

Memona Lodge Stakeholder Meeting
Tuesday, 15 July 2025, 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm
MS Teams Meeting

Service/Agency
KCC, UAS Children's Service
KCC, Prevent
Pie Factory
Kent Kindness
Kent Police
Kent and Medway NHS
John Wallis Academy

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

Welcome and Introductions
A KCC representative welcomed attendees to the first Stakeholder Meeting for Memona Lodge. The purpose of the meeting is to share information about the operation of the Reception Centre; explore ideas around community engagement, to establish local networks of support; and to resolve any enquiries or concerns raised in the community as a partnership.
Overview of the Centre
<p>Memona Lodge provides temporary accommodation to up to 50 UAS children at any given time. After arriving in the UK, UAS children come to Memona Lodge or KCC's other Reception Centres, to begin their resettlement with support of staff to help their understanding of UK life and prepare them for moves to other LAs across the UK via the NTS.</p> <p>Transfers to other areas of the UK via the NTS takes place usually within 10 workings days – some children will transfer within a couple of days and others will take longer. In the time they are at Memona Lodge, they develop independent living skills and receive education in English, maths and other subjects. Memona Lodge is registered as Supported Accommodation with Ofsted and therefore meets Ofsted regulations and requirements.</p> <p>A Kent Kindness (charity organisation) representative provided a brief overview of the education offer they provide to children at Memona Lodge and Oak Manor in Cranbrook: lessons take place at Memona on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and focus on learning core English skills – recently, they held lessons on using maps to find places such as navigating a route to college or to the supermarket. Kent Kindness also receives donations which allows them to provide things like gift bags at Christmas, text books, etc.</p> <p>A KCC representative noted that there may be opportunities to link with John Wallis Academy for joint working and activities and agreed to arrange a further discussion with the school in the new school term.</p> <p>A KCC Prevent representative noted there have been no significant problems surrounding Memona Lodge and a KCC representative stated that engagement with Kent Police has been for the Community Liaison Officer to visit the centre to undertake direct work with the children. This has been positive work to build trusting relationships between children and the Police. A month ago, Police were called out due to aggressive behaviour from one of the boys, who had gotten frustrated due to waiting for his transfer to another LA area – this was resolved swiftly and no further concerns were raised.</p> <p>The Kent Police representative mentioned historical issues of conflict between older boys but noted that no such concerns have been raised for a significant period. They commented that the engagement with Kent Police colleagues has been positive and supports building trusting relationships with authorities. A KCC Prevent</p>

representative agreed with Kent Police and noted that part of their work is to identify community tensions, which have not been found for Memona Lodge. A KCC representative agreed and noted that Memona Lodge has been operating as a Reception Centre for UAS children for a number of years and has not seen community tensions – the centre is keen to continue to integrate in the community.

A Kent and Medway NHS representative noted that they are not aware of any issues and stated that Ashford Medical Partnership works well with the centre.

A Pie Factory representative provided a brief overview of the offer they provide to UAS children which involves a weekly youth group where they cook, play music, sports, art, etc. These take place every Friday evening and is funded by NHS. Sessions largely focus around cooking as a way to celebrate children's heritage. They requested that the Reception Centres provide notice to Pie Factory around the expected number of children (and Support Workers) they are expecting to attend and also ideas/requests for specific dishes to cook – this helps the team ensure they have enough food and the right ingredients/recipe to follow. A KCC representative agreed to take this away to discuss with colleagues.

A KCC Prevent representative suggested there may be opportunities to link with Prevent Education Officers to do some direct work with UAS children.

A Kent Kindness representative explained that they receive a range of donations, including money/tickets for outings and trips – they would like to ensure these are well utilised in the service. A KCC representative thanked Kent Kindness for their contributions and noted that KCC are committed to offering a robust and varied programme of activities for children.

A KCC representative noted that the Memona Lodge has been running for a number of years and explained that the opportunities and purpose of the Stakeholder Meetings, as per the Terms of Reference are:

1. Sharing information related to the operation of the Reception Centre and/or activities within the local community.
2. Establishing a robust local network that support the aims of the Reception Centre – through providing positive engagement, learning and enrichment opportunities for UAS children; and, in turn, offering the opportunity for UAS children and the Reception Centre to contribute positively to the local community. These discussions contribute to the development of the Independent Living Programme (ILP).
3. Raising questions/concerns/complaints from residents or other interested persons, with the intention to be solution-focused within this space.

A KCC representative encouraged members of the Stakeholder Meeting to contact the team if other colleagues and partners would like to join and to share ideas of community events and opportunities for boys to get involved in local activities.