



City and County of San Francisco

Shelter Monitoring Committee

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shelter Monitoring Committee
FROM: Committee Staff
DATE: March 15, 2024
RE: February 2024 Staff SOC Report

Client Complaints

A total of nine formal complaints were submitted through the SMC in February 2024.

****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.*

Division Circle Navigation Center

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 1/31/2024 Sent to shelter: 2/1/2024 SMC received response: 2/14/2024

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (Safety...)
- SOC #25 (Require all staff to wear a badge...)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2, 25):

- The complainant states that male employees frequently check the women's restroom and showers while women are using them. The client believes it would be most appropriate/reasonable to have female employees check the restrooms and showers for women and vice versa. When the client expressed her opinion about this, one shelter employee told her to "Shut the f*** up." Employees commonly have their employee ID badges turned around.
- *Wellness checks for the opposite sex bathrooms or showers begin by first knocking and slightly cracking the door open while identifying as male or female staff. Staff members will then ask for bed numbers and close the door if they receive a response. Staff members will notify the supervisory on duty immediately if there is an emergency situation. If they can identify the staff member who was rude, they will do retraining/counseling. There are times that staff badges may be turned around unintentionally. The site does not have specific men or women's sleeping areas in Dorm/Pod 4, but strives to keep separation between males and females as much as possible. They offer anyone who wants to be transferred to a women's section in Dorm/Pod 1 when a bed becomes available.*

Allegation #2 (SOC 2):

- The client reports that there are guests who use the female restrooms and urinate while standing. This is audible and makes many female residents anxious.
- *The organization is currently conducting DEI training for all staff members. This training is being conducted in accordance with SVDP–SF’s Mission Statement of offering hope and service on a direct person-to-person basis. The request made by the complainant is something that has been brought to the attention of The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing in order to have what may be a larger discussion for the Adult Temporary Shelter Program.*

Oasis Family

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 2/5/24 To shelter: 2/7/24 Response: 2/29/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #3 (Make toiletries available...)
- SOC #4 (Provide feminine hygiene and incontinence supplies upon request...)
- SOC #9 (Engage a nutritionist, who shall develop all meal plans, including for children...)

Allegation #1 (SOC 9):

- The client states that after the holidays the shelter began experiencing periods when little or no food was available, once for nearly a week. When the client brought up this concern, they were told someone would follow up, but this did not happen. Since the holidays, the food that is available is lower-quality, unhealthy fare (e.g., “hot pockets”). The client has had to use their limited funds to obtain food to give their child/children, especially for dinner. Sadly, it appears staff consume some of the food that is donated, including the more desirable items.
- *The shelter asserted that, except during a brief period when the food provider changed, a variety of nutritious foods are always readily available, both as planned meals and supplemental choices. DPH’s Registered Dietician initiated technical support to help facilitate meal services that meet SOCs, and City nutrition and food safety guidelines.*

Allegation #2 (SOCs 3, 4):

- The complainant reports that toiletries and related supplies have not been readily available.
- *The shelter stated they always have plenty of these items available onsite. They frequently inquire with guests about their needs and these items can be obtained readily from the inventory room. All that a guest must do is request what they need.*

Allegation #3 (SOC 1):

- The client’s case manager is almost never around and has not been doing enough to assist the client. To the degree that the client has moved forward, it has been without significant help.
- *A case manager went on personal leave and there was confusion about who the client’s backup case manager was; however, there has always been assistance available. There are currently four case managers employed at Oasis. There were three actively working at the time of the complaint. Each has a caseload. They actively help every participant who engages with them as required.*

Client 2

Submitted to SMC: 1/6/24 To shelter: 2/6/24 Response: 2/6/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (Safety)
- SOC #9 (Engage a nutritionist, who shall develop all meal plans, including for children...)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2):

- The complainant states there is a rodent problem within the rooms at Oasis. Staff are not taking it as seriously as they should. Proper/ professional pest control/ abatement is not being done. It appears that very few traps have not been set up. There are children in the shelter, and it is unsafe to allow rodents to roam and proliferate.
- *Clark Pest Control comes onsite weekly to spray rooms and set traps outside. When there is a complaint made about a pest issue, Clark responds within 48 hours. They check the rooms for holes and patch as needed and also set up traps. Shelter staff dump trash from every floor at the conclusion of every shift to deter infestation. The neighborhood has several encampments, and a lot of trash builds up. This has led to the need for pest control.*

