



Shelter Monitoring Committee

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shelter Monitoring Committee
FROM: Committee Staff
DATE: October 16, 2023
RE: **September 2023 Staff SOC Report**

September Client Complaints

Seven formal complaints were submitted through the SMC in September 2023.

****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.*

Bayview Navigation Center

Complaints submitted: 9/12/2023

Response received: 9/20/2023

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (Safety...)
- SOC # 3 (...hire janitorial staff clean shelters on daily basis)
- SOC #15 (secure storage...)
- SOC #17 (...post ... when a maintenance problem will be repaired ...)

Complaint #1 (SOC 3):

- Around August 27, the client heard janitorial staff complaining about excrement in one of the showers in the men's bathroom. He saw for himself that one of the stalls was filthy. Staff failed to address the situation. The shower remained in this state for several days. Even after the complainant himself, seeing no action, initiated cleaning. Also, some of the showers have mold.
- Management could not *speak directly to the issue the client describes and does not categorically deny the allegations. However, their janitorial staff clean restrooms three times a day and keep a log of the times the restroom are cleaned and who they are cleaned by. If there was a time that they missed a restroom or failed to clean it promptly they express their apologies and promise to be more attentive moving forward.*

Complaint #2 (SOCs 3, 17):

- The ADA bathroom often has no toilet paper, and there is often no soap in the dispensers at the sinks in the women's bathroom. Also, several shower heads are broken/missing, and no information as to the status of repairs is posted.
- *Janitorial staff are constantly checking and replenishing needs in the restrooms. Again, they do not deny it could have occurred that day. They addressed this with staff, and will be sure to check all restrooms for toilet paper. All showerheads are working.*

Complaint #3 (SOCs 1, 2):

- The complainant witnessed staff disparaging a wheelchair-bound client over 60 years old. Subsequently, this guest was assaulted by another guest. The client sees a connection between the assault and accusations made by staff. Staff often speak unprofessionally, even aggressively, to and in the presence of clients. For example, as the complainant entered the site, he heard a supervisor say, "We have some killers on the payroll." He repeated this two or three times, loud enough for other guests to hear it.
- *The shelter operates with the model of Care and Compassion and that is expected to be adhered to by staff at all times. If guests witness anyone being assaulted or if they feel as though they are treated unfairly, those issues are promptly dealt with. The staff member mentioned denied stating what the complainant alleges. Be this as it may, management reminded them of their part in the shelter's mission.*

Complaint #4 (SOC 15):

- The client believes someone on staff stole his DVD player from the mailroom/Case Manager's office. Only staff have access to this room. They did not take any action to investigate the theft. If it was not outright stolen by staff, then it was lost due their negligence. He has received almost no mail from Social Security for several months. He would like to know what safeguards are in place to prevent staff from taking items that appear to be interesting/valuable.
- *Management spoke to Case Managers regarding the clients DVD player. They offered to help the guest file a dispute with Amazon. It seems as though the guest received a notification that it was delivered but the site never received the package. They are still willing to assist the guest with getting a refund or the item re-sent. They assert that they operate with integrity and would never steal mail. Intake staff are the only ones who are allowed to receive and issue mail. It is issued to the guest as soon as it arrives.*

Complaint #5 (SOC 2):

- Many clients have potentially dangerous dogs. The complainant is concerned that rules requiring guests to keep their animals under control are not enforced rigorously enough. For example, he arrived at the entrance of the site and a dog with large jaws was very close to the keypad used to ask that the gate be opened, requiring him to approach very carefully. He reported this to the supervisor at the entrance, who did not seem to see it as anything he or the shelter needed to worry about. The shelter has a responsibility to address hazards. Dog owners should be reminded and incentivized to restrain their animals.

- *The shelter stated they do their best to protect guests and staff as well as be fair when it comes to pet owners. They balance the needs of all guests, including being sure to not place a guest who has a fear of dogs next to a bed area where there is a dog. They provide muzzles to dog owners and require them to be worn on site if the dog seems at all aggressive.*

The client requested an investigation. This is close to completion. I am awaiting one last item.

