

OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT

Report of a Complaint Investigation
Laura Dester Shelter

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Investigation conducted by Sara Vincent-Spain

Introduction

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a complaint on July 7, 2008, that alleged the Laura Dester Shelter (LDS) was infested with mice and roaches. The OJSO conducted an unannounced visit on July 13, 2008, at the LDS in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The LDS was licensed for fifty residents by the Oklahoma Child Care Services (OCCS) division of the Department of Human Services (OKDHS). On the day of the OJSO visit, the census was fifty-three residents.

On July 13, 2008, the OJSO conducted the entrance conference with a Direct Care Specialist III (DCS III) regarding the emergency shelter's policy and procedures as well as the complaint allegation. During the visit, the OJSO toured the facility and interviewed four additional shelter staff members. During the exit conference, the OJSO notified the DCS III of the findings resulting from the oversight complaint investigation. The OJSO spoke with the shelter director subsequent to the investigation.

Interviews Conducted

- Entrance and exit conferences with a DCS III
- Shelter Director
- Four shelter staff members

Documents Reviewed

- Shelter janitorial contract
- Shelter pest control invoices
- Shelter roster for July 13, 2008

Areas Toured

- Building #3
- Building #6 (Little House)

Findings

Interviews

The OJSO interviewed four staff members. The interview questions pertained to the staff members' perceptions of shelter program services, resident rights, discipline policies, and other residential issues including the allegations of health and safety hazards caused by mice and roaches. It was reported to the OJSO by the staff members that the shelter did have periodic problems with mice and roaches; however, the staff members also reported that the shelter administration responded to their concerns regarding this issue. The staff members further reported that a janitorial service cleans the shelter twice daily. According to the shelter director, the facility has been serviced regularly by a pest control service as well as a pest elimination service for the mice and roaches.

Documents Reviewed

The OJSO reviewed the shelter janitorial contracts that verified the contractor's completion of janitorial tasks and frequency of the tasks. The tasks included daily sweeping, mopping and trash removal. The shelter pest control invoices were also reviewed. The invoices verified that extermination services for insects, rodents and termites were conducted at least once monthly, sometimes twice monthly. The shelter roster documented that the shelter's census on the day of the oversight was fifty-three.

Facility Tour

The OJSO toured Building #3 and Building # 6. The OJSO noted mouse holes in Building #3 on the second floor of the west hall stairwell and in the northeast corner of the west bedroom. No issues of concern were noted in Building # 6.

Violations

Based on the documentation reviewed and interviews conducted, the OJSO noted the following violation:

1. The OJSO reviewed the facility population report for the day of the oversight and there were fifty-three residents at the LDS. The shelter was out of compliance on the day of the oversight visit. The OKDHS policy, OAC 340:75-10-9, Admissions and discharges, (b), Shelter capacity and length of stay in OKDHS operated shelters, in part, states, "The specified licensed capacity is... [50] children at the Laura Dester shelter."

Summary

Based on the interviews conducted, documents reviewed, and the areas toured, the allegation noted in the complaint was not substantiated. Although staff did report to the OJSO that the shelter did have periodic problems with mice and roaches, the staff member indicated that the shelter administration responded to their concerns regarding this issue. The OJSO was able to verify that a janitorial service cleans the shelter twice daily and that pest control services and pest elimination services were conducted at the shelter at least once monthly, sometimes twice monthly.

According to the shelter director, the facility maintenance department planned to patch and paint the mice holes noted in this report within two weeks of the date of this report.