Allegation #2 (SOC 9):

- The client originally received three hot meals every day. In the more recent past, guests were offered mostly microwavable burritos, chicken melts, or chicken nuggets for every lunch and dinner. The selection is not healthy. Related to this, clients are not able to use the breakroom and must wait for staff to help if they need food heated/ microwaved.
- *Food is readily available, and there is a lot of variety. Guests may prefer to obtain other items if they do not want what is offered, but the DPH nutritionist did not find an issue in this area.*

Allegation #3 (SOC 1):

- Shelter case managers are not meeting with clients more than once a week. One of them goes above and beyond for people who aren't even in his caseload, but others do not seem to be acting proactively.
- *The site manager gets daily reports from case management about client engagement. Case Managers do daily outreach to engage with the clients. Each case manager engages with those in their respective caseloads. Case management is mandatory, and the shelter is careful to do outreach. Most of their clients are employed so some will also engage with the specialist responsible for long-term (PFSC) clients, regardless of their being in another person's caseload.*

Ansonia

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 2/5/24 To shelter: 2/7/24 Response: 2/7/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (Safety)
- SOC #8 (Provide services in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act...)
- SOC #12 (Provide shelter clients with ... clean sheets at least once per week...)

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

- The complainant-client says he was moved from his own room to a shared room, despite his serious health needs. One of his new roommates cannot take care of himself. He contracted lice. This person's lack of hygiene is serious enough to constitute a threat to the health of those around him. The complainant contracted lice from him. This is particularly problematic—dangerous, even—given the complainant's medical condition. The shelter has received his reasonable accommodation request, verified by the DPH nurse who visits the shelter, but they have not taken action. Meanwhile, a third roommate was moved. The client has a hard time not seeing this as discriminatory.
- *The shelter has gone to great lengths to accommodate this client, but do not always have single-person spaces available. He has his own hygiene issues that include a difficulty with maintaining a reasonable amount of property per the participant agreement. He regularly leaves open food containers in his bed area which has attracted insects, and, as a result, creates turmoil between himself and his roommates. The decision to move the other guest was arrived at objectively.*

Allegation #2 (SOC 12):

- The shelter does not supply clean bedclothes weekly, or anything close to that. It is also a challenge to get clean towels.
- *New bedding is provided upon request. This client has been informed that the laundry service is on Tuesday and Thursday, 10:30 am-11:30 am, but tends to miss the deadline. Regrettably, he has been generally uncooperative with staff when it comes to facilitating his various requests.*

Allegation #3 (SOC 1):

- The client reports that his case manager rarely ever meets with him, and his housing journey seems to be at a standstill because of this.
- *The client creates obstacles for himself when it comes to his housing progress. He failed to provide income verification to the housing assessment team, for example, and refused to meet with his Care Coordinator to provide employment verification, though he claims to be employed.*

MSC-South

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 2/12/24 To shelter: 2/20/24 Response: 3/11/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

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

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

- The complainant reports there is a tendency at the shelter for some clients to be treated differently from others. A particular employee-supervisor has more than once directed baseless comments to him or in his presence to the effect that he and other Spanish-speaking guests are in a gang. He is not in any gang, nor are the few friends he has made there at the shelter. He works every day and is trying to better his circumstances. He is offended by the manner in which he is treated. After multiple threats directed to him from another guest, he went to the front desk to make staff aware of this. Took it upon themselves to opine that the other guest did not owe the complainant for work

he did for him. It was inappropriate of staff to give their opinion and harmed the complainant insofar as the other guest is now relying on this staffer's baseless assertions.

