



**Merton Procedure for Senior Manager Approval when requesting an Out of Borough Placement  
for a Looked After Child or Young Person**

<u>Issue Date</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Date Of the Next Review</u>	<u>Lead officer</u>
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1. The Children's Homes and Looked After Children (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2013 came into force in 2014. These regulations confirmed the need for approval of a nominated officer for any out of borough placements and introduced requirements for the Director of Children's Services (DCS) to give approval for placements for any looked after child placed "At a Distance". The definition of distant placements is those outside the area of the local authority and not within the area of any adjoining local authority.
2. In Merton the DCS must give permission for all placements outside of Merton.
3. In the absence of the DCS, approval must be given by the AD CSC, AD CSP or AD Education.
4. Although the majority of placements are sourced through the ART team, in Merton placements of looked after children and young people are also sourced by different groups. Services providing placements are:
  - Access to Resources Placement Team
  - Placement for Adoption through the Adoption team
  - Permanent foster placements through the Adoption team
  - 52 week residential school placements through the SENDIS service
5. Merton is a small borough and several looked after children and young people will need to be placed outside of the area. Where an Out of Borough placement is either requested or needs to be sourced, the appropriate Head of Service should request an "In Principle" agreement to this from the DCS prior to a placement being made. This involves emailing a short summary of the situation to the DCS or, in her absences the appropriate AD for agreement. The response to this request must be saved into Observations in CareFirst as this will provide the date for agreement. In most cases this with the HOS for Access to Resources.
6. Once a placement has been identified, an Out of Borough form must be completed, signed by the HOS for both the social work team and Access to Resources service and forwarded to the DCS for final sign off. On return, this form must be saved into the CareFirst system via LBMSmart.
7. For placements made through the Access to Resources Team, the Placement Officers will complete the out of borough forms. For other placements it is the responsibility of the social worker for the child/young person to ensure this form is completed, signed by the appropriate HOS and Director and added to CareFirst.
8. Once an In Principle decision has been given for an out of borough placement, this does not need to be repeated should a child or young person need to move placement. However as Out of Borough form should be completed for each subsequent move.

9. Exceptions to this process are:

- Children to be placed for Adoption outside of Merton where ADM decision has been agreed following the Adoption Panel process. The date of ADM agreement should be recorded on the CareFirst system by the social worker for the child as the “Director Approval for Out of Borough Placements” in Observations
- Placements made through the Complex Needs panel for 52 weeks residential school placements outside of Merton. The date of the Complex Needs panel decision should be recorded on the CareFirst system by the social worker for the child as the “Director Approval for Out of Borough Placements” in Observations