



City and County of San Francisco

# Shelter Monitoring Committee

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Shelter Monitoring Committee  
**FROM:** Committee Staff  
**DATE:** February 12, 2024  
**RE:** **November 2023, December 2023, January 2024 Staff SOC Report**

---

### Client Complaints

A total of 13 formal complaints were submitted through the SMC from November through January.

*\*\*\*Note: SMC receives Standard of Care complaints each month that do not end up being submitted in writing, either because they were resolved informally or the client did not provide basic necessary details. Narratives provide an overview of the types of 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.*

### Next Door

#### Client 1

**Submitted to SMC: 11/13/2023. To shelter: 11/17/2023 Response: 11/20/2023**

#### **Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:**

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #12 (Clean bedding...)
- SOC # 15 (Secure storage...)

#### **Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 15):**

- The lock on the client's drawer was cut and his belongings were bagged. This was done to allow for a new bed to be installed. The client was not given advance notice. His valuable property, including many pieces of new clothing, was subject to theft while on his bed, unattended, in see-through plastic bags. As far as he is aware, there was no announcement that this would be happening.
- *Shelter management apologized for having to cut the client's lock. They did announce the additional beds being added to the site, as well as the related need for guests to pack up.*

#### **Allegation #2 (SOCs 1, 15)**

- When the client discovered what had transpired, instead of an apology, he was told he had to promptly select whatever key subset of his belonging would fit in the new and 70% smaller drawer. Because he was scheduled to depart for work soon after, this was not feasible. He had to go to work in casual clothing, and when he returned his medication was inaccessible to him, and he missed multiple doses, placing his health at risk.

- *The shelter apologized for the inconvenience. The night manager was not aware of the special arrangements that had been made to store the guest's property.*

### **Allegation #3 (SOCs 12)**

- Staff appeared to have been given the task of changing out a large number of heavy beds and thus may have been overwhelmed. In fact, they mistakenly packed his bedding in the plastic bags along with his personal property. This led to the client not having bedding for one night. Given this experience, the client took measures to self-exit in advance of his previous plans. He would like to hear some expression of apology from Five Keys. Additionally, he wants to make Five Keys and HSH decisionmakers aware that others were adversely impacted by the abrupt changeout of bunks and major reduction in storage space.
- *The shelter did not specifically address this element of the complaint.*

## **MSC-South**

### **Client 1**

**Submitted to SMC: 11/1/2023. To shelter: 11/17/2023 Response: 12/22/2023 (LATE)**

#### **Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:**

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #15 (Secure storage...)

#### **Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 15):**

- The complainant returned from the store to find that his lock had been broken and “everything taken to wash,” including important medications, an expensive camera, and a hard drive with important personal records. He was told he would not get it back until “it is clean and frozen.” No one gave him a chance to remove sensitive items from the clothing. He felt disrespected and anxious. The client did get his property back; however, the kind of practice described makes it difficult to retain much confidence that management and staff can be relied upon to act reasonably or show compassion and empathy for the clients they are entrusted to serve.
- *Staff were reminded of the importance of adhering to the SOC's. There was an infestation of bed bugs the morning in question and an exterminator was summoned to the site immediately, so that treatment would prevent the spread of contamination. Beds near the contaminated bed were quarantine and treated. Since staff could not locate the complainant, they had to remove his lock and secure his property. The site manager that communication is key in avoiding problematic issues. And they will continue to work on improving customer service.*

### **Client 2**

**Submitted to SMC: 12/19/2023. To shelter: 12/20/2023 Response: 2/14/2024 (LATE)**

#### **Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:**

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #15 (Secure storage...)

#### **Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 15):**

- Client states that his property was discarded when he went beyond the deadline to retrieve it, but it would have been easy enough for the shelter to call him to remind him before they disposed of valuable property that constituted a large subset of everything he owned.

- *Guests must retrieve their belongings after they exit. The shelter cannot store them for more than five days. Guests are clearly told this. The shelter works hard to offer fair service and respect the dignity of guests.*

### **Client 3**

**Submitted to SMC: 1/22/2024 To shelter: 1/24/2024 Response: 2/14/2024 (LATE)**

#### **Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:**

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #15 (Secure storage...)

