

REPORT TO: Children & Young People Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 24 May 2010

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children & Young People

SUBJECT: Climbie Visits

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To report to PPB on the conduct of and outcomes from Climbie Visits to front line Child in Need Teams.
- 1.2 To review the outcomes from the recommendations reported to PPB on 7 September 09.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) the PPB note the contents of the report;**
- (2) a new and extended list of available Members is agreed by PPB and training offered and a rota of Climbe Visits agreed;**
- (3) that following all Climbe Visits the report provided by Members and the responses made by relevant Managers should be reported to PPB and scrutinised twice a year; and**
- (4) that the focus of Climbe Visits should give increased scrutiny to the core business of Contact, Referral and Assessment processes and performance data should routinely be discussed and understood.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Training was provided to PPB Members on 1st June this year 09. A further training date need to be arranged to provide both refresher training for those Members who carry out visits and training for members new to this role.
- 3.2 There are currently five Members identified to carry out Climbie Visits, three in Runcorn and two in Widnes. Visits are carried out quarterly and a report is then sent to the Operational Director for Specialist Services and passed to the Divisional Manager, Children

in Need to respond to any issues raised.

Meeting dates have been set for the year; Widnes visits have taken place on the agreed dates, 21st September 09, 14th December 09 and 31st March 10.

Runcorn visits have again proven more problematic, a visit took place on 17th November 09, February visit did not go ahead and there is one scheduled for 18th May 10.

3.3 The purpose of the Climbe Visit is to;

- Ensure that staffing levels are appropriate
- Check that workloads of individual workers are appropriate
- Ensure that referral management processes are sound and secure
- Check on the performance of the Duty Teams
- Track the progress of implementation of Integrated Children's System (ICS)

3.4 Following on from the recommendation in the last report in relation to increased scrutiny of the core business of Contact, Referral and Assessment processes there has been an increased emphasis on these issues. Many of the issues have been addressed in the 'Children in Need Referral and Assessment Analysis' which has been tabled today these include,

- Court issues
- IT issues including Carefirst 6
- Management vacancies
- Volume of work.

Additionally issues have been raised about,

- Parking at Midwood house which has been improved with the installation of a barrier but still remains problematic.
- Impact of leave year and suggestion that this should be staggered e.g. by birthdays to take pressure off service delivery especially in March.
- Raised the profile of Conflict Management Training
- Raised the profile of Flu Jobs
- Positive availability of training for front line workers

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Lord Laming's Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbe recommended that; *Chief Executives of local authorities with social services responsibilities must make arrangements for senior managers and councillors to regularly visit intake teams in their children's services department, and to report their findings to the Chief Executive and social services committee.* This recommendation remains 'best practice' and still considered as part

of any Ofsted Inspection.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are two issues which need to be addressed to strengthen the conduct of Climbie Visits.

5.2 Firstly there have been some difficulties engaging Members to carry out visits. Visits to the Widnes team are prioritised by the two Members involved and take place at appropriate intervals, however embedding the same process in Runcorn has proved more problematic. All Members involved in Climbie Visits must have an Enhanced CRB Disclosure.

5.3 Secondly, training is available for Members carrying out the visits to ensure there is increased scrutiny of Referral and Assessment processes and that performance data is understood, this will ensure that Members have a good understanding of the issues that impact on front line services and ensure that services continue to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the borough.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

All Children in Need are subject to regulated service provision. From April 2009 there will be annual unannounced inspections of Contact, Referral and Assessment Teams. Climbie Visits afford Members an opportunity to assure themselves that front line teams are providing a standard of service that safeguards children.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

If children and young people are not safeguarded from harm they will have poorer outcomes and less likely to achieve economic well being

6.3 A Healthy Halton

If children and young people are not safeguarded from harm they will have poorer outcomes and less likely to thrive and be healthy

6.4 A Safer Halton

The performance of the Council's children services contact, referral and assessments teams is critical to keeping the most vulnerable children and young people in the borough safe.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 If Climbie Visits are not conducted regularly and effectively, the Council will be in breach of recommendation 41 of Lord Laming's Inquiry. This will have a detrimental impact upon the rating of

children services and the wider Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

8.1

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
The Victoria Climbe Inquiry	Grosvenor House	Vicky Buchanan
Procedure Undertaking Visits for Climbe	Grosvenor House	Vicky Buchanan