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August 24, 2016

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

CHILDHELP USA 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 the Childhelp USA Group Home (the Group Home) in January 2016. The Group Home is a Rate Classification Level 12 and has four sites: one located in Riverside County and three sites located in Orange County. 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 individualized treatment services delivered via a multi-disciplinary Treatment Team model to each child admitted to the program."

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. The OHCMD noted an opportunity for improved performance in the focus area of Safety.

In February 2016, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer discussed the results of the QAR with the Group Home and provided the Group Home with technical support to address methods for improvement in the area of Safety. 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
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Diana Correa, Director of Operations, Childhelp USA Group Home
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

CHILDHELP USA 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 the Childhelp USA Group Home (the Group Home) in January 2016. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the Group Home's service delivery and to ensure that the Group Home is providing the 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 27 DCFS placed children. The focus children's average number of placements was 14, their overall average length of placement was five months and their average age was 14. 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	5 - Good Safety Status	The focus children have a generally and substantially safe living situation with reliable and competent caregivers who protect the focus children well under usual daily conditions. Protective strategies are generally 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 December 2014 and noted an opportunity for improvement in the focus area of Safety. In April 2015, the Quality Assurance team 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 this area. Based on the information below, it appears that there continues to be a need for improvement in the area of Safety on their 2015-2016 QAR.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

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

In the area of Safety, the OHCMD found that the Group Home implemented their 2014-2015 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to reduce incidents of Absence Without Leave (AWOL) and assaultive, acting-out behaviors by the placed children, as well as to ensure special incidents are appropriately documented and cross-reported. The Group Home is ensuring positive interventions and coping mechanisms are available to the placed children. Additionally, the Group Home therapists increase frequency of meeting with the placed children in crisis to prevent AWOLs. The Group Home's Director of Operations assures that the Group Home is safe, and that the placed children's needs are being met. The DCFS CSWs reported that they visit the focus children monthly to check on them to ensure their safety. All three focus children reported that they feel safe at the Group Home and that the Group Home is a safe place to live. One focus child stated that staff were always present and protected the children. The second focus child stated that she could always talk to the Group Home staff when she needs to, and the Group Home staff members always help address her concerns. The third focus child stated that he felt safe because the Group Home staff was always present to protect them.

Although the focus children and their DCFS CSWs reported no safety concerns, the Group Home scored below the minimum acceptable score in the area of Safety due to a child safety concern related to the Group Home's ability to provide adequate supervision and the Group Home staff's ability to appropriately intervene in incidents of assaultive behavior between the placed children. The incident involved two placed children who had engaged in a physical altercation. The Group Home reported there were two staff in the cottage at the time of the incident that attempted to break up the fight, but were unsuccessful in separating the girls or properly restraining them. Control was restored after another placed child called Law Enforcement, and Law Enforcement responded to the Group Home. Neither of the placed children involved in the fight were arrested. However, one placed child did receive medical treatment for a minor injury to her finger. There was no referral made to the Child Protection Hotline by Law Enforcement or by the Group Home.

In the areas of Permanency, Placement Stability and Visitation, the OHCMD found that the Group Home continues to provide a good quality of services to the focus children. The permanency goals established by the DCFS CSWs are supported by the Group Home. The permanency plan for two of the focus children is Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA). One focus child is receiving Family Reunification services, as the plan is for her to return to a family member who resides out-of-state; her concurrent plan is PPLA. This focus child has expressed wanting to receive extended foster care services. The Group Home is making good efforts to assist the focus children in reaching their permanency goals. The Group Home is teaching the focus children independent living skills, such as shopping and meal preparation, as well as discussing future options with the focus children, including transitional housing, and educational and career goals. The structured program and services have assisted the focus children in stabilizing their placement. The focus children have not experienced any recent placement disruptions. The Group Home staff shared that they make efforts to match prospective placed children during the intake process to decrease the likelihood of placement disruption. Additionally, the Group Home staff members are provided with training to identify the focus children's needs, and to assist them in establishing positive relationships with their peers and key supporters. The focus children have established positive relationships with key adult supporters such as the Group Home staff and the Group Home Social Workers. The Group Home supports the maintenance of family connections and ensures the focus children are visiting with family members, NREFMs or key people in their lives. The Group Home supports the court-ordered visitation plans for the focus children and provides transportation and monitoring of visits, when necessary. Two of the focus children have weekly visits with their family members. Although the third focus child's family members are unable to visit the focus child, as they reside out-of-state, the focus child maintains regular telephone contact with them. Additionally, the Group Home was instrumental in advocating for this focus child to have weekend overnight visits at the home of a friend to assist the focus child in the development of lifelong connections with the friend's family.

