



Shelter Monitoring Committee

MEMORANDUM

TO: Shelter Monitoring Committee
FROM: Committee Staff
DATE: September 19, 2025
RE: August 2025 Staff SOC Report

Client Complaints

11 formal complaints were submitted through the SMC to City shelters in August 2025.

****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 response, 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.*

Gough Cabins (09)

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 7/28/25 Sent to shelter: 8/11/25 SMC received response: 8/12/25

Standards of Care (SOC) Violated: 1, 30

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2)

- The complainant alleges that staff unfairly targeted him and falsely accused him of being absent from the shelter for more than 48 hours in order to deny him access to services. The complainant denies having been away for that duration and attempted to present evidence from his Google Timeline to verify his whereabouts. However, staff reportedly declined to review the information. The complainant recalled using the shower facilities during the disputed timeframe, which he believes would be logged and support his claim. Despite this, staff maintained that he had missed four wellness checks and, based on that, concluded he had been absent for over 48 hours. They refused to verify the shower log or consider his documentation. When the complainant sought assistance from the Shelter Client Advocate (SCA), the SCA contacted Gough Cabins staff, who stated that the director was on vacation and that no further action could be taken until the director returned.
- *The shelter said they “thoroughly reviewed all shower records and front gate logs to ensure that Mr. [redacted] was not wrongfully exited. Our procedures strictly adhere to policy, and I can assure you that Mr. [redacted] was not targeted in any way.”*
- ***SMC staff investigated the complaint, finding it inconclusive as to whether the complainant was unfairly DOS’d. However, based on survey results and staff interviews, we find the complainants’ claim of not being treated with dignity and respect, credible. We recommended that training be provided to ensure that residents are treated with dignity and respect, including those who have been denied services. It would be reasonable for HSH to***

review the rules around 48-hour abandonment of shelter beds. At present, the assessment and enforcement of this rule appear to be unevenly applied across the shelter system. Our concern is that as written they could be misused as a cudgel against clients perceived to be “difficult.”

Division Circle Navigation Center (13)

Client 1

Submitted to SMC: 8/3/25 Sent to shelter: 8/6/25 SMC received response: 9/17/25

Standards of Care (SOC) Violated: 1

Allegation #1 (SOCs

- The shelter promised to pay for an eye exam plus glasses. The shelter manager seems to be insisting on being provided with a combined invoice, which is problematic insofar as the optometrist and the lens-wear dealer, though sharing a location, are separate businesses. The shelter manager has not responded in a timely manner to the complainant's many emails. This matter has remained unresolved now for several months. The complainant no longer stays at Division Circle, but nevertheless has been expecting to receive replacement glasses, as was agreed to after his old glasses were broken "due to the shelter's negligence." The complainant is sure the shelter manager knows he is suffering from a very serious medical situation. Absent his glasses, "eye strain leads to dizziness, migraines, stress to his heart, and even hospitalization."
- *The shelter apologized for the delay, which was in part due to an outbreak of Covid 19. They remain willing to pay for the exam and glasses.*

Baldwin (14)

Submitted to SMC: 8/13/25 Sent to shelter: 8/25/25 SMC received response: 8/26/25

Standards of Care (SOC) Violated: 1, 30

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 30)

- The client complainant says staff repeatedly made incorrect assumptions that the complainant and her partner were fighting, causing them a great deal of anxiety. They have arbitrarily moved her twice and do not allow visitation, though this was promised to them when they moved into the site. Staff seem to be working against the clients, discriminating against them for their marital status. For example, making "sexist jokes." Though the complainant never complains about her relationship, staff keep suggesting her life would be "better without her in it." They go out of their way to keep them apart. They are "two females going through a lot and learning how to cope with [their] trauma." Instead of taking this into account, the team at Baldwin have made things worse.
- *The site manager responded that Baldwin allows visitation except during designated quiet hours. At one point, they permitted overnight stays for couples who entered the program together. However, due to recurring issues, they had to discontinue this option. Over time, staff repeatedly reported loud yelling and banging coming from the clients' rooms, including during quiet hours. They worked with both individuals for several months in an effort to resolve these issues. The disruptive behaviors continued and began affecting neighboring rooms. The guests were given an opportunity to follow all policies and procedures for a two-week period, after which it was decided overnight stays would not be reconsidered. The site manager denied ever making inappropriate jokes or comments Management attempted to support them and submitted a referral to DPH Behavioral Health. The case was later closed due to non-engagement. They pointed out that they have a responsibility to ensure the safety of everyone in the building.*

Allegation #2 (SOC 1)

