

**OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT**

Name and Location of Facility: Northwest Oklahoma Juvenile Detention Center
Woodward, Oklahoma

Date of Visit: February 24, 2009

Oversight Reviewer: Dana S. Holden, Oversight Specialist

Focus of Visit: Unannounced Visit, 2009

Date: March 23, 2009

Introduction

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) conducted an unannounced visit on February 26, 2009, at the Northwest Oklahoma Juvenile Detention Center, located in Woodward, Oklahoma. The purpose of the visit was to assess compliance with established responsibilities and facility policy and procedures. The facility was certified for ten juveniles by the Office of Public Integrity (OPI) of the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA). The OJA contracted with the Woodward County Board of Commissioners to manage the detention center and, in turn, the County Commissioners subcontracted with Eastern Oklahoma Youth Services for the day-to-day operation of the facility. The detention center provides regional services to other counties. On the day of the OJSO visit, the census was ten.

Interviews Conducted

- Entry interview and an exit conference with the Superintendent
- Four residents

Documents Reviewed

- Four resident files
- Room confinement/room restriction log
- Use of force/restraint log
- Office of the Oklahoma State Fire Marshal report dated January 10, 2008
- Oklahoma State Department of Health Food Inspection report dated September 24, 2008
- OJA OPI annual monitoring report dated January 22, 2008

Findings

Interviews

The OJSO interviewed four residents. The interview questions pertained to the residents' perceptions of safety, detention program services, resident rights, discipline practices, and other residential care issues. Responses to the interview questions indicated the interviewees felt safe at the facility, participated in recreational services, had access to medical care, and were knowledgeable of the residents' rights. According to the interviewees, the residents received adequate amounts of food at mealtimes. No concerns were noted from the resident interviews.

File Review

The OJSO reviewed four resident files. The files were complete, and the documents were easy to locate. No issues of concern were noted from the resident files reviewed.

Room Confinement/Room Restriction Log Review

The OJSO reviewed the room confinement/room restriction log and the related incident reports for September 1, 2008, through February 24, 2009. No concerns were noted from the confinement/restriction log review.

Use of Force/Restraint Log Review

The OJSO reviewed the use of force/restraint log and the related incident reports for September 1, 2008, through February 24, 2009. The OJSO noted:

- Three incident reports indicated that mechanical restraints were used for behaviors that did not meet criteria for the use of mechanical restraints.
 1. Documentation indicated that a resident who had wrapped a towel around his/her neck while in the restroom was placed in restraints for approximately one hour, fifty-one minutes. According to documentation, staff removed the towel from the resident's neck. The incident report did not indicate that the resident was combative or resistant to the staff intervention.
 2. Documentation indicated that a resident who had been hitting the back of his/her head against the wall while sitting on his/her bed was placed in mechanical restraints for one hour, twenty-five minutes. According to documentation, the resident was allowed to remain sitting on the bed. The restraints secured the resident's hands and feet but would not have prevented the resident from hitting his/her head against an object.
 3. Documentation indicated that a resident was observed "messaging" with a door lock and was placed in mechanical restraints for one hour, fifty-five minutes. The facility documented that it "looked like a possible escape attempt." The incident

report did not state how the resident was “messaging” with the lock or whether there was any damage to the lock.

No other concerns were noted from the review of the use of force/restraint log.

Inspection Reports Review

The OJSO reviewed the most recent inspection reports from the Office of the Oklahoma State Fire Marshal, the Oklahoma State Department of Health, and the OJA OPI. When informed by the OJSO that an annual inspection of the facility by the fire marshal’s office was past due, the facility superintendent stated that he would immediately contact the fire marshal’s office to schedule an inspection. On February 26, 2009, the OJSO contacted the superintendent, who advised that he had contacted the fire marshal’s office on February 25, 2009, to schedule a time for an annual inspection. The most recent inspection report by the health department did not cite any violations. The OPI had not yet conducted a monitoring visit at the facility for 2009. The OJSO had previously addressed the last OPI report in the OJSO report from the 2008 oversight visit to the facility.

The OJSO reviewed documentation to ensure the facility had corrected the violations cited in the OJSO oversight report dated May 27, 2008. The OJSO noted the facility had made the necessary corrections, and no additional concerns were noted.

Summary

Overall, on the day of the OJSO visit, the facility was meeting the needs of the residents. An exit conference was conducted with the facility superintendent and all of the findings were discussed.

Violation

1. Documentation indicated that mechanical restraints were used in three instances that did not meet criteria for the use of mechanical restraints. OJA policy, OAC 377:3-13-44, Security and Control, (c), (9), Use of mechanical restraints, (A), in part, states, “Restraints are used only:
 - i. for self protection;
 - ii. to separate juveniles from fighting;
 - iii. to restrain juveniles in danger of inflicting harm to themselves or others;
 - iv. to restrain juveniles who have escaped or who are in the process of escaping;
and
 - v. [to] prevent destruction of property if reasonably related to (i) through (iv).”

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