

Out of area placements

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Go to <http://content.socialcare.wales/resources-guidance/improving-care-and-support/children-who-are-looked-after/out-of-area-placements> for the latest version.

Find out more about out of area placements for the children you care for

What are the benefits to a young person of living in a home close to their local area?

You should be aware that as long as it's in their best interests, living in a home that's close to their local area has many benefits for children and young people. It can help them:

- stay in closer contact with their family (including pets), friends and other significant people in their lives
- attend the same school and avoid disrupting their education
- make it easier to stay in contact with their social worker and independent reviewing officer
- register with the same GP
- use the same specialist services
- maintain links with their community and any activities they might be doing.

Keeping in contact with family members has been found to support placement stability and can be important in helping a child or young person [return to their family](#), where this is in their best interests.

You should also recognise that as well as being attached to people and pets, your young people may also be attached to places. These can be an important part of their [sense of identity, security and belonging](#).

Everything is harder to do when there is an out of county placement

[The Right Care report, Children's Commissioner for Wales](#)

Why would children need an out of area placement?

Local authorities should only place children in homes out of their area if:

- there's no home in the local authority area that can meet their needs
- an out of area placement would be better for the child's well-being than a local placement.

What are the challenges for children living in homes outside their home area?

If you're a child it can be upsetting and disruptive to be moved away from your family, your friends, your school, your community, possibly hundreds of miles away from your local area.

Children can find themselves in a strange environment and different culture. They've not only changed homes but lost all the ties they had around that home.

Children living in out of area homes will find it more difficult to get the benefits of a local area placement listed at the top of the page.

In addition, they may be more isolated and vulnerable than young people living in children's homes within their local area.

Young people who move across national borders – from Wales to England and vice versa – may face additional challenges: having to navigate different education systems as well as another language. Professionals working with

children across borders may also be unfamiliar with the different legislation, regulations and guidance which applies in different UK nations.

The Children's Commissioner provides the example of a child - a first language Welsh speaker - who had been moved to a residential home in England. They had been prevented from speaking Welsh when relatives came to see them as it was deemed to be a safeguarding issue because the contact supervisor was unable to verify what was being said: 'it was concerning that language preferences had not been considered fully when placements were being made'.

[The Right Care, Children's Commissioner for Wales](#)

Useful resources

[Our work to support children who are looked after](#)

[Our chosen or 'curated' research about the number who are looked after](#)

[The Right Care report, Children's Commissioner for Wales](#)

[Part 6 Code of Practice \(Looked After and Accommodated Children\) Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act](#)

[Care Planning, Placement and Case Review \(Wales\) Regulations 2015](#)

[Understanding the educational experiences and opinions, attainment, achievement and aspirations of looked after children in Wales](#)

We want your feedback

Help us to improve the Residential child care worker resource by telling us what you think about it in our short [four question survey](#).