County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5602

PHILIP L. BROWNING
Director

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March 25, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
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Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Philip L. Browning
Director

VISTA DEL MAR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES GROUP HOME CONTRACT COMPLIANCE REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Contracts Administration Division (CAD) conducted a Contract Compliance Review of Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services Group Home (the Group Home) in August 2015. The Group Home has one site located in the Third Supervisorial District and provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed foster children, Probation placed youth and children from other counties. According to the Group Home's program statement, its stated purpose is, "to provide services to court dependent, emotionally disturbed, abused and neglected children."

The Group Home maintains a 24-bed residential site and is licensed to serve a capacity of 24 male and female children, ages 13 through 18. At the time of review, the Group Home served 21 DCFS placed children and one Probation placed youth. The children's average length of placement was five months and their average age was 17.

SUMMARY

During CAD's Contract Compliance Review, the interviewed children generally reported: feeling safe, having been provided with good care and appropriate services, being comfortable in their environment and treated with respect and dignity.

The Group Home was in full compliance with 7 of 10 areas of CAD's Contract Compliance Review: Licensure/Contract Requirements; Facility and Environment; Educational and Workforce Readiness; Health and Medical Needs; Psychotropic Medication; Discharged Children; and Personnel Records.

CAD noted deficiencies in the areas of: Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery, related to the Group Home not obtaining County Children's Social Worker's (CSW's) authorization to implement the Needs and Services Plan (NSP) and not developing a timely initial NSP; Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being, related to not having a fair rewards and

discipline system in place; Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being, related to children not being provided adequate personal care items and children not encouraged or assisted in creating a Life Book/Photo Album.

REVIEW OF REPORT

On September 28, 2015, Jennifer Higuchi, CAD and Adelina Arutyunyan, Out-of-Home Care Management Division held an Exit Conference with the Group Home representative, Amy Jaffe, Senior Vice President. The Group Home representative was in agreement with the review findings and recommendations, was receptive to implementing systemic changes to improve compliance with regulatory standards and to addressing the noted deficiencies in a Corrective Action Plan (CAP).

A copy of this report has been sent to the Auditor-Controller and Community Care Licensing (CCL).

The Group Home provided the attached CAP addressing the recommendations noted in this report.

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

PLB:EM:LTI:jh

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Calvin Remington, Interim Chief Probation Officer
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Sybil Brand Commission
Nancy Tallerino, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Leonora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

IV	**Educational and Workforce Readiness** (5 Elements) 1. Children Enrolled in School Within Three School Days 2. GH Ensured Children Attended School and Facilitated in Meeting Their Educational Goals 3. Current Report Cards/Progress Reports Maintained 4. Children's Academic Performance and/or Attendance Increased 5. GH Encouraged Children's Participation in YDS or Equivalent Services and Vocational Programs	Full Compliance (All)
V	**Health and Medical Needs** (4 Elements) 1. Initial Medical Exams Conducted Timely 2. Follow-Up Medical Exams Conducted Timely 3. Initial Dental Exams Conducted Timely 4. Follow-Up Dental Exams Conducted Timely	Full Compliance (All)
VI	**Psychotropic Medication** (2 Elements) 1. Current Court Authorization for Administration of Psychotropic Medication 2. Current Psychiatric Evaluation Review	Full Compliance (All)
VII	**Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being** (13 Elements) 1. Children Informed of Group Home's Policies and Procedures 2. Children Feel Safe 3. Appropriate Staffing and Supervision 4. GH's Efforts to provide Nutritious Meals and Snacks 5. Staff Treat Children with Respect and Dignity 6. Appropriate Rewards and Discipline System 7. Children Allowed Private Visits, Calls and Correspondence 8. Children Free to Attend or Not Attend Religious Services/Activities 9. Children's Chores Reasonable 10. Children Informed About Their Medication and Right to Refuse Medication 11. Children Free to Receive or Reject Voluntary Medical, Dental and Psychiatric Care 12. Children Given Opportunities to Plan Activities in Extra-Curricular, Enrichment and Social Activities (GH, School, Community) 13. Children Given Opportunities to Participate in Extra-Curricular, Enrichment and Social Activities (GH, School, Community)	1. Full Compliance 2. Full Compliance 3. Full Compliance 4. Full Compliance 5. Full Compliance 6. Improvement Needed 7. Full Compliance 8. Full Compliance 9. Full Compliance 10. Full Compliance 11. Full Compliance 12. Full Compliance 13. Full Compliance

