

Overnight short breaks for children with disabilities at 1 Ledbury Road consultation results

11 January to 19 February 2016

The council held a six week consultation regarding proposals for overnight short breaks for children with disabilities at 1 Ledbury Road for 2016 to 2017 between 11 January and 19 February 2016.

The consultation was published on the council's [newsroom](#) and letters were sent to 220 families with children known to the council's children with disabilities team to directly promote the consultation. The consultation was also publicised to other interested parties, including schools and special schools, special interest groups, charities and service providers.

Appendix 1 (page 3) provides a summary of the views received, whilst appendix 2 (page 9) provides the background information published as part of the consultation.

A total of 26 responses were received, the majority of which came via the online questionnaire, whilst some general comments were submitted via e-mail:

- 13 responses represented 12 families of children with disabilities, including 10 responses from families of children that had accessed 1 Ledbury Road within the previous two years.
- The responses received represent 6% of the 220 families of children known to the council's children with disabilities team.
- The remaining 13 responses were submitted by other interested parties or did not state their background. These responses included service providers, schools and community figures.
- Not all respondents answered all of the questions. All submissions have been included in the summary of responses in appendix 1 (page 3).

During the consultation period, the council hosted two consultation events, mainly aimed at families of children with disabilities, although they were also open to other interested parties. Fewer than 10 families attended the events, along with a small number of members of the public, elected councillors and professionals. We received verbal feedback at the events, including:

- Welcome the plan to enter into a contract with Wye Valley NHS Trust to provide a short breaks service at 1 Ledbury Road.
- Some concern that a 12 month contract would not be long enough to stabilise the service.
- It would be preferable if the service was able to accept new referrals.
- More communication is needed to provide families with an update on progress being made to establish the new family-based short breaks service.

- It's important for children to be with their friends during their short break, could there be more network opportunities or activities like the Marches Family Network?
- Value for money is an important factor.
- The direct payment system needs more development to make it effective.
- As the number of children needing an overnight short break is small, a unit-based service might be more economical than a family-based service.
- Other services need to be considered, like the Marches Family Network, so they can make better long term plans.

Appendix 1: Summary responses

Please note that not all respondents answered all of the questions and some responses came via e-mail. Therefore, the totals in brackets do not always correspond to the overall total of responses received which was 26.

1) Do you agree that funded overnight short breaks should be provided based on a professional assessment of the needs of a child and their family?

All responses (24)

Yes	91.7%
No	8.3%
Don't know	0.0%

Family responses (11)

Yes	90.9%
No	9.1%
Don't know	0.0%

Other responses (13)

Yes	92.3%
No	7.7%
Don't know	0.0%

2) Do you support the proposal that the council should enter into a contract with Wye Valley NHS Trust, subject to both the trust and the CCG fulfilling their responsibilities, to ensure a continued and more flexible service is available at 1 Ledbury Road during 2016 to 2017 for up to 15 children?

All responses (24)

Yes	62.5%
No	29.2%
Don't know	8.3%

Family responses (13)

Yes	69.2%
No	30.8%
Don't know	0.0%

Other responses (11)

Yes	54.5%
No	27.3%
Don't know	18.2%

3) Do you agree that moving to new arrangements will allow the service to adapt to a more social focussed and cost effective way of working?

All responses (23)

Yes	34.8%
No	39.1%
Don't know	26.1%

Family responses (12)

Yes	25.0%
No	50.0%
Don't know	25.0%

Other responses (11)

Yes	45.5%
No	27.3%
Don't know	27.3%

4) Do you agree that the council should secure value for money short break services?

All responses (23)

Yes	56.5%
No	34.8%
Don't know	8.7%

Family responses (12)

Yes	41.7%
No	50.0%
Don't know	8.3%

Other responses (11)

Yes	72.7%
No	18.2%
Don't know	9.1%

5) If you answered yes to question 4, do you recognise that achieving value for money can involve the change or closure of existing services in favour of alternative provision?

	Of those that answered yes to Q4 (13)	Of those that answered either yes, no or don't know to Q4 (19)
All responses		
Yes	69.2%	52.6%
No	23.1%	42.1%
Don't know	7.7%	5.3%

Family responses	(5)	(10)
Yes	60.0%	40.0%
No	40.0%	60.0%
Don't know	0.0%	0.0%
Other responses	(8)	(9)
Yes	75.0%	66.7%
No	12.5%	22.2%
Don't know	12.5%	11.1%

6) Do you support the idea that the council should enable more parents to access direct payments to have greater choice and control over their overnight short breaks?

