



City and County of San Francisco

Shelter Monitoring Committee

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shelter Monitoring Committee
FROM: Committee Staff
DATE: April 14, 2023
RE: March 2023 Staff SOC Report

March Client Complaints and Investigations

There were six formal complaints submitted through the SMC in March 2023.

Note: Frequently the SMC staff receive tentative complaints that the complainant never follows up on. That is, they do not provide minimally necessary details, or they do not approve our draft of a complaint that they have not themselves completed in writing. These are not included in this report. Narratives provide an overview of the complaints forwarded to each site. Not all sites have had a chance to respond to the complaints. Complaints may have already been investigated to the satisfaction of the site or its contracting agency; however, the Committee must allow for each complainant to review the responses and the complainant determines whether s/he is satisfied. If the complainant is not satisfied, the Committee will investigate the allegations listed in the complaint.

Central Waterfront

Client #1

Complaints submitted: 3/7/2023

Response received: 3/13/2023

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1:** (treat clients equally, with respect and dignity); and
- **Standard 2:** (Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe...

Complaint #1 (SOC 1):

- Another guest threatened the complainant. He sought assistance from staff. When they ignored him, he asked the DPH nurse to convey his request for assistance to management. They told her they would respond but did not do so. The next day the client was moved to another dorm, allegedly to separate him from the client he complained about. He believes this reassignment was a purely retaliatory move. There was no reason why he could not have stayed in the dorm and bed he had been in for almost a year. He can see no other reason for shelter management to have moved both him and the new guest who threatened him. He believes his defense of female shelter guests who were threatened with sexual assault, along with other complaints he has made, have led management to see him as a troublemaker. Rather than addressing real behavioral problems of guests, they focused on the complainant.
- *The shelter responded that the client has not complied with Case Managers and has often been disruptive. He was moved out of Dorm A due him and another client threatening each other on*

more than one occasion. Additionally, the client regularly left the dorm door open overnight, resulting in the rest of the clients complaining of the cold. Staff informed the client he could not prop the door open. (The complainant was subsequently placed in Dorm B, away from guests he told them he feels threatened by.)

Complaint #2 (SOC #2):

- Complainant had made known to the shelter that Dorm D housed both (1) the meth smoker(s) whose on-site drug use had not long before sent him to the hospital with respiratory distress, and (2) the guest who had in November 2022 threatened him with a hatchet. Both of these guests remained in Dorm D. Management should have known the move would endanger the complainant, as well as be unacceptable to him; he would have no choice but to abandon the shelter. Thus, the change of dorm and bed, supposedly made to protect the complainant, actually amounted to a denial of service.
- *The shelter received complaints regarding drug use in Dorm D from March 3rd, 2022 until April 4th, 2022. Per their policy, staff complete rounds every 15 minutes. Contracted security officers complete rounds every 30 minutes. Neither staff nor security found anyone using drugs in the dorms or on the premises during that time. As to the allegations that the client was threatened with a hatchet, the police were called at the time and no corroboration was found. (The complainant has since returned to the shelter, to Dorm B.)*

MSC-South

Client #1

Complaint submitted: 3/20/2023

Response received: 4/12/2023

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1** (Treat guests equally and with respect...)
- **Standard 2:** (Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe...)
- **Standard 31** (Training, e.g., cultural humility, intervention with aggressive clients, etc.)

Complaint #1 (SOC 1):

- The complainant-client states that someone on staff passed his personal information to other staff and to guests. Then when guests ostracized and threatened him, staff witnessed this but did nothing. He was also discriminated against based on his race. No help was offered, nor were his concerns addressed. He was not protected from the staff he had reported for harassment, “forcing” him to request a life-safety transfer.
- *The shelter investigated without finding corroboration of the allegations; however, staff were reminded of St. Vincent de Paul Society’s (SVDPS) commitment to treating clients equally, with dignity and respect.*

Complaint #2 (SOCs 1 and 2):

- The complainant witnessed an employee making racist “sermons,” especially during breakfast. He says inflammatory things, e.g., refers to whites as “devils,” even in the presence of the

complainant (who is white). The comments instigated violence against the complainant. Due to the regularity and racial vitriol expressed during in the dining area, he had to stop eating breakfast there. He sees this as evidence of the racist atmosphere at MSC-South.

