Frequency of Visiting Procedure

Foster Carer Policies and Procedures · https://handbook.co.uk/docs/frequency-of-visiting-procedure/

(Last reviewed 10/11/2026)

Purpose:

To ensure Supervising Social Workers maintain consistent support and engagement with foster carers, children and professional networks, enabling positive outcomes for children in care.

This procedure must be adhered to for consistent support, monitoring and safeguarding of foster carers, children in care and their overall wellbeing.

The frequency of visits must comply with:

1. Regulations: Fostering Regulations, National Minimum Standards and Statutory Guidance
2. Individual Needs: Consideration of the needs of the child, the foster carer and any emerging concerns.

Initial Visit following a child being placed:

• Following the placement of a child, supervising social worker must have phone contact with the foster carer and the young person (if they are happy to engage) on the same day or within 24 hours.

• Supervising social workers must visit within 72-hours or sooner of a child being placed.

• Seeing the child or young person at the 72-hour visit does not count as supervisory home visit or supervision visit.

- Supervising social workers must arrange and attend an initial placement agreement meeting within 7 days of the child being placed.

Regular Visits:

- Supervising social workers must visit their families every month. These can be alternated between supervision with carer visits and supervisory home visits.
- Children in care must be seen and spoken to once every other month during supervisory home visits.
- Supervision visits are carried out by Supervising Social Worker's with the foster carer using a standard agenda. If there are two approved foster carers both must be seen for supervision.
- Supervisory home visits are undertaken by the Supervising Social Worker at the foster carers home with the purpose of meeting the child in care and spending some time with them and any birth children.
- Supervisory home visits should be arranged at times when the foster carer (s) is also at home. If this is not possible then the SSW should notify their line manager to discuss.
- The above time scales are the minimum required in a settled placement. New or troubled placements should be visited more frequently.
- More frequent visits must be agreed if concerns arise about the child's wellbeing, placement stability or foster carers capacity.
- After the end of a placement, especially if the placement ends abruptly, SSW must arrange a visit to enable the carer to reflect on the placement experience and identify lessons for the future support and training. This visit can be combined with a supervision visit with the carers.
- For those foster carers that are on a break from fostering do not need to be visited for supervision until they resume fostering. However, mandatory visits which include unannounced visits and health and safety visits should be completed where possible to ensure that foster carers remain compliant. This should be explained to carers when they take a break from fostering.
- For those foster carers that have young people placed on a staying put arrangement and do not have any additional fostering bedroom can be visited at an agreed frequency, agreed by the Team Manager.
- If carers are on holiday or on a break, a record needs to be made on carers file following discussion with the Team Manager.
- When foster carers do not have a placement, it must be agreed with the manager the frequency of visits.

Newly approved foster carers:

- Following the approval of a foster carer, Supervising Social Worker must contact the carer and arrange the foster carers induction. The induction must be completed in person at the foster carers home. This will be an opportunity for the Supervising Social Worker to check the home, meet household members and address any health and safety actions.
- Supervising social workers should visit newly approved foster carers once a month for the first three months whether they have a placement or not. This will enable foster carers and the supervising social worker to develop a working relationship and expectations of the fostering role and responsibilities.

Respite Placements:

- When a child or young person goes on respite, the supervisor for the respite carer must visit the placement within 72 hours unless this is agreed otherwise by the team manager.
- An unannounced visit mustbe undertaken if the respite placement lasts a week or longer. This must be carried out by the respite carers SSW.
- If the respite care is being provided by a member of the foster carers support network, an unannounced visit mustbe undertaken by the supervising social worker for the foster carers during the respite period.

Other Visits

- Supervising social workers are required to attend and contribute to all relevant meetings to support the foster carers and the child effectively.
- If the SSW cannot attend due to unforeseen circumstances, they must notify their manager immediately and arrange for another suitable professional to attend on their behalf. They must also provide all necessary documentation and updates before the meeting.
- All carers are must have an annual Health and Safety check (please refer to the Health and Safety Policy). This visit can be combined with a supervision.

Unannounced visits - Please refer to the Unannounced visits procedure.

- Supervising social workers must undertake unannounced visits at least twice a year. whether or not a child is in placement. Foster carers should be reminded from time to time of this requirement. The dates are set up on Supervising Social Worker’s task lists. Both unannounced visits must incorporate a general health and safety. This does not require a full check but rather

the SSW’s observations and check of the home and lists of any obvious hazards or concerns. This is separate to the full health and safety check and is completed using the Health and Safety App.

- For newly approved carers, an additional UV should be undertaken when they are placed with their first child.
- An unannounced visit is in addition to the monthly supervision or supervisory home visits. It must be completed on a different day to these monthly visits and does not count as one of them.
- If there are concerns about the carer or concerns about the home or household, additional unannounced visits must be undertaken.