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February 26, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
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From: Philip L. Browning
Director

T & T HOME FOR BOYS 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 T & T Home for Boys Group Home (the Group Home) in April 2015. The Group Home has one licensed facility located in the Second Supervisorial District and provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS foster children and youth. According to the Group Home's program statement, its stated mission is, "to provide comprehensive behavior and social adjustment services to its adolescent males who experience emotional disturbance, physical abuse, poor social adjustment, behavioral problems and learning disabilities."

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 8 of 9 focus areas: Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork and Tracking & Adjustment. OHCMD noted opportunities for improved performance in the focus area of Safety.

The Group Home provided the attached approved Quality Improvement Plan addressing the recommendations noted in this report. In October 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 Safety.

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
Jimmie Theragood, Administrator, T & T Home for Boys Group Home
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

T & T HOME FOR BOYS 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 T & T Home for Boys Group Home (the Group Home) in April 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 two focus children, two Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Children's Social Workers (CSWs), one Group Home childcare worker, and the Group Home facility manager. Only two focus children were interviewed due to the other children in the home being placed less than 30 days.

At the time of the QAR, the placed children's average number of placements was three, their overall average length of placement was 25 months and their average age was 17. The focus children were randomly selected. One focus child was 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 children. 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	4	**Fair Safety Status** - The focus children are usually avoiding behaviors that cause harm to self, others, or the community but rarely may present a behavior that has low or mild risk of harm. The child may have had related history, diagnoses, or behavior presentations in the past, but may have presented risk behaviors at a declining or much reduced level over the past three months.
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 focus children have substantial permanence. The focus children reside in a group home and DCFS reunification or permanency goals are adequately supported by the Group Home.
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	5	**Good Stability** - The focus children have substantial stability in placement and school settings with only planned changes and no more than one disruption in either setting over the past 12 months with none in the past six months.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	GH QAR Score	GH QAR Rating
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 Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies. All appropriate family/NREFM have regular visits.
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 CSW, and the focus children feel heard and respected. Reports indicate that good, consistent, efforts are being used by the Group Home staff as necessary to find and engage the focus children, caregivers and other key people. Useful accommodations are used to provide scheduling times and locations based on convenience of appropriate parties. Engagement efforts are made frequently and on an ongoing basis.
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** - 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. The array provides an appropriate range of options in the selection of providers.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	GH QAR Score	GH QAR Rating
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 focus children are 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. Necessary conditions for improved functioning and increased overall well-being are generally understood and used to select promising change strategies.
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	5	**Good Teamwork** - The team contains most of the important supporters and decision makers in the focus children's lives, including informal supports. The team has formed a good, dependable working system that meets, talks, and plans together; face-to-face family team meetings are held periodically and at critical points to develop plans. The team has good and necessary skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to organize effective services with children of this complexity and cultural background.
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's 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)

Permanency (5 Good Status)

Permanency Overview: The Group Home provides good permanence. The Group Home demonstrates efforts to assist the focus children in achieving permanency, and the treatment team is aware of each focus child's permanency plan. The Group Home ensures meetings are held regularly to discuss permanency options for each of the focus children. The Group Home also ensures the focus children are visiting or maintaining contact with their family members even when family members are not a viable option for permanency placement.

The first focus child's permanency plan is Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA). The focus child is 18 years old. There are no family members involved in permanency planning or who are viable options for placement. The focus child is preparing for his high school graduation, and he will be attending community college. The focus child will also be submitting an application for DCFS transitional housing. The focus child is mature and has been a good role model for the younger children placed at the Group Home.

The second focus child's permanency plan is PPLA. The focus child is a teen father. He does not have custody of his son; the infant resides in the home of its maternal grandmother. His son's maternal grandmother is supportive of the relationship and visitation the focus child has with his son. There are no family members involved in permanency planning for the focus child. The focus child is a senior in high school and plans on transitioning out of care as soon as he is able.