- *The shelter investigated and determined that there was validity to this claim. Appropriate (very serious) disciplinary action was taken.*

Complaint #3 (SOCs 2 and 31):

- The complainant-client alleged that staff shared his personal information, which was misused. Guests have threatened the client and called him “faggot” in front of staff, who did not discipline or even chide the perpetrators. One of them told another guest to harass the client because he was a snitch. She did so for a period of several days. The client brought this to the attention of the site manager, who never got back to him. The complainant subsequently became increasingly concerned for his safety and requested a transfer to another shelter,
- *A discussion/ investigation was conducted by management. The staffer named in the complaint was notified and asked to review the Standards of Care. Management emphasized that the goal of SVDPS is to ensure that all clients are treated appropriately. This was stressed and understood by the staffer in question.*

Complaint #4 (SOCs 1 and 31):

- The client witnessed a staff member bully younger guest severely. That guest overdosed and died the next day. When the client pointed this out, suggesting to the staff member that his cruelty may have led to this, he callously said the deceased had been taking up a bed too long and that others deserved it! When shortly thereafter another staffer began bullying an older guest, the complainant intervened. He approached the on-duty supervisor and was initially reassured. However, when this same staffer very soon afterwards began to bully the complainant, he went back to the supervisor, who, apparently out of patience, threatened to DOS him.
- *Management discussed the allegations and the importance of adhering to the standards of care, including, but not limited to the site-specific rules that touch and concern the well-being of clients. These were stressed and understood by staff and the front-line supervisor named in the complaint.*

Taimon Booten

Client #1

Complaints submitted: 3/17/2023

Response received: 4/11/2023

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1:** (Treat guests equally and with respect.)
- **Standard 2:** (Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe...)
- **Standard 31:** (Training, e.g., cultural humility, burnout, etc.)

Complaint #1 (SOC 1, 2, 31):

- The client reported that “staff is always sleeping.” Also, staff have threatened clients and are “always high on drugs.” These are alleged to be ongoing problems.
- *The shelter appreciates feedback, even if not complimentary. Taimon Booton Navigation Center (TBNC) takes complaints very seriously and we appreciate the collaboration of guests to make the center the best it can be. They are aware there might be some problems with staff behavior and are continuing investigation of the complaint. They are also planning to install more cameras to be able to better follow up on any future complaints.*

Complaint #2 (SOC 1):

- The complainant is treated with special disrespect because of her background/history. She has been threatened with denial of service without good cause.
- *The shelter responded that staff are trained to take a harm reduction approach, which includes being non-judgmental of program participants’ past or present use of drugs, participation in sex work, or previous incarceration. The DOS protocol is taught to staff regularly by HSH. All staff are educated on the need to maintain appropriate boundaries and suspend bias when issuing program participant warnings or denials of service. TBNC leadership will continue to ensure adequate training and follow up on DOS’s.*

Sanctuary (ECS)

Client #1

Complaints submitted: 3/27/2023

Response received: 3/31/2023

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1** (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- **Standard 2** (Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe...)

Complaint #1 (SOCs 1 and 2):

- The complainant reports another guest constantly walking through the complainant’s bed area after all on the floor were told not to do this. This guest allegedly called complainant a “bitch” telling the complainant to “stop making noise with her f*ing” shoes.” The floor monitor watched but did and said nothing.
- *Sanctuary management points out that their rules state clients cannot wander through or linger in the aisles and will make a copy available to the complainant for her review again. They point out the complainant also violates these protocols. Guests have been asked many times not to loiter in and block aisles and walkways. Per staff, the client referred to by the complainant talks to herself as if she is quarreling with someone unseen, i.e., should not be assumed to be directing words at those nearby.*

Complaint #2 (SOC 1):

- When Complainant conveyed her concerns to the site manager, he said he did not have time for her. Complainant alleges that staff do not ever address a particular bully and show favoritism.

