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

PHILIP L. BROWNING
Director

BRANDON NICHOLS
Chief Deputy Director

Board of Supervisors
HILDA L. SOLIS
First District
MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District
SHEILA KUEHL
Third District
DON KNABE
Fourth District
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

July 13, 2016

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

From: Philip L. Browning
Director

WEST COVINA FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY DBA HOMES OF HOPE, CASA ESPERANZA TREATMENT CENTER 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 West Covina Foster Family Agency dba Homes of Hope, Casa Esperanza Treatment Center Group Home (the Group Home) on February 16, 2016. The Group Home is a Rate Classification Level 12 and has one site located in the First Supervisorial District. The Group Home provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children. According to the Group Home's Program Statement, its stated purpose is, "to provide quality residential foster care to minors who are unable to live with their families and instill hope, trust, joy and meaning in the lives of minors in care."

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 all 9 focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment.

In April 2016, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss the results of the QAR. The Group Home scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas; therefore, the Group Home did not require a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

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

PLB:KR:KDR:rds

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Sukhwinder Singh, Executive Director, West Covina FFA dba Homes of Hope, Casa Esperanza Treatment Center Group Home
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

WEST COVINA FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY DBA HOMES OF HOPE,
CASA ESPERANZA TREATMENT CENTER GROUP HOME
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIDEW (QAR)
FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of West Covina Foster Family Agency dba Homes of Hope, Casa Esperanza Treatment Center Group Home (the Group Home) on February 16, 2016. 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 QAR focuses on the focus child's functioning during the most recent 30 day period and for Practice Indicators, the QAR 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) and three Group Home staff members.

At the time of the QAR, the Group Home served six DCFS placed children. The focus children's average number of placements was five, their overall average length of placement was five months and their average age was 16. The focus children were randomly selected. None of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the Contract Administration Division's (CAD's) 2015-2016 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 focus children. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
Safety - The degree to which the Group Home staff ensures that the focus children are free of abuse, neglect and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	6 - Optimal Safety Status	The focus children have a highly safe living situation with fully reliable and competent caregivers and are protected well at all times. Protective strategies are fully operative and dependable.
Permanency - The degree to which the focus children are living with caregivers, who are likely to remain in this role until the focus children reach adulthood, or the focus children are in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the focus children, the Group Home staff, caregivers, DCFS CSWs and if applicable, Department of Probation Officers (DPOs) support the plan.	5	5 - Good Status	The focus children have substantial permanence. The focus children live in a family setting that the focus children, Group Home staff and team members have confidence will endure lifelong.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
Placement Stability - The degree to which the Group Home staff ensures that the focus children's daily living, learning and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions. Known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruptions.	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 30 days.
Visitation - The degree to which the Group Home staff support maintaining important connections with significant family members/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visitation and other means.	5	5 - Substantially Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation and Connections	Generally effective family connections are being sought for all significant family members/NREFMs through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies. All appropriate family members/NREFMs have regular visits.
Engagement - The degree to which the Group Home staff working with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to concentrate on the focus children'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, DPOs (if applicable) and the focus children feel heard and respected. Reports indicate that good, consistent efforts are being used.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
Service Needs - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the focus children work toward ensuring the focus children's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the focus children's unique needs.	5	5 - Good Supports and Services	A good and substantial array of supports and services substantially matches intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans. The services are generally helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes.
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs understand the focus children's strengths, needs, preferences and underlying needs and services provided 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.
Teamwork - The degree to which the "right people" for the focus children and their family members/NREFMs, have formed a working team that meets, talks and/or 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/or plans together.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
Tracking & Adjustment - The degree to which the Group Home staff involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs are carefully tracking the progress that the focus children are 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 is occurring.