All responses (22)	
Yes	36.4%
No	45.5%
Don't know	18.2%

Family responses (11)	
Yes	27.3%
No	63.6%
Don't know	9.1%

Other responses (11)	
Yes	45.5%
No	27.3%
Don't know	27.3%

7) How else do you think a family's need for an overnight short break could be met outside of 1 Ledbury Road?

- Make use of the schemes already existing out there. Wild Play, libraries, Halo, RDA, bowling/cinema/museums/Queenswood/Woodland Trust/National Trust/ English Heritage/Megan Baker House/Shortwood Farm/skate parks/churches etc to forge innovative ideas to offer schemes/days out/activities etc for disabled children.
- Halo offer Hit Fit to 12 to 17 year olds during the summer holidays, which is fabulous. This offers use of all their facilities and classes for £30 per child. Look at whether this could be extended throughout the year for disabled children, as there are clear medical links between exercise and improved wellbeing.
- No other way is workable and safe.
- This facility should be left as it is.

- Family-based short breaks are suitable for some, but there will probably always be some children that need a residential setting with a stable team of experienced, well trained staff.
- Provision of similar or like for like services for children in a group setting with a team of qualified staff at another location would be preferable to closure.
- Voluntary organisations forming groups where parents take it in turns to look after the children.
- Future contracts for buddying should have the option for children to get together with other children and their buddy so they gain socially. This is an option and can be offered along with sessions where the child benefits from 1-2-1 with their buddy. Both are important.
- Lots of opportunities for the children to gain experience of 'work' to see what they may like to do. This could be done with local businesses who could offer hourly sessions. This may be part of the 'buddying' scheme.
- 1 Ledbury Road should continue while other options are considered and implemented.
- There appears to be few options and foster care is all that has been offered as an alternative.
- Other short break or respite provision that is being offered or discussed does not mirror what 1 Ledbury Road offers and that is a safe and social respite facility which enables young adults and children to socialise with their peers, have fun, go on trips as a group and outings into town.
- Young carers get increased funding to offer more support to the siblings who often go unrecognised in their role as carers too.
- There are other organisations that also provide valuable respite care and holiday services.

8) Are there any other comments you would like to make?

- The service and staff at 1 Ledbury Road are valued by the families supported, and it could achieve greater improvements with improved resources.
- Respite isn't a luxury; 1 Ledbury Road gives carers the break they need.
- 1 Ledbury Road could offer workshops for parents to offer info to/from staff regarding their child's disability and the parents/staff to explain their techniques used. This will improve communication between respite and home, also more continuous care for the child.

- A crèche for younger disabled children would be good so they become used to being at 1 Ledbury Road before they start staying overnight. The parents would also welcome a break too.
- Improve outside area at 1 Ledbury Road with some raised beds so those children that want to, can take part in a gardening club to grow some flowers/shrubs, but also some fruit/veg/herbs, that can be used by the children to cook with.
- Poor handling of the original proposals affected service delivery. Before removing a service, it is imperative that an alternative is sought and transitions have been supported.
- Some survey questions are ambiguous or “leading” to achieve an objective to close 1 Ledbury Road.
- Referrals should start again to meet future demand, with families put on a waiting list until there is more staff available. Without referrals, the service will run down as children transition or transfer elsewhere.
- There is little or no prospect that a similar alternative service will be available by March 2017 and little explanation of how that might be achieved.
- The extension of 12 months should be extended further to 18 or 24 months, which would give confidence to staff applying for work at 1 Ledbury Road and be sufficient time to develop alternative services.
- Need to ensure overnight respite is available. Value for money is important but should not be the only reason for any changes. A child's assessed need is the most important thing.
- Savings can be made by better reducing staffing in other areas, and making staff generally more effective i.e. social workers who are disorganised and waste families time in arranging meetings that are cancelled at the last minute.
- We are in favour of the council running the service as a social care facility instead of as a health facility, but don't understand what 'socially focussed' means or whether it would be more cost effective.
- All of the questions are aimed at closing 1 Ledbury Road. This is short-sighted. It is more costly to send the child out of county and into residential care away from their family. There are no questions re what is 'safest' or 'best' it is purely down to cost.
- We don't agree that an alternative to 1 Ledbury Road is required, and see no reason why the service cannot be part of the council's short breaks provision in the future.
- Respite needs to be regular and reliable.