- *The shelter says there was a supervisor on duty at all shifts, ensuring that client concerns are addressed. Per one guest, the complainant started telling a staffer that she was “no longer going to tolerate her behavior” and wanted her gone. These two clients have ongoing conflict, and staff must constantly monitor them. They have been asked several times to stay clear of each other. Staff on the women’s floor on 3/27/23 stated that the complainant and the other guest, the dog owner referred to, were both written up for yelling at each other, creating a disturbance on the women’s floor. The complainant has contributed to the problem, e.g., making gestures at this guest, trying to elicit a reaction. In fact, she does not get along with most of the women on the first floor. She is inclined to accuse staff of engaging in favoritism as staff will only deny client services if there was an immediate rule violation or after the appropriate process, with written warnings, for a non-immediate violation. She has been told to follow the complaint escalation protocol but does not do so. Due to the extraordinary number of verbal and written complaints filed by the complainant, staff may not always be able to meet with her immediately. All residents at Sanctuary are treated with respect and dignity.*

Complaint #3 (SOCs 1 and 2):

- Complainant alleged another client routinely fails to maintain control of her dog, e.g., leaves it unattended. Complainant alleges a previous interaction with the dog biting her pant leg. Complainant has reported this on several occasions and feels the issue is not being addressed.
- *The shelter responds that the complainant did bring to the site manager’s attention that a guest left her dog unattended and went out of the facility. Upon learning about the incident, despite not witnessing it, he went over the pet policy with that client. She stated that she stepped out while her dog was asleep on her bed for a very short time. She says she tries to follow procedures and would not leave the dog unattended again. Pet owners are informed of their responsibilities and of the consequences of not abiding by the rules. Regarding the allegation that the dog bit Complainant’s pant leg, staff witnessed the incident. The dog was attracted to her and jumped on her legs when Complainant noisily struck her shoes together to clean them.*

Sanctuary (ECS) Client #2

Complaints submitted: 3/27/2023

Response received: 3/31/2023

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 1** (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- **Standard 2** (Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe...)

Complaint #1 SOC 2

- The complainant states she went to front desk to make a complaint when another client came running and stood right behind her stating that the complainant was lying. As the complainant moved away, this other client continued saying the complainant is always lying, trying to get her way, etc. In the presence of the supervisor, she said to the complainant, “Bitch, I want to f* you up.” She then tried to correct herself by say “*you make me* want to f* you up.” Complainant asked if the supervisor was going to do anything. He chided the other guest, but the complainant felt this was inadequate, insofar as she had been threatened. The complainant

felt nothing was being done and went to the site manager. Essentially, the complainant says, the site manager put words in the other guest's mouth, asking her if she was talking to herself, to which she responded that she was.

- *Sanctuary stated that, in looking into this complaint, the client referred to denied any wrongdoing and clarified in front of the complainant and staff members that she was venting to herself and did not direct any threat against the complainant. This client did receive a 2B warning for general threats that lack specificity (e.g., "I am going to get you outside"). Complainant received a write up for 2H verbal harassment, intimidation or bullying other guests, staff, or volunteers. The site manager was not present when the incident happened but was able to manage the situation with staff. They noted that the other client is no longer a resident.*

Complaint #2 (SOC 1):

- Complainant feels she was not treated with respect. Rather than addressing the problem, she was herself given a warning notice over this incident, stating she was being argumentative.
- *The shelter says the complainant has a tendency to ignore non-immediate rules, e.g., 2H states verbal harassment, intimidation or bullying other guests, staff, or volunteers is grounds for a write up. She writes her complaints after engaging in verbal confrontations, including yelling matches with other clients that she is having issues with in the facility. At that point, she has already violated the rule. Complainant has been told to submit complaint forms without disrupting the peace of other clients. We ask guests to be respectful and considerate of others. Sanctuary's goal is to provide a pleasant, supportive environment to residents*

Lower Polk TAY

Client #1

Complaints submitted: 3/29/2023

Response received: written response is pending

Client-complainant alleges SOC Violations:

- **Standard 31** (Training including...requirements under the ADA...)

