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July 21, 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

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 December 2015. The Group Home is a Rate Classification Level 12 and has three sites, one site located in the Second Supervisorial District and two sites in the Fourth 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 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 8 of 9 focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment. The OHCMD noted an opportunity for improved performance in the focus area of Visitation.

In March 2016, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the Group Home with technical support to address methods for improvement in the area of Visitation. The Group Home provided the attached approved Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 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:KR
KDR:rds

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Laneta J. Hill, Executive Director, 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 2015-2016

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 December 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 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 16 DCFS placed children. The focus children's average number of placements was seven, their overall average length of placement was 20 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 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.
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	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 30 days.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
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	4 - Acceptable Maintenance of Family Connections	Fairly effective family connections are at least minimally maintained for most significant family members/NREFMs through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies. Family members/NREFMs have periodic 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.
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.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	Group Home QAR Score	Group Home QAR Rating
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.
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 March 2015 and noted an opportunity for improvement in the focus areas of Visitation and Teamwork. In July 2015, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the Group Home with technical support to address methods for improvement in these two areas. Based on the information below, it appears that the Group Home showed improvement in the area of Teamwork; however, the OHCMD noted a continued need for improved performance in the area of Visitation on their 2015-2016 QAR.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

Status Indicators	Safety	Permanency	Placement Stability	Visitation
2014-2015 Scores	6	5	6	4
2015-2016 Scores	6	5	6	4

In the area of Safety, the Group Home continues to provide a safe living environment and appropriate supervision for the focus children. The Group Home staff conducts unannounced walk-through safety assessments at all the Group Home sites. Additionally, when a placed child presents with at-risk behaviors and requires additional support, the Group Home provides increased supervision and immediately arranges for the Group Home therapist to meet with the placed child. The focus children reported that the Group Home staff's presence makes them feel safe and comfortable in the Group Home. DCFS CSWs had no safety concerns regarding the Group Home or the care the focus children received. They reported that the Group Home provides a safe living environment for the focus children with competent, caring childcare workers.

In the area of Permanency, the Group Home demonstrates efforts to assist placed children in reaching their permanency plans recommended by DCFS. The focus children are aware of and work toward their permanency goals. Two focus children are receiving Supportive Transition services and one focus child is receiving Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (PPLA) services. The Group Home provides permanency services that include Emancipation and Youth Development Services to assist placed children in becoming self-sufficient. The Group Home also assists placed children in the exploration of employment opportunities. The Group Home is preparing the two focus children in achieving permanency by connecting them with an Independent Living Program (ILP). One of the focus children is expected to move into transitional housing in the near future. The second focus child has initiated the application process for transitional housing and graduated from high school in June 2016. These two focus children are also employed part-time at a local warehouse. The third focus child shared that the Group Home staff has been supportive and has worked to stabilize him so that he may work toward achieving his permanency goals to become independent. The Group Home is also working on a concurrent permanency plan for this focus child in efforts to transition him to the home of his legal guardians.

In the area of Placement Stability, the Group Home is providing a stable home environment for the focus children. The Group Home ensures that its staff is trained to deal with the focus children's needs. Two focus children expressed that they have made significant progress since their placement at the Group Home. They shared that initially they were struggling to follow staff directives and had difficulty adjusting to other placed children in the home. Now, they feel the Group Home is their home and the Group Home staff is part of their family. They feel comfortable, relaxed and supported. The third focus child reported that although he wants to reunify with his legal guardians, he understands he needs to remain placed at the Group Home due to his behavior and treatment needs. The Group Home is the most appropriate placement for this focus child, as it provides the structure and stability he requires. The focus child further reported that he has maintained conflict-free relationships with the other placed children, he is trying to adhere to his curfew, and he has decreased

incidents of AWOLing. The focus child's DCFS CSW expressed that she appreciates the Group Home's efforts to work with the focus child so that he could remain at the Group Home. All of the DCFS CSWs agreed that the focus children will remain placed at the Group Home until they transition to a permanent arrangement and there is little likelihood of future disruptions.

