

1. This letter introduces the National Protocol about inter-authority arrangements for negotiating support for care leavers who are resident outside the area of their responsible authority. This advice included in the Protocol has been agreed between DfES and the Association of Directors of Social Services as providing a sound basis for negotiations between local authority leaving care services about how support might be best provided for care leavers who live well away from their responsible authority's area.
2. This Protocol has been produced in response to concerns that care leavers who live away from their responsible authority may be least able to access the services to which they are entitled and risk losing touch with the authority that has a legal responsibility towards them.
3. The processes outlined in the Protocol are intended to offer care leavers living way from their authority access to support in emergencies and to support more consistent service delivery for young people who are "harder to reach".
4. The advice included in the Protocol is intended to support councils with social services responsibilities achieve their targets for care leaving services. The procedures outlined in the protocol should improve services to care leavers who, for whatever reason, live outside their responsible authority area as they only involve following a simple process for obtaining information and advice from local leaving care services. Authorities should be enabled to better "keep in touch" with young people who have left their care so that they can receive the necessary support to achieve the objectives that will have been set out in their Pathway Plans.

ACTION

5. Authorities are asked to take the following action -

Note the advice and information included in the Protocol.

Make their Leaving Care services and any other relevant agencies aware of the Protocol.

Nominate a lead officer from their leaving care services to be responsible for having an overview of services for their care leavers who live outside the local area and for care leavers who are the responsibility of other councils who live within the local authority. Further details about the lead officer's role can be found in Section 5 of the Protocol.

- 6 The North West Aftercare Forum has agreed to take responsibility for holding and updating the national list of lead officers. Authorities should send the name and contact details of their lead officer to Keir Parsons, North West After Care Forum, Frederick Street, Oldham, OL8 1SW net@nwacf.com

ENQUIRIES

7. Enquiries about this letter should in the first instance be made to:

Mark Burrows/Sara Cooper
Department for Education & Skills
Children, Young People & Families Directorate
Looked After Children Division
Room 125 Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
LONDON SE1 8UG

Tel. 020-7972-4284

Email: Mark.Burrows@dfes.gsi.gov.uk