- Organisations that offer summer activities i.e. Crossroads/Halo/RDA/Marches etc, should get together and discuss who will offer what and when to avoid things being offered at the same time.
- Previous experience of changes to individual support hasn't been positive.
- Siblings also benefit when disabled children have time at 1 Ledbury Road.
- Direct payments doesn't suit the assessed needs of many families, many still need residential provision. Changing the way families access funding doesn't address the lack of available respite facilities.
- Keeping services local provides employment opportunities and supports the local economy.

Appendix 2: Overnight short breaks for children with disabilities at 1 Ledbury Road consultation

Purpose of the consultation

Herefordshire Council, supported by the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), is seeking your views on proposed changes to the way that short break services are contracted and delivered at 1 Ledbury Road from April 2016 to March 2017.

This consultation builds on the dialogue we have had with families during 2015 and previously and our [frequently asked questions](#) provide additional background information.

The council's [Cabinet](#) will consider recommendations regarding service arrangements for 2016 to 2017 on 21 January 2016 (the report will be available on 13 January) and we welcome any initial feedback by 19 January 2016, although the consultation period will run until 19 February 2016.

The consultation findings will be considered alongside the above Cabinet report and recommendations at the end of February, when a final council decision will be taken. Subject to that decision, the findings will also help inform any future contract arrangements for services at 1 Ledbury Road. The consultation findings will be published on the [council's newsroom](#).

The CCG will consider these proposals at its governing body meeting on 23 February.

How to respond

You can provide initial feedback by 19 January by e-mailing shortbreaks@herefordshire.gov.uk.

Alternatively, you can respond formally to the consultation by 19 February by completing the online SurveyMonkey questionnaire. If you require the consultation in an alternative format, please call 01432 261596 or e-mail shortbreaks@herefordshire.gov.uk.

You can also attend one of two public consultation events being held on Monday 25 January at:

The Kindle Centre , Belmont Road, Hereford, HR2 7JE	1pm – 2pm
Shirehall , St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX	6pm – 7pm

To book a place at one of the events, please call 01432 261596 or e-mail shortbreaks@herefordshire.gov.uk.

Who we are consulting with

Families: We are particularly keen to hear from children and families that may be eligible for overnight short breaks funded by the council and CCG. This includes families that are currently, or have previously been, accessing 1 Ledbury Road.

Eligibility for an overnight short breaks service funded by the council is determined by a professional assessment of the needs of a child and their carer/s. We have therefore written to all families currently open to the council's children with disabilities team to ensure they can also respond to the consultation. If you have specific questions about support for your child, please

call 01432 260857 and speak to the children with disabilities team duty social worker.

We also welcome responses from families who are not currently being supported by the council's children with disabilities team.

Interested parties: We are also interested to hear from individuals and organisations that support children with disabilities and their families in Herefordshire, including special interest groups, charities, service providers, schools and special schools.

Background information

Families of children with disabilities make many different arrangements to support their lives and this consultation relates to overnight short breaks provided by the council, with support from the CCG.

The primary duty to provide short breaks is set out by the Children Act 1989, which describes the council's duties in relation to children in need, which can include a disabled child. By providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs, local authorities are required to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need
- So far as is consistent with the duty to safeguard, promote the upbringing of such children by their families

Within the statutory duties, local authorities should enable carers of disabled children to have breaks from caring by providing, as appropriate, a reliable range of services. This could involve:

- Daytime or overnight care for disabled children in their own homes and elsewhere
- Services that enable disabled children to take part in educational and recreational activities
- Emergency care, for example, due to illness in the family or safeguarding concerns

1 Ledbury Road has been providing respite services for a long time under a health service contract, most recently via the CCG. It's registered as a 9 bed hospital ward and has been operating a 'medical' model reliant on professional nursing staff. For most of its operational life, children were signposted or referred to 1 Ledbury Road, but few were officially known to the council's children with disabilities team or had undergone a comprehensive social care assessment of their needs.

In 2013 the council, in partnership with the CCG, invited local and national providers of services to deliver a range of daytime and overnight short break services. Informed by dialogue with families at the time, the new services would help Herefordshire move towards a more 'social' model of short breaks provision. Families wanted their short break services to meet their needs by helping them to achieve particular outcomes, including:

Children with additional or complex needs have fair access to a range of short break services that meet their needs and are:

- Able to achieve personal goals and learn new skills
- Able to spend time with their friends

Parent carers are supported in their caring role to:

- Feel less stressed and have some time for themselves when they can be 'off duty' and relax knowing their child is in safe hands
- Spend time with their other children

- and make new ones
- Able to take part in exciting activities that interest them
- Supported to maximise their independence and feel more confident
- or together as a family
- Get to know other families who share similar experiences
- Be confident that their child is having fun with skilled carers who understand their needs

One of the options requested was for residential based short breaks, but a contract could not be awarded at that time. Under a CCG contract in the interim period, Wye Valley NHS Trust has continued to provide services at 1 Ledbury Road to those families that were already being supported whilst alternative solutions were sought.