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 OHCMD found that the Group Home continues to make consistent good efforts to engage the focus children and the key people in decisions and recommendations regarding the focus children. The focus children's DCFS CSWs reported that the Group Home staff engages them and the focus children and that they get along with the Group Home Social Workers; and the Group Home child care workers work collaboratively to address the focus children's concerns and treatment goals. The Group Home continues to provide a good array of services to the focus children. Intervention strategies identified in the case plans and Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) match the services provided to the focus children, such as weekly individual and group therapy, tutoring, and Independent Living Program services. The Group Home continuously assesses the focus children to ensure the focus children receive the required services, and the Group Home Social Worker meets with the focus children weekly to discuss and assess their progress. The Group Home encourages the focus children to participate in activities in which they have an interest. One focus child participates in planned activities through the Boys and Girls Club. The second focus child is a cheerleader at school. The Group Home holds team meetings in which the focus children, their DCFS CSWs and the Group Home staff are included. All three DCFS CSWs reported that they have participated in team meetings at the Group Home. During team meetings, the focus children's needs and progress toward achieving goals are evaluated. Services are recommended to assist the focus children in making progress and being successful in placement and in other settings. Modifications to case plans or treatment goals are made when necessary or appropriate.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In January 2016, the OHCMD provided the Group Home with technical support related to the CAD's 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review findings in the areas of Licensure/Contract Requirements and Personnel Files. The technical support addressed how the Group Home will ensure compliance with Title 22 Regulations, remain free of Community Care Licensing citations and ensure that the Group Home staff that has direct contact with the placed children meet the educational/experience requirements.

In February 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 for improvement in the area of Safety. The Group Home submitted the attached approved 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.

Childhelp®
Founded in 1959
by Sara O'Meara and Yvonne Fedderson
PREVENTION and TREATMENT of CHILD ABUSE

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To: Patricia Bolanos-Gonzalez, Children Services Administrator II
Kirk Douglas Barrow, Children Services Administrator I
Date: May 23, 2016
Subject: Quality Improvement Review Field Exit Summary
Facility: Childhelp Inc. –The Childhelp Merv Griffin Village and Costa Mesa Group Homes
License Numbers: 330902381, 30600901, 30600902, 30600509
Diana Correa, Executive Director of Program Operations-CA Diana Correa
Manny Barragan, Assistant Director
Angelique Yoshikawa, Quality Improvement Manager
Suzan Abou-Hebeish, Program Manager

This quality improvement report addresses the area of Childhelp's safety score of 5/6 during our quality improvement audit. It was stated in the report that Childhelp documented 8 Special Incident Reports (SIRs) during the audit reporting time. Out of these 8 SIRs, 3 were school related and 1 was illness related, thus requiring no improvement plan. We will be addressing the additional SIR below separately, as part of our quality improvement plan.

SIR # 442638 Child to child injury (The Orange County Group Homes)
What Childhelp did to prevent this incident:
The two children were separated by staff; however a peer reacted by contacting the police which was unexpected and unauthorized by staff. Though children have the right to contact the police at any time they feel unsafe, staff had already asked this child to go to her room during the altercation and she refused staff direction, which ultimately lead into her feeling unsafe which is what staff had attempted to avoid by sending her to her room. Both girls who were involved in the fight have a history of aggression and the flight was mutual between the two.

Quality Improvement Plan: The Group Home Program Manager and Therapist will continue to monitor all children and therapeutically intervene when a child is becoming aggressive towards his/her peers. Childhelp will continue to separate all children into small groups when possible to monitor the children effectively and reduce the possibility of child to child injuries. When a child has escalated into physical aggression, staff will intervene using Childhelp sanctioned therapeutic verbal, and if necessary, physical interventions for the safety of all involved. Childhelp designees (Clinical Director, Residential Coordinator, Training Coordinator, and Quality Improvement Manger) will work together to ensure that all cottages are working in small groups and minimizing opportunities for child to child injuries.

As of March 1st 2016, Childhelp has created and distributed a new "Childhelp Anti-Bully Program". The program is 8 weeks long and is age appropriate. The anti-bully program teaches kids how to avoid bullies as well as evaluate if they themselves are bullying others. The anti-bully program is trained in group process by a therapist and children receive a certificate of

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