

Children's Services

Local guidance for placing a child out of area

1. Introduction

Our core guidance for arranging placements for children outside the Dorset Council area is [Out of Area Placements \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com) provided by tri.x. This local guidance gives additional information about the consultations that should precede an out of area placement, the officers responsible for approving placements, and the notifications required when placements are made.

2. Scope

This guidance applies to all placements outside the Dorset Council area of children in the care of Dorset Council. It also sets out the notification requirements where a child who is not in care is placed by Dorset Council in an out of area health or educational establishment, where the intention is that the placement should be of at least three months' duration.

3. Placement in a neighbouring authority

- 3.1 A neighbouring authority is one that shares a geographical boundary with Dorset Council. Our neighbouring authorities are, therefore:

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council
Hampshire County Council
Wiltshire Council
Somerset Council
Devon County Council

- 3.2 The allocated Brokerage Officer should consult with the child's Quality Assurance Reviewing Officer (QARO) before arranging the placement by sharing the EOI .
- 3.3 Placement of a child in a neighbouring authority requires the approval of the Corporate Director, Care and Protection or, in their absence, the approval of the relevant Head of Locality.
- 3.4 The requirement to obtain approval of the Corporate Director does not apply where the placement in a neighbouring authority is with a local authority foster carer who is either approved by Dorset Council or who is a connected person.

4. Emergency placements in neighbouring authorities

Where the placement is made in an emergency, and there is no opportunity to consult the QARO or to notify the receiving authority before placement, both of these actions must be completed within 5 working days of the placement

start. Emergency placements must always have the prior approval of the Corporate Director, Care and Protection or, in their absence, the relevant Head of Locality.

5. Placing Children in Distant Placements

- 5.1** A 'Distant Placement' is a placement address that is not in ANY of the authorities that border the Dorset Council area. When placing children at a distance the Brokerage Officer is required to also consult with the receiving authority **before** placing the child (unless the placement is with a Dorset approved foster carer) . They should also consult with the child's QARO by sharing the EOI (Expression of Interest).
- 5.2** Upon an offer of a placement in an area which is distant from the Dorset Council area, the Brokerage Officer should check on ADCS website for correct officer/distant local authority details in respect to consulting and sending notification. This should have contact details for team/designated person who should be consulted regarding the proposal to place the child.
- 5.3** If there are no details on the council's site specifically relating to Placing Children at a Distance, the Brokerage Officer should contact the general Children's Services number and ask to be connected to the appropriate person.
- 5.4** The Brokerage Officer should record the information they receive through the consultation process, and present this to the Executive Director as part of the approval process. For more information about the consultation process, please see [Out of Area Placements \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://proceduresonline.com)
- 5.5** Placement of a child in a distant authority must have the prior approval of the Executive Director, Children's Services.
- 5.6** The requirement to obtain approval of the Executive Director does not apply where the placement at distance is with a local authority foster carer who is either approved by Dorset Council or who is a connected person.

6. Emergency placements at distance

- 6.1** In the event of an emergency placement at distance (that is, a same day placement or where the child is placed over the weekend by the Out of Hours service) where there is no opportunity to consult the receiving authority prior to placement, consultation must be carried out within five working days of the placement start. For more information, see the [Statutory Regulations for the Children Act 1989: care planning, placement and case review](#).
- 6.2** An emergency placement at distance still requires the prior approval of the Executive Director, Children's Services or, in their absence, of the Corporate Director, Care and Protection.

- 7. Letter notifying placement of a child in another authority's area**
- 7.1 The Brokerage Officer must notify the receiving local authority and NHS Integrated Care Partnership (ICS) of the placement. The relevant contact details for local authorities may be found using the [Assistant Directors of Children Services web site](#). This lists notification contact addresses for all local authorities. The Brokerage Officer should notify the receiving authority and ICS using the Template Notification of Placement Out of Area Letter.
- 7.2 The Brokerage Officer should also notify NHS Dorset of the placement.
- 7.3 Where a child who is not in care is placed in a health or education placement for three months or more, or with that intention, the Brokerage Officer also has a duty to notify the receiving local authority and ICS prior to placement or as soon as practicable thereafter.