

## **Briefing Note: Providing greater choice and flexibility – short breaks for children and young people with disabilities and their families and carers**

The council and clinical commissioning group (CCG)'s shared vision for children and young people with disabilities is *that they are healthy, safe and achieve well; and that they go on to lead happy and fulfilled lives with choice and control.*

As part of this vision the council and the CCG have worked closely over the past two years to develop a range of services to provide “short breaks” for children and young people with disabilities, and their families. This includes enabling families to have support in local family based settings, which is something that families told us they wanted when we worked with them to develop services.

We recognise that we have gaps in our short breaks services, and in January 2015 we let families and stakeholders know that we were undertaking further work to develop more options and choice in short breaks provision. This includes children currently using Ledbury Road. As part of this we have been working closely with children and their families to ensure we understand their individual needs.

Whilst working to develop more options and choice of services we have:

1. Individually assessed the needs of children and young people using 1 Ledbury Road with their families
2. Worked closely with adult services to ensure those young people nearing the age for adult services are fully supported through the transition.
3. Ensured the continued use of the existing 1 Ledbury Road service through contractual arrangements for 2015/16.
4. Engaged and involved existing providers in the programme of work, to ensure their expertise and knowledge is taken into account and that they are aware of the work as it has developed.
5. Engaged with the “Friends of 1 Ledbury Road” support group to explain our vision and our plans, and commence an ongoing dialogue on how they can continue to support these children and their families

This work provides opportunities to develop the community based services and choice that children and families told us they wanted. Alongside the existing range of short breaks available which include making use of universal services, as well as buddying, Saturday and holiday schemes, we plan to have in place a respite foster care service that will provide family based respite, be local, and be supported by excellent training and advice for health issues. This is intended to become fully operational from January 2016.

We recognise that it has been a challenging time for some parents and staff, to whom community based services and approaches such as personal budgets are relatively new. However we are working closely with individual families and with the staff of 1 Ledbury Road to explain the vision, timescales and future opportunities. This includes developing individual transition plans for some of the children and families.

We will continue to work closely with children and families and with WVT and their staff, and will provide further briefings throughout this transition period.

With regards

Phil Milligan  
Interim Accountable Officer  
Herefordshire CCG

Jo Davidson  
Director of Children's Services  
Herefordshire Council

July 2015