Division Circle (SVDP)

Client #1

Complaints submitted: 9/18/2023

Response received: 9/24/2023

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

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

Complaint #1 (SOC 1):

- The complainant states a group of clients purchased a meal to share. This is much more economical than buying individual meals. They were told that the rules say a guest can only bring one meal in at a time, but the group had pitched in with the plan to share food as a community and sit down together and eat. Staff did not want to see this and ironically suggested they “have a picnic” (outside the shelter). Staff were not open to reason and told them they would have to go back out and break it up so each client just bring in a single portion. This comes across as overly rigid enforcement of rules and goes against the philosophy that led to the creation of the Navigation Centers. Cooperating in a group like this is good for morale and not at all unreasonable.
- *The shelter stated that their philosophy is to treat guests equally, with dignity and respect. They have made a point of asking guests bring in a reasonable amount of food to be consumed in one sitting in the Community Area in order to prevent any food being take to the dormitory areas. Often guests take outside food into the dormitory areas after stating that they were going to share it with other guests, and end up leaving it in their bed or lockers, which can attract vermin.*

Division Circle (SVDP)

Client #2

Complaints submitted: 9/13/2023

Response received: 9/18/2023

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

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

Complaint #1 (SOC 1):

- The anonymous complainant stated that shelter staff routinely ask/pressure her to exit the RA

bathroom well in advance of the posted cleaning time. This seems unnecessary and especially inconsiderate insofar as the client has issues with mobility. Note that this not an isolated incident, having happened on at least five separate occasions. Staff should abide by the posted cleaning schedule.

- *Management spoke with the Maintenance Supervisor, asking him that he have the Maintenance Workers adhere to the posted times for cleaning of the restrooms and showers.*

Division Circle (SVDP)

Client #3

Complaints submitted: 9/27/2023

Response received: 10/11/2023

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #2 (Safety)
- SOC #9 (Nutrition)
- SOC #12 (Provide shelter clients with one pillow...)
- SOC #15 (Storage)
- SOC #16 (Provide shelter clients with access to electricity for charging cell phones...)
- SOC # 19 (22” between sleeping units, excluding ... units separated by a wall)
- SOC # 25 (Require all staff to wear a badge...)
- SOC # 31 (Training...)

Complaint #1 (SOCs 1, 2):

- The complainant states he has been disrespected and threatened by the night shift manager. This first arose when after reluctantly being given a late snack by this employee—two unripe plums—he became angry when the client temporarily left one on a counter. He continued to verbally abuse the complainant and behave in a very threatening way, even backing him into a window and putting his fist in the client’s face. He told the client that “whatever [he included] in a complaint would make no difference.” This employee behaves in a thuggish fashion. Some of the security officers also behave in a very unprofessional, aggressive manner. The client has been temporarily exited (for four hours) without good cause, though he was not misbehaving in any way. The disciplinary action was taken solely to show the supervisor’s ability to make things difficult when the client does not give sufficient regard to his authority.
- *The Navigation Center receives meals for the guest three times per week from Meals on Wheels. They also provide milk, juices, and fruits to supply to the guests. They have been working on providing extra food through partnerships with such organizations RePlate and Food Runners. They agree there are issues concerning the quantity food provided. (The guest has subsequently requested a reasonable accommodation for additional food.) The shelter is in the process of securing the video footage to see if the threatening [assaultive] behavior by staff really took place. The site manager has invited the complainant to come to him if he feels that any staff member does not treat him with dignity and respect.*

Complaint #2 (SOC 1, 12, 15):

- Staff discriminate against the complainant, e.g., the client was, for several days after intake, not given a pillow or provided a lock for his locker. No significant case management services have been provided. And the metal detectors at the entrance appear to have been set to a level that allows staff to search the possessions of the client and some other guests every time they enter the site, even when they are carrying virtually no metal.
- *The shelter stated that they make every effort to provide guests with pillows and a lock for their locker upon entry into the Navigation Center. One issue they have identified is having an adequate supply of both items on site at all times for intakes and should guests request them. They are also experiencing a staffing shortage. The site manager offered his assistance to this guest, as well as other guests who appear to need it. The metal detectors are set to detect any metal on a person and they do ask guests to remove all metal objects before they are screened. This is done for the safety of all guests, visitors, and staff.*

Complaint #3 (SOC 1, 2, 9, 25, 31):