#### **Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 31):**

- The complainant-client says while at the shelter staff seemed interested in his property. Then, four days before he was scheduled to depart, he was singled out for attention, although his property was neatly stored. They moved some of his bags to storage. He asked to be spared from this, since he was leaving in only four days, but management was insistent. When it was time to depart, staff could not locate his bags. He had to catch his transportation, and he feared thousands of dollars' worth of clothing and hygiene products were lost. Only after he was journeying on his way to his new out-of-state residence was he told they had been located.
- *Shelter management never received any complaint about staff interest in the client's property. He and all other guests were informed they had to downsize. When it was time for him to depart to catch his train, the graveyard supervisor did not know where his possessions were. The shelter shipped them to his new address, so he did not suffer any loss.*

### **Central Waterfront Navigation Center**

#### **Client 1**

**Submitted to SMC: 11/19/2023. To Shelter 11/21/2023. Response: 11/21/2023**

#### **Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:**

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (safe and free of physical violence)
- SOC #3 (provide toilet paper ... and hire janitorial staff clean shelters on daily basis)
- SOC #8 (Provide shelter services in compliance with the ADA)
- SOC #17 (Post in a common area ... when a maintenance problem will be repaired.)

#### **Allegation #1 (SOC 1, 2):**

- The client states staff prevented his departure from the shelter.
- *In emergencies, staff and clients are asked not to move around..*
- **Allegation # 2 (SOC 1, 2, 8):**
  - Passageways are often blocked. The client feels disrespected and unsafe.
  - *Staff roam every 15 minutes. If a walkway is blocked staff, addresses this immediately.*

#### **Allegation # 3 (SOC 3, 17):**

- The complainant provided photos to illustrate maintenance problems in the restrooms.
- *HSH came soon after the photos were taken and replaced the broken fixtures.*

## Embarcadero Navigation Center

### Client 1

**Submitted to SMC: 12/4/2023. Submitted to Shelter: 12/5/2023 Response: 12/8/2023**

#### **Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:**

- SOC 3 (provide toilet paper in each bathroom stall and hire janitorial staff clean shelters on daily basis...)
- SOC #17 (Post in a common area ... when a maintenance problem will be repaired.)

#### **Allegation #1 (SOCs 3, 17):**

- The client, who wishes to remain anonymous, says bathrooms are never cleaned at night. He says, “the restrooms are poorly monitored and people use narcotics.” Some “play dice in the restroom and smoke narcotics...toilets and urinals don't flush...there are missing toilet paper dispensers, and moldering shower curtains...They are saying they don't have people clean up at night and only have one janitor during the weekend.”
- *The shelter contends that they have a cleaning crew that comes in daily to clean the entire restrooms. This is aside from our regular janitors that we have on site. There is no janitorial service during the night. They paint at least once biweekly to keep the graffiti clean. They have toilet paper available at all times. When dispensers are damaged, they replace them. They are going to replace the shower curtains. They monitor the restrooms as best they can. They will definitely bring restroom maintenance up at our town hall meetings and document our progress moving forward. No mention was made of the alleged failure to post repair status.*

## Ellis Hotel

### Client 1

**Submitted to SMC: 11/1/2023. To Shelter: 12/6/2023\* Response: 12/18/2023 (LATE)**

#### **Allegation #1**

#### **Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:**

- SOC 1 (treat clients equally, with respect and dignity)
- SOC #28 (free laundry services)
- SOC #31 (training)
- The complainant states his clothes were lost and instead of assisting him, staff disrespected him, minimizing and essentially ignoring his legitimate concerns.
- *The shelter denies being uncaring. They do their best help and support guests. Training on these matters is ongoing. An outside service does the laundry for the guests who use that service at their own risk. All the guests who use the laundry service have been notified of this.*

## Monarch

### Client #1

**Submitted to SMC: 11/20/2023. To Shelter: 12/6/2023 Response: 12/18/2023 (LATE)**

#### **Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:**

- SOC 1 (...treat clients equally, with respect and dignity)
- SOC 3 (...hire janitorial staff clean shelters on daily basis.)
- SOC #28 (...free laundry services)

**Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 28)**

- The shelter lost multiple bags of the client's clothing that was sent out to launder and never returned.
- *The shelter queried the laundry vendor, Purple Tie. They could not figure out what happened. The guest was informed of this and continued to use the laundry service. Unfortunately, she had another bag that allegedly went missing. The shelter checks all the bags that go out to ensure that the right bags are picked up by Purple Tie and the bags are checked in when they return them to ensure that they receive the same laundry back. The bag for the guest's room was returned to the Monarch but she claimed that none of the clothes in the bag were hers. They checked with all the other guests and all of their laundry was correct. Per HSH, the laundry service is a courtesy, and they hold no liability for any lost or stolen items. The shelter informed the guest of this policy.*

**Allegation #2 (SOCs 1)**

- The shelter is not providing required case management services. The client states her counselor misses appointments and was not reachable by phone.
- *Management provided the phone number as soon as they were aware the client did not have it. They were able to get a decision for disqualification of housing overturned due to the case manager working with the client to appeal the decision. It has been challenging to provide this guest with case management. Nevertheless, they engage with her weekly and keep her updated on her housing status. Additionally, she has been linked with outside case management Glide.*

**Allegation #3 (SOCs 1, 3)**

- Mice have defecated and urinated on the client's belongings (including food) for months. The city building inspector supports her contention that the pest problem is serious. Her closet smells and her orthopedic shoes were covered in urine and feces.
- *The shelter provided storage containers from to protect the guest's food and sent staff to four different stores to replace all of her items. Neither the city, nor WeHOPE, were willing to assume responsibility for shoes or similar the client feels cannot be cleaned.*

**Allegation #4 (SOC 3)**

- The client was moved to another room, but it was very dirty. She found a toilet brush and its holder in the bottom drawer of the dresser. Cleaning is especially important because she has allergies. The shelter is unclean and unsafe.
- *WeHOPE hired a professional biohazard cleaning company to clean the room that the guest was moved into. They also inspected the room. However, they see the toilet brush in the drawer. Perhaps the cleaning company thought it was new so they left it in the drawer.*

**Client #2**

**Submitted to SMC: 1/17/2023. To shelter: 1/25/2024. Response: 1/30/2024**

**Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:**

- SOC 1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC 2 (Safety)
- SOC 17 (...note the status of the repairs...)

**Allegation #1 (SOCs 2):**

- The complainant-client reported a fire safety issue. Staff are not replacing smoke detector batteries. A fire alarm went off and everyone in the building was evacuated. Guests were told there was a strong smell of gas. The fire department found potentially volatile sprays that were unsecured. The client believes WeHope there have been small fires in guests' rooms that were addressed by staff.
- *Staff went from room to room trying to locate the beeping smoke detector but no one but the guest could hear it until eventually one was found that was low on batteries. They evacuated the building and called the fire department when the odor of gas was detected. The fire department reported that it was butane leaking from containers that were being stored for the guests. They will no longer store butane for the guests.*

**Allegation #2 (SOCs 1, 17):**

- The only elevator for a building with six floors was not working for several days in January. It screeched loudly for more than a week before breaking. Also, the entire building had no hot water for three days over Christmas. The shelter did not inform clients of the status of repairs.
- *The building is old, and the elevator does go out frequently. When the elevator they contact the elevator repair company immediately. They put signs on the elevator letting the guests know that it was out of service and that the elevator company came out and as soon as the parts come in they would come and fix the elevator. The moment the shelter was informed that the hot water was out they called the hotel manager. Because it of the holiday time, he was not able to get anyone to come out until the following week. Both the hotel owner as well as WeHOPE felt horrible about this situation, however, there was nothing more they could do.*

**Baldwin Safe Navigation Center**

**Client #1**

**Submitted to SMC: 12/4/2023. To Shelter: 12/11/2023 Response: 12/18/2023**

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity ...)
- SOC #8 (Provide shelter services in compliance with the ADA...)
- SOC #9 (Engage a nutritionist, who shall develop all meal plans )
- SOC #10 (Make dietary modifications to accommodate ...health or disability...)
- SOC #31 (Training...)

**Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 9, 10, 31):**

- The client states that food is regularly spoiled, improperly heated, and that some guests have become ill.
- *Meals on Wheels is provided via a contract with the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing. The meals are pre-cooked and kept frozen until needed at which time they are heated to 165 degrees. At that time, the meal is handed directly to the guest. All meals are kept frozen at -7 degrees or below until moved into the refrigerator to defrost where they are kept at 31 degrees until they are taken out, heated to 165 degrees and served to the guest. All meals are rotated by first in and first out. The meals that are placed in the refrigerator are only allowed to sit for five days before being trashed.*

**Allegation #2 (SOCs 8):**

- The complainant alleged he was not given a reasonable accommodation allowing him to keep food in the kitchen or bring canned food into the shelter.
- *Guests are allowed food accommodations based on medical or dietary needs. Guests can turn their accommodation into their case manager who will then present the accommodation to the Site Director where they will determine if the accommodation can be effected.*

**Allegation #3(SOCs 1, 31):**

- The client says many staffers are disrespectful and unprofessional, sleep on the job, threaten retaliation, and failed to properly heat the client's meal on Thanksgiving Day.
- *Staff are trained to handle clients with care, respect, and dignity. Any client who turns in a grievance is taken very seriously. At no time should staff be asleep. Supervisors do walkthroughs every hour and a half to ensure the building, staff, and clients are safe and everything is running properly.*

**Client #2**

**Submitted to SMC: 12/14/2023. To Shelter: 12/20/2023 Response: 12/20/2023**

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity ...)
- SOC #2 (Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe...)
- SOC #31 (Training...)

**Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2, 31):**

- An allegation was made that a disabled client was verbally abused and manhandled by staff. In screening the client at the entrance, staff asked him rudely to stand up, so they could search him. When he was not quick to comply, they cursed him and shook his chair.
- *All Five Keys staff are required to complete de-escalation training once a year and ADA training as well. Five Keys does not tolerate any type of violence whether it's from guests or staff. Five Keys do not allow staff to speak to clients in any unprofessional manners or tones. Any staff who engage in aggressive or unprofessional behavior are held accountable. Management spoke to staff that were mentioned in the complaint. Both stated they would never do such things.*

**Hamilton Family**

**Client #1**

**Submitted to SMC: 12/11/2023 To shelter: 12/14/2023 Response: 12/19/2023**

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity ...)
- SOC #2 (Safe environment)
- SOC #31 (Training...)

**Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2, 31):**

- The client alleged that another guest harassed his wife and shelter management failed to act to make the shelter a safe environment or to respect the dignity of the client and his family. In fact, they offered to transfer them—in essence, to punish the family for complaining.
- *Both families have complaints about each other. None of the staff of Hamilton Family Shelter have witnessed any inappropriate interactions between the families. Both primaries were asked to refrain from speaking to one another and to let staff know if there were any further inappropriate*

*interactions. To protect the client that has filed the complaint, the shelter asked if they would like a transfer. This is not a form of punishment, in fact, this is the shelter exercising due diligence in support of the client and practicing standards of care.*

## **Episcopal Community Services (Sanctuary)**

### **Client #1**

**Submitted to SMC: 1/9/2024 To shelter: 1/19/2024 Response: 1/26/2024**

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity ...)
- SOC #8 (Provide shelter and case management services in compliance with the ADA ...)
- SOC #13 (... shelter facility available to shelter clients for sleeping at least 8 hours per night...)

### **Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 13):**

- Beds are changed without good cause, even after lights out.
- *Supervisors may switch clients who would like this if one becomes available. Sometimes clients must be moved to the beds assigned to them through 311, CAAP and HOT/HSOC. New clients may request to switch beds when it becomes available. When the beds become available, guests can be moved to beds that match their reservation.*

### **Allegation #2 (SOCs 1, 8):**

- The client has a temporary disability and suffers anxiety around dogs. A woman with a dog came in and the client had to move from her bed. The client felt she was being threatened when she questioned this action and called the police. The shelter falsely stated to the police that the client had asked to move five times, implying that she, the client, was being unreasonable. The client in fact had changed beds only three times.
- *Clients with animals are referred to the shelters through 311, CAAP and HOT/HSOC and not by the shelter. It is correct that the Complainant has moved 3 times. She had also requested to move to other beds and later turned them down. Some of the beds she wanted were not CAAP beds. She could only be placed in a CAAP bed.*

### **Allegation #3 (SOC 1):**

- Shelter staff, specifically the Spanish-speaking morning staff, often raise their voices, shouting at clients unnecessarily.
- *The employee in question assured management she does not raise her voice with any clients except when she makes announcement of the floor.*

### **Allegation #4 (SOCs 1, 8):**

- The complainant asked for a Homeless Verification Letter. Because they don't want her there, they delayed providing the document.
- *The complainant asked for a Homeless Verification when the employee was in the middle of working on a project. There must had been some misunderstanding. The shelter has never refused to give any client a homeless verification.*

\* Delayed because the client did not approve the complaint until the date it was sent to the shelter.



