Peacock House Stakeholder Meeting
Tuesday 25th August 2026, 10am
MS Teams Meeting

Agencies and Services in Attendees
KCC, UAS Children's Service
KCC, Family Hubs
KCC, County Councillor
MP Office
Kent Police
FHDC, Representatives

Kent County Council (KCC) – Folkestone and Hythe District Council (FHDC) - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UAS Children)

Introduction
Introductions made and agenda shared.
Overview
A KCC Representative confirmed that the children's home received their Ofsted registration on 29 July and is now licensed and operational. Nine children have stayed at the home since registration. No significant issues have arisen involving the children, and all but one child have since moved on the National Transfer Scheme. The opening and initial operation of the home have been positive. At the previous meeting, discussion had taken place regarding tensions in the local area and vocal comments online concerning the opening of the home. An incident had also occurred in which three individuals were assaulted. Appreciation was expressed to Kent Police for issuing public messages that corrected misinformation circulating in relation to the incident. A KCC Representative highlighted potential cultural issues that children and staff may experience. During a visit to the local area, one young person was playing on a swing while accompanied by a member of staff. A member of the public took a photograph and shared it on social media alongside racially inappropriate comments. An administrator of the social media group removed the comment very quickly. The incident demonstrated that cultural tensions and inappropriate public reactions may continue to occur. As a precaution, leisure activities within the immediate local area will not currently be arranged, and staff will avoid taking children into that area. The information regarding the incident has been shared with relevant parties. A KCC Family Hub Representative asked whether access to the Family Hub could be beneficial. Family Hubs are often not open during the evening, and an offer was made to explore whether the premises could be made available to support the children's home. A KCC Representative welcomed the offer and agreed that further discussion could take place by email.
Community Tensions
Attendees were invited to share any thoughts or views regarding current community tensions.

A KCC Family Hub Representative advised that no concerns or reports had been received and that nothing had been raised with Family Hub staff working within the local area.

A KCC Councillor advised that local social media activity is monitored regularly. Very little has been posted about the children's home since the initial announcement that the home would be opening and that a protest might take place. The limited amount of subsequent social media activity was a pleasant surprise.

In response to a message from a FHDC Representative, a KCC Representative clarified that the children accommodated at the home are teenage boys.

A FHDC Representative asked what educational arrangements are in place for the children.

A KCC Representative explained that the home employs a Higher-Level Teaching Assistant. A two-week programme is delivered repeatedly and is based on ESOL. The programme is delivered alongside an Inclusion & Support Programme completed by staff with each child. The content includes UK laws, budgeting, English culture and other information intended to support children during the relatively short period spent at the home. As much relevant information as possible is condensed into the available timeframe.

The children do not attend a local school. The only potential impact on local community services is the use of GP services for immunisations. Experience to date indicates that this does not affect the availability of appointments. Due to the short length of time some children remain at the home, most children do not require any other GP services other than immunisations.

A NHS Representative confirmed that no issues had arisen and described the team as very good. Some communication difficulties have occurred, and opportunities to support children can occasionally be missed when a child moves on very quickly.

A Kent Police Representative asked whether the social media comments had been hate-related and whether the matter had been reported to Kent Police.

A KCC Representative confirmed that the incident had been reported to Kent Police and to the PREVENT team.

A Kent Police Representative asked again whether the comments were considered hate related.

A KCC Representative confirmed that the comments could be considered hate-related in some respects.

A Kent Police Representative stated that hate-related comments would not be tolerated and requested that all such incidents continue to be reported.

A KCC Representative confirmed that appropriate reports would continue to be made.

A Kent Police Representative asked whether a good working link had been established with the Community Safety Unit Inspector.

A KCC Representative confirmed that contact had been made with most members of the relevant team.

Stakeholder Enquiries

Attendees were invited to raise any additional questions.

A Kent Police Representative asked about the anticipated number of children who would be accommodated at

the home.

A KCC Representative explained that a soft opening is currently taking place. The home is therefore not accepting too many children at the same time, as recruitment is still under way. Staff onboarding is in its final stages, and a number of local residents have been successful in securing roles.

The home has 14 beds. Two beds are reserved for use as isolation rooms if a child is suspected of having a communicable disease, and in most cases that is likely to be diphtheria. The home will not always operate at full capacity, and admission numbers are being deliberately capped during the opening period.

A Kent Police Representative asked whether the home has a process for responding to missing-person incidents.

A KCC Representative confirmed that a missing-person process is in place.

A Kent Police Representative advised that it would not be feasible for a child to be reported missing simply because a curfew had been missed by five or ten minutes.

A KCC Representative agreed to take that advice into consideration.

A Kent Police Representative confirmed that relevant information would be passed on.

