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DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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December 11, 2015

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Philip L. Browning
Director

SOUTH BAY BRIGHT FUTURE GROUP HOME QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of South Bay Bright Future Group Home (the Group Home) in March 2015. The Group Home has three sites located in the Second and Fourth Supervisorial Districts. The Group Home provides services to County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children and youth. According to the Group Home's program statement, its stated mission is, "to provide a safe therapeutic environment with emphasis on anger management, educational needs, vocational services, social development and independent living skills for children."

The QAR looked at the status of the placed children's safety, permanency and well-being during the most recent 30 days and the Group Home's practices and services over the most recent 90 days. The Group Home scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in 7 of 9 focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, and Tracking & Adjustment. OHCMD noted opportunities for improved performance in the focus areas of Visitation and Teamwork.

The Group Home provided the attached approved Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) addressing the recommendations noted in this report. In July 2015, OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss results of the QAR and to provide the Group Home with technical support to address methods for improvement in the areas of Visitation and Teamwork.

If you have any questions, your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager, at (213) 351-5530.

PLB:EM:KR:rds

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
William M. Hill, Chief Executive Officer, South Bay Bright Future Group Home
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

SOUTH BAY BRIGHT FUTURE GROUP HOME
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR)
FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of South Bay Bright Future Group Home (the Group Home) in March 2015. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the Group Home's service delivery and to ensure that the Group Home is providing children with quality care and services in a safe environment, which includes physical care, social and emotional support, education and workforce readiness, and other services to protect and enhance their growth and development.

The QAR is an in-depth case review and interview process designed to assess how children and their families are benefiting from services received and how well the services are working. The QAR utilizes a six-point rating scale as a yardstick for measuring the situation observed in specific focus areas. The QAR assessed the following focus areas:

Status Indicators:

- Safety
- Permanency
- Placement Stability
- Visitation

Practice Indicators:

- Engagement
- Service Needs
- Assessment & Linkages
- Teamwork
- Tracking & Adjustment

For Status Indicators, the Reviewer focuses on the child's functioning during the most recent 30 day period and for Practice Indicators, the Reviewer focuses on the Group Home's service delivery during the most recent 90 day period.

For the purpose of this QAR, interviews were conducted with three focus children, three Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Children's Social Workers (CSWs), one Group Home social worker, two facility managers and one childcare worker.

At the time of the QAR, the placed children's average number of placements was nine, their overall average length of placement was 16 months and their average age was 18. The focus children were randomly selected. None of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the 2014-2015 Contract Compliance Review.

QAR SCORING

The Group Home received a score for each focus area based on information gathered from on-site visits, agency file reviews, DCFS court reports and updated case plans, and interviews with the Group Home Staff, DCFS CSWs, Service Providers, and the Child. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	GH QAR Score	GH QAR Rating
Safety - The degree to which the Group Home ensures that the child is free of abuse, neglect, and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	6	**Optimal Safety Status** - The focus children are optimally and consistently avoiding behaviors that cause harm to self, others, or the community and are free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and/or intimidation in placement.
Permanency - The degree to which the child is living with caregivers, who are likely to remain in this role until the child reaches adulthood, or the child is in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the child, the Group Home staff, caregivers and CSW, support the plan.	5	5	**Good Status** - The focus children have substantial permanence. The focus children live in a family setting about which the focus children, the Group Home staff, caregivers, caseworker, and the team members have confidence will endure lifelong.
Placement Stability - The degree to which the Group Home ensures that the child's daily living, learning, and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions, and known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruption.	5	6	**Optimal Stability** - The focus children have optimal stability in placement settings and enjoy positive and enduring relationships with primary caregivers, key adult supporters and peers. There is no history of instability over the past 12 months and little likelihood of future disruption.
Visitation - The degree to which the Group Home staff support important connections being maintained through appropriate visitation.	5	4	**Acceptable Maintenance of Family Connections** - Fairly effective family connections are being at least minimally maintained for most significant family members/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	GH QAR Score	GH QAR Rating
Engagement - The degree to which the Group Home staff working with the child, biological family, extended family and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to focus on the child's strengths and needs.	5	5	**Good Engagement Efforts** - To a strong degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the Group Home staff, DCFS CSWs, and the focus children feel heard and respected.
Service Needs - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the child, work toward ensuring the child's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the child's unique needs.	5	5	**Good Supports & Services Needs** - A good and substantial array of supports and services substantially matches intervention strategies identified in the case plan. The services are generally helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes. A usually dependable combination of informal and formal supports and services is available, appropriate, used, and seen as generally satisfactory.
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the child and family understand the child's strengths, needs, preferences, underlying issues, and services are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	5	**Good Assessment and Understanding** - The focus children's functioning and support systems are generally understood. Information necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs, and preferences is frequently updated. Present strengths, risks, and underlying needs requiring intervention or supports are substantially recognized and well understood.
Teamwork - The degree to which the "right people" for the child and family, have formed a working Team that meets, talks, and makes plans together.	5	4	**Minimally Adequate to Fair Teamwork** - The team contains some of the important supporters and decision makers in the focus children's lives, including informal supports. The team has formed a minimally adequate to fair working system that meets, talks, and/or plans together; at least one face-to-face team meeting has been held to develop plans.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	GH QAR Score	GH QAR Rating
Tracking & Adjustment - The degree, to which the Group Home staff who is involved with the child and family is carefully tracking the progress that the child is making, changing family circumstances, attainment of goals and planned outcomes.	5	5	**Good Tracking and Adjustment Process** - Intervention strategies, supports, and services being provided to the focus children are generally responsive to changing conditions. Frequent monitoring, tracking, and communication of the focus children status and service results to the team are occurring. Generally successful adaptations are based on a basic knowledge of what things are working and not working for the focus children.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