Why change is necessary

The health commissioners have historically managed the contract arrangements for 1 Ledbury Road, although the prime duty for such service sits with the council. Wye Valley NHS Trust has struggled to maintain a consistent level of staffing and has had to reduce services during 2015. Renewed contract arrangements, based on assessed need of individual children, should enable the trust to stabilise staffing and ensure that families can access the level of support recommended by their assessment in a safe and potentially more flexible way.

1 Ledbury Road consisted of three 3 bed units, which in spring 2015 was supporting 40 children who had a variety of day and night time support. Since then, the number of service users has reduced as some young people have moved to adult services or had their needs met in other ways.

There are currently 25 children and young people making use of the provision and over recent months, the council has been working with families to review and update their assessments. A number of alternative services have been identified that can meet the needs of some families in a more appropriate manner. This may involve transferring to direct payment arrangements, daytime short breaks, family-based short breaks or specialist residential based short breaks. In partnership with those families concerned, the council is managing plans to transfer each child to their new service.

It is expected that the number of children requiring support at 1 Ledbury Road from April 2016 will reduce to around 15, requiring up to a total of 950 nights in 2016 - 2017. This will reduce further during the year as a result of natural transition of some young people to adult services. Furthermore, the assessed needs of fewer than 10 children can only be met in a residential setting such as 1 Ledbury Road, so the number of service users could reduce even further during the year as more appropriate alternative services become available.

Given Herefordshire's population, it is anticipated that the number of children with disabilities needing overnight short breaks in a residential setting will remain low in the long term. The council, as lead commissioner, will continue the dialogue with charities and other providers to enhance the choice of services for families in Herefordshire. The council will also work with families so that more can take up direct payments rather than relying on the council holding contracts for short break services.

The proposal

We propose the following:

- 1) The council enters into a 12 month contract with Wye Valley NHS Trust for overnight short breaks at 1 Ledbury Road in 2016 - 2017.
 - a) The service would be based on the assessed need of individual children and would move to a social focused model reflecting the outcomes described by families, whilst also providing for health needs and operating safely.
 - b) A contract would support up to 15 children and young people by offering up to 1,092 nights of service for the 12 months. As a number of children will have transferred to alternative services by April 2016, these proposed contract arrangements would ensure that those children continuing at 1 Ledbury Road are able to access the number of nights recommended by their individual assessments and with greater flexibility than has been possible during 2015.
 - c) The arrangements are intended to be flexible so that families can discuss their individual requirements with the council's children with disabilities team and 1 Ledbury Road should have the potential to offer blocks of time rather than the traditional one night a week, if that would be appropriate
- 2) In order to comply with legislation, Wye Valley NHS Trust would be required to register 1 Ledbury Road with Ofsted, the national regulator of children's care services, which includes overnight short breaks and respite services in residential settings. The change in registration would also allow the service to adapt its staffing model to more socially focussed and cost effective arrangements, whilst still addressing health needs and operating safely.
- 3) In order to secure sufficient provision while the wider short breaks offer is further developed in Herefordshire, the council should become the contractual lead for overnight short break services at 1 Ledbury Road in 2016 - 2017. The provision at 1 Ledbury Road will be subject to financial contributions from both the council and the Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. The council's Cabinet will be taking a decision regarding its contribution in January. The CCG will be taking a decision in February on the recommendation to continue to use the Better Care Fund resource for carers support to support the overall provision of short breaks.
- 4) This approach is intended to provide sustainable short breaks provision and a period of stability for families and the staff of 1 Ledbury Road, while alternative provision is developed and established. New services are expected to become established in 2016 - 2017, including alternative family-based and residential based overnight short break opportunities alongside enabling more families to take up direct payments, so that they can exercise choice. The council will also be preparing to re-commission its wider short breaks offer in advance of March 2017 and will be seeking to enter into new contract arrangements with a range of providers beyond that date. This will include any future residential respite provision and parents, carers, children and providers will be formally consulted as part of this.