once plans progressed.</p> <p>An update was also shared regarding the Inclusion Support Programme, with children continuing to engage positively, particularly as improved weather conditions had enabled increased access to community-based activities and opportunities to become more familiar with the local area. Although children were beginning to develop independence skills, it was noted that they still generally preferred to access the community accompanied by staff. Positive progress was also reported in relation to the children's English language development. A KCC representative further advised that they were involved in a working group reviewing the Inclusion Support Programme and the quality of associated workshops, with the aim of strengthening the programme further and, in due course, seeking feedback from the children regarding their experiences and any suggested improvements.</p> <p>A KCC Councillor requested further information regarding the current cohort of children at Maple Rise. It was confirmed that there were currently four children in placement, aged between 14 and 15 years old. It was explained that, due to the short-term nature of placements, Maple Rise does not operate as a registered school; however, children receive daily education on-site focused on basic English and mathematics, integrated alongside the Inclusion Support Programme to ensure continuous learning and development throughout the day.</p> <p>Clarification was provided regarding onward placements. The majority of children move on to foster placements across the country, while some progress to boarding school placements or supported accommodation if they reach the age of 16 whilst at Maple Rise. A KCC Councillor asked additional questions regarding boarding school arrangements, and a KCC representative explained that such decisions are managed by the relevant local authorities, although Hertfordshire had been known to develop specialist arrangements for some young people.</p> <p>It was also confirmed that there were no current concerns or incidents requiring escalation from the Social Work Team, and the reporting period had been relatively quiet.</p>
Update of Inspections
In relation to inspections, the KCC representative reported on the recent Regulation 44 visit, explaining that the

independent visitor had completed a thorough review of safeguarding arrangements, documentation, and stakeholder feedback, and had not identified any recommendations for improvement, resulting in a positive outcome. The written report was still awaited at the time of the meeting.

#### **Update on Safeguarding and Community Concerns**

It was noted that further enquiries would be made with the Police and Prevent teams regarding any emerging community concerns, particularly in light of potential protests occurring across the county. As no Prevent team representative was present, this action remains outstanding.

#### **Any other business**

The meeting concluded with thanks being expressed for the update, and attendees agreed there were no further matters to discuss.