- *Upon inquiry, the staffer said she was never rude or called clients gang members. After review, a staff discussion regarding the importance of adhering to the standards of care, including, but not limited to our local rules that touch and concern the well-being of our clients, was held and understood by the staffer who the client complained about. The need to communicate carefully was stressed, as well as the need to maintain professional boundaries between staff and clients, including not getting involved in matters that do not concern shelter operations. Lastly, St. Vincent de Paul Society is in the process of scheduling all staff to undergo additional de-escalation training.*

Client 2

Submitted to SMC: 2/19/2024 To shelter: 2/26/2024 Response: 3/11/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #3 (Provide...at least one bath-size towel to shelter clients...)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 3):

- Client states that lately there seem to have been many unreasonable rule changes. He believes staff sometimes make up rules for their own convenience, even when this causes obvious hardships for guests. Often staff now yell at guests just because they do not like a question. They will, for example, come into the restroom shouting at clients and making threats to them to, "get out or I'm putting you outside." The complainant understands staff are supposed to check on people to make sure they are okay, but there is no rule limiting time in the restroom, except when cleaning is scheduled. Also, they are rationing towels aggressively. They ask if clients "are going to shower now." If they say "no" they won't give them a towel. The client feels poorly served by this approach because if he waits till morning to get a towel, he finds that then staff are likely to say they do not have any. He has also seen staff take towels away from people's beds, people who may have been planning to use the towel in the morning. Staff are placing their own convenience above the real needs of guests.
- *Management spoke with staff, stressing the importance of respect and dignity to all clients at MSC, in addition to providing enough towels for all clients who need them for bathing. Employees engaging in disrespectful behavior are subject to disciplinary action. Some clients hoard towels, which would explain why staff run out of towels by the morning. Staff do regular wellness checks, especially in the restrooms, because of a history of drug use and overdosing there. Unfortunately, some guests hang around the men's bathrooms and harass other clients. Supervisors will talk with their teams about expressing patience and compassion towards guests and to be clear about articulating the shelter's rules. It was understood by the staff that we should be more sensitive to our clients' needs and provide enough bath towels during each shift. In closing, a clear understanding of expectations regarding the importance of ensuring that all clients are treated with dignity and respect was acknowledged by staff and supervisors.*

Client 3

Submitted to SMC: 2/16/2024 Sent to shelter: 2/27/2024 SMC received response: 3/11/24

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

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

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

- The client reports that his valuable earphones were swept up by the janitor. He was told to look in the nearest trash container and the one in the bathroom. In his anxiety to retrieve them, he showed frustration. Staff overreacted. The complainant was grabbed by a security guard from behind and placed in a chokehold. He was frightened for his life and they scuffled. Subsequently he was DOS'd. It was about 5PM. He was not given information or paperwork with instructions on how to appeal. Additionally, some of his property was missing from the bag he was given upon exit. Staff are ill prepared to deescalate clients, often resorting to threats, like, "I'll put you on the street," when a guest dares disagree with their instructions.
- *The on-duty SVDP Supervisor indicated that the client was denied service (DOS) on 02/26/24 for threats and physical violence against staff. He lost his headphones and believed that maintenance staff had swept them up and thrown them away. He threw trash all over the floor trying to find them and threatened to beat in the face of a member of the maintenance team. The supervisor drafted an incident report and was about to hand it to the front desk Supervisor when the complainant snatched it out of his hands and tore it up. He also tore the supervisor's shirt. This is why security stepped in. Police were notified and incident reports were filed. There was no choice but to DOS the client. After review, a staff discussion regarding the importance of adhering to the standards of care, including, but not limited to our local rules that touch and concern the well-being of our clients, was stressed and understood by staff. The director stressed that communication is key in avoiding problematic issues. SVDP believes this, and is scheduling all staff to undergo updated de-escalation training.*

Embarcadero Navigation Center

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 2/20/24 Sent to shelter: 2/29/2024 SMC received response: 3/1/24

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)

Allegation #1 (SOC 1, 2):

- The complainant said she felt unsafe. Threatening insinuations have been made against her by other clients and she is being harassed. One client plays loud music that is still audible after lights out, which worsens her insomnia. Another nearby bunk neighbor actively shared what appeared to be alcohol with other guests. A few days ago, her locker key was stolen. It is concerning to know that one's neighbors are always on the lookout for an opportunity to steal one's property. Clients smoke meth and sometimes have sex in the bathroom. Little is done to discourage these activities. She has submitted internal grievances, but most of her concerns have not been addressed.
- *The client draped a prayer rug over her neighbor's spiritual stuff. So, in fairness, some friction was generated by the client. There wasn't anything to determine that any threat was made. The site does not always have beds available to accommodate those who wish to move.*