What's Working Now (Score/Narrative of Strengths for Focus Area)

Safety (6 Optimal Safety Status)

Safety Overview: The Group Home complied with the procedures and protocols and reported Special Incident Reports (SIRs) via the I-Track database system in a timely manner. During the QAR, it was reported that the Group Home took responsibility for safety of the children. The focus children reported feeling safe at all times while at the Group Home and always being supervised by staff. The focus children are free from harm in their placement and other daily settings, including at school and in the community.

The Group Home demonstrates great efforts in keeping the placed children safe. The Group Home prepares SIRs to address unauthorized absences, assaultive behavior, illness, behavior problems or hospitalization and other incidents that occur at the Group Home. Two focus children reported they feel safe in their current group home and protective strategies are in place to keep them from harm. The third focus child reported that there were no safety concerns while placed in his current Group Home. He has a good relationship with Group Home staff, and he gets along with everyone. He further stated that the Group Home Facility Manager always asks him how his day went, and he is able to voice his concerns.

The Group Home submitted two SIRs during the past 30 days; the SIRs did not involve the focus children. Both SIRs reported runaway (AWOL) incidents. The Group Home had reported both incidents to the Child Protection Hotline and law enforcement and cross-reported the SIRs to all required parties. The Group Home addressed the incidents with the children who had AWOLed upon their return to the Group Home. Additionally, the Group Home increased supervision and provided counseling to the children in efforts to prevent future AWOL incidents.

The three DCFS CSWs had no safety concerns regarding the Group Home. They reported that the Group Home generally provides a safe living environment for the focus children with competent, caring childcare workers.

One Group Home childcare worker stated that the Group Home provides the staff training to assist them in recognizing problems that may pose a safety risk to placed children. The childcare worker also stated that if placed children display risky behaviors, Group Home staff shares the information with the Group Home social worker and they work together on a plan to ensure child safety.

The Out-of-Home Care Investigations Section (OHCIS) reported that the Group Home did not have any open referrals or investigations within the most recent 30 days.

Permanency (5 Good Status)

Permanency Overview: The Group Home provides substantial permanence. The primary permanency plans and concurrent plans for the focus children were appropriately developed and processed in a timely manner. The Group Home ensures the focus children are visiting with their family members and other important people in their lives. The Group Home is also providing permanency services that include Emancipation and Youth Development Services. The focus children are aware of and work toward their permanency goals, as well as concurrent plans, which are developed to ensure timely permanency. The Group Home demonstrates efforts to assist the focus children in reaching the permanency plan recommended by DCFS and with the DCFS CSWs to prepare the focus children to timely transition out of care.

