



City and County of San Francisco

Shelter Monitoring Committee

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shelter Monitoring Committee
FROM: Committee Staff
DATE: September 15, 2023
RE: August 2023 SOC Staff Report

August Client Complaints

There were two complaints submitted through the Shelter Monitoring Committee in August 2023.

***Note: 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 (SVDP)

Client #1

Complaints submitted: 8/30/2023

Response received: 9/8/2023

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (Safety)
- SOC #3 (Restroom maintenance)
- SOC #13 (Sleep)
- SOC #25 (Badges)

Complaint #1 (SOCs 1, 2):

- The complainant alleged vulnerable guests were being exploited and trafficked by staff, who recruit women and pimp them and sell drugs. Guests are sometimes watched while they are dressing or in the shower.
- *Staff members mentioned in the complaint were identified. The Program Director interviewed them. None of them observed anything to corroborate these allegations. Staff members of the opposite sex are required to identify themselves during wellness checks of the bathroom or showers. The staff member will only enter an opposite sex bathroom or shower area if there is an event such as a medical emergency or guests involved in an altercation. Staff must contact either the Assistant Shift Supervisor or Supervisor on duty to apprise them of their intent to enter an opposite sex bathroom or shower in these types of situations. All guests identified in this complaint were interviewed. None of these guests could corroborate the allegations. One stated the complainant told her they were going to*

file a complaint against St. Vincent de Paul Society of San Francisco for allegations similar to what is described in this complaint and “get Division Circle shut down.” The Program Director has received no other complaints from either former guests, current guests, former staff, or current staff pertaining to the allegations expressed. The agency’s goal is to treat all clients with dignity and respect and ensure their safety.

Complaint #2 (SOC 2):

- There are no partitions, and space between guests is not enough. With adequate partitions, guests will not be so exposed. The windows of the dorm area add to the lack of privacy.
- *Complainant did discuss the need for partitions between bed areas. Program Director advised her that SVDP was in the process of ordering more partitions to separate the beds. Installation of these partitions has been started upon receipt of new partitions with an anticipated completion date of September 30, 2023. Guests have been advised to sleep in opposite directions in those without partitions. Due to the congregate setting of Division Circle Navigation Center, the walls in between the dormitory areas do have windows so that staff can observe as much of the dormitory area as possible by completing regular walkthroughs and wellness check in their assigned areas and other parts of the facility. Staff is also able to observe if any guests are looking into other areas and request that they do not do so. Having these windows covered for privacy could impact the overall safety of the staff and guests in the event of an emergency. As such, the Program Director believes safety standards are being met and priorities balanced appropriately.*

Complaint #3 (SOC 3):

- There are no paper towels or toilet seat covers, according to the client. Hygiene is an issue. Paper towels are provided in all bathrooms in accordance with Standards.
- *Maintenance Workers clean the restrooms and showers three times per day and replenish any paper towel dispensers that are empty in the bathrooms. Wellness checks are conducted every 20 minutes throughout the day. The shelter no longer supplies toilet seat covers in the bathroom areas as they have caused issues with the plumbing when guests place a large quantity of them in the toilet.*

Complaint #4 (SOC 25):

- The staff do not consistently wear badges, or if they do, they are not readily visible. When asked, they decline to reveal their names to clients.
- *The shelter disagrees. All staff members are required to wear their badges during their assigned shifts and to identify themselves when asked.*

Complaint #5 (SOC 1):

- Staff discriminate, treating guests who participate in their criminal side businesses better than those who do not, e.g., allow them to skirt the rules on eating in the dorm area or do a better job on their laundry.

- *Staff treat all guests with dignity and respect. All guests are reminded to not bring any food or drinks (other than water) in the dormitory areas so as to prevent any vermin from entering the dormitory. All guests are provided the same equal opportunity to do their laundry and are not given any special privileges as alleged in the complaint.*

Complaint #6 (SOC 2, 13):

- There is little effort made to keep the noise at night to a level where guests can get a good night's sleep, and staff ignores cries for help from guests who are suffering from assault or illness. It appears there are few or no staff on duty and attentive after midnight. Clients with disabilities are especially impacted, left without support during the night.
- *Every reasonable effort is made by staff to keep the noise level to a minimum at night. There are known issues of guests that may have mental health issues that may cause noises at night, guests suffering a medical emergency, or guests that may be returning from work in the middle of the night. Staff members conduct regular wellness checks in the dormitory areas or around the facility, including during the night.*

Central Waterfront

Complaint submitted: 8/18/2023

Response received: 9/12/2023

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (Safety)
- SOC #15 (Secure Storage)
- SOC #25 (Badges)

Complaint #1 (SOCs 1, 15, 25):

- The client was DOS'd and his lock was cut by management at the shelter. He was not given the contents. The items lost were valuable. No one gave him a form to use to submit a claim for these lost items. The manager who told him that he had cut his lock offered no consolation or useful information as to the disposition of his valuables or how to go about asking that the shelter look for them. The manager did not wear a badge/name tag.
- *The shelter later located and returned all of the missing items to the client.*

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

- Client states that when another guest assaulted him near the shelter exit with a pole, a staffer—with no badge—did not promptly take appropriate action. In fact, he initially laughed at the complainant's plight, as if it was entertaining, before half-heartedly intervening.
- *The shelter regrets the incident, but did not corroborate the allegation that staff were uncaring or rude. The perpetrator was DOS'd.*

August 2023 Site Visit Infractions

FY2023-2024 Unannounced Site Visit Tally

Site	7/23	8/23	9/23	10/23	11/23	12/23	1/24	2/24	3/24	Total (FY23-24)
Buena Vista Horace Mann	0	0								0
Compass Family	0	0								0
Cova	1	0								1
Hamilton Family	0	0								0
Harbor House Family	1	0								1
Lark Inn	0	0								0
Monarch	1	0								1
MSC-South	0	0								0
Next Door	1	0								1
Providence Family	0	0								0
Sanctuary	0	0								0
St. Joseph's Family	0	0								0
Total	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4

FY2023-2024 Announced Site Visit Tally

Site	7/23	8/23	9/23	10/23	11/23	12/23	1/24	2/24	3/24	Total FY 23-24
711 Post (Ansonia)										
Buena Vista Horace Mann		1								1
Central Waterfront										
Compass Family										
Hamilton Family										
Harbor House Family										
Lark Inn										
MSC South Shelter										
Next Door										
Providence Family										
Sanctuary	1									1
St. Joseph's Family										
A Woman's Place										
AWP Drop-In	1									1
Total	2	1								3

Buena Vista Horace Mann Family shelter was visited in August with no adverse findings. One thing that came up in surveys was that a particular client was insulting, threatening, and causing anxiety to others. (The shelter's initial attempt to DOS this client was unsuccessful. Later, due to continued violations of the rules, the client with whom several others took issue, as denied service.)

Staff Update and Committee Membership

Membership (Admin. Code Sec. 30.305)

There are currently four 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 2 – Shall be held by a person who is homeless or has been homeless within the three years prior to being appointed to the Committee, and who has a disability.

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.

Seat 12 - This is the “DPH Seat.” DPH has put forth a candidate and he will go before the HOC Nomination Committee in their next meeting.

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.

FY2023-2024 Upcoming Meeting Calendar

- Oct 18
- Nov 15