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DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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January 11, 2016

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

From: for Philip L. Browning
Director

DREAM HOME CARE, INC. GROUP HOME QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a review of Dream Home Care, Inc. Group Home (the Group Home) in June 2014. The Group Home has three sites located in the Fourth Supervisorial District and provides services to County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children, as well as placements from various counties. According to the Group Home's program statement, its purpose is "to serve court dependent abused, neglected, emotionally disturbed 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 6 of 9 focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, and Assessment & Linkages. OHCMD noted opportunities for improved performance in the focus areas of Placement Stability, Teamwork and Tracking & Adjustment.

The Group Home provided the attached approved Quality Improvement Plan addressing the recommendations noted in this report. In September 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 area of Placement Stability, Teamwork and Tracking & Adjustment.

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

PLB:EM:KR:tm

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Cora Manalang, Executive Director, Dream Home Care, Inc. Group Home
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Leonora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

DREAM HOME CARE, INC. GROUP HOME
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
FISCAL YEAR 2013-2014

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of Dream Home Care, Inc. Group Home (the Group Home) in June 2014. 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 children'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 Probation Officer, three Group Home staff members, two Group Home social workers, and two Group Home administrators.

At the time of the QAR, the placed children's average number of placements was five, their overall average length of placement was 14 months and their average age was 16.

QAR SCORING

The Group Home received a score for each focus area based on information gathered from on-site visits, agency file reviews, DCFS files, and interviews with the Group Home staff, DCFS CSWs, service providers, and children.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	GH Agency Score	QA Rating Score
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 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, supports the plan.	5	5	**Good Status** - The children have substantial permanence. The children live in a family setting that the children, the Group Home staff, caregivers, caseworker, and 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	4	**Fair Placement Stability** - The children have minimally acceptable stability in placement and school settings with only planned changes and no more than one disruption in settings within the past 12 months and none in the past 90 days. The children have established positive relationships with primary caregivers, key adult supporters, and peers in those settings.
Visitation - The degree to which the Group Home staff support important connections being maintained through appropriate visitation.	5	5	**Substantially Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation & Connections** - Generally effective family connections are being sought for all significant family/ Non-Related Extended Family Member (NREFM) through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	GH Agency Score	QA Rating Score
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 strengths and needs.	5	5	**Good Engagement Efforts** - To a strong degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the Group Home staff, DCFS CSW, certified foster parent and the children feel heard and respected.
Service Needs - Tthe 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 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. The array provides an appropriate range of options in the selection of providers.
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the child and family understand the child's strengths, needs, preferences, and underlying issues and services are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	5	**Good Assessment and Understanding** - The children's functioning and support systems are generally understood. Information necessary to understand the 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. Necessary conditions for improved functioning and increased overall well-being are generally understood and used to select promising change strategies.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	GH Agency Score	QA Rating Score
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 children's life, 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.
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	4	**Minimally Adequate to Fair Tracking and Adjustment Process** - Intervention strategies, supports, and services being provided to the children are minimally responsive to changing conditions.

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's safety status was optimal as they provided a highly safe living situation during the past 30 days. All three focus children reported feeling safe at all times while at the Group Home.

The Group Home had a total of 17 Special Incident Reports (SIRs) during the past 30 days. None posed an immediate child safety concern. According to Out-of-Home Care Investigations Section, the Group Home had one open referral dated July 28, 2014, alleging General Neglect and Emotional Abuse. The referral involved one of the focus children who alleged that he did not like how the Group Home's social worker spoke to him. The allegation of General Neglect was substantiated and Emotional Abuse was closed as Inconclusive on August 12, 2014. The Group Home terminated the social worker.

Permanency (5 Good Status)

Permanency Overview: The Group Home provides substantial permanence. The Group Home is providing the services that correspond with each of the focus children's permanent plan and

demonstrates efforts to reach the plan recommended by DCFS. Meetings are held between the Group Home and DCFS CSWs in order to discuss the permanent plan for placed children.

The first focus child has family reunification services in process, another has a plan of adoption and the third focus child was 18 years of age and achieved his permanency plan to become independent. The second focus child is receiving reunification services with his biological mother. The team is committed to the plan and the focus child believes he would reunify with his biological mother. The permanent plan for the third focus child is Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA) with a specific goal of self-sufficiency. The focus child has graduated high school, is working part-time and making preparations to enter into transitional housing.

Visitation (5 Substantially Acceptable)

Visitation Overview: The Group Home has maintained generally effective family connections for the focus children. The Group Home encourages the focus children to maintain regular contact with their families and provides transportation if necessary. The Group Home keeps logs regarding visitation and if missed, visits are re-scheduled in a timely manner.