A KCC Representative advised that missing-person incidents are not common at the children's home and are more likely to occur at the reception centres where older children reside and tend to have more unescorted free time in the community. When children leave the home, activities and visits tend to be arranged and supervised, reducing the likelihood of missing-person incidents.

Community Engagement

A KCC Representative expressed an intention to use the working group as a forum for greater collaboration with the local community and to support the development of positive relationships. The children's home should not remain in the background indefinitely and should instead be seen as a positive service that makes a valuable contribution to the area.

A FHDC Representative referred to previous experience involving Napier Barracks, where volunteering opportunities had been developed. Although the circumstances would not be the same, similar opportunities could be considered. Examples could include theatre displays and shared sporting activities involving local sports centres.

A KCC Councillor noted that the short period children spend at the home may present difficulties when developing community involvement. Some children may remain for only two or three days and may therefore not have sufficient time to feel part of the local community. Opportunities such as local football teams are available, although it may be difficult to identify activities that allow children to participate flexibly for short and varying periods.

A KCC Representative agreed and suggested that any longer-term community initiative would need to involve the home as an organisation, rather than relying on the continued participation of individual children.

A Kent Police Representative advised that, as involvement with the home develops, Kent Police would welcome

opportunities to visit. Such visits could help children understand the role of the police in the UK and demonstrate that the police should not be feared. Kent Police could also deliver talks on respect and policing powers.

A KCC Representative welcomed the proposal and explained that an open invitation had previously been extended to Kent Police. A weekly timetable is prepared for the children, and police visits could be incorporated or activities rearranged where required. A formal appointment would not always be necessary.

A Kent Police Representative confirmed that Kent Police could make a commitment to supporting this work.

A KCC Representative welcomed that commitment and explained that some children may arrive with negative expectations of authority. Positive engagement with Kent Police could help children integrate into the community and develop a clearer understanding of policing in the UK.

A FHDC Representative highlighted the home's position as a local employer and suggested that this could be promoted as a positive contribution to the area.

A KCC Representative confirmed that recruitment remains open and that vacancies are advertised through the KCC recruitment platform. Applications are received from a wide geographical area, so it has been particularly positive to see local residents securing employment at the home.

A desire was expressed to advertise vacancies more locally, although this may not currently be feasible. Greater visibility and involvement within the community would also be welcomed, but consideration is required as to whether the current time is appropriate and how such activity might be received.

A Kent Police Representative suggested that Beat Officers could use My Community Voice to issue positive messages. Visible police engagement with the home could help build public confidence and encourage positive engagement from the wider community.

A KCC Representative agreed that a suitable time and place for this type of communication would arise. Some hesitation remains due to the current political climate. Publicity at this stage could create additional attention and attract negative comments. The aim is for perceptions to become increasingly positive over the next 12 months.

A MP Office Representative agreed that a gradual approach would be appropriate. Church-based organisations in the area arrange youth groups and may be willing to provide support. Such groups represent some of the limited organised youth provision available on the Marsh.

A KCC Representative referred to an earlier suggestion concerning litter picking and provided examples of community involvement previously undertaken at another children's home, Olea Grove. Children and staff had participated in a litter pick, and Easter cards written by the boys had been sent to local residents.

A local employer operating a vehicle repair business had also allowed two boys to undertake a short period of work shadowing because both had expressed an interest in becoming mechanics. These activities were described as small but meaningful successes.

The current children's home has a small garden area, and consideration is being given to growing produce. Potential use of an allotment space and greenhouse is also being explored. Produce could potentially be donated to a local food bank or community kitchen, allowing the home to make a practical contribution to the

local community.

A FHDC Representative welcomed the proposal and confirmed that a local network supports community kitchens and related initiatives. A mobile food truck also operates locally and would be grateful to receive donated produce. An offer was made to connect the children's home with the relevant organisers. It was acknowledged that the home remains in the early stages of operation, but opportunities could still be explored.

A KCC Councillor advised that a representative from the local allotment association may be able to support the home in establishing the growing space.

A KCC Representative welcomed that offer.

A KCC Councillor agreed to pass on the relevant contact information.

A KCC Representative noted that gardening would provide a valuable way for the boys to become involved, even where an individual child does not remain at the home long enough to see the entire growing process from beginning to end.

A KCC Representative asked attendees to bring ideas and suggestions to future meetings. Any proposed activity or opportunity would need to be assessed individually before participation could be agreed.

Attendees were invited to raise any further matters or concerns.

A KCC Representative thanked attendees for their engagement and expressed the hope that the group would continue to meet consistently. The longer-term aim is for the children's home to develop a strong, positive and constructive role within the community over the next one to two years.

AOB

None raised.