VIII	**Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being** (7 Elements) 1. $50 Clothing Allowance 2. Adequate Quantity and Quality of Clothing Inventory 3. Children Involved in the Selection of Their Clothing 4. Provision of Clean Towels and Adequate Ethnic Personal Care Items 5. Minimum Monetary Allowances 6. Management of Allowance/Earnings 7. Encouragement and Assistance with Life Book/Photo Album	1. Full Compliance 2. Full Compliance 3. Full Compliance 4. Improvement Needed 5. Full Compliance 6. Full Compliance 7. Improvement Needed
IX	**Discharged Children** (3 Elements) 1. Children Discharged According to Permanency Plan 2. Children Made Progress Toward NSP Goals 3. Attempts to Stabilize Children's Placement	Full Compliance (All)
X	**Personnel Records** (7 Elements) 1. FBI, DOJ, and CACIs Submitted Timely 2. Signed Criminal Background Statement Timely 3. Education/Experience Requirement 4. Employee Health Screening/TB Clearances Timely 5. Valid Driver's License 6. Signed Copies of Group Home Policies and Procedures 7. All Required Training	Full Compliance (All)

VISTA DEL MAR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES GROUP HOME
CONTRACT COMPLIANCE REVIEW SUMMARY

Rate Classification Level: 12

	Contract Compliance Review	**Findings: August 2015**
I	**Licensure/Contract Requirements** (9 Elements) 1. Timely Notification for Child's Relocation 2. Provided Children's Transportation Needs 3. Vehicle Maintained in Good Repair 4. Timely, Cross-Reported SIRs 5. Disaster Drills Conducted & Logs Maintained 6. Runaway Procedures 7. Comprehensive Monetary and Clothing Allowance Logs Maintained 8. Detailed Sign-In/Sign-Out Logs for Placed Children 9. CCL Complaints on Safety/Plant Deficiencies	Full Compliance (All)
II	**Facility and Environment** (5 Elements) 1. Exterior Well Maintained 2. Common Areas Well Maintained 3. Children's Bedrooms Well Maintained 4. Sufficient Recreational Equipment/Educational Resources 5. Adequate Perishable and Non-Perishable Foods	Full Compliance (All)
III	**Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery** (10 Elements) 1. Child Population Consistent with Capacity and Program Statement 2. County Children Social Worker's Authorization to Implement NSPs 3. NSPs Implemented and Discussed with Staff 4. Children Progressing Toward Meeting NSP Case Goals 5. Therapeutic Services Received 6. Recommended Assessment/Evaluations Implemented 7. County Children Social Workers Monthly Contacts Documented 8. Children Assisted in Maintaining Important Relationships 9. Development of Timely, Comprehensive Initial NSPs with Child's Participation. 10. Development of Timely, Comprehensive, Updated	1. Full Compliance 2. Improvement Needed 3. Full Compliance 4. Full Compliance 5. Full Compliance 6. Full Compliance 7. Full Compliance 8. Full Compliance 9. Improvement Needed 10. Full Compliance