The DCFS CSWs, Probation Officer, and Group Home staff indicated that the Group Home makes efforts to provide children with their visitation.

All three focus children are having visits with members of their families. The visitation recommendations made by the DCFS CSWs or Deputy Probation Officers are followed by the Group Home. Visits occur on a regular basis and are consistent for the first and second focus children. In general, the Group Home is effective in maintaining family connection for most of the children they serve. They transport the children and ensure that visits occur as planned.

The first focus child has weekly unmonitored visits with his uncle. According to the focus child, his uncle has three children whom he spends time with when he visits. The Group Home provides transportation for the focus child to visits his uncle when requested. The second focus child continues to have unmonitored visits with his mother and siblings and stated that he enjoys his visits. The third focus child stated that he is 18 years of age and does not need the Group Home to set up visits with his siblings; he is able to do this on his own. The focus child has unmonitored visits with his younger siblings in placement. He stated that he enjoys his visits with his siblings; however he wishes he could visit them more often.

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

Placement Stability (4 Fair Stability)

Placement Stability Overview: The Group Home is providing fair placement stability for the three focus children. Despite the Group Home's efforts to stabilize placement, some of the children refuse to meet for group therapy with the Group Home social worker and exhibit non-compliance and disrespectful behavior towards staff and peers.

Both the first and second focus child have established positive relationships with the Group Home staff. The second focus child is on informal probation and was subsequently terminated from the Group Home due to violating the conditions of his probation. The third focus child reported that the

Group Home does not meet his needs for placement stability since he turned 18. The focus child minimally accepted stability at the Group Home and has not established positive relationships with the Group Home staff, however, the third focus child has not had any placement disruptions while at the Group Home.

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 makes consistent and good efforts to engage the focus children and key people in decisions that are being made for the children. The Group Home has built a good rapport with DCFS CSWs and other team members. The Group Home ensures that placed children have regular contact with their DCFS CSWs, family members, and other team members who are involved in their lives.

The first focus child has regular visits with his uncle's family and they are also engaged. The second focus child disclosed that he has regular contact and is very engaged with his family; and the third focus child has regular contact with his siblings and girlfriend. The Group Home is in contact with the CSWs and regularly provides information in regards to the focus children, whether it is face-to-face, by telephone or via e-mail.

According to the Group Home administrator, children are able to contact their DCFS CSWs and Probation Officers whenever they want. The Group Home stays in communication with the family members who the focus children have visitation with, keeping the relatives informed of concerns and successes at the Group Home. The third focus child's mother resides out of the country and is not part of the case plan; therefore there has been no family engagement on his behalf.

Service Needs (5 Good Supports & Services)

Service Needs Overview: The Group Home provides a substantial array of supports and services matching the intervention strategies identified in the case plan for placed children. The Group Home social worker collaborates with the DCFS CSW, the child, and the Group Home staff to develop the Needs and Services Plan (NSP) goals for the focus children. The Group Home makes an effort to ensure that the children attend regular weekly counseling sessions with the Group Home's social worker. The Group Home provides various services to the children and maintains contact with other service providers. The first and second focus children felt that their service needs were being met through the Group Home.

The first focus child participates in individual counseling, drug treatment education and Wraparound services. The focus child also received tutoring in order to assist him with the California High School Exit Examination and the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The focus child also participates in sports activities at the YMCA and is a member of the DCFS Torrance Teen Club.

The second focus child participates in individual and anger management counseling. The focus child receives Wraparound services and counseling and was also involved in a program that provides support regarding his sexuality.

The third focus child receives weekly individual and group counseling, but did not participate in many other services at the Group Home. The focus child reported that he participated in counseling services to maintain his placement at the Group Home.

Assessment & Linkages (5 Good Assessments and Understanding)

Assessment & Linkages Overview: The Group Home generally understands the focus children's functioning and support systems. The focus children meet with the Group Home social worker at least monthly to assess their progress and to evaluate their needs. NSPs are completed timely and the Group Home determines if children are making progress towards their NSP goals by observing if there is a reduction in incidents, occurrences and acting out behaviors that the children exhibit. Progress is also determined by what staff observes and reports. The Group Home administrator and Group Home social worker meet weekly with staff to discuss concerns regarding placed children.

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

Teamwork (4 Minimally Adequate to Fair Teamwork)

Teamwork Overview: The Group Home has provided a minimally adequate system of teamwork. Although the Group Home is familiar with the team members and team meetings are held, there appears to be little emphasis on involving important supports and decision makers involved in the focus children's life. Each of the focus children are aware of the people who are part of their support team; however the focus children and a review of case files did not reveal any family members being involved in team meetings. One DCFS CSW indicated that she communicated with the Group Home during the visits and through e-mails.

