Cypress House (formerly Edward Moore House) Stakeholder Meeting
Tuesday 6th October 2026, 10am
MS Teams Meeting

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

Kent County Council (KCC) – Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UAS Children)

Introduction
Agenda shared and introductions made.
Overview
A KCC Representative provided an update and advised that the previous couple of months had been particularly busy, with a significant number of new arrivals. The centre was almost at full capacity, with 22 young people currently accommodated. All young people had settled well and were engaging positively with staff. Several birthdays had recently been celebrated. It was noted that some young people had said that birthdays had not previously been celebrated, making it particularly positive to recognise these occasions. The Higher-Level Teaching Assistant was currently absent on long-term leave. During this period, work had been taking place with other centres to provide support with the ESOL programme. A Kent Police Representative asked about the gender and age range of the young people accommodated at the centre. A KCC Representative confirmed that the centre accommodated male young people only, with different provisions available for females. Where sibling groups were involved, consideration could sometimes be given to how the circumstances could be accommodated appropriately. The centre only provided accommodation for young people under the age of 18. Most young people were aged between 16 and 17 and usually moved on from the home before reaching the age of 18. A Kent Police Representative thanked a KCC Representative for the information and advised that this was helpful in relation to intelligence concerning the local town.
Community Safety and Exploitation Awareness
A KCC Representative reported two incidents involving members of the public who had been verbally abusive while the young people were out in the community. Staff regularly supported young people to access the local community. During one incident, an individual believed that a young person had been staring and subsequently used a derogatory term towards the young person. The same individual, accompanied by another person, later attended the gate of the home and attempted to prevent young people from entering the premises. A KCC Representative also reported that there had been two missing-person episodes. One young person had since been located and placed elsewhere. A further young person had been reported missing the previous day,

having arrived in care only a few hours before going missing. Both incidents had been reported to the police.

A GBC Councillor asked whether one of the two people who attended the gate was the same individual who had used the derogatory term towards the young person.

A KCC Representative confirmed that this was the same individual. The incident had occurred during the previous week and the individual had not been seen since. It was believed that the individual might be local, as someone had recognised the person.

A Kent Police Representative asked whether a CAD reference number had been provided.

A KCC Representative confirmed that a CAD reference number had been provided.

A KCC Representative raised concerns relating to some young people visiting a particular establishment in the local town. Different groups of young people appeared to be aware of the establishment, and it had been noted that discounted food was being offered. There was some concern about whether young people might potentially feel under pressure to provide something in return for the discount. However, it was made clear that there was no evidence to suggest that any exploitation or inappropriate activity was taking place**.** The current group did not appear to be as interested in visiting the establishment as previous groups, although staff remained aware of the situation.

A Kent Police Representative asked whether those working at the establishment shared a similar background to the young people and whether staff had noticed any unexplained items or anything else that might give cause for concern.

A KCC Representative confirmed that nothing had been disclosed and no unexplained items had been identified. The concern had arisen primarily because of the level of discount being offered.

A Kent Police Representative asked how significant the discount was.

A KCC Representative explained that food was being offered at a noticeably reduced price compared with the usual cost. It was acknowledged that this could simply be an act of kindness or a way of supporting young people from a similar community. However, it was also recognised that the distinction between kindness and potential exploitation could sometimes be difficult to establish. There was no evidence at that stage of anything untoward taking place.

A Kent Police Representative advised that the establishment had previously been of interest to another agency.

A GBC Councillor asked about the background of those associated with the establishment.

A KCC Representative provided the information known at that time.

A Kent Police Representative asked whether staff from the home had approached the establishment to ask about the reason for the discounts.

A KCC Representative explained that this had been discussed as a possibility, but staff had not wanted to make enquiries if another agency was already looking into the matter. Confirmation was sought as to whether it would be appropriate to make enquiries.

A Kent Police Representative advised that there was no significant concerning intelligence to share. Some

individuals known to the police had been seen in the surrounding area, but nothing specifically stood out as a concern in relation to the establishment. It was acknowledged that the situation was difficult to assess with certainty.

A GBC Councillor suggested that visiting the establishment and having an appropriate conversation might help provide a clearer understanding of the situation.

A KCC Representative agreed to explore this following the meeting.

A KCC Representative advised that protests continued to take place across the UK. A lockdown drill had recently been completed at the centre, and arrangements were in place to support young people if an unexpected protest occurred. Police had also recently visited the home to explain UK law and provide information to the young people. Due to the high number of recent arrivals, a further police visit would be welcomed.

A Kent Police Representative agreed to make enquiries regarding another visit.

A GBC Councillor asked whether contact had been made with the relevant community representative regarding the litter-picking project.

A KCC Representative confirmed that the centre was due to join the project at the end of the month. A presentation had been delivered to the young people, which had also led to an improvement in the management of litter within the home. The presentation had been enlightening and litter-picking equipment was available for young people to use around the premises.

A GBC Councillor expressed pleasure at the positive outcome.

A KCC Representative advised that it had been positive to see the impact and that the scale of the project had not previously been fully appreciated.

A GBC Councillor confirmed that there were no further matters to raise.

A KCC Representative invited attendees to make contact if any further issues arose. Meetings were now taking place every two months, although matters could still be raised between meetings. It was confirmed that no recent complaints had been received from neighbours, with the most recent complaint having been received in April. Appreciation was expressed for the ongoing support provided.

A Kent Police Representative returned to the earlier discussion regarding the young person who had gone missing and asked whether there had been an increase in missing episodes.

A KCC Representative advised that the number of incidents remained very small and there did not appear to have been an increase.

A Kent Police Representative noted that there did not appear to be a clear link between the incidents.

A KCC Representative explained that there could be numerous factors contributing to a young person going missing, including the possibility that some young people remained in contact with traffickers.

A GBC Councillor suggested that fear could sometimes be a contributing factor.

A Kent Police Representative reflected on previous personal experience of relatives providing foster care to unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people and noted the difficult experiences that some young people had faced. Positive outcomes had also been seen over time, and the importance of breaking down barriers between young people and the police was emphasised.

A Kent Police Representative also raised concerns regarding reported drug-related activity near a local Costa area and asked whether young people ever returned to the home and reported witnessing unusual or concerning activity while out in the community. Reference was made to an individual repeatedly asking to use young people's mobile phones, and concern was expressed about young people potentially becoming involved in, or exposed to, inappropriate situations.

A GBC Councillor acknowledged that some members of the public could hold narrow or misinformed views and that hearing more about the young people's experiences could potentially help challenge those perceptions.

A Kent Police Representative noted that constructive conversations could help provide people with greater knowledge and understanding.

A KCC Representative agreed that there was a significant amount of misinformation within the wider community and that it was important to redirect inaccurate views and support better understanding. None of the young people at the home had reported being approached in this way by members of the public. Most young people did not have mobile phones. Contact cards had now been provided so that young people could go into a shop and use the card to seek support if required.

A KCC Representative thanked attendees for sharing the community safety information and confirmed that a weekly workshop on exploitation was held with the young people. A quiz was completed following the workshop to assess how much information had been understood. It was acknowledged that considerable work was required to help young people understand and recognise exploitation, including in circumstances where individuals involved might speak the same language.

A KCC Representative concluded the meeting.

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None raised.