

Acacia Stakeholder Meeting
26th September, 9am – 10:30am
MS Teams Meeting

Agencies and Services in Attendees
KCC, UAS Children’s Service
KCC, Councillor
FTC, Councillor
KCC, Prevent
Kent Police
Abbey School
Bysing Wood Primary
West Faversham Community Centre
NHS
SBC, Councillor
SBC, Community Safety
The Howard Academy Trust

Kent County Council (KCC) – FTC (Faversham Town Council) – Swale Borough Council (SBC) - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UAS Children)

Welcome and Introductions
Introductions made and agenda shared with attendees.
Updates
<p>Since the last meeting, the reception centre has still been going well, the young people are really enjoying their time and are a delight to be around. There have been no behavioural issues with the young people, and they are all regularly engaging with the support workers on site.</p> <p>The young people have all taken an interest in British culture and have been trying to learn the English language to help them integrate into society.</p> <p>The reception centre is taking a slow and steady approach to the young people starting to go out into the community. The young people have begun taking the train to the Mosque and visiting places such as, Thorpe Park and the local school to participate in sporting activities. Support workers accompany young people to all activities, like the Thorpe Park Visit, and write a report following the activity/visit.</p> <p>A KCC representative expressed that the centre is encouraging community engagement, and any suggestions on how to increase this further would be appreciated. Community engagement is useful for the young people.</p>

It has been KCC's aim to have a softer landing into the community by taking a low-profile approach to the young people beginning to integrate more into the community around them, especially regarding the young people wanting to explore Faversham Town Centre.

A KCC representative stated there were concerns from one resident about light pollution from the centre. Fully fitted blinds are now on all external doors and where this wasn't possible a thick film has been fitted. The young people's social areas are at the rear of the property to reduce noise pollution.

A KCC representative advised that relationships are being built with two local GP surgeries, but expressed it is a difficult situation to navigate when the young people have longer term needs, such as mental health issues. GP surgeries have been signposting the young people to useful services that can help with their mental health while they are in the reception centre.

The weekly community meetings within the centre are moving in a positive direction. Interpreters are booked in for the meetings so the young people can share any thoughts freely with the staff. In other centres, the police have often joined the meetings. Any community involvement in the meetings is encouraged.

A KCC representative requested an update from an NHS representative regarding the relationship between the centre and local GP surgeries. An NHS representative explained they are pleased the GP surgeries are building relationships with the reception centre.

An NHS representative apologised that there have been delays with the GP forms due to the change of address for Acacia Court and is hoping the post office will rectify the issue soon.

An NHS representative explained that long term mental health issues are expected with young people but would like to encourage informing the next local authority's health team when the young person moves to their next placement. NHS representative agreed that the GP surgeries should continue to signpost the young people to the mental health services available for the short time they reside in the reception centre.

An NHS representative would like to participate in the community meetings and visit the reception centre. NHS team members have previously attended the centre to provide training to the staff around sleep. It is common the young person will be awake during the night when they first arrive. The training helps staff to aid the young person with adjusting their body clocks to this time zone. NHS representative explained further training can be provided around sleep.

A KCC representative mentioned that they had provided the young people with sleep packs, which included a sleep t-shirt, night light and lavender sprays. It was a very helpful resource.

A KCC representative explained that the young people settle into a new routine very quickly. The in-house education, which is called college within the reception centre, starts at 10am, which means that the attendance record for classes has been very high.

A KCC representative highlighted there has been no further complaints made directly to the reception centre and explained that the reduction in complaints is a very positive step forward.

Support for Delivering the ILP

A KCC representative explained that linking with partners and stakeholders in the community, especially the police help teach the young people the UK law, health and other aspects of British society. The young people often come from a background where they do not trust those in authority. The police are a key link for the centre as their inclusion into the centre encourages positive attitudes towards authority for the young people.

Any suggestions or links to the community will be welcomed, as it helps to deliver the independent living programme.

After the last meeting, the centre has been linking with local businesses. Large fruit donations have been made, which helps the young people and staff feel part of the community. The staff explain to the young people that the fruit has been gifted by the local community.

A KCC representative explained the young people are having a positive attitude to authority, especially police. A few police officers had visited the site and played pool and ping pong with the young people, which is a great way to build relationships.

Kent Fire and Rescue have recently attended for an assessment, which was positive. The officer asked how the young people would react and feel during a potential rescue scenario due to their previous experience with those in authority. Staff explained how we encourage positive relationships with those in authority and this seems to be going well. During the visit, one of the boys picked up the toy figure of a police officer and explained that some of the police in his country were bad, but in the UK they are good and he'd like to become a police officer.

A KCC representative brought the meeting to a close and reflected upon how well the centre is going and confirmed that these meetings will continue. Advised the members to continue to build on their relationships with the reception centre and to reach out if there are any issues before the next meeting.

In the next meeting, A KCC representative would like to touch upon the success stories of the young people that have resided in Acacia Court.

Stakeholder Questions

None raised.

AOB

None raised.