



City and County of San Francisco

Shelter Monitoring Committee

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shelter Monitoring Committee
FROM: Committee Staff
DATE: November 19, 2024
RE: **November 2024 Staff SOC Report**

Client Complaints

There were 11 formal complaints were submitted through the SMC in November 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 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.*

Sanctuary

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 9/19/24 Sent to shelter: 9/24/2024 SMC received response: 10/11/24

Standards of Care (SOCs) Allegedly Violated: 1, 2

Allegation 1 (SOCs 1,2)

- The complainant reports that since her stay at the shelter she has been experiencing bullying by another participant. She has witnessed this individual bully staff and clients in the shelter. This person has sprayed harsh chemicals, cursed others and even divulged controlled Rx. The dorm has become a hostile environment for her and other clients.
- *Shelter staff made efforts to mediate the situation, but the alleged aggressor denied any issues with the complainant. Staff have observed that the complainant tends to raise her voice as a defense mechanism, instead of following the shelter's internal grievance protocol, which encourages clients to use the complaint form to voice their concerns rather than engaging in personal confrontations with other clients or staff when provoked. On several occasions, the complainant has received warning notices for disruptive behavior. Shelter management reminded of the importance of adhering to shelter rules, to ensure the shelter's smooth operations. Additionally, they were reminded of the shelter's zero-tolerance policy on violence or profanity directed toward staff or clients in a hateful or disrespectful manner. All interviewed guests agreed to avoid interactions with the complainant. The complainant informed management that she had noticed some improvement. The shelter stated they take the complainant's concerns seriously and increased supervisory presence on the floors to prevent any potential hostile environments that may arise when staff are not present.*

Bay View Navigation Center

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 10/2/24 Sent to shelter: 10/3/24 SMC received response: 10/8/24

Standards of Care (SOCs) Allegedly Violated: 1, 3, 9, 12

Allegation 1 (SOCs 1,12)

- The guest told us that staff, especially at night, are very unprofessional, e.g., use an extraordinary amount of profanity. Staff make noise at night (music, loud laughter), disregarding clients' need for sleep. They do not do a good job responding to noise made by guests. The client slept poorly during his stay at the site, which adversely impacted his mental and physical health.
- *Shift leads were not aware and denied these allegations. However, based upon the description provided in the complaint, management identified the staffers that best fit said descriptions and had one-on-one discussions with them in which they "reviewed the Standards of Quality Care, BVHPF expectations, and the Personal Rights of guests." Additionally, they reviewed their job description, to assure that they clearly understood their obligations, which they agreed to. (Both staffers also denied the allegations.)*

Allegation 2 (SOCs 1,9)

- The complainant claims food took very long to be provided, especially at night. The frozen meals were sometimes not hot. Staff in the kitchen are rude and even threaten guests who question their service. He witnessed staff mocking/deriding a guest with symptoms of dementia when she asked what options there were to eat or if there was dessert. He saw others similarly abused. The client noticed that some clients were treated better, brought well-heated meals of tastier looking food. The difference in the way people were treated appeared to be clearly correlated with ethnicity and country of origin. Additionally, it appears to him that staff routinely took the better meals for their own (later) use. Finally, despite the No-food/drink policy, he saw staff give some favored residents exceptions.
- *Site microwaves were regularly shorting out and needed to be replaced on more than one occasion. This has been an ongoing concern that has been addressed with HSH. To alleviate this problem, two of the microwaves have been repaired, they received a third microwave and are purchasing three commercial microwaves. Because of the differences in microwave wattage and capacity there may have been inconsistency in the temperatures that meals were received. To address this concern, they have purchased infrared cooking thermometers which are scheduled to arrive this week. Regarding staff rudeness, threats, and unfair practices, management met with the graveyard shift leads with the instructions to monitor staff through well-check walk throughs more frequently. They will remind staff during their group briefings, which is to also include the reminder of Safe Nav's food and drink policy, Guests are given daily options at each meal in which they decide what is to their liking. Last month, a Meals on Wheels panel convened with guests to receive feedback and suggestions on the meals provided. "The guests felt heard after partaking in the panel and are hopeful of the outcome."*

Allegation 3 (SOCs 3)

- The client says that the bed he slept on and the whole dorm was dirty and very dusty. The water dispenser there is visibly dirty. Many guests coughed frequently and seemed to be in

poor health. He believes he became ill due to the inadequate cleaning. As far as he observed, management never inspected the sleeping area for cleanliness.