**November 2023 Client Complaints by Standard**

Standard of Care	Number of complaints alleging violations of this Standard
Standard 1: Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...	11
Standard 2: Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe ...	2
Standard 3: ...hire janitorial staff clean shelters on daily basis	3
Standard 8: Ensure case management services go to those most in need	1
Standard 12: ...clean bedding	1
Standard 15: ...secure storage...	5
Standard 17: Note ...when a maintenance problem will be repaired ...	1
Standard 28: Free laundry services with hot water and dryer...	2
Standard 31: Training	1

**Please note that each complaint can include alleged violations of more than one SOC.**

**December 2023 Client Complaints by Standard**

Standard of Care	Number of complaints alleging violations of this Standard
Standard 1: Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...	4
Standard 2: Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe ...	2
Standard 3: ...hire janitorial staff clean shelters on daily basis	1
Standard 8: Ensure case management services go to those most in need	1
Standard 9: Engage a nutritionist, who shall develop all meal plans.	1
Standard 10: Make dietary modifications...	1
Standard 17: Note ...when a maintenance problem will be repaired ...	1
Standard 31: Training	4

**Please note that each complaint can include alleged violations of more than one SOC.**

**January 2024 Client Complaints by Standard**

Standard of Care	Number of complaints alleging violations of this Standard
Standard 1: Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...	5
Standard 2: Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe ...	1
Standard 8: Ensure case management services go to those most in need	2
Standard 13: ...sleeping at least 8 hours per night...	1
Standard 17: Note ...when a maintenance problem will be repaired ...	1

**Please note that each complaint can include alleged violations of more than one SOC.**

**Total Client Complaints FY 2023-2024\***

Site	Site Capacity	7/23	8/23	9/23	10/23	11/23	12/23	1/24	2/24	3/24	4/24	5/24	Total (FY23-24)	Red indicates late response
711 Post/Ansonia	250 beds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					0	
Baldwin	179 beds	0	0	0	0	0	2	0					2	
Bayshore Nav	128 beds	0	0	1	0	0	0	0					1	
Bayview Nav	203 beds	0	0	1	0	0	0	0					1	
Buena Vista/Horace Mann	69 mats	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					0	
Central Waterfront Nav	60 beds	0	1	0	2/3	1	0	0					5	2
Division Circle Nav	186 beds	0	1	3	0	0	0	0					4	
Ellis Semi-Congregate	130 beds	1	0	0	0	0	1	0					2	
Embarcadero Nav Cntr	200 beds	0	0	0	0	0	1	0					1	
Hamilton Family	27 families	0	0	0	0	0	1	0					1	
Harbor House Family	30 families	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					0	
Hospitality House	22 beds	0	0	0	1	0	0	0					1	
Lark Inn	36 beds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					0	
MSC South Shelter	327 beds	0	0	0	0	1	1	1					3	2
Monarch	93 beds	0	0	2	1	0	1	1					5	3
Next Door	334 beds	1	0	0	0	1	0	0					2	
Providence Family	54 beds	0	0	0	0	0	0	1					1	
Sanctuary	200 beds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					0	
A Woman's Place	25 beds	1	0	0	1	0	0	0					2	
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>7</b>

\*Late responses are in red

**Staff Update and Committee Membership**

**Membership (Admin. Code Sec. 30.305)**

There are currently **two unfilled seats** on the Shelter Monitoring Committee:

**Seat 1** - Must be homeless or formerly homeless who is living or has lived with their homeless child under the age of 18. (These requirements are being revised in accord with the changes proposed by the SMC in 2022.)

**Seat 5** - Shall be held by a person nominated by one or more community agencies that provide behavioral health, housing placement, or other services to homeless people.

If you or anyone you would be willing to recommend is interested in applying for a Seat on the Committee, please contact staff at 628-652-7706 or email shelter.monitoring@sfgov.org for more information.

Great news: A **new staffer** was hired effective February 20, 2024: **Marion McFarlin** has joined the Committee to fill the position previously held by Angie David.

**FY2023-2024 Upcoming Meeting Calendar:**

- Mar 20,
- Apr 17,
- May 15,
- Jun 19