Allegation #2 (SOC 8):

- The complainant has allergies to animals. She was moved to a different bunk, but is still in close proximity to multiple dogs. There are many dogs at the site, yet the rule that animals must be under the owner's control at all times is not being followed. Dogs routinely wander the dorm area. A female client was badly bitten. Feces and urine can be expected on the restroom floor.
- *The shelter accommodated a bed move to a spot of the guest's choosing. There is a pet in the area, but she was fully aware when she opted to move there.*

Allegation #3 (SOC 3):

- The rule about no food in the sleeping areas does not apply to pet food. It should. There is always pet food in the sleeping area. Also, the limits on client property are not enforced. Both of these conditions make it more likely that pests will be attracted and spread.
- *The shelter is actively holding guests accountable and are contacting the SPCA when any pets are unattended and/or running around. In regard to the food, they are addressing this and now have the guests keep dog food out of the dorm areas.*

A Woman's Place

Client #1

Submitted to SMC: 2/17/2024 Sent to shelter: 2/27/2024 SMC received response: 3/7/2024

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity ...)
- SOC #8 (Provide shelter services in compliance with the ADA...)

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 8):

- The complainant states that a fellow client, who has been harassing the complainant with false accusations, stole one of her Croc shoes. Instead of helping the complainant to retrieve her special shoe, staff responded as if they did not know the other guest's tendency to make up stories and to behave unpredictably, and told the complainant she was (that they were both) being childish. The client is already facing challenges as she heals from knee surgery. Staff have not accommodated the client's clear/visible need to minimize movement, even when they see her struggling to navigate up and down and around the shelter on crutches.
- *Staff received a guest input form from the client regarding the suspected theft of her shoe. The report was investigated by the Deputy Director on the following business day. Corroborating information was not found. Verbal disagreements between the two guests were addressed by staff when reported. The other guest reported in this complaint has been admonished for her behavior specifically, but this was not disclosed. Staff do treat all guests equally, with respect and dignity; however, the comment of "being childish" has been brought to their attention as something that is not acceptable to say to a guest. Though the client has not submitted a request form for any ADA accommodations, staff accommodated her request to lessen the amount of times she needed to get in and out of bed by answering questions she asked from her bed without requiring her to go to the front desk.*

February 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...	11
Standard 2: Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe ...	7
Standard 3: ...hire janitorial staff clean shelters on daily basis	2
Standard 4: Provide feminine hygiene and incontinence supplies	1
Standard 8: Ensure case management services go to those most in need	3
Standard 9: ...engage a nutritionist	2
Standard 12: ... Provide shelter clients with clean sheets at least weekly	1
Standard 25: ...Staff must wear a name badge...	1
Standard 31: Training	2

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	6/24	Total (FY23-24)	
711 Post/Ansonia	250 beds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1					1	
Baldwin	179 beds	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0					2	
Bayshore Nav	128 beds	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0					1	
Bayview Nav	203 beds	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0					1	
Buena Vista Horace Mann	69 mats	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					0	
Central Waterfront Nav	60 beds	0	1	0	2/3	1	0	0	0					5	2
Division Circle Nav	186 beds	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	1					5	
Ellis Semi-Congregate	130 beds	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0					2	
Embarcadero Nav Cntr	200 beds	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1					2	
Hamilton Family	27 families	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0					1	
Harbor House Family	30 families	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					0	
Hospitality House	22 beds	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0					1	
Lark Inn	36 beds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					0	
MSC South Shelter	327 beds	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3					6	2
Monarch	93 beds	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	0					5	3
Next Door	334 beds	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0					2	
Oasis Family	54 beds	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2					3	
Sanctuary	200 beds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					0	
A Woman's Place	25 beds	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1					3	
Total		3	2	7	6	3	7	3	9	0	0	0	0	40	7

*Late responses are in red

Staff Update and Committee Membership

Membership (Admin. Code Sec. 30.305)

There is currently **one unfilled seat** 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.)

If you or anyone you would be willing to recommend is interested in applying for a Seat on the Committee, please contact staff at 628-652-8080 or email shelter.monitoring@sfgov.org for more information.

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

FY2023-2024 Upcoming Meeting Calendar:

Apr 17,
May 15,
Jun 19