- *To address the cleanliness the site manager met with our Facilities Manager to review the cleaning records and scheduling. Staff were reminded that dorms and communal areas are to be cleaned daily—swept, mopped, walls wiped, etc. Deep cleaning occurs monthly, including each guest removing everything from the dorm floors to allow thorough sweeping and mopping under their beds. Beginning in November 2024 the deep cleanings will be held bi-weekly. On the same schedule, dorm air fresheners are replaced, and air purifiers are checked for efficiency. Purifier filters are also replaced as needed. When a guest exits or has soiled their beds, mattresses are quickly cleaned and sanitized. Although these allegations focused on the graveyard shift the concerns were shared with all our managers on all shifts to serve as reminders of the seriousness and the importance of our responsibilities to care for our guests.*

Embarcadero Navigation

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 10/9/24 Sent to shelter: 10/9/24 SMC received response: 10/22/24

Alleged Standards of Care (SOC) Violated: **1, 8, 12**

Allegation 1 (SOCs 1,8, 12)

- Management placed a new guest with a large dog next to the complainant, despite the Reasonable Accommodation he has on record to not be near dogs. He has a documented allergy (and this animal sheds a significant amount of hair). He also suffers from PTSD related to fear of dogs (and this particular dog behaves aggressively toward the complainant). Placing a dog so close to him impacted his mental and physical health. He was forced to sleep elsewhere, i.e., outside of the shelter. The client requested a safety transfer.
- *The shelter stated they are not able to always situate guests such that they are not near to animals, and HSH did not approve a safety transfer. SMC pressed the shelter on this decision. It seems reasonable, given the numbers, that clients with animals could be clustered so as to create zones where the exposure is reasonably small. The client was eventually moved to a more appropriate spot.*

Client 2

Submitted to SMC: 10/20/24 Sent to shelter: 10/21/24 SMC received response: 10/23/24

Standards of Care (SOCs) Alleged to have been Violated: **1, 2**

Allegation 1 (SOC 2)

- The complainant reports she was “punched in the stomach” by another client. According to her, this was witnessed by a staff member. She instinctively pushed him away from her to put distance between them, as she was afraid of what he might do next. It was only then that the staff intervened.
- *The shelter manager told the client they were sorry to hear about the incident and assured her they do not condone any violence. They offered her a safety transfer or to be moved to a different bed area. In the end, the other guest moved to a different dorm*

Allegation 2 (SOC 1)

- The client was later confronted by a supervisor who accused her of intentionally stepping on the other guest's foot and threatened to DOS her for this. The complainant asserted this was a lie and that the supervisor shouted at her and mischaracterized events.
- *There was no footage of this incident because it occurred in the dorm bed areas. Staff present to witness the incident stated it was not a punch. The client had gone out of her way to go confront the guest in an isle she was not assigned to. In an effort to support her, the site manager spoke to her about the situation. Management promised to follow up with the staffer to make sure he is not raising his voice or coming across in an intimidating manner. She believes the complainant accidentally stepped on the other guest's foot and that pushing him away was simply a reaction because she was surprised that he pushed or punched her. Management promised to do their best to make sure all staff and guests treat the complainant with dignity, respect, and equity. They will continue coaching staff to help de-escalate situations like this when they occur.*

Next Door

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 10/10/24 Sent to shelter: 10/10/24 SMC received response: 10/16/24

Alleged Standards of Care (SOCs) Violated: **1, 15, 31**

Allegation 1 (SOCs 15)

- A floor supervisor allegedly told the client he could keep a few things (e.g., dirty laundry) under his bed as long as they did not stick out. But soon thereafter he was given a warning that he had excess property, and then while he was away, staff bagged and tagged this. Some items, including expensive new athletic shoes and sweats, were never returned. The client asked if there was a record of when and to whom it was returned or if it had accidentally been returned to his bunkmate. Supervisory staff did not respond to his query other than to offer to find him some donated clothes to replace what had been lost. The client believes his property was lost due to the shelter's negligence.
- *The shelter apologized for an inadequate response from staff. They located the client's property in their storage room and returned them.*

Allegation 2 (SOCs 1, 31)

- The client recently had some personal problems that were very trying for him. Staff have made these worse by remarking on and speculating about his sex life in his presence/hearing. He sees this as verging on harassment.
- *As for staff being unprofessional, management stated that they take client rights very seriously. Unfortunately, he was not willing to provide any staff names. It was explained that explained that in order to hold staff accountable, they would need either a description or the names of those involved. All Five Keys staff undergo training and are expected to maintain professionalism at all times. They promised to reiterate these expectations to all staff.*

MSC-South

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 10/14/24 Sent to shelter: 10/22/24 SMC received response: 10/25/24