	NSPs with Child's Participation	
IV	**Educational and Workforce Readiness** (5 Elements) 1. Children Enrolled in School Within Three School Days 2. GH Ensured Children Attended School and Facilitated in Meeting Their Educational Goals 3. Current Report Cards/Progress Reports Maintained 4. Children's Academic Performance and/or Attendance Increased 5. GH Encouraged Children's Participation in YDS or Equivalent Services and Vocational Programs	Full Compliance (All)
V	**Health and Medical Needs** (4 Elements) 1. Initial Medical Exams Conducted Timely 2. Follow-Up Medical Exams Conducted Timely 3. Initial Dental Exams Conducted Timely 4. Follow-Up Dental Exams Conducted Timely	Full Compliance (All)
VI	**Psychotropic Medication** (2 Elements) 1. Current Court Authorization for Administration of Psychotropic Medication 2. Current Psychiatric Evaluation Review	Full Compliance (All)
VII	**Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being** (13 Elements) 1. Children Informed of Group Home's Policies and Procedures 2. Children Feel Safe 3. Appropriate Staffing and Supervision 4. GH's Efforts to provide Nutritious Meals and Snacks 5. Staff Treat Children with Respect and Dignity 6. Appropriate Rewards and Discipline System 7. Children Allowed Private Visits, Calls and Correspondence 8. Children Free to Attend or Not Attend Religious Services/Activities 9. Children's Chores Reasonable 10. Children Informed About Their Medication and Right to Refuse Medication 11. Children Free to Receive or Reject Voluntary Medical, Dental and Psychiatric Care 12. Children Given Opportunities to Plan Activities in Extra-Curricular, Enrichment and Social Activities (GH, School, Community)	1. Full Compliance 2. Full Compliance 3. Full Compliance 4. Full Compliance 5. Full Compliance 6. Improvement Needed 7. Full Compliance 8. Full Compliance 9. Full Compliance 10. Full Compliance 11. Full Compliance 12. Full Compliance

	13. Children Given Opportunities to Participate in Extra-Curricular, Enrichment and Social Activities (GH, School, Community)	13. Full Compliance
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Philip M. Stein
Chair, Board of Directors

Louis Josephson, Ph.D.
President/Chief Executive Officer

VISTA DEL MAR
CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

October 8, 2015

Ali Bhatti
Contracts Administration Division
Department of Children and Family Services
3530 Wilshire Blvd, 4th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90010

bhatta@dcfs.lacounty.gov

RE: CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN, Level 12 Group Home (Handler Unit)

To Whom It May Concern:

I am providing the Contracts Administration Division with a Corrective Action Plan (CAP)) as requested, regarding the findings revealed during the monitoring of our Level 12 Group Home facility (Handler Unit) by DCFS' Contract Compliance Reviewer Jennifer Higuchi.

FINAL MONITORING REVIEW FIELD EXIT SUMMARY 09/28/2015

III. Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery

23. Did the treatment team develop timely, comprehensive, initial Needs and Series Plans (NSP)?

For child # 6, NSP was missing the CSW signature and there was no record that a follow up NSP was sent to the CSW after the NSP report due dates.

CAP: Please see attached revision of Vista Del Mar's updated process for seeking to obtain signatures from CSW which demonstrates at least 3 attempts within 5 days of NSP due date. Attached is also a calendar for October's upcoming NSPs. This procedure has been reviewed with all clinicians and clerical staff.

VII. Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being

41. Is a fair rewards system and discipline system in place?

Three children stated that they experience the point system as being unfair and subjective.

CAP: An updated point system has been identified and will be put into practice on Monday 10/19/2015. The process of formulating the new system involved clinicians, direct care staff, supervisors, Senior VP, and our DBT consultant. It is based on a daily 10 point system and is not subjective. Supervisors and clinicians to be trained regarding the new system on 8/14/2015 and direct care staff will be trained follow that meeting. Groups to be held with all residents to review new, simpler point system. (Please see attached Residential Point Chart).

VIII. Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being

52. Are children provided with a sufficient supply of clean towels along with adequate personal care items...and are these items readily accessible?

Three of the children interviewed stated that they have used their own money to purchase "special" hygienic items not made available to the unit. One child reported that the staff can't get into the closet where persona hygiene items are kept.

CAP: On 9/15/2015, review took place with all staff (including supervisors) regarding the policy that residents should not spend their own money on personal hygiene products if we don't have the comparable product that the child desires in our regular supply. This was reviewed in unit meetings during October (*please see attached training outline and sign in sheet*). If a resident would like a personal care item that is not stocked at this facility, Vista Del Mar will fund the alternative options that can be purchased during off site community outings or for those residents who cannot safely go off grounds, the staff will purchase the requested item for them. In addition, direct care staff have met with the children one on one to review this protocol. Please also see information regarding this as addressed in the unit's handbook for residents. Furthermore, a follow up was conducted with all staff and every staff does have access with their key to the cupboard where hygiene items are kept.

55. Are children encouraged and assisted in creating and updating a life book/photo album?

Three of the children reported that they either have very few pictures or known at all.