- From Monday 9/18/23 to Saturday 9/23/23, no snacks, food, or even milk were given out to anyone at night. The complainant repeatedly asked the food service staff, who also double as front desk clerks and guards. They refused to give any food or drinks to the client. According to all staff, clients are forbidden to have both milk and juice at any meal. Once when the client asserted his need for orange juice, a staffer with no name tag—who refused to give his name to client on several occasions—said, “...you’re trying my last nerve, bro,” and continued to refuse to give client a cup of orange juice. When the client insisted, remaining standing near the food service counter/window, this staffer began calling him names, stating that client is “a child” ...and “not a grown-ass man.” The client was then surrounded by a guard, a supervisor, and another staffer (another one with no name tag). When asked what was going on, the client stated that he was being discriminated against, verbally abused with insults, and refused juice. Finally, the client was given a cup of orange juice. Staff resist providing snacks and nighttime meals, even when they are not occupied with work-related activities.
- *Guests are provided milk or juice with all meals that are served. Additional milk and juices are available through V & C Foods. Meals are available twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week. Three meals are provided to each guest each day if they want them, along with either a milk or juice. They try to provide additional milks and juices to guests, but do not withhold meals from guests as alleged. If a particular shift is short-staffed, it is the responsibility of the Supervisor on Duty or Assistant Shift Supervisor to assist in the kitchen. Coffee is provided from morning until early afternoon to guests, but not in the night.*

Complaint #4 (SOC 1, 2):

- At one point a staffer insulted the client, saying “What, are you stupid or something?” He then repeatedly called the client “stupid.” This was done in the presence of a supervisor. After this verbal assault, the client gathered his belongings from his bed and left the facility. He forgot to sign out, and was followed closely by a guard all the way to the

outside gate in a menacing way as they demanded he sign out. The client reports suffering from lifelong PTSD and felt unsafe inside the Navigation Center, which is why he could not bring himself to sign out in order to flee the abusive staff/guards.

- *Staff is very aware of guests that have past traumatic experiences. They strive to make everyone feel that they are in a safe space and believe that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. [The specific allegations were not addressed.]*

Complaint #5 (SOCs 1, 15):

- Staff make comments which imply that they who take clients' valuables. This is at least unprofessional and intimidating and at worst evidence of theft by staff from vulnerable and often financially struggling clients. Staff insist that restroom doors remain open. The complainant has been followed into the bathroom with a frequency that amounts to harassment. Other guests are not subject to this treatment. The client denies having given any reason for staff for this. He has seen cleaning staff behave rudely/unprofessionally toward other guests who are using the restroom by sweeping the floor of the stall while it is occupied, and to disabled guests, by mopping very close to or even under their wheelchairs.
- *The shelter maintains a security log for when guests store items that are deemed potentially dangerous when they enter the premises. They make it a point to properly mark these items with the guest's name and bed number when they surrender these items so that they are able to retrieve them upon exiting. The cleaning schedule is posted outside of all bathrooms and showers as a courtesy to guests. They make other bathrooms and showers available to them while individual bathrooms or showers are being cleaned. These doors are closed after this time. Staff is responsible for doing wellness checks to make sure that guests are not in need of medical assistance. There may also be other staff members that enter the restrooms or showers in order to locate a guest should someone be on-site looking for them. Examples of this may be an In Home Support Services worker or Housing Navigator looking for a particular guest for services they may need.*

Complaint #6 (SOCs 1, 16):

- Staff make it difficult for guests to access the shelter's electric outlets. Once when the one single electrical outlet which is designated by staff for use by up to 180 clients (beds) to charge their phones was already in use, the client had a pressing need to charge his phone. A staff member told client that he must use only the single electrical outlet designated. The client explained that he needed to have his device working so he could attend to his business, and that he felt his civil rights were being violated by being discriminated against. The staff member replied "there are no civil rights in this place." When the client said he would continue to use the outlet, the staff member came toward client, saying: "You have become a child, bro ... You're a child, bro." He stated that if client left his phone even for a moment, it would disappear. The client stated that he would not leave it unattended for even a moment. The staffer then stood closer to client (a foot away) and stated over and over: "You're a child, bro" ... "You're a child, bro"—repeating this phrase in a hostile tone ten times or more. The client told him to stop harassing him, but he continued to menace client physically and badger him verbally with his repetitive taunting. The front guard and

supervisor were alerted and came to the dining room and surrounded the client. He explained to the supervisor and others present that he felt harassed, bullied, and mistreated. At that point, a case manager intervened, fortunately.