Standard of Care (SOC) Violated: 1

Allegation 1 (SOC 1):

- The client reports that since he filed his original complaint, he has been experiencing ongoing concerns with the staff who work in his dormitory. According to the guest that the original individual with whom his complaint was filed has been very cordial. However, the other staff have begun taunting him, laughing, and making rude noises at the guest's back. The guest tried to get the supervisor's support, who also refused to aid him.
- *Shelter management stated they have a good rapport with this client. In this case the nearest window to his bed is fifty feet away across the room from where he sleeps. Most of the clients near the window did not want the windows open. Staff admitted they could have explained better, but they were trying to pass out linen and allowed their irritation to show. MSC-South reassured the guest they sincerely want to make sure everyone is treated with dignity and respect.*

Division Circle

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 10/11/24 Sent to shelter: 10/15/24 SMC received response: 10/23/24

Alleged Standards of Care (SOCs) Violated: 1, 9

Allegation 1 (SOC #1):

- The guest reports he had missed his morning and lunch meal and had hoped to be able to get a second dinner as he was hungry. The guest stated that in the past he had been able to do this so long as he did not exceed his two-meal daily limit. The client was informed that the rules had changed, and they could no longer do this, this was done without any prior notification, so that the guests could plan accordingly. The guest reports the bad news was conveyed in a mocking tone. She then yelled at him. The complainant reports that he has had multiple interactions with staff speaking disrespectfully including the guard who works at the front that told him, "Get the fuck out of here" at some point during his stay.
- *DCNC's Food Log indicates the complainant appears to have foregone a meal during Brunch (served between the hours of 12:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.) and was provided a juice. Complainant was provided Dinner (served between the hours of 12:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.) and a milk on this particular date. Guests at DCNC were advised both verbally and during Weekly Community Meeting prior to the implementation of this new policy. DCNC is working to provide supplemental food resources and are advising the guests of other organizations that provide meals throughout the day in San Francisco, such as Glide, St. Anthony's, Martin de Porres House of Hospitality. Adequate notice was provided by DCNC and the Food Service Coordinator was reiterating this policy to the complainant. The complainant has also been offered the opportunity for a reasonable accommodation for two meals during each meal service. DCNC's Program Director did speak with the complainant about completing a reasonable accommodation, but complainant was reluctant to begin this process. The guest and a member of the security staff were involved in a verbal exchange of words during Graveyard on July 13, 2024. A supervisor spoke with the security staff about treating guest with dignity and respect, as well as not using inappropriate language when speaking with others while on duty.*

Allegation 2 (SOC 9):

- The guest reports that the shelter does not provide options for vegetarians and often repeats the exact same meal for days in a row. The complainant question is whether nutritional values can be met if they eat the exact same thing repeatedly in consecutive order and often repeatedly week by week.
- *The shelter has been working with Meals on Wheels and Nutrition Consultant Kimberly Jower, RD regarding meals. Options for vegetarians are provided for both the Brunch and Dinner meal service times. They are currently waiting for Meals on Wheels to implement their bi-weekly Daily Meals calendar on a more consistent basis in order to avoid having meals served in consecutive order and on a weekly basis as the complainant points out.*

Client 2

Submitted to SMC: 10/14/24 Sent to shelter: 10/22/24 SMC received response: 10/30/24
Standards of Care (SOCs) Allegedly Violated: **9, 17, 18**

Allegation 1 (SOC #17, 18):

- The complainant reports that the shelter's telephone has been out of service and that, before he complained, no notice was posted to inform clients of this maintenance issue. The issue has remained unresolved for about two weeks. An offer to allow him to use the Case Management Supervisor's cell phone is appreciated, but clients need to be able to make important calls now and then without having to make special arrangements.
- *Telephone service and lights in Pod 4 were down. DCNC has been working with HSH to address these issues. Signage was placed on the Community Room telephone and at both entrances to Pod 4. Telephone service was restored on October 28, 2024. It was estimated lights in Pod 4 would be fixed by November 1, 2024. DCNC believes they complied with SOC #17. The complainant did send emails to the Program Director indicating that DCNC "promised" to have phone service restored. The shelter states that in fact this was an estimated date. DCNC updated this estimated repair date on two separate occasions after further discussion with HSH Facilities. The complainant and other guests were offered the option of using staff work cellphones during non-sleeping hours. The complainant acknowledged this; therefore, DCNC argues it did comply with SOC #18.*

Allegation #2 (SOC 9)

