



Division of Youth Services

P.O. Box 1437, Slot S501 · Little Rock, AR 72203-1437
501-682-8654 · Fax: 501-682-1351 · TDD: 501-682-1355



TO: Herman Williams, Assistant Director Residential Services

FROM: April Hannah, Internal Affairs Investigator

CC: Keesa Smith, DYS Interim Director

DATE: December 10, 2014

SUBJECT: Yell County JDC's Follow-up

The Division of Youth Services was initially notified that Yell County Juvenile Detention Center was possibly utilizing a restraint process known as the "WRAP" system on or around September 1, 2015. On Friday, September 5, 2014, the Division of Youth Services, directed the OJJDP Compliance Monitor to conduct a site visit to Yell County JDC to investigate the issue, and he determined that the "WRAP" system was being utilized by Yell County JDC staff on youth, for both minor and major rule violations. On September 29, 2014, a cease and desist letter on the use of the "WRAP" restraint system on DYS committed youth was issued, and the Yell County Sheriff's Department was directed to submit a corrective action plan to the Division of Youth Services within thirty days (a copy of the letter is attached to the document).

On October 1, 2014, Yell County Sheriff Bill Gilkey, issued the following orders (a copy of the orders is attached to the document);

1. Comply with the Memorandum of Understanding between DYS and the Yell County JDC.
2. Comply with the Arkansas Juvenile Detention Standards.
3. Immediately cease and desist from any use of the "WRAP" system on any juveniles that are held in the custody of the JDC.

The Division of Youth Services, in collaboration with the Yell County Sheriff's Department and the Yell County Juvenile Detention Center, have developed a series of corrective action initiatives; to ensure that the youth entrusted to the care of the Division of Youth Services, placed at the Yell County Juvenile Detention center receive quality care, and are safe and secure. These initiatives included:

1. Sheriff Gilkey further ordered that the "WRAP" devices and any other headgear be removed from the possession of the JDC and surrendered to the Yell County Sheriff's Criminal Investigation Division. Yell County JDC administration surrendered both devices on October 1, 2014.
2. Sheriff Gilkey appointed a new Facility Administrator, Ms. Robin Barefield to operate the Yell County JDC on October 3, 2014.

3. The revision, training, and dissemination to Yell County JDC staff on the Yell County Juvenile Detention Center Policy & Procedure Manual on October 6, 2014.
4. Staff at Yell County JDC, are also undergoing National Juvenile Detention Association's forty hour Juvenile Detention Care Worker training. The training class consists of topics such as: juvenile rights, conflict resolution, anger management, and behavior management). Ms. Barefield employs a staff of eighteen employees. To date, six of the staff members have completed the forty hour training course. There are seven people in the current class that ends on December 12, 2014. The remaining five staff members will participate in the training in January 2015 (a copy of the training syllabus is attached to the document).
5. More stringent reporting controls, and all incidents be placed in the clients file and in RiteTrack. Prior to this directive, the facility incident reports weren't being entered into the DYS RiteTrack system. In addition, Ms. Barefield, and two of her staff members were in Little Rock on December 9, 2014; and participated in a refresher training course on RiteTrack from DYS Program Manager, Melissa Nickols.

Steve Nawojczyk, Manager of the DYS Systems Improvement Unit, provided technical support to Yell County JDC staff on October 15, 2014. It should be noted that while the Sheriff and his Chief were aware the WRAP was being used, they did not know its application process had been modified by the previous JDC administrator. Neither did they know about the helmet. Mr. Nawojczyk had no reason to doubt the veracity of their claims since the use of the WRAP apparently was not being documented on client charts. Mr. Nawojczyk also held a meeting with a staff to discuss and assess the staff's knowledge on current trends in youth's behaviors, alternative treatment practices, and gang culture awareness. Based on this meeting, it was evident that the staff didn't feel as if they weren't adequately trained to address many of the issues the youth in their custody were experiencing. Sheriff Gilkey welcomed the assistance of the Division of Youth Services and the resources that can be provided. Sheriff Gilkey is also seeking assistance in training and recruiting a pool of mentors from the Yell County area who can develop meaningful relationships with clients.

Mr. Nawojczyk also held a campus wide meeting with the youth to discuss their overall living conditions in the facility. Mr. Nawojczyk reported that the youth all had favorable things to say about their interactions with the staff, and no one reported any incidents of abuse or neglect. The overall interactions he observed between staff and youth appeared positive and caring. During his time at the facility, he didn't detect any tension between staff and clients. He was also very impressed with the teacher and her relationship with all of the clients. She was an encouraging, firm, and fair person who obviously takes her job seriously. It was obvious there was a strong connection between clients and the new facility administrator, Ms. Barefield. As my visit was nearing an end, several clients performed a surprise birthday song for the administrator. The youth had been practicing it for days, and Ms. Barefield was surprised and moved by their performance

The staff at the Yell County JDC is in the process of scheduling intensive trainings with the Division of Youth Services on Adolescent Development, Motivational Interviewing, and Trauma Informed Care, for January 2015, hosted by Steve Nawojczyk. Four of the senior staff members attended Handle With Care Training December 1-5, 2014 in Oklahoma, in order to become certified as trainers of the intervention method. An \$18,000 DYS Community Based Programming grant was authorized to provide the Yell County JDC staff with training on Safe Crisis Management, another intervention method emphasizing on de-escalation of youth in crisis.

The Internal Affairs Investigator provided on-site technical support to Robin Barefield, the Yell County JDC Facility Administrator and her Lead Supervisor on the DYS incident reporting policy on Wednesday, November 19, 2014. While at the facility, Mrs. Hannah was able to tour the grounds, meet with staff, and conduct interviews with 5 DYS youth on site. The youth she spoke with all had favorable things to say regarding their care and stay at Yell County JDC. Several of the youth expressed that they felt staff were concerned about their overall well-being, and that they were treated fairly and equally. None of the youth Mrs. Hannah spoke with

reported any abuse or neglect. Of the five youth she spoke with, two were at the facility prior to the removal of the WRAP and headgear. Of those two youth, one had seen it utilized on another youth.

The JJDP Compliance Monitoring Unit along with the OJJDP State Representative conducted a site visit of the Yell County JDC on November 19, 2014. The overall feel of the visit was positive, and DYS was praised for working with Yell County JDC and providing oversight, training, and technical assistance.

Since the removal of the WRAP, Ms. Barefield states that the staff has utilized verbal de-escalation as their primary tool to address inappropriate youth behaviors. The staff has also utilized mechanical restraints (handcuffs) on eight occasions to remove a youth from a situation, and relocate them to a cool down room, for a period not lasting more than fifteen minutes on any given instance.

The dialogue between the Division of Youth Services, the Yell County Sheriff's Department, and the new Yell County JDC Facility Administrator has been positive. Sheriff Gilkey has shared with the Division of Youth Services administration his vision to continually improve the custody & care, programming, and overall treatment of all youth housed at Yell County JDC. Based off our the interactions that DYS staff have had with the Yell County Sheriff's Department & Yell County JDC staff, I feel the actions they've taken so far are very positive and sincere. They are earnestly soliciting our input into all procedural changes that are occurring at Yell County JDC. With the new trainings that are being provided to Yell County JDC staff, and the gradual shift in culture; I recommend monthly follow-up site visits for the next 90 days to assist in the transition.

