

26 April 2024

Dear Resident,

Re: Kiln Court

Following our letter on 29 January 2024 we would like to provide you with a further update regarding Kiln Court.

Communication

We have received enquiries from residents and continue to respond to these as quickly and fully as possible. These enquiries and responses are informing our Frequently Asked Questions webpage: www.kent.gov.uk/receptioncentres, which you can access for information and we would like to encourage residents to continue to use our enquiries mailbox (reception.enquiries@kent.gov.uk) to make any further contact about Kiln Court.

Stakeholders Meeting

On 12 March 2024 Kent County Council (KCC) held its first meeting with your local councillors where your questions regarding Kiln Court were represented and responded to.

Senior officers for the relevant service areas in KCC, KCC Councillor for Faversham, Councillors for Faversham Town Council, and senior representatives from: Bysing Wood Primary School, EKC Schools Trust, The Abbey School, The Howard Academy Trust, KCC Prevent, Kent Police, NHS England, and Swale Borough Council attended the meeting.

This meeting provided opportunity for discussion regarding the legal context under which KCC is working and information was about the enabling works on site and the management of the centre once in operation. It provided opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions on behalf of the residents and services they represent. Minutes of the meeting are available at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/protecting-children/reception-centres-for-unaccompanied-asylum-seeking-children/resident-communication>.

Summary of the key points discussed during the meeting on 12 March:

- KCC must comply with the High Court ruling and take 'every possible step' to increase its capacity to accommodate and look after all UAS children arriving to Kent. KCC does not have enough existing accommodation to look after all children who arrive, even though most children move on to the care of local authorities.
- It is regrettable KCC was not able to share plans in full for Kiln Court ahead of time. The necessity to comply with the urgency of the Court ruling and accommodate all UAS children who continue to arrive to Kent, means it has not been possible for KCC to consult with residents in ways it might normally and would prefer to do.
- UAS children are extremely appreciative of the accommodation and support they receive from KCC and are eager to learn about, integrate and contribute positively to UK society. KCC's

experience of running existing reception centres has shown UAS children present very minimal risk to local communities.

- Kiln Court is an empty building with no existing use. It will now be registered with Ofsted to provide supported accommodation to 32 UAS children, aged 16 and 17. The nearby Osbourne building will not be used as it is not suitable for this purpose.
- Kiln Court will have dedicated KCC staff and security staff 24 hours a day, throughout the year, and there will be no time when the children are unsupervised at the home.
- The Home Office robustly considers any differences between a child's claimed age and their presentation and the information they provide on arrival. If the Home Office considers a person to be older than 18 years old, they will not refer them to KCC. If concern regarding a child's age is raised whilst in KCC's care, an age assessment is completed by social workers. If the assessment concludes the child is aged over 18 years old, they are immediately moved to Home Office accommodation for adults.
- Kiln Court will be a temporary home for children, whilst they await transfer to the care of other local authorities under the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). The required timescale for this, set by Central Government, is ten working days.
- Children will not enrol in local schools. Instead, KCC staff will deliver education and activity at the home and supervised activity in the community. This will include English language lessons and guidance on English law and society, giving children the best and earliest opportunity to contribute towards their community, wherever that may be in the UK. Children will be able to independently leave Kiln Court for short periods of time, with the agreement of staff about where they will be and when they will return.
- UAS children in the care of KCC are not in detention, they have the same rights to the same level of care as any other looked after child, including access to services and amenities in the local community.
- If a child did not return at a time agreed, at any time of day, KCC staff will take all steps to locate them. Reference in the letter on 29 January 2024 to 10:00pm is not a time at which KCC would act if a child did not return. At 10:00 pm there is a handover between day and night staff teams but there is no set time to wait before reporting a child missing to Police. A decision to do so is based on an assessment of risk by staff, trained and experienced in working with UAS children.
- Robust protocols, already successfully used at KCC's existing reception centres, will be in place at Kiln Court. Skilled and experienced social workers meet with newly arrived children to assess their needs and risks, including trafficking and exploitation. These assessments inform plans made around children before they move to a centre. Social workers and staff at the reception centres are trained and experienced in working with vulnerable children and are responsible for implementing plans to keep children safe at the centre and in the local community.

Schedule of works

April 2024

Mechanical and Electrical 1st & 2nd fix in progress.

Upgrade of Gas Supply.

Decoration works in progress.

Carpentry works in progress.

Commencement of flooring works.

Electrical supply upgrade.
Removal of scaffolding.

May 2024

Repairs to underground drainage
Mechanical and Electrical 1st & 2nd fix progressed.
Continuation of decoration works.
Continuation of Carpentry works.
Continuation of flooring works.
Kitchen installation.

June 2024

Mechanical and Electrical 2nd fix progressed.
Continuation of decoration works.
Continuation of Carpentry works.
Continuation of flooring works.
Loft Insulation
Fireproofing works.

July 2024

Commissioning and testing
General snagging of finishes.
Builders Clean and silicon works.
Start site compound decamp and carpark clean up.
Building Control Sign Off and building handover

We hope this information provides you with further reassurance regarding Kiln Court.

We will continue to keep you updated and will write to you again when we have more information to share with you.

In the meantime, if you do have questions, please contact us at reception.enquiries@kent.gov.uk.

Kind regards,

UASC Reception Centre Enquiries Team