

Cypress House Stakeholder Meeting
30th January at 11am
MS Teams Meeting

Services in Attendance
KCC, UAS Children’s Service
GBC Councillor, KCC Councillor, MP
Kent Police
Head of Community Support, GBC
GBC, Councillor
Local Charity
Representative for the Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara
KCC, Public Health

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

Welcome and Introduction
Introductions made and agenda shared.
Update
<p>A KCC Representative mentioned that the centre welcomed its first group of young people on December 26th. Since then, 13 young people have been accommodated, with 5 still in placement and the rest having moved on via the NTS. The centre's capacity, currently at 15, will gradually increase. The young people have expressed their gratitude for the support from Cypress and Gravesham.</p> <p>Since opening, several stakeholders have visited, including a representative from the Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara. Kent Police have attended in-house community meetings to offer advice to the young people on how to stay safe in the community.</p> <p>A KCC Prevent representative has provided training to staff on Modern Day Slavery. All staff have completed induction training, and the centre continues to monitor the staffing ratio.</p> <p>Following a visit from Britain First at another site, staff have been briefed and any concerns addressed.</p>

A GBC representative enquired about the visit from Britain First at another site.

A KCC representative responded that there was a demonstration outside another centre, and KCC's Prevent team continues to monitor this.

Stakeholder Questions/Feedback

A representative from a local charity asked if a representative from the Mosque has been invited to the meeting, noting a recent change in the Mosque's chair. They also enquired about an overview of the young people's faiths and backgrounds.

A KCC representative responded that they'll reach out to the Mosque and the young people come from various religious backgrounds, including Christianity and Islam, and have opportunities to attend local mosques and churches.

A KCC representative mentioned that no complaints have been received from neighbours since Cypress House opened and asked if any stakeholders had received complaints.

A GBC Councillor expressed concern about the non-operational lift, noting that while no disabled children are expected to live at the centre, a child with a broken leg would be unable to use the stairs.

A KCC representative assured that social workers can make necessary adjustments if required and will feedback to the service manager for review.

A Kent Police representative reported no complaints and positive interactions with the centre, with plans to visit again soon.

A GBC representative also noted no community feedback.

A KCC Public Health representative mentioned that infection control training was provided early on and will be revisited, with additional guidance on norovirus due to increased cases.

A representative from the Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara noted a visit from five young people who did not follow the Gurdwara's rules, though it was unclear if they were from the centre.

A KCC representative assured that this will be investigated and reiterated that the young people have been informed about the rules.

The Gurdwara representative welcomed future visits from staff and the young people.

A GBC Councillor representative mentioned that they initially had many concerns, but these have been alleviated with confirmation on how the site would operate. Everything has been running smoothly, and there have been no complaints from residents.

A KCC Representative expressed satisfaction with the positive feedback and noted that the young people are doing very well. The Independent Living Programme has started, with independent cooking being a particular highlight. This provides the young people with budgeting and cooking skills to help them live independently at their next placement. They are also encouraged to engage in various activities. Recommendations for gyms and boxing, which the young people have shown interest in, would be greatly appreciated.

A GBC Councillor asked about the ages of the young people.

A KCC representative confirmed they are 16-17 years old, with the centre supporting those under 18. The average stay is up to 10 days.

A Kent Police representative offered to share a list of local boxing gyms after the meeting.

A representative from the Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara advised that the centre is welcome to attend the Vaisakhi celebrations on April 12th, featuring a funfair.

A KCC representative closed the meeting by assuring that any complaints received before the next meeting will be addressed.

AOB

None raised.