In the area of Visitation, the OHCMD found that the Group Home had not fully implemented the 2014-2015 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to promote monthly visitation between each placed child and their family members, extended family, NREFMs and/or mentors. During this QAR, the OHCMD found that two focus children were not having regular visitation with their family members, as the family members were upset and refusing to visit the focus children due to their misbehavior during prior visits. The Group Home made no efforts to intervene or assist the focus children and their family members in resolving the issues. After the family members resumed visitation, visits were sporadic. There was no follow-up by the Group Home and the Group Home did not make efforts to contact the family members to schedule visits or discuss the visitation plan. Additionally, the Group Home did not initiate efforts to link the third focus child with a mentor, as the focus child did not have any visitors. The Group Home staff stated at the time they were experiencing difficulties with the family members' lack of interest in maintaining a relationship with the focus child. The OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss visitation and the importance of maintaining family connections, how to work together to implement the Visitation QIP, as well as modify or develop strategies to ensure visitation for placed children that would be successful for the Group Home.

PRACTICE INDICATORS
(Measured over last 90 days)

Practice Indicators	Engagement	Service Needs	Assessment & Linkages	Teamwork	Tracking & Adjustment
2014-2015 Scores	5	5	5	4	5
2015-2016 Scores	5	5	5	5	5

In the area of Engagement, the Group Home maintains good efforts to engage the focus children and key parties. The Group Home has developed an open dialogue with the focus children, their DCFS CSWs and service providers regarding the well-being and progress of the focus children. The Group Home administrator stated that all of the focus children interact with some of the treatment team members on a daily basis. The focus children expressed that they could speak with any of the Group Home staff members to discuss a need or concern, and they felt heard. The focus children stated that they like meeting with the Group Home therapists, as they feel they address their concerns. The DCFS CSWs for the focus children reported good rapport and positive working relationships with the Group Home Social Workers and case manager.

In the area of Service Needs, the Group Home provides the placed children with an array of services and extracurricular activities to help the children make progress toward their planned outcomes. The services include weekly individual therapy, substance abuse treatment, alternative school settings, internship programs and summer employment opportunities, ILP activities, tutoring, as well as transportation to work, school and extracurricular activities. Two focus children are participating in individual counseling at least twice a month. They are both receiving tutoring services, ILP services and/or Youth Development Services, and participating in extracurricular activities. One of the focus children is on the high school basketball team and the other focus child is enrolled in the local Boys and Girls Club. The third focus child reported that the Group Home provides him with a stable placement and offers him educational advice. He is currently attending community college. All of the focus children stated that the services they are receiving are meeting their needs and they feel they are benefitting from the services. An example of the Group Home's efforts to address the needs of placed children is in the situation of one focus child that was struggling with substance abuse and AWOL behaviors. The Group Home held a team meeting with his DCFS CSW to develop a safety plan, increased supervision and enrolled the focus child in a substance abuse treatment program. The focus child reported that he is benefitting from the services and is making progress toward achieving his treatment goals.

In the areas of Assessment & Linkages and Tracking & Adjustment, the Group Home continues to assess the focus children's needs and provides appropriate interventions to assist them in functioning effectively in daily settings. The Group Home treatment team promptly adjusts a placed child's treatment plan when it is determined that services are not producing the desired results. For example, one focus child had difficulty following house rules and complying with staff directives. He would leave the Group Home without staff's permission and sometimes returned to the Group Home late from school. A treatment team meeting was held, and the team decided to relocate him to another Group Home site to separate him from his roommate who was a negative influence. The Group Home also enrolled him in the local Boys and Girls Club where the focus child explored his interests in playing basketball and music production. Since the changes were made, the focus child has agreed to participate in voluntary substance abuse counseling services which he previously refused to attend. The focus child's behavior has improved. He has been respecting house rules and complying with staff directives. The DCFS CSWs reported that the Group Home staff appropriately addresses the focus children's needs and maintains regular contact with them regarding their progress and adjustment.