The DCFS CSW for the first focus child reported that she determines when the team meets, which is when she visits the focus child at the Group Home, she then has an opportunity to talk to staff members about him. She maintains regular contact with the Group Home social worker.

The second focus child has only had one meeting with his team in July 2014. The Group Home was aware that the third focus child is a Non Minor Dependent (NMD), who has special needs that required more attention; yet, the Group Home did not ensure that team meetings were occurring with the NMD and his team.

Although placed children do participate in Team Decision Making and Resource Management Process meetings that are scheduled by the DCFS CSW in collaboration with the Group Home administrator and Group Home social worker, on a whole, teams are minimally formed at the Group Home and members are not always present for team meetings.

Tracking & Adjustment (4 Minimally Adequate to Fair Tracking and Adjustment Process)

Tracking & Adjustment Overview: The Group Home provided periodic monitoring and tracking of services. The Group Home has monthly meetings to hear the focus children's concerns and track their progress; however the Group Home's intervention strategies, supports and services being provided to the children are minimally responsive to changing conditions.

The first focus child has stated that he does not want to be considered for adoption; however his plan has not changed. The second focus child disclosed that he was satisfied with the Group Home's efforts and did not have any concerns.

According to the third focus child, since he is 18 years-old, the Group Home was not addressing his concerns and assisting him when needed. The focus child disclosed that his communication with the Group Home staff was limited, and only minimal responses were obtained from the intervention strategies, services, and support the Group Home used to assist him.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In June 2014, the OHCMD provided the Group Home with technical support related to findings indicated in the 2013-2014 contract compliance review. In October 2014, OHCMD met with the Group Home to discuss the results of the QAR and provide the Group Home technical assistance addressing methods on improving areas of Placement Stability, Teamwork and Tracking & Adjustment. 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.

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November 18, 2014

Ms. Korliss Robinson, CSA II
Quality Control Reviewer
DCFS Out of Home Care Management Division
9320 Telstar Avenue #216
El Monte, CA 91731

Dear Ms. Robinson,

The following Quality Improvement Plan is being submitted for your kind consideration and approval in reference to the Quality Assurance Review conducted in August 2014:

A. PLACEMENT STABILITY

A Clients Survey Form (called "This Month I will") was developed to address residents placement stability concerns.

1. **Based on this questionaire, group therapy will be designed to include topics of client's interest and input.**
2. **Based on this questionaire, client is able to identify staff of their choice that they feel comfortable interacting with.**

B. SERVICE NEEDS

The Clients Survey Form was developed to address the Service Needs of the residents.

1. **Based on this questionnaire, the resident will be able to identify his additional specific needs that have not been met. The group home treatment team will then review the list and set up the goals to help and provide the resident the tools and the support to meet his needs.**

C. TEAMWORK

The Clients Survey form and Invitation letter was developed to address Teamwork concerns:

1. **A week before the Needs and Service Plan is due, an invitation letter is send to DCFS CSW and other people involved (CASA worker, mentor, family member,etc.) who are in clients lives and part of their support team. This NSP meeting is done quarterly for each resident together with the group home treatment team (administrator, facility manager, group home social worker and client).**

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2. **At least once a month the group home treatment team will continue to meet to address clients needs, progress, concerns, educational issues, family and visitation matters. This monthly meeting will also focus areas in reference to the Clients Survey (" This Month I will") progress/accomplishments.**

D. TRACKING AND ADJUSTMENT

The Client Survey questionnaire Form was developed to address Tracking and Adjustment concerns.

1. **Based on this questionnaire, the resident will be able to disclose his choice of staff that he is comfortable communicating with and assisting him.**
2. **With this questionnaire, the resident will be able to identify the people that he wanted to be involved in his life including his permanency planning (adoption, reunification, transitional programs, etc).**

Although the Quality Assurance Review deficiencies were mostly referring to AB-12 Non-Minor Dependents, the above Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) was designed for all residents (minors and NMDs). The enclosed Clients Survey (called "This Month I will") is being submitted.

Monthly review of all Clients survey questionnaires will be kept in a separate binder. This monthly meetings will focus areas in reference to the Clients Survey (" This Month I will") progress or accomplishments. The review will also address combined efforts done by the DCFS CSW, group home treatment team (group home social worker, administrator, facility manager) and the client.
At least once a month the group home treatment team will continue to meet to address clients needs, progress, concerns, educational issues, behaviors family and visitation matters.

In behalf of the group home in its entirety, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude for your never ending help and support to our organization in an effort to provide our children the best services possible.

Sincerely,

Cora Manalang, CEO
electronically signed