Two focus children are receiving Permanency Placement Living Arrangement (PPLA) services. The Group Home is preparing the two focus children for transition out of care by connecting them with an Independent Living Program (ILP) and exploring financial support services for them. The Group Home teaches the two focus children independent living skills, assists them with job search and college preparation, as well as obtaining transitional housing. Currently, the Group Home is also exploring the military and Job Corp for them. The Group Home is also very supportive of the third focus child, Non-Minor Dependent (NMD), who achieved his permanency plan to become independent. This focus child is in college and receives Supportive Transition Services, and has obtained his original birth certificate, medical and immunization records, social security card, and high school diploma. The Group Home is assisting him with housing options and college study.

Placement Stability (6 Optimal Stability)

Placement Stability Overview: The Group Home is providing good placement stability for the focus children. The Group Home takes responsibility in ensuring the focus children obtain the resources and treatment needed for them to become stable in all areas. The Group Home is linked to various community resources to ensure stabilization of placement and to meet the focus children's needs, including but not limited to non-public school programs, tutoring services and ILP Services. The Group Home ensures that its staff is trained to deal with the focus children's needs. The Group Home provides the focus children with emancipation services until they are discharged. The focus children reported that they enjoy positive and enduring relationships with the staff members and key adult supporters. They also shared that the services and resources they are receiving from the Group Home are above their expectations.

The focus children's overall average length of placement was 16 months. They reported that they are adjusting well in their placement, participating in Group Home programs and have been able to maintain conflict-free relationship with the other residents. One focus child expressed that he has made significant progress since his placement at the Group Home. Initially, he was not cooperative with staff directives; as of the writing of this report, he is fully cooperative and complies with house rules and chores. The second focus child reported that he is a role model to the other placed children. He also shared many positive qualities about the Group Home's childcare workers. The third focus child reported that he completes his chores daily without prompts. He has been able to maintain conflict-free relationships with the other placed children. He is abiding by his curfew, no longer AWOLing, and has had no serious issues at school. The focus children stated that they feel supported by the Group Home staff and feel that their needs and wants are quickly addressed.

The DCFS CSWs all agree that the focus children will remain placed with the Group Home and there is little likelihood of future disruptions.

What's Not Working Now and Why (Score/Narrative of Opportunities for Improvement)

Visitation (4 Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation & Connections)

Visitation Overview: The Group Home has maintained periodic visits and family connections for the focus children. The Group Home staff initially engaged the DCFS CSWs and family members in discussing the court visitation orders. The Group Home made visitation arrangements according to the court orders, with the parties listed in each focus child's case plan, and provided transportation to the visits, when needed. However, two of the focus children had expressed their refusal in visiting with their family members and there were no efforts made by the Group Home to support visitation or work through the focus children's resistance to visit with their families, extended family members, and non-related extended family members. Further, when visitation was not a viable option, there were no mentoring services initiated by the Group Home for the focus children.

Practice Indicators
(Measured over last 90 days)

What's Working Now (Score/Narrative of Strengths for Focus Area)

Engagement (5 Good Engagement Efforts)

Engagement Overview: The Group Home developed a strong rapport with and consistently engages the key parties. The focus children reported that their concerns are heard and they feel respected. The focus children reported that they can confide in various team members to discuss their issues of concern.

The Group Home facility managers reported that prior to children being placed in the Group Home, they are provided with information regarding the children's history and trauma, which helps them prepare for and provide better care for placed children. One Group Home childcare worker stated that he makes sure to communicate with the focus child regularly to ensure that he is doing well and that his needs are met. Another Group Home social worker expressed being supported by the Group Home and has a good working relationship with the Group Home Treatment Team.

The DCFS CSWs for the focus children reported that they all have a good rapport and working relationship with the focus children's Group Home social worker and case manager. They further reported that the Group Home social worker keeps them informed of how the focus children are doing on a monthly basis, or more often if needed. The Group Home maintains a good relationship with DCFS CSWs and key people in the focus children's lives. The Group Home also engages the community partners, such as ILP Coordinators and school teachers who provide services to meet the needs of the focus children. The Group Home continues to make efforts to maintain contact with the DCFS CSWs and provides information regarding the focus children via face-to-face meetings, telephone, or e-mail.

Service Needs (5 Good Supports & Services)

Service Needs Overview: The Group Home provides the focus children with an array of services and extracurricular activities to help the focus children make progress toward their planned outcomes. The focus children reported their personal needs are met by the Group Home and that they are satisfied with the services they are receiving. The services include weekly individual therapy, substance abuse treatment, alternative school settings, internship programs, ILP activities, summer jobs, tutoring, as well as transportation to work, school and extracurricular activities. The Group Home is in constant contact with other service providers in the community, and the services provided are seen as very satisfactory by the focus children.

