

Cypress House Stakeholder Meeting
10th December at 2pm
MS Teams Meeting

Services in Attendance
KCC, UAS Children’s Service
KCC, Deputy Chief Executives Department
KCC, Councillor
GBC Councillor, KCC Councillor, MP
Kent Police
Head of Community Support, GBC
Altheia Academies Trust

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 advised that, following a number of delays, the keys were handed over by the contractor on 6th December.</p> <p>A KCC representative explained that there were delays in the refurbishment, and it was the only centre that faced these delays. The contractors handed over the keys on the 6th, and there are still a few teething issues, so the contractors are able to come back if required. New electrics and boilers were fitted. The building has been refurbished in line with the other reception centres, and the furnishings are the same to maintain a uniform look across the centres.</p> <p>A KCC representative advised that signage has been put up. It is called Cypress House; however, Edward Moore is also on the sign. Staff arrived at Cypress House yesterday for their first day on site.</p> <p>A KCC representative continued that day and night staff were on site for orientation. The staff started to make the centre look homely by adding soft furnishings and making up the rooms. The staff have been shadowing for the last two months in other centres, so they are well equipped for the opening of the centre.</p> <p>A KCC representative mentioned that the staff have been eager to start and are making the centre homely.</p> <p>A KCC representative advised that there have not been any further enquiries since the last meeting into the enquiry inbox. There will be a slow approach to opening the centre, with the aim to open quietly and not cause any concerns. The centre is aware of school drop-off and</p>

pick-up times and will manage this effectively. Any concerns or enquiries can be directed to the centre's inbox. The residents have all received letters, which have been uploaded to the KCC website along with the stakeholder minutes.

A GBC representative asked what the email address for the centre is.

A KCC representative responded that this will be forwarded to everyone.

Recruitment

A KCC representative explained that the current operations manager will be leaving; however, the new operations manager has already been recruited so they can work alongside each other and learn.

A KCC representative advised that the recruitment phase has now finished, and all permanent staff positions have been filled. Several of the staff members live in Gravesend, with a few of their children even attending the local school. It has been a really positive experience to hire people from the local area.

Stakeholder Tour

A KCC representative advised that there will be a stakeholder tour tomorrow, providing an opportunity to see the building and its layout. Although the keys were only recently received and there are still a few tasks to complete within the building, stakeholders will be able to gain an idea of how the building will operate.

Future Stakeholder Meetings

A KCC representative expressed that going forward, the key purpose of the stakeholder meetings will be for the group to be a voice for the community and a place to provide any concerns or positive feedback.

A representative from Altheia Academies Trust asked about the age group of the young people.

A KCC representative responded that the young people will be 16-17 years old.

A representative from Altheia Academies Trust asked when the young people will start moving in.

A KCC representative responded that an exact date cannot be given; however, it will be in the next few weeks. The centre has 36 beds, but when it opens, not all 36 beds will be filled. It will be a gradual opening, starting with 3-5 young people and gradually increasing to full capacity. However, at this time of year, due to arrivals at the port slowing down, it is unlikely to reach full capacity this year.

A KCC representative explained that another reason for the meetings will be to build on community relationships to help with the independent living programme. The programme helps the young people gain independent skills and assists with their resettlement into the UK. The independent living programme runs alongside the education programme managed by the higher-level teaching assistant. It is not a full education programme like in a school, but it

includes key skills that they can build upon when they move to their next placement. All information regarding what the young people have completed in the ILP is passed over to their next local authority.

There will be continued efforts to reach out to the local community. For example, there have already been conversations with the Gurdwara about how they can provide information about the Gurdwara and faith interconnections. The local Mosque has also been contacted to build a relationship. It is beneficial to have the community help deliver the modules for the ILP by providing information to be delivered by staff or in person, such as local police officers attending. The centre will continue to reach out and explore these options.

A KCC representative concluded the meeting by advising stakeholders to reach out if they know of anyone willing to work alongside the centre, so they can be included in future meetings.

Stakeholder Questions
None raised.
AOB
None Raised.