- On Friday, October 18, the shelter did not provide meals. Staff told the complainant that there would be no meals that day. There certainly were none before dinnertime—only very limited “Pop-tarts” were provided during the day. The complainant had to use his limited funds to purchase dinner.
- *Brunch (served between 12:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.) and Dinner (served between 12:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m.) were provided to guests at DCNC on October 18, 2024. Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches were provided to guests when Brunch meals ran out due to Meals on Wheels not delivering meals until around 1:30 p.m. Dinner service was started around this time. One correction that was noted after review by SFDPH's nutritional consultant, Kimberly Jower, was that an additional sandwich and nuts should also be included as part of this type of this meal.*

Monarch Hotel

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 10/11/24 Sent to shelter: 10/15/24 SMC received response: 10/23/24

Alleged Standards of Care (SOCs) Violated: 3, 15

Allegation 1 (SOCs 3, 15):

- The complainant reports that the shelter has allowed his room to fall into a state of uncleanliness (“filth”) that is unhealthy. His floors are dirty and his toilet does not work. He provided photos. The week he complained the housekeeper came in and “spent less than 4 minutes in my room and didn't even do the whole floor!! She never even touched my bathroom. She took one look at it and hurried out the door.”
- *Guests are responsible for cleaning their own rooms. Although the Monarch was a hotel and provided housekeeping services in the past, it is currently a non-congregate shelter that does not provide housekeeping services. Program guidelines clearly state that guests are responsible for cleaning their own rooms. Their housekeeper is primarily responsible for room turnover. (They do clean guests' rooms with disabling conditions when asked.) After a heads up from the SMC, the shelter stated they had housekeeping go to the complainant's room to clean it. Unfortunately, the guest refused to take his dog and step out. In the unusual case when their housekeeper cleans a guest's room, the guest is required to exit with any pets for the duration of the cleaning. Further, the guest must remove clothing, etc. from the floor. When the housekeeper refused to enter unless he did so, the guest became agitated, raising his voice. He has a history of being verbally abusive. Maintenance has tried to enter several times to make repairs but has been greeted with aggression on each occasion. The good news is that he has now been housed.*

Gough Cabins

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 10/11/24 Sent to shelter: 10/15/24 SMC received response: 10/23/24

Standards of Care (SOCs) alleged to have been violated: 1, 2, 31

Allegation 1 (SOCs 1, 2):

- The complainant is an outside service provider. Four anonymous guests have independently confided in her that over the course of approximately five months, a shelter employee solicited sexual favors from them. These individuals appeared unaware of one another's allegations, further supporting the credibility and consistency of the claims.
- *HSH was made aware of these allegations. The shelter suspended the employees and is investigating. The complainant accepted SMC's suggestion that she encourage the victims, who have not given her permission to identify them, to seek appropriate counselling.*

Allegation 2 (SOCs 1, 2):

- The complaint reported that one of her clients witnessed an employee go into the ADA bathroom with a shelter guest for approximately ten (10) minutes during the day shift.
- *See above.*

Allegation 3 (SOCs 1, 31):

- The complainant had reports from multiple clients of inappropriate behavior by two employees and a manager, including forcing entry into private spaces (rooms and bathrooms), sexual assault, and disrespectful treatment.
- *See above.*

Allegation 4 (SOC 31):

- The complainant was told by a client that a former boyfriend, who is not a shelter guest, repeatedly yelled her name outside the shelter during the night. Rather than attempting to de-escalate the situation or contacting law enforcement, the shelter staff imposed a "time-out" on the complainant. She was required to leave the shelter late at night, exposing her to significant risk. Another client was similarly subjected to a "time-out" for alleged disrespectful behavior. Clients are also allegedly threatened her with a "time-out" if they are not "respectful."
- *See above.*

Ellis Hotel

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 10/25/24 Sent to shelter: 10/29/24 SMC received response: 11/05/24

Standards of Care (SOCs) alleged to have been Violated: **1, 2**

Allegation 1 (SOC 2):

- The complainant reports that a client who was placed in his room sexually assaulted him as he was sleeping around 6:30 a.m. The complainant jumped up and verbally objected to what he had felt and was seeing. The other client suggested that he "be quiet and everything will be cool." The complainant replied, "No, everything is Not cool," quickly dressed and went out to report the incident to the staff. He expected support, but staff essentially just handed him a grievance form and told him to complete it. He went downstairs to ask for help from a supervisor. Meanwhile, he claims, the roommate stole gaming equipment and other belongings. When the complainant later realized this, he again informed the staff of this. Once again, they simply handed him a grievance form.
- *When it was reported to management that a guest had alleged to have been sexually assaulted by their roommate, he asked the complainant to come talk with him in his office. He was in aa hurry to go to work. This is why he was given a grievance form to fill out. He returned that afternoon. In the meantime, the other guest was moved to another floor. They had no information about the alleged theft until that evening. It was appropriate to give him a grievance form.*

