

Children placed more than 20 miles from home

1. Item 3 of the agenda.

2. Action required

TWG members are asked to indicate whether they would be content for the additional question, shown in Appendix A, to be included on the SSDA903 return for 2004-05.

3. Any comments on the attached paper should be sent to:

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Policy objective

Choice Protects is a three year £113 million programme which aims to improve outcomes for looked after children through improving the way local authorities plan and commission placements and services. The development of appropriate local placements and services forms a critical part of this agenda. Research evidence shows that looked after children who are placed unnecessarily at a distance from home have poorer outcomes. They are more likely to lose contact with their families and friends and experience disruption through their schooling and health care.

Collecting information on distance from home would help to monitor changes in the proximity of placements. In addition, the development of a new indicator helps local authorities measure their performance in this area and demonstrates the importance Government attaches to the development of local placements.

Appendix A shows the proposal for a new question on the SSDA903.

Proposed new Indicator

The Indicator being discussed at the Performance Indicator group is as follows:

- *Proportion of looked after children who are placed more than 20 miles from home.*

Suggested question on placement from home (SSDA903 from 2004-05)

Additional question:

- **How far is placement from home?**

Suggested codes: 1 = 0-10 miles, 2 = 11-20 miles, 3 = 21-30 miles, 4 = 31-40 miles, 5 = 41 miles and over

Issues:

- ◆ Definition of “home” has been proposed to be: “address when child entered first period of being looked after”
- ◆ Are there too many codes? Is this level of detail acceptable?