

Maple Rise, Stakeholder Meeting

29th April 2025 at 11 am

MS Teams Meeting

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

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

Welcome and Introductions
Introductions were made, and the agenda was shared with attendees.
Update on Inspections
<p>The KCC representative shared that the home recently received the provisional outcome of their Ofsted inspection, which was extremely positive. The formal report is still pending publication.</p> <p>The representative also reported that regular Regulation 44 visits have continued, with very positive feedback. Only one minor recommendation was made regarding a fire door, which was an issue already identified and is awaiting resolution following the routine six-monthly door inspections.</p>
Update on Operations
<p>The KCC representative noted that it had been a quiet period since the last meeting until a few days ago, when the home became busier again. They reported that 12 children had been admitted and 14 had moved on. All children remained settled and engaged positively in programs and activities while under their care.</p> <p>The representative also mentioned recent recruitment efforts due to staff taking annual and maternity leave. The vacant positions have now been filled, and onboarding is in progress, with DBS checks pending. Once complete, new staff will be trained in line with the home’s ethos and practices.</p> <p>A concern was raised about declining attendance at stakeholder meetings. The representative announced that an updated Terms of Reference would be circulated to clarify the purpose and value of these meetings—particularly in relation to the Inclusion Support Program (ISP). Attendees were encouraged to contribute actively and remain engaged.</p> <p>Additionally, the KCC representative intends to follow up separately to explore the possibility of introducing night staff training to support children with bedtime routines, in line with the ISP.</p>
Update on community concerns and engagement
<p>The KCC representative requested renewed police presence during the home’s weekly house meetings to help children become more familiar and comfortable with officers. A Kent Police representative responded positively and suggested that the home send potential dates so arrangements could be made. The officer also offered to deliver presentations on topics such as online safety and hate crime and agreed to provide a list of available sessions.</p> <p>The KCC representative mentioned Thursdays at 2 PM were identified as a preferred time for such visits, aligning with Maple Rise’s weekly community meeting when interpreters are also available.</p> <p>The KCC representative raised concerns regarding a recent protest in Dover. The Kent Police representative confirmed that the situation was well managed and under control and acknowledged the importance of improving</p>

communication with the home for such events.

In addition, a question was raised about any potential community tensions involving Maple Rise or the nearby hotel housing asylum seekers. The police confirmed that there were no known concerns and that a recent intruder incident at the home was not believed to be related.

Update on activities

The Kent Police representative shared upcoming summer activities, including the return of the panna football pitch in the town centre and the potential rebooking of a gaming bus. A multi-agency workshop focusing on antisocial behaviour and youth engagement is also scheduled for the following day.

The KCC representative expressed appreciation for these suggestions and confirmed that a trip to the Big Cat Sanctuary has been booked for June in collaboration with Memona Lodge. The team is also working to gather feedback from children regarding their experience at Maple Rise and in Ashford. This feedback will support case study development and help monitor the impact of care—an area highlighted in the recent Ofsted feedback.

Stakeholder Questions

None raised.