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**Frequency of statutory visits to looked after children in stable long-term placements**

When there has been a sustained period of stability within a long-term stable placement consideration could be given for the frequency of statutory looked after child visits.

[The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations, Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review (June 2015)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441643/Children_Act_Guidance_2015.pdf) states ‘*3.234 Where the child is placed in a long-term foster placement, the child should be visited within one week of the start of the placement. Thereafter, the child must be visited at interval of not more than six weeks for the first year of the placement [regulation 28(2)(b)]. Visits during subsequent years must take place at intervals of not more than six months, where the child, being of sufficient age and understanding, has agreed to be visited at this minimum frequency [regulation 28 (3A)]’* ‘

The social worker will require their team manager’s approval before making a request for a reduction in the frequency of statutory visits to a looked after child, to the allocated IRO to be considered at the next Looked After Child Review meeting. The Service Manager must be informed of the proposed change.

The following criteria will need to be met, before consideration will be given to reducing the frequency of statutory visits to a looked after child:

* The child or young person has been in placement for at least two years and the placement is stable.
* That the child or young person wants less frequent statutory visits.
* That the IRO has visited and discussed the proposal with the child or young person, and it is clear that the child or young person is able to communicate their wishes about the frequency of statutory visits.
* That they are over 10 years of age.
* That they have stable school attendance, a good PEP and good school engagement.
* That the network around the child or young person is in support of less frequent statutory visits.

All relevant parties within the child or young person’s network should agree to the new proposed frequency – for up to 6 monthly intervals between statutory looked after visits.

Where there is also a younger sibling in placement for whom the placement is also a long-term stable placement and has been in placement for more than two years, individual case consideration should be given to extending this request to cover the young sibling too. His/her views must also be sought and considered.

It the reducing in frequency is agreed by all at the Looked After Review Meeting, the IRO will record this in the Outcomes and Minutes of the meeting. A Management Oversight note will be recorded on the child’s record to confirm the ratification of reducing the frequency of statutory visits (up to maximum of 6 month between visits) by the Team Manager.

The social worker should thereafter update the Case Summary Sheet on the front page of ICS for child/young person where it clearly states the agreement frequency of statutory visits to the child in the placement.

This arrangement can be reviewed and changed at any time to undertake more frequent statutory visits if circumstances within the placement and with the child or young person changes.

Please see flow-chart on the next page :-

## Flowchart for frequency of statutory visits in stable long-term placements