

REPORT TO: Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board
DATE: 31ST October 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 21st February 11

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) Refresher Training is provided towards the end of the year to update Members and review processes**
- ii) Rota to be developed for next year and circulated by December**
- iii) Update report to be brought back in six months**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

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)

3.1 Update on Recommendations from 21st February

- 3.2 **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.**

Members have provided evidence of enhanced CRB disclosures or applications have been progressed. This has enabled a rota to be drawn up and we currently have nine Members on the rota. This is working very well, the advantages of the rota are that Members have the opportunity to take an objective view of the service and pick up on different issues. In addition some Members have visited both Child in Need Runcorn Runcorn and Child in Need Widnes and this helps to ensure that a consistent service is provided.

3.3 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.

Following Climbie visits reports are sent to the Divisional Manager Child Protection and Children in Need who responds to any issues that arise. Below is a summary of issues / positive developments that have been identified as a result of visits and the responses.

Issue Highlighted	Response
Work loads / Caseloads are high.	<p>The CiN service has seen an increase in referrals of 15% this year which is being carefully monitored. Work flows are being considered to look at what work can move to the Children in Care Service as case loads are reducing in that service. The Team Around the Family which provides Early Help and Support to families is beginning to be embedded across partners although it may be sometime before this begins to impact.</p> <p>Managers work closely with social workers to ensure that caseloads are manageable and all children are safeguarded.</p>
Car Parking	Car parking is often raised by staff as this perceived as an issue. In fact there is access to free parking at both offices with public car parks near by.
Staff Support and Retention. Noted that teams are fully staffed in terms of social work and staff talk positively of	Staff do have access to support and training and this does impact positively on retention. Additionally 'grow your own'

access to opportunities to develop. Staff morale remains high.	schemes have supported unqualified staff to become qualified workers. A full social work compliment helps to ensure children are safeguarded.
IT issues, multiple systems, reliable IT, opportunities for working at home.	Lap tops have been rolled out in the teams and whilst there were problems initially they have been resolved. Staff are encouraged to work at home when possible and IT have helped staff to set up at home when they have experienced difficulties. Carefirst 6 has gone live in one of the teams and has been generally welcomed. IT are working closely with the service to resolve problems as they arise.
Accommodation for supervised contact.	Principal Managers reminded to ensure that risk assessments are in place to ensure that venues for contact are safe and appropriate.

3.4 **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.**

As evidenced in the table above there is increased scrutiny of core business. It is important that Members are aware of case loads and the impact this has on the service and ensure that children are safeguarded.

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 The development of the rota and commitment from Members to undertake these important visits has had a very positive impact and needs to be maintained to ensure the visits happen regularly.

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 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 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 8.1 The teams provide services to the most vulnerable children in the

borough. The service is available to all children and their families who meet the criteria at level 3b / 4 of Halton's Level of need. This includes all those with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010

9.0 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

9.1 N/A

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

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