- The client believes that since the first day at the Baldwin, staff knew it was “imperative [she and her partner] be together.” and Baldwin agreed to this, knowing “how agitated and even frantic [her] wife would get being apart from [her], and they used that to DOS [them] knowing it was only a matter of time before she had a breakdown.” The site manager and her team kept stringing them along, “purposely messing with someone that’s handicapped.” They “provoked her and laughed.” The site manager even told the complainant that “HSA (sic) won’t do anything to help [them] out because she’s prepared herself to answer any questions they may have for her, and “really discouraged [them] to make the complaints.” Not all Baldwin employees have this attitude. A few warned the complainant that certain people “have it in for [them] and to be on [their] best behavior because staff are waiting for any excuse to DOS [them].”
- *Baldwin responded that they do not control the information provided to incoming guests by external parties. Misinformation is sometimes shared during intake by referring organizations. Be this as it may, upon arrival all couples are informed that they do not allow overnight stays or room-to-room visitation. The client did not request any accommodations; however, when they noticed she was using a cane, they notified the medical team so they could assess and offer support. They have responded to every concern and complaint to the best of their ability and proactively reached out to HSH for guidance to ensure they remain in compliance with policy, offering appropriate support and services to both individuals. On August 12, 2025, a physical altercation occurred between the two guests in question within 200 feet of the facility entrance. This incident was directly observed by staff and was later confirmed through video footage. Because of this incident, both individuals were DOS’d. This altercation validates prior concerns room-to-room visitation. Although both parties denied that a physical confrontation occurred, the incident was clearly witnessed and documented. The decision was made with the safety and well-being of all guests and staff in mind. They have “exhausted all available avenues to accommodate their needs, recognizing that it is not easy to come off the streets and face separation as a couple.”*

Mission Cabins (17)

Submitted to SMC: 8/16/25 Sent to shelter: 8/20/25 SMC received response: 8/21/25

Standards of Care (SOC) Violated: 1, 8

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 8)

- The complainant. The complainant reports that during her stay at the site, her ADA needs were not accommodated and she was subjected to harassment by a supervisor. This supervisor repeatedly entered her cabin to search through her belongings, a practice she believes was not applied to other clients. She states she brought this concern to the Site Director, who acknowledged knowing which supervisor was involved and assured her that the matter would be addressed. However, the complainant reports the supervisor’s behavior continued, leading her to begin avoiding the site. On 08/04/2025, the complainant was informed that she had “abandoned her bed.” The complainant disputes this, stating she had not been absent for 48 hours. She states that she raised this issue directly with the Director, who initially agreed to review camera footage but kept her waiting for over a week without resolution. During this time, the complainant refrained from seeking shelter elsewhere in the hope she could return. She also reports that when she attempted to follow up, front gate staff repeatedly informed her that the Director was “on vacation.” When she was finally able to meet with the Director, she informed her camera footage could only be reviewed in cases involving violence. When the complainant asked why she had been kept waiting if the footage would not be reviewed, she received no response. Lastly, the complainant reports that the site confiscated some of her personal property, citing “excess property,” and she has not yet been permitted to retrieve these belongings.
- *The shelter’s answer focused allegations of property loss. The allegation of unfair DOS was not addressed. They stated there is no record of the complainant coming to the site to ask for her property and reported they “held on to her property longer than usual” in hopes that she would be able to retrieve it.”*

Next Door

Client 1 (15)

Submitted to SMC: 8/18/25 Sent to shelter: 8/19/25 SMC received response: 8/21/25

Standards of Care (SOC) Violated: 1, 2, 30

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2)

- The complainant states that the manager on the graveyard shift, regularly behaved unprofessionally. He drinks enough to impair his judgement. He has been harassing and discriminating against the complainant. The complainant believes his habit is known to many of his coworkers/ subordinate employees. He is "heartless," recently imposing an immediate DOS at night on a client named "David" who everyone could see was not at all threatening. He also kept a client with mental impairment (possibly autism or schizophrenia) from entering the shelter, keeping him standing near the entrance all night, on the excuse that he was carrying two backpacks. He smirks at the discomfiture of the people he is supposed to help.
- *The shelter responded that they appreciate feedback and acknowledge the client's frustration. They assured him of their commitment to creating a safe and respectful environment for everyone and that staff members are held to high standards. Any allegations involving misconduct, including possible impairment due to substance use, will be appropriately addressed following internal review. All guests are subject to the same Program Rules and DOS policies, which are designed to support safety, fairness, and due process. They cannot comment on specific situations involving other guests, but do welcome feedback and complaints. Every guest has the right to a hearing following a DOS. Regarding a guest carrying two backpacks after hours, the posted policy states that excess property is not permitted after 6:00 PM. That said, if a guest leaves during the day with extra belongings and notifies staff, they are allowed to bring those items back in.*

