**Assessment of prospective foster parents:**

**26.**—(1) The fostering service provider may carry out an assessment of any person who applies to become a foster parent and whom they consider may be suitable to become a foster parent (“X”), and any such assessment must be carried out in accordance with this regulation.

(2) The fostering service provider—

(3) Having regard to the information obtained under paragraph (2), the fostering service provider must—

(a)consider whether X is suitable to be a foster parent and whether X’s household is suitable for any child. (FSR, 2011)

**STANDARD 10 - Providing a suitable physical environment for the foster child:**

Underpinning Legislation: 26 – Assessment of prospective foster parents Schedule 3 – Information as to prospective foster parent and other members of their household and family

Outcome:

• Children live in foster homes which provide adequate space, to a suitable standard. The child enjoys access to a range of activities which promote his or her development.

10.1) The foster home can comfortably accommodate all who live there including where appropriate any suitable aids and adaptations provided and fitted by suitably trained staff when caring for a disabled child.

10.2) The foster home is warm, adequately furnished and decorated, is maintained to a good standard of cleanliness and hygiene and is in good order throughout. Outdoor spaces which are part of the premises are safe, secure and well maintained.

10.5) The foster home is inspected annually, without appointment, by the fostering service to make sure that it continues to meet the needs of foster children. (NMS, 2011)

All foster carers approved with NCT’s Fostering Service must have a minimum of one unannounced home visit (UAHV) undertaken within each twelve-month review period, with the best practice expectation being that two UAHVs are undertaken within each twelve-month review period. Within one of the two UAHVs to be undertaken within each twelve-

month review period, any child or children living within the fostering household are expected to be seen. Therefore, if only one UAHV is undertaken in a twelve month period, any child or children living in the household must be seen as part of that UAHV.

Within any UAHV undertaken, the following expectations should be considered:

* The child’s bedroom must be viewed.
* The bathroom used by a child or children placed within the fostering household must be viewed.
* The garden or any outdoor space that is available to the child or children within the fostering household must be viewed, to include consideration of this being a safe space to play and the cleanliness in regard to the areas used by any pets of the fostering household.
* The kitchen and dining area of the fostering household must be viewed.

UAHVs are not to be attempted immediately prior to a planned visit to be undertaken to the fostering household by the SSW.

The SSW must not enter the fostering household to undertake an UAHV if children are present without the foster carer being at home as may be the case by agreement for older looked after children or the foster carer’s own children.

Where children are seen as part of an UAHV, this must be recorded to both the foster carer’s Carefirst record and the child’s ‘running record’ within TEAMS.

Where an UAHV is attempted but is not successful due to the foster carers not being at home, then this must still be recorded to the carer’s Carefirst record as an ‘Attempted, unsuccessful UAHV’.

References:

[The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 (legislation.gov.uk)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/581/regulation/26/made)

[Fostering Guidance - MASTER (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/192705/NMS_Fostering_Services.pdf)