- *The charging station can handle up to 24 phones at one time. The shelter is looking for ways of providing additional outlets to guests.*

Complaint #7 (SOCs 1, 19):

- The complainant's bed is far less than 22 inches from his neighbor. The small partition is inadequate. His neighbor sometimes inadvertently extends his leg onto the client's bed. The client has not seen other guests with such a small partition.
- *Guests have been advised to sleep in opposite directions in those without larger partitions. It is the shelter's understanding that HSH is considering the issue of bed separation and more specifically the use of partitions at the Navigation Centers.*

The client has yet to determine whether he will ask for an investigation.

Monarch

Client #1

Complaint submitted: 9/11/2023

Response received: 10/6/2023

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- Standard of Care #2 (safe environment...)
- Standard of Care # 3 (...hire janitorial staff clean shelters on daily basis)
- Standard of Care #25 (wear a badge that identifies the staff person by name...)
- Standard of Care #28 (free laundry services with hot water and dryer...)

Complaint #1 (SOCs 1, 3, 28):

- The Monarch has failed to consistently provide clean sheets, towels and blankets. Most often there are no towels or wash cloths. Paper towels have never been offered. The client has had to ask repeatedly for a single towel, and has been forced to dry her hands on her clothing. The shelter only started giving out laundry detergent after repeated requests. They have never provided any washing capabilities for guests' clothes.
- *The shelter states that towels and blankets have always been taken care of by the hotel. When guests ask and they have run out of what is in the supply room, they have to wait for the hotel staff to come in to get more towels and blankets. Laundry pods are in the lobby and the supply room. If the guest thought that we were out, they were mistaken. Also, though it was a challenge to set up, they now have regular laundry service.*

Complaint #2 (SOC 2):

- Client states there was water pooling above the ceiling of her 4th floor bathroom. Staff went to the 5th floor and talked to the people in the unit above her room, asking them to desist from what was later revealed to be the washing clothes in their tub (see Complaint #1). The client expressed concern about the bulge in the ceiling and that any moisture remaining could encourage the growth of mold. She asked staff to open the ceiling and fix the leak. They did not take appropriate steps to address the root of the problem. Not only is mold a health hazard, but the structural integrity of the ceiling was compromised. Over the client's objections, staff re-plastered over the clearly still-wet ceiling material. The plaster ended up collapsing down into the client's tub multiple times. The client filed a complaint with the City of San Francisco building inspectors, as the shelter was failing to ensure a safe environment.
- *The shelter responded that a work order was done the same day the guest let them know about the leak and it was given to the maintenance man. He handled it shortly after that. The complainant requested that the maintenance man only come to her room to make repairs when the hotel manager was available to assist him. The ceiling was opened and no mold was found.*

Complaint #3 (SOCs 2, 3):

- The client was moved to a 2nd floor and even while waiting waiting to see the room, she saw a rat run across the hallway. She noticed mouse droppings on the bed springs and soon after this saw a mouse run across the floor in her room. The floor had stains and the walls and curtains were also visibly dirty. Management responded that they would send someone to take a look and see what needed cleaning, but no one ever came. An exterminator laid traps and said there was a hole in the wall that needed to be fixed. Nobody came to fix the hole. The carpet was only vacuumed, not steam cleaned. The room remained in what the client felt was an unacceptable state. The client also saw cockroaches in the lobby by the microwave.
- *The carpet was steam cleaned. The maintenance man was also able to take care of the walls and baseboards, the hole in the wall, and replacing the curtains at the same time. The exterminator came out and sprayed and laid traps. One of the traps was by the microwave. The traps are thrown away after any vermin are trapped.*

Complaint #4 (SOC 25):

- The complainant reported that staff do not wear a badge where it can be seen. Perhaps some keep them in their pockets.
- *Many of the staff have their badges on a lanyard which sometimes gets turned around. Guests just need to point out that the badge is turned around and the staff will correct this.*

Monarch

Client #2

Complaint submitted: 9/20/2023

Response received: 9/26/2023

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- SOC #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- SOC #8 (ensure case management services go to those clients most in need)

Complaint #1 (SOCs 1, 8):