In the area of Teamwork, the QAR found that the Group Home had fully implemented the 2014-2015 QIP. During the previous review, the Group Home was not having quarterly team meetings which included key parties. Further, the Group Home was not meeting regularly with its staff or holding in-house treatment team meetings. To address this, the Group Home is scheduling quarterly team meetings and is inviting DCFS CSWs and service providers. The Group Home is providing advanced notification of the quarterly meetings. Additionally, the Group Home implemented weekly in-house Team Communication Meetings to ensure pertinent information regarding placed children is shared between the Group Home administration, Group Home Social Workers, Group Home facility managers and childcare staff, in an effort to ensure the best interests of the placed children. Two focus children stated that they are satisfied with the teamwork demonstrated by the team members. They

reported that they are part of their team, and they feel respected. The third focus child is struggling to meet with his treatment team, as he claims it makes him uncomfortable to be the center of attention. The focus child prefers to speak with the treatment team members individually or in small groups. The DCFS CSWs reported that they maintain regular contact with the Group Home Social Worker to coordinate team meetings and that the Group Home staff continuously teams with them in order to meet the focus children's needs. The DCFS CSWs also stated that they receive the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) quarterly and that they are invited to the team meetings held by the Group Home.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In June and July 2015, the OHCMD provided the Group Home with technical support related to the CAD's 2014-2015 Contract Compliance Review findings in the areas of Licensure/Contract Requirements, 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 Special Incident Reports are properly cross-reported, placed children are participating in age-appropriate extracurricular activities, monthly DCFS CSW contacts are properly maintained and NSPs are comprehensive.

In March 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the Group Home to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the Group Home with technical support addressing methods on improving in the area of Visitation. The Group Home submitted the attached QIP. The 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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March 31, 2016

To: Patricia Bolanos-Gonzalez, Children's Services Administrator II
Department of Children and Family Services Out of Home Care Management Division (OHCMD)

From: LeVetta Holloway, Administrator

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

In December 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 area of Visitation.

Visitation QIP: South Bay Bright Future's Staff shall encourage that each child's important connections be maintained through appropriate visits.

SBBF shall continue to be proactive in promoting monthly visitation for each child and their family, but in the event the child or family refuses to visit, SBBF's Administrator or Facility Managers shall make every effort to facilitate communication between the child and family in hopes of establishing a connection. Every attempt shall be made by providing the opportunities such as family sessions and conference calls. Please note, since SBBF previous QIP, an increased effort was made, but at times SBBF faced difficulties with the families' lack of interest in maintaining the relationship with the child. Nevertheless, SBBF shall continue to strive to reach out to family members by providing them with status and update reports on the child, in hopes of reengagement. In addition, social media resources such as Facebook will also be used as a possible bridge for rebuilding the relationship. If the child or family continues to refuse visitations or it is determined the child has no one to visit, SBBF's Facility Managers shall ensure a Mentor's Request Form be completed and submitted on the child's behalf to Big Brothers, 100 Black Men, etc. The Facility Managers shall ensure these efforts are well documented via monthly email transmittals or communication logs and SBBF's Social Workers shall ensure it is noted in the child's NSPs. The Facility Manager will ask the child if there is anyone from the past he may be interested in visiting, e.g. Former Foster Parent, Teacher, Coach, Neighbor. The child's P3 Worker shall also be enlisted for any other possibilities leads on important connections. The monthly Administrator review shall continue to confirm the above process is completed.

Upon your approval South Bay Bright Future's Administrator shall be responsible for ensuring the above QIP is fully implemented on or before May 4, 2016.

We respectfully submit this Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for your review. We appreciate the opportunity to evaluate our program services and your assistance in identifying areas for improvement. If additional information is needed, please contact me at (310) 721-5204 or levettahill@yahoo.com, thank you.

Sincerely,

LeVetta D. Holloway

LeVetta D. Holloway
Administrator