The DCFS CSWs reported that the focus children are aware of their permanency plans. The focus children report that the Group Home staff has been highly supportive with their plans for permanency. The Group Home shared that it hires adult males as role models who are committed to the well-being of the placed children. The Group Home staff are always talking with and teaching the placed children about, as well as demonstrating to them, what it takes to become a law-abiding, educated and self-sufficient person in society. When the focus children were asked about having a mentor, both of the focus children reported that they were not interested. The focus child stated that the Group Home was meeting their needs.

Placement Stability (5 Good Stability)

Placement Stability Overview: The Group Home is providing good stability for the focus children. Each focus child has been stable in placement with no placement or major school disruptions. The Group Home engages the DCFS CSWs by assessing each focus child's needs prior to placement in the Group Home to ensure the placement is a good match for each focus child.

One focus child has been placed in the Group Home for over four years. When the focus child's DCFS CSW was asked about transitioning the focus child to a lower level of care, the DCFS CSW shared that the focus child had developed strong relationships with the Group Home staff, and the focus child wanted to remain at his current school. The focus child is on the high school football team, is on target to graduate and plans to attend community college in the Fall. The Group Home

has assisted the focus child to stabilize, and he is doing well. The focus child has developed strong ties, and it is expected that these relationships will endure.

The DCFS CSW for the second focus child reported that the focus child continues to do well in placement. The Group Home is providing a stable living environment for the focus child. The strong presence of male role models at this Group Home has a positive impact. Prior to placement at the Group Home, the focus child had been incarcerated. The DCFS CSW states that the Group Home has promoted academic excellence and encourages all children placed at the Group Home to become well rounded. She further stated that although the focus child continues to have difficulty with school attendance, he has made progress; the focus child has occasionally been truant from school.

The Group Home administrator is an educator who is constantly encouraging the focus children to not only go to school, but to excel in school. The administrator proudly shares the many high school diplomas that are on display to all those who frequent the home.

The focus children feel safe, comfortable and respected. There have been no major issues or concerns regarding the focus children. The focus children reported that the Group Home is meeting all of their needs, and they have formed a good, supportive relationship with their caregivers.

Visitation (5 Substantial Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation & Connections)

Visitation Overview: The Group Home is generally effective in maintaining family contact and follows the court's visitation orders. The Group Home staff and DCFS CSWs always work together to assist the focus children in maintaining telephone contact with their families. The Group Home encourages visitation. However, if the focus children do not wish to have visitation, the Group Home and DCFS CSWs encourage and support the focus children in maintaining connections with their relatives, when appropriate. The Group Home maintains visitation logs for tracking of visits. The DCFS CSW provides monthly bus passes for the focus children, if needed.

The first focus child maintains contact with his mother by telephone. The focus child has a brother who resides in DCFS transitional housing. He visits with his brother at his residence every other month. The focus child also has a sister with whom he speaks with via telephone often. He also communicates with her via social media.

The second focus child has a two-year old son. He visits with his son weekly. His visits are overnight weekend visits in the home of his son's maternal grandmother. The focus child also has a half-sister. He recently began visiting with his half-sister, who was located by a DCFS Permanency Partner's Program Social Worker. The focus child's DCFS CSW reported that what began as written and Facebook communication with his half-sister is now frequent face-to-face contact.

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

Safety (4 Fair Safety Status)

Safety Overview: The Group Home provides a fairly safe living situation for the focus children. The focus children have not shown any suicidal behaviors or exhibited any self-injurious behaviors.

The focus children did not report any concerns, and they reported that they feel safe at all times in the Group Home.

The DCFS CSWs reported that the Group Home staff have been very good with keeping them informed of any concerns or issues that might arise with the focus children. The DCFS CSWs reported that there has been no serious school, medical or behavioral issues with the focus children.