- The client alleged retaliation in response to an earlier complaint. She states that staff visited her room to tell her the carpet would be cleaned the next day. She told them that the city inspector found mouse feces in the closet and asked whether the walls would be cleaned and the curtains replaced. They responded that they were only told about the carpet and “she could just file a new complaint.” The client is frustrated staff would advise her to file a new complaint rather than just address the issues. The complainant emailed shelter management to say she had been waiting for three weeks for a replacement razor for one brown water had rained down onto from the ceiling. Within minutes staff brought her one. The client sees the delay as evidence of staff’s vindictively exerting power, i.e., there was no reason the razor could not have been replaced without management’s intervention. At one point, four staffers went to her room at the same time. There is a pattern of abuse of power and retaliation. The client has complained about this before. Also, after a full year, the shelter is reassigning her case management to someone new, which will entail further delays. Finally, the client asked for replacement bedding, worried it may be “infested.”
- *Staff were not aware of all of the complaints that the client had made. There was no malicious intent. They called the exterminator the same day they received the complaint and he came the next day. When the complainant told staff there was a dead mouse in her room an employee went to her room to remove the mouse since none of the hotel employees had arrived to work. There is no desire to intimidate the guest. Staff speak with her in a respectful manner and do their best to address issues she raises. A new razor was sent up when the manager was informed that new ones had come in. This had nothing to do with power or control. The box spring was examined. There were no mice living in it and it was cleaned up.*

Complaint #2 (SOCs 1, 8):

- The client alleges the case manager has not provided reasonable or adequate service. For example, she “waited for weeks to go back to ECS to file for special disability consideration,” and then canceled the scheduled appointment. Her “stalling” has negatively impacted the client’s progress.
- *The case manager worked hard to try to accommodate the complainant. She waited for an entire month just to get her to go to the ECS. The complainant had withdrawn consent to allow access to her medical information. Due to the fact that they were having ECS come to their facility a few days later, they cancelled all scheduled appointments to the ECS office. They informed the complainant of this and explained.*

Bayshore Navigation Center

Complaint submitted: 9/26/2023

Response received: 9/27/2023

Alleged Standard of Care (SOC) Violations:

- Standard of Care #1 (Treat clients equally, with respect and dignity...)
- Standard of Care #7 (Supply clients with fresh...drinking water.)
- Standard of Care #9 (Engage a nutritionist who shall develop all meals plans...)
- SOC #10 (Make dietary modifications...based on ... health or disability reasons.)
- SOC #17 (Note...the status of repairs...)

Complaint #1 (SOCs 1, 10):

- The complainant states that his doctor's prescription was ignored. He needs to be able to store and access edibles as prescribed by his doctor. Staff dismissed as "so-called" his need for accommodation, and he asserts this treatment was rude and discriminatory. He complained to his case manager without any resolution.
- *The shelter requests that guests with specific dietary requirements provide a medical certification, including a list of permissible food items. They encountered challenges in the client's case due to the ambiguity of the provided medical note, which led them to consult on-site medical personnel. They determined that the client could safely consume foods already available.*

Complaint #2 (SOC 9):

- The complainant reported he has experienced severe abdominal pain and diarrhea due to food that is spoiled. Food does not have expiration dates. He is now very concerned that the shelter and its staff cannot be trusted to provide nutritious and safe meals.
- *The shelter sources meals from Meals On Wheels. They have a good track record. Each meal is accompanied by a clear expiration date, ensuring freshness. The shelter maintains a direct line of communication with Meals On Wheels in case any issues arise with the meals. To date, they have received no other reports of guests falling ill due to the meals provided.*

Complaint #3 (SOC 17):

- The men's washroom has no hot water and one sink is dismantled. The water pipes stick out from the wall. There is toilet paper without appropriate holders, lying on the floor, which is very unhygienic. The men's shower requires repairs, and the lighting is also broken. No information as to the anticipated completion date of repairs is posted.
- *Hot water is available in both restrooms. The showers are reported to be fully operational. The removal of one sink from the men's restroom was undertaken by the City due to damage and safety considerations. The exact date of completion remains uncertain. There is no known issues with the lighting. Staff diligently maintain the restrooms, subjecting them to thorough cleaning twice per shift and addressing any issues promptly.*

Complaint #4 (SOC 7):

- The client says there is no drinking water in the lunchroom.
- *The shelter states it provides filtered water dispensers in both the kitchen and the community room, equipped with fresh filters. At one point recently, these dispensers were both down for approximately one week during which time guests were offered bottled water.*

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

- Nov 15