

REPORT TO: Children & Young People Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 23rd February 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children & Young People

SUBJECT: Regulation 33 Visits and Climbié Audits

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update PPB on the conduct of Regulation 33 Visits and Climbié Audits and to set out proposals to strengthen reporting, scrutiny and Member involvement.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) note the contents of the report;
- (2) that training is provided to all PPB Members on Regulation 33 Visits and Climbié Audits. This training should take place in a Pre-Meeting of the PPB in the early New Year;
- (3) that following training and CRB Checks a new and extended list of available Members is put together by PPB and a rota of visits and audits are agreed;
- (4) that following all visits and audits the reports provided and the responses made by relevant Managers should be reported to PPB and scrutinised twice a year;
- (5) that this reporting and scrutiny is led by the relevant Managers in Children and Young People's Directorate to strengthen accountability;
- (6) that all templates for auditing should be made available to Members electronically and responses to the audits should be recorded electronically; and
- (7) that the Board receive a regular monitoring report, on the progress made in respect of recommendations 2.2 – 2.6 above.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Regulation 33 of the Children's Home Regulations 2001 requires the Local Authority to carry out Children's Home Visits in order to: -

- Interview with consent children, their parents and relatives and carers in the Children's Home.
- Inspect the premises

- Review daily logs of events and records of any complaints
- Prepare a report on the conduct of the Home and the quality of care provided.

3.2 Appendix 1 sets out the template to be used for report writing.

3.3 The regulations require someone who does not hold Line Management responsibility for the Home to carry out the visit and in order to ensure objectivity.

3.4 Department of Health Guidance suggests that Elected Members should consider the desirability of making Regulation 33 Visits in order to demonstrate and carry out their role as Corporate Parents. In Halton it has been agreed that Members should carry out Regulation 33 Visits. Ofsted check that visits are being carried out during their inspections of Children's Homes. During the recent inspection of Inglefield OFSTED inspectors have raised issues about the timing and quality of Regulation 33 visiting. It is essential that visits take place when children are present.

3.5 Climbié Audits were introduced in 2004 following the death of Victoria Climbié. The purpose of the Audit is to:-

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

Members carry out these Audits on a quarterly basis and the report is provided to the relevant manager for a response. See Appendix 2.

3.6 In both cases there is an expectation that an overview of the key issues would be made available to PPB for scrutiny.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The requirements set out in this paper are derived from legislation and regulations. The Council is required to implement this legislation and regulations and inspections will investigate compliance.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are three issues, which need to be addressed to strengthen the conduct of Regulation 33 Visits and Climbié Audits reporting mechanisms scrutiny and Member involvement.

5.2 Firstly, there have been difficulties engaging Members to carry out the visits and audits. Re-running the training provided to Members and extending the number of Members who are available to carry out the audits can overcome this problem. All Members involved in Regulation 33 Visits and Climbié Audits must have Enhanced CRB Checks.

- 5.3 Secondly, reporting on and responding to the visits and audits is carried out but is to the relevant Manager in the service area. Consequently insufficient understanding of the issues that have been identified in the visits and audits has been developed to PPB and other relevant forums.
- 5.4 Thirdly, Regulation 33 Visits are not carried out electronically and this is proving to be problematic. So proposals:-
- That training is provided to all PPB Members on Regulation 33 Visits and Climbié Audits. This training should take place in a Pre-Meeting of the PPB in the early New Year.
 - That following training and CRB Checks a new and extended list of available Members is put together by PPB and a rota of visits and audits are agreed.
 - Following all visits and audits the reports provided and the responses made by relevant Managers should be reported to PPB and scrutinised twice a year.
 - That this reporting and scrutiny is led by the relevant Managers in Children and Young People's Directorate to strengthen accountability.
 - All templates for auditing should be made available to Members electronically and responses to the audits should be recorded electronically.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

All Children in Care and Children in Need are subject to regulated service provision. Regulation 33 visits and Climbié audits provide Members with a practical opportunity to demonstrate their Corporate Parenting responsibilities for these children by checking that the standards of services are sufficient and the voice of children is heard directly by locally elected people.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

If Regulation 33 visits and Climbié audits are not conducted and scrutinized effectively, the Council will be in breach of the law and regulations.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

All Children in Care and Children in Need are at risk of disadvantage and are therefore a priority group for the Council and its partner agencies.

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Children's Home Regulations | Grosvenor House | Chris Taylor |