One focus child reported that the Group Home provides a stable placement, ensures his financial needs are addressed, and offers him good tutoring services. The focus child is currently enrolled in junior college. The other two focus children receive mental health services; they each receive individual counseling two times a month. They also receive tutoring services and ILP services. They also participate in extracurricular activities, such as the school basketball team and are enrolled at the local gym. All focus children stated that the services they received are meeting their needs and expectations, and they feel they are benefiting from the services.

The services provided by the Group Home are substantially helping the focus children make progress toward their planned outcomes.

Assessment & Linkages (5 Good Assessments and Understanding)

Assessment & Linkages Overview: The Group Home generally understands the focus children's functioning and support systems. Information regarding the focus children and their families' strengths, needs and preferences are frequently updated. The focus children meet with the Group Home social worker at least once per week to assess their progress and to evaluate their needs. The implementation of services is specifically tailored to meet the needs of each focus child. Medical and dental services as well as educational supports, tutoring, ILP, and internship are provided, and participation in extracurricular activities is encouraged by the Group Home. The Group Home seems to have a good assessment and understanding in the functioning and support systems for the focus children.

The Group Home provides approved services to help the focus children and supports them in placement successful. The focus children reported that they have seen improvements in their behaviors since being placed at the Group Home. The focus children are involved in providing input

regarding to the services received. The focus children also reported that they can request extracurricular activities or outings of their choice, and the Group Home Campus Supervisor ensures that it happens.

The DCFS CSWs reported that the Group Home keeps them informed regarding the focus children's progress toward achieving Needs and Services Plan (NSP) goals, as the Group Home social worker maintains regular contact with them via telephone or e-mail. The DCFS CSWs also stated that they inform the Group Home of the focus child's needs, such as, medical, dental, educational and mental health services, and the Group Home does a good job in ensuring the needs are met.

Tracking & Adjustment (5 Good Tracking & Adjustment Process)

Tracking & Adjustment Overview: Intervention strategies, supports, and services provided to the focus children are generally responsive and appropriate to changing conditions. There is continuous monitoring, tracking of and communication regarding the focus children's progress and services. The Group Home tracks their daily contacts, monthly CSW contact, quarterly health and safety assessments, and the Group Home submits NSPs for each of the focus children. The Group Home forwards the NSPs to the DCFS CSWs for review and signature. The Group Home determines if the focus children are making progress towards their NSP goals by observing if there is a reduction in incidents, occurrences and acting out behaviors exhibited by the focus children. Progress is also determined by observation and reports from the childcare workers. Additionally, the Group Home social workers meet with the focus children regularly to discuss their progress and encourage them to continue making progress toward achieving NSP goals. Adjustments are promptly made when it is determined the specific services are not producing the desired results.

All focus children reported that the Group Home strongly focuses on tracking their progress and modifying their treatment goals to ensure successful outcome. One focus child reported that he had some difficulty following house rules and complying with staff directives. He often left the Group Home without staff's permission and sometimes returned to the Group Home late from school. The Group Home Manager immediately addressed these concerns with the focus child, and the facility manager enrolled the focus child in a basketball program at the Boy's and Girl's Club and worked on his independent living plans. Since then, the focus child is doing much better. He has been respecting house rules and complying with staff directives. Additional monetary incentives were added to assist in modifying behaviors at the school and Group Home.

The DCFS CSWs also maintain regular contact with the Group Home social worker and the focus children to ensure any necessary adjustments to the NSP and case plan goals are made, the resources for the focus children are in place, and that they are included in making modifications to the NSPs.

<u>What's Not Working Now and Why (Score/Narrative of Opportunities for Improvement)</u>

Teamwork (4 Minimally Adequate to Fair Teamwork)

Teamwork Overview: The team has formed a minimally adequate to fair working system that meets, talks, and/or plans together; face-to-face team meetings, which include all team members, are not being held. Each focus child's team includes some of the important supporters and decision makers

in the focus children's lives, including the DCFS CSW, the Group Home social worker, Group Home childcare worker, therapist and the focus child. Although the team has ongoing communication, works collaboratively and contributes to the development of the focus children's NSP and case plans, it was noted that the occurrence of team meetings has been minimal, or team meetings in which all key people participate have not taken place. Within the last 90 days, there has not been a meeting held for any of the focus children where the DCFS CSW, Group Home social worker, the therapist, the focus children, and other key people were all present.