Allegation #2 (SOC 30)

- The complainant reports experiencing a hostile and discriminatory environment in the shelter, primarily emanating from supervisor Calvin. For example, he moved the complainant's keffiyeh (scarf) without any reason and asked him to remove a Palestinian flag he had on his bed, which was positioned in a way that did not impede the view of any guest. It was hanging in the same manner that many people hang their towels. This adds to the client's impression that this supervisor, who has passed out some pro-Israel information, is biased against people he sees as being of MENA origin. The behavior has become worse recently. It seems to the complainant that the above-referenced supervisor managed to bring in a few new "thuggish" staffers, men who are similarly unprofessional, as well as pliable or otherwise amenable to following his lead without objection. This supervisor seems to be trying to goad the complainant into a response, e.g., he recently told him there was a rule against charging his phone in the lobby. This seems to be a pattern, i.e., he will work to rile people up until they give him an excuse to DOS or otherwise punish them.
- *The shelter responded to assure the client they never want a policy to feel punitive or be unclear. They understand their policy about hanging items may feel inconvenient, but this rule is in place for health, safety, and communal living reasons, and is enforced uniformly to maintain a safe and clean environment. They offer a wall hook for towels, so they should never be hung from a bed. The supervisor mentioned does not have the authority to hire or assign staff members. These decisions are made by their off site hiring director. Lastly, they are committed to enforcing all rules consistently and respectfully across the board. They deeply value the dignity of every guest and strive to ensure everyone feels seen, heard, and treated equitably.*

Client 2 (18)

Submitted to SMC: 8/20/25 Sent to shelter: 8/20/25 SMC received response: 8/21/25

Standards of Care (SOC) Violated: 1, 2, 3, 8, 13

Allegation #1 (SOCs 2, 8, 13)

- The complainant states he has from the start clearly been in need of reasonable accommodation. He walks with a cane. He informed 311 prior to being placed on the homeless wait list that he was physically disabled. Be this as it may, he was placed on a top bunk.. The shelter initially ignored his request and only found him a lower bunk after he actually fell, seriously hurting himself. Also, the top bunks have inadequate guardrails, which makes it hard to rest, i.e., guests worry they might roll off, fall, and injure themselves.
- *The shelter responded that the reasonable accommodation request was approved, but such requests can only be fulfilled when a bed becomes available. It may appear that some lower beds are available; however, each bed is designated for a specific agency. If the referring agency is not the one assigned to a particular bed, they are unable to place another guest there. They said guardrails meet standards.*

Allegation #2 (SOCs 1, 3)

- The client alleges that “no matter what time of day one might look, there is toilet paper, urine, and feces on both the toilets and the floors of the restrooms.” The shelter did not respond to the grievance the complainant filed about inadequate maintenance of the bathrooms. More frequent cleaning is needed given the number of people in the shelter and the known tendency for unsightly and unhealthy conditions to arise.
- *The shelter responded that janitorial staff is scheduled to clean the restrooms during both the day and swing shifts. Additionally, they encourage all staff members to step in and assist as needed to maintain a clean and sanitary environment. They are continuously working to improve this.*

Allegation #3 (SOC 1)

- Some staff are rude or even verbally abusive towards guests. There also appear to be inappropriate relationships between staff and guests.
- *They said they were deeply concerned by any report of unprofessional or inappropriate conduct and asked for more specific details to help them investigate and address the matter properly. In the meantime, all staff will be reminded of the importance of professional conduct.*

MSC-South

Client 1 (19)

Submitted to SMC: 8/20/25 Sent to shelter: 8/20/25 SMC received response: 9/5/25

Standards of Care (SOC) Violated: 1, 8, 30

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 8, 30)

- The client-complainant was treated rudely and his disability was made light of by the person screening people at the shelter’s ADA entrance. He reports that “a female security guard opened the door and asked for his name and bed number. He proceeded to follow her in through the door. She then, for no reason, and told him he had to go back outside and wait for her to check the book—which “was approximately two feet from where” they were standing. He asked if there was some reason why she couldn’t have simply checked the book without making him go back out. When he characterized it as the harassment of a disabled 61-year-old for no reason. Her reply was: ‘If you don’t shut up, I’ll make you go around and use the stairs.’ He told her that ADA rules, which she had just implicitly threatened to violate, are not optional. She then said, “you need to shut your old ass up.”
- *The shelter found the guard did tell Mr. Dotson that he needed to “take his old ass back outside before she had him go back to the other side of the facility and use the stairs. Insofar as the shelter always wants to*

treat guests with respect—even when they themselves may not get that in return—the threat and derogatory language is considered unacceptable and therefore disciplinary actions was taken.