CAP: In exploring with team members, it became apparent that some of these children have not wanted to participate in the life book activity and have declined having pictures taken. One resident came from another country and has no pictures available. Meeting was held with staff to discuss options for those residents who decline wanting to participate in life book projects. In these cases, staff to put together pictures for them and to keep the book in the staff room. If the child ever changes his/her mind and wants pictures, they will be organized and ready for him/her. At least monthly, our Mental Health Rehabilitation staff will orchestrate a formal activity where residents will receive support and help in adding pictures and mementos to their life books.

Please let me know if additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

Amy Jaffe, LCSW
Senior Vice President of Intensive Intervention Programs

Cc: Adelina Arutyunya, DCFS Quality Assurance/OHCMD
Louis Josephson, PhD, CEO
Lynn Cohen, Handler Unit Director
Quality Management Department
Steven Smithwick, Contract Compliance Manager, Vista Del Mar

- A timely initial NSP was not developed.

A child's NSP due on May 1, 2015, was not submitted to the CSW within five days of the due date.

During the Exit Conference, the Group Home representative stated that it was previously unclear that three documented attempts needed to be made and that they will implement that in their new protocol.

Recommendation:

The Group Home's management shall ensure that:

1. The County CSW's authorization to implement NSPs is obtained.

2. Timely Initial NSPs are developed.

Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being

- Appropriate rewards and discipline system not in place.

Three sampled children stated that they felt the point reward system was not applied fairly. The first child stated that the current point system is not fair because the points are not given out consistently by staff and at times the Group Home staff forgets to write the points in the charts. The second child stated that the Group Home staff does not give points if they don't actually see the residents completing the chores and sometimes chores are completed prior to staff being available to observe. The third child stated that staff does not give out points fairly and that the residents are treated differently based on the staff's personal opinion.

During the Exit Conference, the Group Home representative stated that a new and simpler point system was implemented recently that will reward children for concrete tasks that are completed. It was also mentioned that the Group Home's staff have been trained regarding this new point system.

Recommendation:

The Group Home's management shall ensure that:

3. An appropriate rewards and discipline system is in place.

Personal Needs/Survival and Economic Well-Being

- Children not provided adequate personal care items.

Four children stated that they utilized their weekly monetary allowances to purchase personal care items. The first child stated that he purchases his own deodorant and shampoo but when he runs out he uses what the Group Home provides. The second child stated that he buys certain products on his own because he likes a particular brand. The third child stated that at night the supervisors are not present and the personal care items closet is locked. There was an incident where she had to

borrow items from other residents to take a shower. The fourth child stated that she buys her own shampoo because she needs a shampoo and conditioner that detangles her hair.

During the Exit Conference, the Group Home representative stated that she will speak with their purchasing department to ensure the children have the option of choosing their own personal care items. On September 15, 2015, the Group Home trained staff regarding children not spending their own money for these items and to ensure children have a regular supply of required or preferred comparable personal care items in stock. In addition, children are now taken on monthly outings to allow them to choose their own personal care items.

- Children were not encouraged and assisted in creating a Life Book/Photo Album.

Three children stated that they do not have any pictures in their possession. The first child stated that all the photos he has are from home and that he has not been given any pictures by the Group Home staff. The other two children stated that they do not remember the Group Home staff taking or giving out any photos.

During the Exit Conference, the Group Home representative stated that Life Books/Photo Albums will be incorporated into their afternoon activity on a regular basis. Staff was trained to put together pictures of children in an album and maintain in staff room in case children who previously expressed a desire to not participate in maintaining a life book have those photos available if and when they change their mind.

Recommendations:

The Group Home's management shall ensure that:

4. Children are provided adequate personal care items.

5. Children are encouraged and assisted in creating and updating a Life Book/Photo Album.

PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP FROM DCFS CAD's GROUP HOME CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW

CAD's last compliance report dated December 31, 2014, identified ten recommendations.

Results

Based on CAD's follow-up, the Group Home fully implemented 8 of 10 recommendations for which they were to ensure:

- Comprehensive monetary and clothing allowance logs are maintained.
- The Group Home is in compliance with Title 22 regulations and free of Community Care Licensing complaints.
- Adequate perishable and non-perishable foods are maintained.
- Children are progressing toward meeting NSP goals.