The Group Home did not comply with the procedures and protocols of reporting Special Incidents. During the last 30 days, the Group Home did not submit any Special Incident Reports (SIRs) via the I-Track database. After a review of the Group Home's records and the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) of the focus children, it was noted that one focus child had been truant from school. The incident had not been reported via the I-Track database. OHCMD was not aware of the incident; however, the Group Home did notify the focus child's DCFS CSW of the truancy.

In addition, DCFS Child Protection Hotline had received a report of alleged physical abuse and general neglect against the Group Home. The allegations were deemed inconclusive by the DCFS Emergency Response investigating CSW. The Out-of-Home Care Investigations Section (OHCIS) conducted a follow-up investigation and requested a Corrective Action Plan to ensure the Group Home staff attends appropriate training to address concerns.

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 focus children. The Group Home works to ensure that rapport has been developed between the DCFS CSWs, the focus children, and the Group Home staff. Open communication is occurring between the Group Home staff, the focus children, and the DCFS CSWs. All parties interviewed are in agreement that engagement efforts are made by the team members on a regular basis, and reasonable efforts have been made by the Group Home to engage all team members.

The DCFS CSWs reported that the Group Home keeps them informed of the focus children's progress. They also shared that the Group Home staff is very involved and very "hands on" when working with the children. Both CSWs reported that the focus children may also contact them whenever they need to.

The Group Home administrator meets with the focus children daily to discuss academic and behavioral issues that arise.

Each focus child reported that their concerns and needs were heard and respected. The focus children reported that they have bonded with certain staff and are able to discuss their issues and concerns without any problems.

Service Needs (5 Good Supports & Services)

Service Needs Overview: The Group Home has a good array of supports and services that match intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans. The focus children are receiving therapeutic services and tutoring to address academic deficiencies, as well as regular medical and dental check-ups. The focus children receive weekly individual therapy and group therapy from the Group Home social worker.

The DCFS CSW for the first focus child reported that the Group Home staff has been very supportive with the focus child's educational needs, especially ensuring that the focus child receives after school tutoring. The DCFS CSW also shared that the Group Home staff is very involved with the extracurricular activities the focus child participates in; the Group Home staff regularly attended the focus child's football games.

Although the second focus child has demonstrated challenges with school attendance, he has made great efforts to improve academically, especially after he became ineligible to play football due to poor grades. With the support of the Group Home staff, the focus child successfully completed assignments and was able to bring all of his grades into good standing. The focus child struggles with attending each of his classes daily, but recognizes that frequent absences and/or tardiness jeopardize his ability to participate on the school football team. The Group Home staff work with the focus child's school, and they attended the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meeting to address the focus child's educational needs and school attendance. The Group Home staff remain involved, continue to support, and encourage the focus child to do well in school. They also support his dream of playing football at the collegiate level.

The Group Home utilizes a team approach to develop NSP goals. The Group Home social worker collaborates with the DCFS CSW and the focus child to develop NSP goals. The focus children reported that the services received are appropriately meeting their needs.

Assessment & Linkages (5 Good Assessments and Understanding)

Assessment & Linkages Overview: All parties involved generally understand the focus children's functioning, challenges, earlier life traumas and support systems. The Group Home staff assesses the focus children's needs and provides appropriate interventions for them to function effectively in daily settings. The services and supports are regularly assessed and modified to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals. Educational supports such as tutoring are provided, and participation in extracurricular activities is encouraged by the Group Home, as both focus children are participating in football at their high school.

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. The Group Home provides services required to help the focus children and supports them to make their placement successful. The Group Home seems to have a good assessment and understanding in the functioning and support systems for the focus children.

The Group Home works closely with the school the focus children attend. The Group Home promotes education and ensures the focus children's educational needs are met. The first focus child

will be graduating from high school. The Group Home has been supportive of the focus child's plans to continue his education.