Client 2 (20)

Submitted to SMC: 8/13/25 Sent to shelter: 8/22/25 SMC received response: 9/9/25

Standards Care (SOC) Violated: 1, 2, 30

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2, 30)

- The complainant asserts has experienced repeated discrimination based on her gender identity. Upon arrival, security initially refused her entry and only allowed her access after management was contacted. Since then, she has been repeatedly questioned by staff about why she is in the women's dorm and has been compelled to disclose her gender identity multiple times. She reports that night security has treated her rudely, asking why she is in the women's dorm and, on occasions when she wore women's clothing, pointing and laughing at her. At one point one of the guards "threw a towel at her face." When she became upset the guard became visibly annoyed with the complainant and stated, "Oh, you want to complain, then let's go to talk with the manager," (who did de-escalate the situation and walked the guard away). When the complainant raised her concerns with another member of management, she was met with a dismissive response: "I am pretty good at my job and if you have a problem with it, you should probably just go somewhere else." Additionally, the complainant was issued a write-up for allegedly refusing to leave during a fire alarm, despite evidence of her timely evacuation.
- *The shelter made the case that they need to make sure those entering reside there. They experience people trying to enter the shelter for many reasons. The complainant did not show any sign of identifying as a woman. She was in complete men's attire. It is understandable why she was asked questions. Nether security, staff, nor other guests remember the client ever dressing like a women. They can work with this when everyone knows they are supposed to be there. Regarding the fire alarm, the noise necessitated yelling. It is hard to hear over the noise. The staffer in question explained that her job is to get everyone to the emergency exits as if a fire was actually happening. The client appeared not to hear. She was not trying to be rude but merely "acting on the urgency of the situation."*

Allegation #2 (SOC 1)

- The client reports that the shelter security lack in their regard for processing the guests through the check in. According to the client everyone in line has to wait as each person in front of them has their bag searched. This shows utter disregard for clients' time.
- *The "lack in regard for processing the guest through the check in" is, according to the shelter, their best effort to keep everyone safe. They do open up a second line if they can when a lot of guests are coming in at once. All staff must complete comprehensive training covering customer service, professionalism, effective communication, mental health issues, etc.*

Client 3 (21)

Submitted to SMC: 8/15/25 Sent to shelter: 8/25/25 SMC received response: late

Standards of Care (SOC) Violated: 1, 2, 8, 30

Allegation #1 (SOCs 1, 2, 30)

- The complainant asserts that he was mistreated by a supervisor. He entered the facility and went into the main-level bathroom while one employee was seated at the front information

desk. The bathroom was unoccupied when he entered. Shortly after, the supervisor entered the bathroom and loudly asked, "Is anyone here?" The complainant, Rolando, responded, "me." He was informed the bathroom was for women only, which the complainant had not been aware of. According to the complainant, he was yelled at in an unprofessional manner. He attempted to explain that he had not noticed the sign until it was pointed out. Already embarrassed by his mistake, the complainant felt further humiliated when the supervisor reprimanded him in front of the entire community room and again at the security checkout gate. He was threatened the complainant with a write-up for "sexual harassment" and instructed security not to allow the complainant back into the facility without his approval.

- *The shelter has not yet responded.*

Allegation #2 (SOCs 1, 8)

- The client also says he was mistreated by a staff member who, while she was working the day shift at the main window of the community room stated loudly, "These tables are for people with dogs only! I'm tired of allowing you and two other clients to abuse the right to sit there." He asked whether she was sure. Her response, made according to him in an "incoherent and aggressive manner, fabricating unrelated statements and yelling through the plexiglass that the complainant" was very rude. She also asked the complainant whether he had ADA paperwork. The complainant notes this is "the seventh time [he] has been asked to provide ADA documentation, in addition to ongoing incidents of yelling, harassment, and threats of write-ups from multiple employees." Finally, he claims that despite being told of a write-up, he has not actually received them, i.e., the assertions were in fact merely threats made to intimidate him but not with any supporting bases.
- *The shelter has not yet responded.*

Client 4 (22)

Submitted to SMC: 8/25/25 Sent to shelter: 8/26/25 SMC received response: 9/4/25

Standards of Care (SOC) Violated: 1

Allegation #1 (SOC 1)

