

Overnight Unit-Based Short Breaks Frequently Asked Questions

These questions have been asked by parent carers or members of the public during the family meeting on 3rd June or emailed in to shortbreaks@worcestershire.gov.uk

Questions about the proposals in general

1. Are you confident this is the best plan for delivering overnight short breaks in the future?

Yes. These proposals would deliver a stable, resilient, sustainable and responsive service for families that is not under constant review. The changes would enable all families currently receiving overnight unit based short breaks to continue receiving a service and allow for opportunities to increase the number of beds available if demand increases.

2. If more housing will be built, will there be enough beds available for growing demand for overnight short breaks?

There are many factors that will impact on the future demand for overnight short breaks and the Council will continue to review assessed need and ensure that we have sufficient provision. The proposed delivery model has the capacity to change in response to need in the future whether this is an increase in the number of beds for Worcestershire children or a change in the nights that they are available. For example, in the proposed new children's bungalow there would be four beds, two of which will be bought by Worcestershire County Council. The proposal is for Worcestershire Health and Care Trust to sell the other two beds to other commissioners (e.g. other councils), but if there is a growing need in Worcestershire then these two beds could also be bought by Worcestershire County Council in the future.

3. Will parents get transport to alternative short break units? Have these additional transport costs been included in the total costs for the proposals? Are the school and home transport services aware of the potential extra travelling?

For those who already access school transport mid-week and are taken to or from Ludlow Road, the same will happen at either Osborne Court or Providence Road. Weekend and school holiday transport will be assessed on an individual basis; as it is now. We are committed to making sure that parent carers get a meaningful and worthwhile break so transport to and from units will be reviewed by the Children with Disabilities Social Work team as part of this process. Transport costs change day-to-day depending on the needs of families and different children and young

people accessing different units and schools. As can be seen in the Alternative Provision document, we have calculated the travel distances to alternative units for families currently accessing Ludlow Road and the majority would have a shorter travel distance than they do now. Transport services are flexible to the changing needs of families so will be informed as necessary of any changes.

4. Can you provide all the accurate costs for these proposals? Including how much closing Ludlow Road would save, how much improving Osborne Court would cost and additional staff needed.

The costs for the proposals have been calculated and are included in the Cabinet report (page 11/12). [Click here for a direct link to the Cabinet report](#) (scroll to item 4), or visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/ShortBreaksUpdates.

It is not possible to compare refurbishment costs between Ludlow Road and Osborne Court as the changes and the outputs created are not the same and it is not possible to create the same offer at Ludlow Road that could be delivered at Osborne Court.

Any refurbishment costs will be met by Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust who have said that the estimated capital costs for Ludlow Road are approx. £334k and this would create 2 new bedrooms, moving it from a 4 bedroom to a 6 bedroom unit.

The estimated capital costs for Osborne Court are approx. £941k and this involves

- significantly refurbishing 2 disused bungalows and creating a new 5 bedded unit for adults (overall increase of 1 bed)
- a new children's unit, creating 4 additional beds

5. How many extra children and young adults would go to Osborne Court if these proposals go ahead?

The current information is available in the Alternative Provision document available at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/ShortBreaksUpdates. The numbers of children and young adults who would go to Osborne Court, as well as other alternative provision, will be confirmed based on families' views and any changed circumstances and included in any future Cabinet report on the proposals.

6. Will there be enough space for everyone to get their assessed number of nights?

As can be seen in the Alternative Provision document, yes there will be enough alternative provision for all families to continue getting their assessed number of nights.

7. If a child needs to go to hospital in the middle of the night, will staff at alternative units be able to do this or would parents be expected to collect their children?

If a child needs an emergency admission to hospital in the night, the family would be contacted and a staff member would accompany the child in the ambulance if this was the most appropriate response to the child's needs. There is always the capacity to release one staff member. Staff at all units are appropriately trained to support the health and care needs of the children and young people attending and parent carers would not be expected to transport them to hospital.

Questions about proposed changes at Osborne Court

8. Has the infrastructure at Osborne Court been assessed? E.g. Mini bus access, extra traffic coming and going, bad weather plans etc

Osborne Court has the relevant plans and strategies to manage situations such as bad weather. Accessibility to Osborne Court is good and additional mini bus access and extra traffic has been considered as part of the proposed changes and the minimal impact would be managed accordingly. Signage and marking will be reviewed to ensure that any additional transport is suitably managed, and access is not blocked by routine parking.

9. Have local residents been informed of the proposed changes to Osborne Court?

These proposals would have a minimal impact on residents local to Osborne Court so have not been directly informed of the changes. Immediate neighbours to the unit will be notified of the building works.

10. Would the changes be put in to place before Ludlow Road closes?

If the proposals are agreed Ludlow Road will remain open until the alternative provision is available. No family will go without their respite for any period or have their respite reduced or taken away because of these proposed changes.

