

**REPORT TO:** Children & Young People Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2011

**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 24.05.10.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:**

- i) Note the contents of the report
- ii) Members who have completed the recent training and agreed to become Climbie visitors are encouraged to complete and return CRB forms or provide evidence of Current enhanced CRB held in their role as Councillors, so that a rota of visits can be established.
- iii) 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
- iv) 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 on the role of Climbie Visitors and Levels of Needs took place on 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> October 10. These sessions were well attended and well received, with a total of 12 members over the two sessions.

As a result of this training 5 additional Members agreed to undertake the visits which would mean that there would be a total of

8 Climbie visitors. This would mean that each Member would be needed for a maximum of twice per year.

A request was made for members with current enhanced CRB's to provide evidence of these and forms were sent out to those who needed to complete new CRB's.

To date one member has returned a completed CRB and one has provided evidence of current CRB. Three remain outstanding.

- 3.2 Climbie 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 will shortly be set for this year based on the five Members we have confirmed with appropriate enhanced CRB.

- 3.3 Since the last report Visits have taken place in Widnes on 6<sup>th</sup> July 10 and 11th January 11 and Runcorn 18<sup>th</sup> May 10 and 16<sup>th</sup> December 10.

Visits have not been completed Quarterly but it is hoped that the training provided and increased availability of Members to undertake Climbie visits that there will be improvement in both the frequency and the purposefulness of these visits in the coming year.

- 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 There has been increased scrutiny of the core business of Contact, Referral and Assessment processes and this is reflected in the reports from Members undertaking Climbie Visits. 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 progress of Carefirst 6 project and problems with roll out of Lap tops.
- Volume of work, described as high but under control.
- Staff Morale generally good
- Low social worker vacancy rates.
- Management capacity improving.

Additionally issues have been raised about,

- Working environment in Midwood house – very cramped.

#### 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 Two issues were identified in the last report 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. The pool of Members available to carry out visits is currently 5 but potentially could increase to 8 if those members who have agreed to undertake visits process their CRB applications.

5.3 Secondly, training has been offered to 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 annual unannounced inspections of Contact, Referral and Assessment Teams have taken place. Halton had an Inspection in May 2010 and can expect a second inspection at any time. 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 Climbe 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).

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

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

**Name of Board:** PPB  
**Date of Meeting:** 21st February 2011  
**Report Title:** Climbie Visits.  
**Author:** Vicky Buchanan

<b>STANDARD SECTIONS – CHECKLIST</b>		
All reports must be submitted together with the following checklist fully completed		
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<p><b>Resource Implications</b></p> <p>The financial, manpower and land (buying or selling) considerations should be clearly detailed including any corporate implications of following the recommended course of action.</p>		N
<p><b>Social Inclusion Implications</b></p> <p>Any implications relating to social inclusion/anti poverty should be highlighted</p>	Y	
<p><b>Sustainability Checklist</b></p> <p>Any implications that affect the sustainability themes of economy society and the community and the environment should be included,</p>		N
<p><b>Best Value</b></p> <p>Any Best Value implications should be included.</p>		N
<p><b>Legal Implications</b></p> <p>Any Legal implications should be included.</p>	Y	
<p><b>Crime and Disorder Issues</b></p> <p>Any crime and disorder implications should be included.</p>	Y	
<p><i>Please review these potential effects, within the context set out overleaf, to compose your summary assessment</i></p>		

**Summary assessment of Implications:** *This wording will appear in the Board report.*

Climbie Visits afford Members an opportunity to ensure Contact, Referral and Assessment processes safeguard the most vulnerable children and young people of Halton.