Allegation 2 (SOC 1)

- When the complainant followed up on the incidents with management, they reported that the roommate claimed the sexual contact was consensual, so there was nothing he could do. He asked if the shelter would respond the same way if a female made the same allegations. The manager admitted, "that would be different." When asked what the difference would be, the manager was unable to answer. The complainant called the police and pressed charges against the other client himself. Shelter staff never offer the complainant support or even ask if he was okay.
- *When the client returned to the shelter, management was able to talk in-depth about the situation he reported. He shared with him that he had questioned the roommate about the allegation of exual assault and that he had denied it. There was no conversation about female versus male-on-male assault. Five Keys is aware that many of these types of cases go unreported, and is committed*

to responding appropriately. They could not call the police themselves, since they had limited/ hearsay information, and the client was not available to give a statement. The situation did not fit the criteria of a mandated report. Since the day of the incident, management has asked if the client felt safe at site 34> He said he does and does not want to move to another site. He knows he can approach management if he has any problems.

October 2024 Client Complaints by Standard

Standard of Care	Number of allegations of violations of this Standard
Standard 1: Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...	12
Standard 2: Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe ...	5
Standard 3: Supply and clean restrooms...	2
Standard 8: Provide shelter services in compliance with the ADA...	1
Standard 9: Engage a nutritionist...	3
Standard 12: Clean bedding...	2
Standard 13: Make sleep possible...	
Standard 15: Storage...	2
Standard 17: Maintenance problems...	1
Standard 18: Telephone available...	1
Standard 31: Training...	3

Note that each complaint can include alleged violations of more than one SOC or multiple violations of the same SOC.

Total Client Complaints FY 2024-2025*

Site	Site Capacity													Total FY24-25 Red indicates late response	Complaints per 100	
		7/24	8/24	9/24	10/24	11/24	12/25	1/25	2/25	3/25	4/25	5/25	6/25			
711 Post/Ansonia	250 beds	1													1	.004
Baldwin	179 beds	2	1												3	.017
Bayshore Nav	128 beds	1													1	.008
Bayview Nav	203 beds	1		1	1										3	.005
Gough Cabins	70 rooms				1										1	.014
Central Waterfront Nav	60 beds															0
Cova Hotel	90 beds															0
Division Circle Nav	186 beds			2	2										4	.022
Ellis Semi-Congregate	130 beds				1										1	.008
Embarcadero Nav Cntr	200 beds	1			2										3	.015
Hamilton Emergency	27 fams	1													1	.04
Harbor House Family	30 fams		1												1	.033
MSC South Shelter	327 beds	2/1	1	2	1										6	.018
Monarch	93 beds				1										1	.010
Next Door	334 beds				1										1	.003
Oasis Family	54 beds	1													1	.019
Sanctuary	200 beds	1	1		1										3	.015
A Woman's Place	25 beds	2		1											3	.12
Total		13	4	6	11										34	1

*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. the Homelessness Oversight Commission has a nominations subcommittee charged with recommending appointments to the SMC (and some other related groups). Applicants submit a [form](#) and the candidate(s) name is added to the Nomination Committee meeting agenda and invited to meet the members who conduct a soft interview. At this point, the candidate is also able to ask committee members questions. The full HOC will vote to approve the candidacy

Legislation

On November 18, the BOS’s Rules Committee accepted a proposed Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to alter the frequency of site visits; require the Committee to establish in its bylaws the threshold number of complaints and/or out-of-compliance findings during a year that would trigger additional site visits; **revise eligibility criteria for Seat 1** on the Committee; revise the Standards of Care for City Shelters by establishing requirements for shower stalls with working hot and cold water controls, minimum passing space for sleeping units that are not up against a wall or partition, and signage posting regarding availability of translation services; eliminate the minimum shelter stay requirement for single adult reservations; revise the complaint process and investigation procedure; and updating some language in the ordinance.

Rules Committee	11/18/2024
Full Board (Reading #1)	12/3/2024 (no BOS meeting on 11/26)
Full Board (Reading #2)	12/10/2024
Enacted	12/13 or 12/20 (TBD MO's schedule)
Effective (30-days after enactment)	1/14/25 or 1/21/2025 (based on enactment date)

FY2024-2025 Upcoming SMC Meeting Calendar:

January 15
February 19
March 19

April 16
May 21
June 18