Teamwork (5 Good Teamwork)

Teamwork Overview: The Group Home involves most of the important supporters and decision makers in the focus children's lives. The team, consisting of the DCFS CSW, the Group Home therapist and the focus children has formed a good, dependable working system that has ongoing discussions and works collaboratively in case planning. The team members for each of the focus children appear to be attuned to the focus children's strengths and needs, and they ensure the necessary supports are available to assist the focus children in addressing their underlying needs related to child abuse and neglect.

One DCFS CSW reported that during her monthly visit with the focus child, she sits with the facility manager and the focus child to discuss any concerns regarding the focus child. Additionally, the Group Home administrator meets with the DCFS CSWs along with the Group Home staff to discuss the focus children's progress and any modifications to their treatment plans to assist them in making progress. The Group Home staff also maintains regular contact with the focus children's DCFS CSWs, via face-to-face contacts, by telephone or via email or sometimes by texting.

The Group Home also works as part of the team to address the educational needs of the focus children. The Group Home staff, along with the second focus child's DCFS CSW, the Biology teacher, the attendance counselor and the focus child participated in an IEP meeting to address the focus child's educational needs and address concerns at school.

The focus children reported that they are satisfied with the teamwork demonstrated by the team members. The focus children reported that they feel they are included in the team, and feel respected when they are permitted to make their own choices regarding placement, visitation or contact with their family members and participation in extracurricular activities of their choice.

Tracking & Adjustment (5 Good Tracking & Adjustment Process)

Tracking & Adjustment Overview: Intervention strategies, supports, and services provided to the focus children and their families are generally responsive to changing conditions. The focus children's needs and progress are regularly evaluated, and services provided are modified accordingly. The Group Home is aware of the ongoing and changing needs of the focus children and modifies the needed services accordingly. The Group Home administrator and facility manager ensures that barriers encountered and any strategies modified are communicated with key members of the team. Adjustments are promptly made when it is determined that specific services are not producing the desired results. The Group Home therapist uses NSPs to closely document and monitor each focus child's progress toward their treatment goals.

An example of the Group Home's efforts to track and adjust the focus children's progress is when the first focus child was struggling with receiving passing grades. The focus child really wanted to play football; the Group Home began to impress upon the focus child the importance of education. The focus child was provided with tutoring, and the Group Home modified the focus child's intervention strategies and supported his academic and athletic process. The focus child began to earn passing

grades and improved his grade point average to meet the school's academic requirements to participate in sports. The focus child maintained his grades and was able to play football.

Another example is how the Group Home worked with the second focus child. The focus child is a teen father. The Group Home has been very supportive of the focus child and his relationship with his infant son. The Group Home is aware that the focus child is attached and bonded to his child. The Group Home encourages the visitation, and they also transport the focus child to see his son. The Group Home also worked with the DCFS CSW who approved a community pass for the focus child to visit his son.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In December 2014, OHCMD provided the Group Home with technical support related to findings indicated in the 2014-2015 Contract Compliance Review, which consisted of the following: discussion of compliance with Title 22 regulations, Licensure Requirements and Maintenance of Required Documentation, Health and Medical Needs, Personal Needs and Personnel Records.

In October 2015, the 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 Safety. 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.

T & T HOME FOR BOYS

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December 2, 2015

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I. **LICENSURE/CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS**

FINDINGS

- The Group Home did not comply with the procedures and protocols of reporting special incidents.
  The Group Home did not submit any special Incident Reports (SIR's) via I-track database system regarding the resident being truant from school. **(SAFETY)**

Person(s) Responsible for Implementation of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The Facility Manager is responsible for ensuring that SIR I-tracking Guidelines are followed per the **Special Incident Reporting Guide for Group Home (GH).** Facility manager will examine all SIR's and submit to OHC, CCL and CSW.

Time Frame of Implementation

Immediately

Agency did receive technical support from OHCMDM on November 18, 2015.

Agency will ensure that all SIR's submitted as required by SIR reporting guidelines and Title 22 Regulations.

Jimmie Theragood

Jimmie Theragood, Administrator