OHCMD conducted the last QAR of the Group Home in May 2015 and the Group Home scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas of the 2014-2015 QAR. The Group Home did not require a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). Based on the information below, it appears that the Group Home maintained their quality of services on the 2015-2016 QAR.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

Status Indicators	Safety	Permanency	Placement Stability	Visitation
2014-2015 Scores	6	5	5	5
2015-2016 Scores	6	5	5	5

In the areas of Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability and Visitation, the Group Home provides a good quality of services and stability to the focus children. The Group Home continues to provide a safe living environment and protective strategies are utilized to consistently avoid behaviors that cause harm to the placed children. The Group staff are quick to intervene if any situation arises and they are all familiar with the focus children's behaviors and they always ensure that the focus children are constantly supervised. The Group Home staff reported that they utilize observation and interaction techniques to assist them in recognizing the behaviors of the focus children to ensure their safety. All of the focus children reported that they feel safe in the Group Home because the Group Home staff provide adequate supervision at all times. One focus child reported that the Group Home makes her feel safe and is meeting all of her needs and that there is always staff available to assist her if she has any concerns. The DCFS CSWs interviewed reported having no safety concerns regarding the Group Home. The Group Home continues to provide permanency services by teaching the focus children independent living skills such as, respecting authority,

money management and job searches. The focus children's permanency goals are documented in their Needs and Services Plans (NSPs), such as Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA) services and Family Reunification. Permanency goals are shared among staff and other team members to ensure they are aware of each focus child's individual permanency goals and that the services provided are assisting them in achieving their goals. The focus children reported that the DCFS CSWs are working with the Group Home in preparing them to transition to a lower level of care, such as Intensive Treatment Foster Care homes. The Group Home provides good placement stability for the focus children. To prevent possible placement disruptions, the Group Home staff work closely and share the focus children's information with the DCFS CSWs to ensure that appropriate services are in place. The Group Home always encourages the focus children to maintain connections with their family members/NREFMs. The Group Home is also very good in ensuring that the visits are convenient for the focus children's family members/NREFMs. The Group Home will also provide transportation for parents to facilitate visitation with the focus children. If a visit is missed or cancelled, the Group Home will work with all parties to immediately reschedule the visit.

PRACTICE INDICATORS
(Measured over last 90 days)

Practice Indicators	Engagement	Service Needs	Assessment & Linkages	Teamwork	Tracking & Adjustment
2014-2015 Scores	5	5	5	5	5
2015-2016 Scores	5	5	5	5	5

In the areas of Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment, the Group Home continues to make consistent and good efforts to engage the focus children and key people in decisions that are being made on their behalf. The Group Home staff are in regular contact with all team members and DCFS CSWs to provide information in regards to the focus children's current status. The DCFS CSWs reported that the Group Home staff keeps them informed regarding the focus children's progress and well-being. The Group Home provides a good array of supports and services and provides match intervention strategies identified in the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) for each of the focus children. All of the focus children reported that the services provided were appropriate and are meeting their needs. The DCFS CSWs also reported that the services provided to the focus children are appropriate. The Group Home facility manager and the Group Home child care workers continue to review the focus children's status and well-being on a daily basis to understand the needs of the focus children. The Group Home invites the important supporters and decision-makers in the focus children's lives to attend the monthly in-house meetings to discuss the focus children's NSP goals, concerns and/or other issues. The DCFS CSWs meet with the Group Home staff, Group Home administrator and Group Home Social Worker during their monthly visits and the Group Home staff are available if meetings need to occur more frequently. The Group Home facility manager and

child care workers are quick to respond to all key members inquiries regarding the focus children. Additionally, the Group Home staff meets weekly with the Group Home administrator or the therapist to review and discuss the focus children's progress to better assist them in making progress toward their case plans. The focus children's DCFS CSWs reported that they are invited and have attended team meetings with all the important supporters in the focus children's lives and the focus children to address their needs and services. The Group Home staff continues to track services provided to the focus children. The Group Home staff also ensures that adjustments or modifications are promptly made so that the focus children are progressing towards their NSP goals.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In August 2015, the OHCMD provided the Group Home with technical support related to the CAD's 2014-2015 Contract Compliance Review in the areas of Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery and Personal Rights and Social/Emotional Well-Being. Technical support was provided on how the Group Home can ensure that visitation is in adherence with court orders; that NSPs are submitted timely; all placed children are treated with respect and dignity; and that personal rights are explained to all placed children.

In April 2016, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss the results of the QAR. The Group Home scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all focus areas; therefore, a QIP was not required. However, the OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support training and consultation, as needed.