- The complainant says he was very relieved to get a bed at MSC-South in mid-August. But only a week later he came back from errands on a Sunday afternoon to be told he had no bed. His belongings were handed to him, and he was exited with no explanation and no reference to the Shelter Client Advocates. SMC staff asked the shelter why the client lost his bed (per the ONE system, as of that prior Friday). The response was that it was for 48-hour abandonment. But the client insists he was never away for anywhere near that long. Also, ONE says the client saw his case manager (CM) a day prior to the date shown as his exit date. He says he was still there on Saturday and not even informed that he had lost his bed until Sunday afternoon. For reasons that are obscure to the SMC, HSH has not established an appeals process for allegations of bed abandonment. Beyond the contraindications delineated here, the complainant believes the shelter did not treat him equitably or with respect, i.e., in the manner in which he was told he had lost his bed.
- *The assistant shelter manager expressed sympathy for the complainant's not being "given an opportunity to continue residing at MSC-South; however, he stated they "have rules and guidelines concerning not signing in within the forty-eight (48) hour time period." Many guests ignore the 48-hour rule, leaving space underutilized while at the same time other potential guest our trying to access shelter. He admitted the client may indeed have seen his CM before he was exited, "however the One System and Envoy are not connected so it's not ...very cumbersome to navigate (sic) between the two." He noted that for some reason "CAAP guests" are able to come "right back and get another bed whereas guest with 311 beds have to be placed on/back on a waiting list."*

ECS Sanctuary (23)

Submitted to SMC: 7/28/25 Sent to shelter: 7/31/25 SMC received response: 8/4/25

Standards of Care (SOC) Violated: 1, 2, 30

- The client told SMC he has been experiencing targeting and discrimination from a staff member at the shelter. For example, he entered the shelter and complied with the security procedure by opening his backpack for inspection. While he was preparing to remove items for viewing, the person screening incoming guests grabbed and pulled the backpack with both hands. The complainant objected, stating he did not want the backpack torn or damaged. Shortly thereafter a supervisor approached the complainant with a Warning Notice, written by the same staffer who was aggressive at the entrance. This incident is part of a pattern of ongoing harassment from this employee since his hiring at the site. He has repeatedly made comments about disciplinary action, removal from the shelter, etc. The complainant also believes he was targeted because he is Black. He is asked to empty his entire backpack into a bin, despite others not being required to do this.
- *The staff member in question denied the allegation that he has discriminated against the complainant. Sanctuary requires all residents to comply with the screening process at the lobby to promote safety of everyone. On the day in question the complainant was not in compliance. Furthermore, he had previously attempted to bring alcohol into the building. It appears his approach is to “make a scene and rush into the building” to avoid being searched. As a harm reduction facility, they do not judge anyone for drinking, but drugs and alcohol cannot be used in the facility. All clients are required to empty pockets of all items before going through the security checkpoint. All clients are treated equally, with respect and dignity. The complainant verbally harasses staff for doing their job, and his complaints of discrimination are gratuitous. The complainant is not profiled or targeted. All staff are trained in safety measures, and de-escalation. All staff have also completed all annual training.*

Total Client Complaints FY 2024-2025*

[illegible]

Next Door	334 beds		2											2		1%
Oasis Family	54 beds															
Sanctuary (ECS)	200 beds		1											1		0.5%
Taimon Booten	75 beds	2												2		3%
AWP Drop In	30 beds															
A Woman's Place	25 beds															
Total		9	11											20	3	

*Late responses are in red ¹ Multiple complaints from the same client(s)

August 2025 Client Allegations by Standard

Standard of Care	Number of allegations of violations of this Standard
Standard 1: Treat all clients equally, with respect and dignity...	15
Standard 2: Provide shelter services in an environment that is safe ...	5
Standard 3: Cleaning/ Janitorial	1
Standard 8: ADA	4
Standard 9: Engage a nutritionist...	0
Standard 13: ... sleeping at least 8 hours per night.	1
Standard 30: Training... (Was 31 before change in Admin Code)	7

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

Staff Update and Committee Membership

Membership (Admin. Code Sec. 30.305)

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

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 7 - Shall be held by persons nominated by one or more nonprofit agencies that provide advocacy or organizing services for 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 628-652-8080 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

Shelters are reminded that they have **five business days** to respond to complaints or ask for an extension, e.g., if they are unable to interview a key witness. It is important to respond to all of the listed allegations in order to fulfill the requirement. Late responses are indicated in the matrix.

FY2025-2026 Upcoming SMC Meeting Calendar:

TBD