11. Will there be a reduction in overnight short breaks for current users?

No, we will not be stopping or reducing the overnight short breaks that families need. The care needs of children, young people and their families are assessed through their social work assessment and overnight short breaks will be provided to any family who needs it.

12. How much time will be scheduled for families to move smoothly to other units?

We know how important it is to children, young people and families to make any changes as smooth as possible and we will be putting plans together with individual families to manage this and working with the Trust and the managers at Providence Road to ensure that transitions are well managed.

13. Why is it that the proposed new unit for children and Thorn Lodge will only be open 5 nights a week? Are you reducing the amount of weekend stays available across the county?

Our initial calculations of the number of additional beds per night needed across the county shows that we do not need the additional beds for 7 nights a week (this can be seen in the Alternative Provision document). Providence Road is open seven nights a week, as is the existing 5 bed unit at Osborne Court. Ludlow Road is only open 5 nights a week and does not routinely open at weekends. In the current model weekdays only have been proposed and costed. However, as part of the consultation we are open to feedback from families and professionals about whether this should be done differently.

Questions about proposed changes at Ludlow Road

14. Is there a suitable alternative for all the children and young people currently accessing Ludlow Road?

Yes, we believe that there is a suitable alternative for all the children and young people currently accessing Ludlow Road. The choice of provision will need to be discussed further with individual families, but we do know that there is an alternative that would meet the care needs of all children, young people and families.

15. Ludlow Road has only recently changed from 6 beds to 4 beds. Was Ludlow Road full as a 6-bed unit? If you're only providing 4 extra beds elsewhere in the county, does this mean there will be less beds and respite available?

The new Ofsted registration has meant that Ludlow Road needs to change from a 6-bed unit to a 4-bed unit – this will change regardless of the consultation and proposed changes. The unit has not been full as a 6-bed unit and it is now rare for more than 4 children to stay at Ludlow Road on any one night. No family has had a reduction in their overnight short breaks to manage as a 4-bed unit.

The proposed changes would increase the number of beds per night available from 20 per week (currently delivered at Ludlow Road) to 24 per week (to deliver between Providence Road and Osborne Court). This is because Ludlow Road operates 5 nights

per week and the two additional beds at Providence Road would be available up to 7 nights per week.

16. Why is Ludlow Road closing? Why can't Ludlow Road be refurbished to offer more beds?

It is not cost effective to run Ludlow Road as a 4-bed unit and the site footprint limits any substantial refurbishments to significantly increase the number of beds available there. It is also not possible for Ludlow Road to offer the same flexibility, sustainability and support for young adults as can be delivered at Osborne Court.

17. Would the staff be transferred from Ludlow Road to Osborne Court?

Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust are very keen to keep the skilled staff from Ludlow Road within their service and are not planning to make any staff redundant. Ideally, the Trust would like for all staff to be transferred to Osborne Court however this will depend on the individual and personal circumstances of each member of staff. Once a firm decision has been made about the future of Ludlow Road, each member of staff will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss redeployment opportunities and how the change will affect them as individuals. HR will identify any suitable vacancies within the Trust that may be considered as suitable alternative employment, including vacancies within Osborne Court, and what is a reasonable alternative for them.

18. How will the Ludlow Road site be used if short breaks are no longer delivered there?

Future use of the Ludlow Road site will be considered by the Trust in line with NHS guidance if the proposals are agreed to see if it would meet any gaps in the Trust's service estate need. If not, the site would be disposed of.

Questions about other units

19. Is there a waiting list for any of the units?

This information is available within the 'Additional information relating to demand and provision' document available at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/ShortBreaksUpdates. However, waiting lists change day by day so the information included is only a snap-shot of one particular time.

20. Are the 2 extra beds at Providence Road available to use?

Registration of the two additional beds and associated accommodation, with Ofsted, for use as overnight short break provision is underway but not complete (registration can take up to 16 weeks). The rooms are furnished and will be available for use when required, in order to provide additional capacity if/when the proposed changes at Ludlow Road and Osborne Court are approved and implemented, following appointment of an appropriately experienced staffing group.

21. Is Osborne Court the only place in Worcestershire where an 18 year old could go?

No, there are 4 other units that adults (over 18s) can go for overnight short breaks (known in adult services as 'replacement care'). Social workers within the Young Adults Team will discuss these options with families from the age of 16 where appropriate.

22. There have been some changes to Moule Close and the unit is closed Sunday nights. Why was this done and what will the money that is saved be used for?

Moule Close was originally closed on a Sunday night because of staffing issues. However, by keeping the unit closed on a Sunday they could make more effective use of the unit to offer more services. A Sunday was chosen as it was the quietest night so had the least impact on families and this did not reduce any overnight respite that families were receiving. The money saved is being used by Moule Close to offer more activities, clubs and day support to their current users. In the future, Moule Close and Providence Road are planning to offer more day support, tea time visits and clubs for other children and young people so that more families can get support. This does not replace overnight short breaks for the families that need it but offers alternative short break services and uses the units in the most efficient way to offer support to more families.