

Worcestershire County Council Overnight Short Break Units

Since the January 2018 consultation around Overnight Short Break Units, the County Council has been talking with parent carers, professionals and providers about how short breaks could be delivered differently to continue to meet the needs of current and future families. Two co-design events were held in September 2018 that generated some innovative ideas for how the County Council's in-house overnight short break units (Bromsgrove Short Breaks Unit, Providence Road and Kidderminster Short Break Unit, Moule Close) units could be used to offer alternative short break services, use the units in the most efficient way and to offer support to more families. Unit managers have been scoping out these ideas and have plans to make their short breaks offer more flexible to better meet the needs of families. The changes described below are already in progress:

- Moule Close has changed its opening hours and is able to provide additional activities for current unit users and non-unit-users as a result. In response to feedback the unit is no longer open on Sunday nights however this has had no negative impact on the families currently accessing Moule Close and has caused no reduction in the number of overnight stays that families receive.
- Moule Close staff have been able to deliver one-to-one support to young people on an agreed emergency basis
- Moule Close is starting to offer teatime/evening activities to young people
- Another Local Authority is funding overnight short breaks at Providence Road for a young person which generates a small income that is reinvested in to the unit to offer additional activities for current unit users and non-unit-users
- Providence Road is offering daytime short breaks to families currently accessing the unit who need a break during school holidays

Additional services that are being planned for May-September 2019 include:

- Moule Close is increasing the activities provided in the units for current users, focusing on three themes: Life Skills, Arts & Crafts and Health & Fitness. From September, this is planned to be offered to additional young people, not just those who currently access overnight short breaks at the unit
- Moule Close is planning to hold Parent Forums at the unit to enable parent carers to meet and support each other
- Providence Road and Moule Close are reviewing how both units will be used over the August school holiday to offer more daytime short breaks. Past occupancy figures have shown that families access overnight short breaks less during the summer holidays. Therefore, the units could close for one or more nights over August and offer daytime short breaks to more families (including those who don't currently access the units) whilst still meeting need for overnight short breaks.

Further additional services that are being scoped include:

- Running activity courses for young people in areas such as life skills and personal care for a set number of weeks, gaining a certificate of completion at the end of the course (this could be offered to young people both accessing and not accessing the units)
- Using the units and facilities during the day for:
 - Stay and Play sessions for parent carers with young children
 - Family contact sessions for any families needing specific spaces and facilities
 - Direct Payment workers to bring young people to use the unit and facilities