All CSWs interviewed reported that they do not have regular team meetings for the focus children. They reported that the focus children's progress is communicated through telephone calls, e-mail contacts, or only when they visit the focus children at the Group Home.

The Group Home reported that it wants to improve its working relationship with all key people and understands that better teamwork is needed. The Group Home will ensure all key supporters are included as part of the team and are involved in the decision making process.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In June 2015, OHCMD provided the Group Home with technical supports related to findings indicated in the 2014-2015 contract compliance review, which consisted of the following: discussion of compliance with Title 22 Regulations; ensuring monthly contacts with DCFS CSWs; addressing concerns related to comprehensive and measurable goals in NSPs; and ensuring placed children participate in age-appropriate extracurricular activities.

In July 2015, quality assurance reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss results of the QAR and to provide the Group Home with technical support to address methods for improvement in the areas of Visitation and Teamwork. The Group Home submitted the attached Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). OHCMD quality assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training, and consultation to assist the Group Home in implementing their QIP.

SOUTH BAY BRIGHT FUTURE, INC.

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September 2, 2015

To: Jui-Ling Ho, Children's Services Administrator
Department of Children and Family Services
Out of Home Care Management Division (OHCMD)

From: LeVetta Hill, Administrator

South Bay Bright Future - Group Home Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

In January 2015 South Bay Bright Future-Group Homes received a Quality Assurance Review conducted by Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD). The following recommendations were noted in the focus areas of Visitations and Teamwork.

Visitation QIP: South Bay Bright Future, Inc. (SBBF) shall ensure that each child is encouraged to establish and maintain healthy family connections.

SBBF shall be proactive in promoting monthly visitation between each child and their family members, extended family, non-related family, mentors, etc.; unless otherwise ordered by the Court. However, in the event the child refuses to visit with family members, etc. SBBF's Administrator and or Facility Managers shall make every effort to help facilitate communication between the child and family member, mentor etc. through mediation in hope of establishing family connections. Every attempt will be made through family meetings, conference calls, etc. If the child continues to refuse family visitations or it is determined the child has no family contacts, SBBF's Facility Managers shall ensure a Mentor Request form is completed and submitted on the child's behalf to United Friends of the Children, Big Brothers, etc. The Facility Managers shall ensure these efforts are well documented in the communication log each month and the Social Workers shall ensure it is noted in the child's NSPs. A monthly Administrator review shall be implemented to confirm this process is being completed.

Teamwork QIP: South Bay Bright Future, Inc. (SBBF) shall ensure, a quarterly Team Meeting be held that will include all interested parties; SBBF's Administrator, CSWs, SBBF's Social Workers, Facility Managers/Case Managers, the Child, Family Member, Mentor, etc.

SBBF shall request from the CSW the identification of the known persons that are important in the child's life. This information shall include but is not limited to: CSW, biological parents, grandparents, etc. All parties shall be informed of the meetings to discuss and plan for the enhancement of the child's future.

The notification of the meeting shall be sent to each party important in the child's life as identified by the CSW. The following shall be included but not limited to:

- Date, time and location of the meeting.
- List of attendees
- Subject matters
- Conclusion
- Date, time and place of next meeting

Team Meetings shall be scheduled quarterly however, in the event additional meetings are needed, all interested parties shall be notified.

Contact information shall be requested (e-mail, cell phone, etc.) to keep all parties informed. Each Team Meeting shall be documented and copies provided to each party.

South Bay Bright Future is unique in using the concept that it "takes a village to raise our children" Therefore a weekly in-house Team Communication Meeting has been implemented to ensure all pertinent information regarding each child is shared from the administration, social workers, facility manager/case manager, in a effort to meet and exceed the minimum standards. A form to document these meetings has been created and implemented.

The Team Meetings and Team Communication meetings will be instrumental in better addressing the Smart Goals in the NSP(s) for our children.

Upon your approval South Bay Bright Future's Administrator shall be responsible for ensuring the above QIP is fully implemented within 30 calendar days.

We respectfully submit this Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for your review. Thank you once again for the opportunity to reevaluate our program services and help us identify areas for improvement. If additional information is needed please contact me at (310) 721-5204 or levettahill@yahoo.com, thank you.

Sincerely,

LeVetta D. Hill

LeVetta D. Hill
Administrator