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Cymdeithas ar gyfer Maethu,
Gofal Perthynas a Mabwysiadu
Association for Fostering,
Kinship and Adoption

**AFKA Cymru
Practice Note 7**

April 2026

Good Practice Guidance on Flexible Reviews and Visits for Kinship Foster Carers

Amendments to

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015

by:

**The Fostering Panels and Care Planning (Miscellaneous Amendments)
(Wales) Regulations 2026.**

These Regulations came into force on 1st April 2026.

*The regulations apply across Wales, affecting all local authorities and
fostering service providers operating under Welsh law.*



Amendments to the CPPCR(W) Regulations 2015

Regulation 3(2) amends regulation 31 of the CPPCR(W) Regulations 2015 by providing for the frequency of children's social work visits to kinship foster care placements to within one week and at intervals of not more than 6 weeks for the first year of placement, to be at intervals of not more than 6 months (rather than 3 months where the placement is intended to last until the child is 18 years, otherwise it is 6 weeks), decided collaboratively by the responsible authority, IRO, carers, parents, and the child.

3.—(1) The 2015 Regulations are amended as follows.

(2) In regulation 31 (frequency of visits), for paragraph (2)(c) substitute—

“(c) thereafter—

(i) where the placement is made in accordance with section 81(6)(a) of the 2014 Act, at a frequency to be determined by the responsible authority following consultation with the IRO, F, P and C that must be at intervals of not more than 6 months,

(ii) where the placement is not made in accordance with section 81(6)(a) but is intended to last until C is 18, at intervals of not more than 3 months, and

(iii) in any other case, at intervals of not more than 6 weeks.”

Explanatory Note

Section 81 (6)(a) of the 2014 act refers to:

[Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

placement with an individual who is a relative, friend or other person connected with C and who is also a local authority foster parent,

IRO – Independent Reviewing Officer

F – foster carer

P – parent

C - child



Regulation 3(3) amends regulation 39 of the 2015 Regulations by providing for the frequency of within 20 working days and not more than three months child looked after (CLA) reviews, any subsequent child looked after (CLA) reviews of these placements to be at intervals of not more than 12 months (rather than 6 months), with timing determined during the review itself.

(3) In regulation 39 (timing of reviews)—

(a) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the English language text, after “carried” in the first place it occurs insert “out”;

(ii) omit—

“, and subsequent reviews must be carried out at intervals of no more than 6 months”;

(b) after paragraph (2) insert—

“(2A) Subsequent reviews must be carried out at intervals of not more than 6 months, except where the placement is made in accordance with section 81(6)(a) of the 2014 Act.

(2B) Where the placement is made in accordance with section 81(6)(a) of the 2014 Act, the frequency of reviews must be determined by the responsible authority following consultation with the IRO, F, P and C, and the reviews must be at intervals of not more than 12 months.”;

(c) in paragraph (3), for “or (2)” substitute “, (2), (2A) or (2B)”;

(d) in paragraph (4), for “or (2)” substitute “, (2), (2A) or (2B)”

Explanatory Note

Section 81 (6)(a) of the 2014 act refers to:

[Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

placement with an individual who is a relative, friend or other person connected with C and who is also a local authority foster parent,

IRO – Independent Reviewing Officer

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Reasons for Change

Welsh Government's intention is to improve outcomes for children in kinship foster care by recognising the distinct nature of kinship care and reducing systemic barriers.

The current regulations impose uniform review and visit intervals for all foster placements, regardless of context. Currently there is an application of a one-size-fits-all approach that may undermine the effectiveness of kinship foster placements and lead to disengagement of kinship foster carers due to perceived over regulation.

Welsh Government have made changes to introduce greater flexibility in the statutory requirements for case reviews and social work visits for children placed with approved kinship foster carers.

The intention of the 2026 amendments to the Regulations is to:

1. Allow tailored review and visit schedules based on the individual needs of the child and family:
 - Less intrusive oversight may help support children's emotional wellbeing and foster a sense of normalcy within kinship foster care arrangements.
 - It may result in reduced disruption for children with a respect for family stability, and empowerment of kinship foster carers by reducing bureaucratic burden. It may make it easier for kinship foster carers to maintain placements without feeling overwhelmed by administrative requirements.
2. Ensure independent oversight remains in place through the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO):
 - Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) will retain discretion to recommend more frequent reviews or visits where necessary,



ensuring that safeguarding standards remain robust and responsive to individual needs. Therefore, there remains flexibility to increase frequency where needed, ensuring responsiveness to complex cases.

3. Promote a person-centred approach in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

- Providing a statutory basis for flexible, needs-led oversight tailored to kinship foster care.

The new regulations reflect the pre-existing relationships, stability and familiarity often present in kinship care and are intended to be proportionate for families with low levels of need, especially in long-term kinship arrangements.

The new regulations are intended to affect:

- **Kinship foster carers** who will benefit from a proportionate response to the needs of their family
- **Children and young people** who may feel more comfortable with reduced formal oversight in stable placements,
- **Local Authorities and social workers**, who will gain flexibility in allocating resources and tailoring support
- **Independent Reviewing Officers** who will play a key role in determining appropriate review and visit schedules.

The proposed changes are intended to reduce unnecessary reviews and visits in low-risk, stable placements, enabling more targeted intervention where complexity is higher and strengthening the effective use of resources across social care teams.



Good Practice Guidance

When implementing the new regulations, processes must continue to uphold the safety, wellbeing, and rights of children, while also respecting the unique dynamics of kinship care. The flexibility of these regulations allow processes to be proportionate, responsive, and centred on the needs of the individual children, especially in long-term stable placements.

However, practitioners must understand the importance of maintaining a balance between flexibility and safeguarding, and of ensuring that any changes support the delivery of high quality, child-centred care.

Flexibility must not be misused to cut costs, lead to inconsistent support or reduce opportunities for children and kinship foster carers to raise concerns.

To promote safety and consistency in how this flexibility is applied, requires informed professional judgment on determinations regarding the stability of a placement and decisions on an appropriate need led response to visiting and review timescales. The decision making should not rest with one individual; it should reflect a multi-agency approach and involve the views of those who directly contribute to the child's Child Looked After (CLA) Review. The child's voice must be clearly heard at every stage of decision making as required by Welsh law. IROs will retain oversight of individual placements and responsibility for recommending the local authority undertake more frequent reviews and visits where necessary.

Decision making must consider if reducing the frequency of visits and reviews could lead to missed early warning signs if not carefully monitored, particularly in placements that appear stable but have underlying issues. Other professionals involved with the child must be made aware of any reduction in visits and of their duty to inform the Local Authority and the IRO if they have any worries or concerns to share in between statutory visits.

Kinship foster carers and children looked after in kinship placements must have clear contact details for all the teams and individual workers involved in their care and know how to contact these in between visits and reviews. The Local Authority must be easily accessible to the kinship families as and when needed.



Consideration must also be given to any impact on the application or monitoring of delegated authority agreements.

Practitioners must remember that while flexibility is seen as potentially beneficial, it must not come at the expense of child welfare, consistent support, and safeguarding.