

Appendix 5

Provision of overnight unit-based short breaks for children with disabilities

Additional formal responses

In addition to the consultation survey, petition and correspondence with families who currently access Ludlow Road, the Council has received five additional formal responses to the consultation on overnight unit-based short breaks. Four of these are from families who have previously or currently access overnight unit-based short breaks. These responses cannot be published as they contain personal information however the collective key points from these responses are below:

- Families highly value the respite they have previously/currently access in terms of giving their family a much needed break from their caring responsibilities, allowing them time to spend with their other children and giving their children enriching life experiences and a sense of independence
- Although there is an understanding that the overnight unit-based short breaks service is expensive, the cost for supporting a family breakdown as a result of less respite would cost more to the Local Authority and have a long-lasting negative affect on the family (not value for money)
- Expectation that the additional costs needed for Osborne Court and Providence Road to meet the needs of those currently accessing Ludlow Road would exceed the amount to keep Ludlow Road open (e.g. cost of staff training, equipment and additional transport)
- Agreement that overall provision should be reviewed in relation to budget and need
- Would like Osborne Court to be used to full capacity
- Transport should be provided for those having to travel from far away to enable families to make the most of their respite
- Osborne Court would be too far away for many children who currently access Ludlow Road to travel
- Providence Road does not have the staff to meet the health needs of the children who currently access Ludlow Road and there would be concerns of mixing these children with the children who currently access Providence Road
- Acorns Children's Hospice is not suitable for all children in terms of travel distance from the north of the County as well as it being a larger setting which stops children from building the necessary rapport with staff
- The closure of Ludlow Road would adversely affect children currently accessing other the other units which families say are already oversubscribed
- Families affected by the consultation have not been adequately communicated with in terms of timing of meetings, clarity of information within letters and not having enough time to respond

The fourth additional response was from Acorns Children's Hospice and was received via a meeting with officers from Acorns and Worcestershire County Council. It was noted that changes to Worcestershire's short breaks services may have an impact on requests for Acorns services. It was agreed that there was a need to look at the respite that families receive from both Worcestershire County Council and Acorns to ensure families receive an equal level of

provision. Acorns also informed the Council that they had started to review children to establish if they still met the health criteria which allow them to be eligible for Acorns services. At the time of the meeting, 16 children in Worcestershire had been identified as no longer meeting the Acorns criteria and would be supported by Acorns to transition from the service. This raised a concern that there may be some families who are having services reduced from Acorns and changed from the Council. Both organisations agreed to work together to manage the impact of this for families.

The final additional response is from Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (WHCT) that is commissioned to deliver overnight short breaks at Osborne Court and Ludlow Road Short Breaks Units. The full response from WHCT is attached as Appendix 4 and the key points are summarised below:

- WHCT agreed to the proposal to review the needs of all families currently accessing overnight unit-based short breaks provision and felt this was good practice and would help to ensure future sustainability for families.
- In regards to the proposal to cease delivery of overnight provision at Ludlow Road, WHCT thought that more work needed to be undertaken to assess whether this was a viable option or not – particularly in terms of whether the alternative options were available and cost effective.
- In regards to the proposal to review the use of Osborne Court to ensure that the current capacity is used effectively, WHCT state that the emergency and assessment bungalow is used for emergency admissions, but also provides a specialist short break service for those children who display risky behaviours to others, or for those who are not able to cope with noise from others and sharing space. WHCT is concerned that if the bungalow is used for more “routine” provision, this would severely impact on the unit’s ability to respond to emergency cases and impact on how the main unit is run.
- WHCT state that they are unable to support or challenge the proposal around increasing capacity at Providence Road until information within the Position Statement is clarified

WHCT also supplied feedback from families and staff that was gathered in 2013 during a similar consultation around ceasing the delivery of short breaks at Ludlow Road. This feedback covers the same concerns that have been raised during this consultation.

In summary, WHCT would request that more information is gathered around the alternative options to be able to properly comment on whether or not they are viable options for the families that access Ludlow Road short breaks unit.