Complaint #1

- The client/complainant states that guests with animals are not being required to vaccinate them as required by HSH rules.
- *As soon as they were notified of the complaint, the shelter posted requirements notifying residents of their responsibilities if they have a service or support animal.*

March 2023 Client Complaints by Standard

Standard of Care	Complaints alleging violations of this SOC
Standard 1: Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity, including in the application of shelter policies...	10
Standard 2: Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe...	8
Standard 31: training of staff	3

Note that each complaint can include alleged violations of more than one Standard of Care

Total Client Complaints FY 2022-2023

Site	COVID capacity	7/22	8/22	9/22	10/22	11/22	12/22	1/23	2/23	3/23	4/23	5/23	6/23	Total (FY22-23)
A Woman's Place	25					0	0	0	0	0				0
AWP Drop-in						1	1	1	0	0				3
Adante	73													
Buena Vista Horace Mann	69 mats	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0
Central Waterfront										1				1
Compass Family	21 families	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0
Cova	87													
Division Circle	180	-	-	-	-	0	0	1	0	0				1
Dolores Street	39 guests			0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0
Hamilton Family	69 families	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				1
Harbor House Family	30 families	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0
MNRC	15 guests			0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Lark Inn	35 beds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0
Lower Polk TAY										1				1
Monarch	96	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	0	0				2
MSC South Shelter	218 beds	1	0	1	0	0	2		0	1				5
Next Door	248 beds	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0				4
Providence Family	Closed January 2023	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Sanctuary (ECS)	124 beds	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	2				8
St. Joseph's Family	9 families	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					0
Taimon Booton										1				1
Total	Single adult:	5	1	1	1	1	6	6	0	6				27

FY2022-2023 Unannounced Site Visit Tally

Site	7/22	8/22	9/22	10/22	11/22	12/22	1/23	2/23	3/23	4/23	5/23	6/23	Total
Buena Vista Horace Mann	0	0	1	0									1
Compass Family	0	0	0	1					1				1
Hamilton Family	1	0	0	1					1				2
Harbor House Family	0	0	1	0									1
Lark Inn	1	0	0	1					1				2
MSC South Shelter	0	0	1	0									1
Next Door	0	0	1	0									1
A Woman's Place*	0	0	0	0									0
Providence Family	0	0	1	0									1
MNRC*	0	0	1	0									1
Dolores*	0	0	1	0									1
Sanctuary	0	0	1	0					1				1
St. Joseph's Family	1	0	1	0									2
*New Site													
Total	3	0	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15

The SMC is required to complete four unannounced visits to each site on an annual basis.

FY2022-2023 Announced Site Visit Tally

Site	7/22	8/22	9/22	10/22	11/22	12/22	1/23	2/23	3/23	4/23	5/23	6/23	Total
711 Post St. ²					1								1
Buena Vista Horace Mann													0
Compass Family													0
Hamilton Family													0
Harbor House Family													0
Lark Inn													0
MSC South													0
Next Door													0
A Woman's Place ¹			1										1
Providence Family													0
MNRC*													
Dolores*													
Sanctuary													0
St. Joseph's Family													0
¹ New Sept ² New Oct													
Total	0	0	1	0	1								2

The Committee is required to make two announced site visits to each site each year to survey clients.

Staff Update and Committee Membership

Meetings

Committee meetings are now being held at City Hall, Rm. 408.

Legislation

The changes to SOC's approved in previous meetings are awaiting action by the Homelessness Oversight Commission which will be seated on May 1, 2023.

Membership

There is currently one unfilled Seat. We are awaiting details of the process by which the new Commission will fill Seats.

If you are interested in applying for a seat on the Committee, please contact staff at 415-255-3642 or email angella.david@sfdph.org for more information.

FY2022-2023 Upcoming Meeting Calendar

- May 17, 2023 (in-person)
- June 21, 2023 (in-person)