

Overnight Short Break Units for Children and Young People with Disabilities

Consultation feedback

A consultation ran from 14th June to 1st August 2019 on proposed changes to the way that Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust deliver overnight short breaks for children and young people in Worcestershire. Feedback continued to be collected after the end of the consultation to ensure that all families could ask questions and comment on the proposals.

Feedback was gathered in the below ways:

- Online and printed survey
- Consultation drop-in sessions
- One-to-one conversations with families

Survey results

An online survey was made available on the County Council website and printed versions were sent to families upon request and made available within short break units.

Below is the information from this survey as well as a summary of the comments made.

9 responses were received in total.

Are you a parent carer, young person or professional?

Parent carer – 5

Young person – 0

Professional – 4

Is your child aged between:

0-16 years – 3

17-25 years – 2

Over 25 years – 0

Which district do you live in?

Bromsgrove – 2

Redditch – 0

Malvern Hills – 0

Worcester City – 0

Wychavon – 1

Wyre Forest – 2

If you are a professional, what district do you work in?

Bromsgrove – 0

Redditch – 0

Malvern Hills – 1

Worcester City – 0

Wychavon – 0

Wyre Forest – 3
Countywide – 0

Does your child currently access overnight short breaks? E.g. at a unit or with a family

Yes – 4
No – 1
About to start – 0
Not sure – 0

Which overnight short break provision do you access?

Ludlow Road, Kidderminster – 2
Osborne Court, Malvern – 1
Providence Road, Bromsgrove – 0
Moule Close, Kidderminster – 1
Family based (via Barnardos) – 0
Acorns Children’s Hospice, Worcester – 0
Not sure – 0

Overall, do you support these proposals for the delivery of overnight short breaks provision?

Yes – 3
No – 6
Maybe – 0
Not sure – 0

Do you have any comments on the proposed changes to Osborne Court Short Breaks Unit in Malvern?

The concerns raised were around the additional travel time to Osborne Court for some families. There were also comments about Osborne Court not having the ‘home from home’ feel that Ludlow Road has, and that the additional beds being provided in a separate building would isolate children and young people from others. Some of the questions and comments suggested that not enough information had been provided or that there was a lack of understanding about the proposals.

Others commented that they were pleased that the unused space at Osborne Court would be used and that it made sense to develop there.

Do you have any comments on the proposed closure of Ludlow Road Short Breaks Unit in Kidderminster?

There was a question around whether all families accessing Ludlow Road had been spoken to about where their child would go if Ludlow Road were to close. Other concerns were shared around the proposals resulting in a lack of provision now and in the future, particularly for families in the north of the county. There was also a concern that there would be reduced emergency provision available. Some comments were made around Providence Road lacking support from nurses while others wished that the money would be spent to improve Ludlow Road.

Do you have any other comments on these proposals?

There were questions about whether training for staff at other units to meet particular needs had been taken into account. Other comments were around budget cuts being the real reason behind the proposals and that vulnerable families would suffer.

Consultation drop in sessions and one-to-one conversations with families

Four drop-in sessions were held throughout July with representatives from the Council's commissioning team, Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust and social care. Three sessions were held at Ludlow Road Short Breaks Unit (two on a weekday and one on a weekend) and at Perdiswell Young People's Leisure Club in Worcester. The drop-in sessions were to allow families to have the proposals explained in more detail, ask any questions, share thoughts and feedback and have one-to-one conversations if required.

These sessions were available for any family to attend however only those who access Ludlow Road Short Breaks Unit came along. A total of five families attended the drop-in sessions.

Alongside the drop-in sessions, some families requested to have one-to-one conversations about the proposals either face-to-face or over the phone. Other families spoke directly to their social worker or short breaks review worker to ask questions and give their feedback on the proposals and preferred alternative overnight short break provision. All families currently accessing Ludlow Road have been spoken to through one of the above ways and all comments and feedback have been fed in to the consultation.

The support received at Ludlow Road is highly valued by families and those who currently access the unit do not want it to close. Families value the 'home from home' feel of Ludlow Road as well as the relationships that staff have built up with children and the whole family. The key concern for most families is the transition and change to alternative units as well as the increased travel distances for some.

The key concerns about the proposals that were raised by families currently accessing Ludlow Road were:

- There will be a lack of provision in the north of the county – now and in the future as the population grows
- The travel distance to alternative units would increase for some families. This would impact on:
 - Respite time for the family – due to the time it would take to take/collect children at weekends and holidays which would reduce the break for families. Some families also need to deliver feeds during respite stays.
 - Meaningful respite for the family - some families would be concerned about the distance they are away from the children in case of emergencies which would impact on them being able to rest and relax
 - Health and happiness of the child – some children become very unsettled when travelling or can't travel long distances due to their health needs
- Transitions (moving to another unit) can be very difficult for the child and whole family

- Providence Road would not have the nursing staff that Ludlow Road and Osborne Court currently has – concerned that the needs of some children could not be met
- Consultation and change causes a lot of stress for families
- Closure of Acorns units across the country and changes to the eligibility criteria at Acorns in Worcester will impact on the amount of short break units needed across Worcestershire

The positive feedback received from families was:

- The facilities at other units are good – particularly the hydro-therapy pool at Osborne Court
- Alternative units are closer to school and home for some families and better suited to some children's needs – some families wish to move to alternatives as soon as possible
- Staff at alternative units have been very welcoming when families visited and some families feel reassured that alternative units could meet their child's needs
- The information provided as well as the opportunity to speak to someone face-to-face about the consultation and proposals has been well received
- The proposed creation of extra beds per night to offer more respite is good – it makes sense to have different options and choices as having choice is really important to some families

Additional feedback and comments from families:

- More weekend provision at Osborne Court would be needed by some families – if the additional beds would be available 7 nights a week this would create more flexibility for families
- If children were accessing both bungalows at Osborne Court then this would need to be considered based on the needs of the children – some children might not do well with going to different bungalows on different days
- Some children would handle the change fine, particularly as alternative units often have children from the same school attending so there would be familiar faces and school friends
- Families would need assurance that their child's health needs could be met at Providence Road and that specific equipment needed (e.g. beds) would be available at alternative units