

## *Addressing Domestic Violence in Families*

<b><u>Organisation(s):</u></b>	Foundation for Social Welfare Services	
<b><u>Country:</u></b>	Malta	
<b><u>Contact:</u></b>	<a href="mailto:policy@esn-eu.org">policy@esn-eu.org</a>	
<b><u>Theme:</u></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ageing & Care <input type="checkbox"/> Asylum & Migration <input type="checkbox"/> Young People <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support for Children & Families <input type="checkbox"/> Community Care <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Care & Support <input type="checkbox"/> Co-Production <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Housing & Homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial Intelligence <input type="checkbox"/> Digitalisation <input type="checkbox"/> Quality Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Labour Market Inclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Social Inclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce and Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Social benefits <input type="checkbox"/> EU Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Social Service's Resilience <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Person-centred Care <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:
<b><u>Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights:</u></b> <i>Check the 20 principles <a href="#">here</a>.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Education, training, life-long learning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2. Gender equality <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Equal opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Active support to employment <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Secure and adaptable employment <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Fair Wages <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Transparent employment conditions <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Social dialogue <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Work-life balance <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Healthy, safe work environment	<input type="checkbox"/> 11. Childcare and child support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12. Social protection <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Unemployment benefits <input type="checkbox"/> 14. Minimum income <input type="checkbox"/> 15. Old age income and pensions <input type="checkbox"/> 16. Health care <input type="checkbox"/> 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> 18. Long-term care <input type="checkbox"/> 19. Housing and assistance to homeless <input type="checkbox"/> 20. Access to essential services
<b><u>Current status of the practice:</u></b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Concept and Design Phase <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Execution & Monitoring Phase <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consolidation Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Up and Transformation Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	
<b><u>Context/ Social issues addressed</u></b> <i>Please explain the problem you attempt to solve.</i>	Domestic violence is a pervasive and distressing social problem that continues to affect individuals and families across societies, and it is a matter of significant concern due to its increasing prevalence. This issue encompasses a range of abusive behaviours that occur within intimate relationships, often involving physical, emotional, psychological, or financial harm.	

	<p>The increasing occurrence of domestic violence can be attributed to several interconnected factors, such as power imbalances, social isolation, lack of awareness and reporting, and cultural and societal norms, amongst others. To combat the increasing trend of domestic violence, it is essential to implement comprehensive strategies that address the root causes, promote awareness, provide support for victims, and hold perpetrators accountable. This involves collaboration between individuals, communities, governments, and organisations to create a culture that rejects violence and fosters healthy relationships.</p>
<p><b>Objectives:</b> Please provide a <b>maximum of three</b> objectives in bullet points.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The services aim to assist victims of domestic violence and their children in times of crisis by providing them with prompt aid to meet their immediate needs, carrying out a risk assessment with the victim, helping them develop a safety plan, and providing ongoing support.</li> <li>• These services aid the person perpetrating the violence to become aware of, understand, and take responsibility for their behaviour, ultimately encouraging change.</li> <li>• The Domestic Violence Services promotes a zero-tolerance approach towards violence within families.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activities:</b> Please summarise the activities put in place to achieve the objectives (maximum 200 words).</p>	<p>The <b>Domestic Violence Services</b> comprise four main services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Domestic Violence Unit,</li> <li>• the Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Service,</li> <li>• the STOP! The Violence and Abuse Service,</li> <li>• and the Għabex Emergency Shelter.</li> </ul> <p>Each service is made up of a multi-disciplinary team of professionals, including social workers, psychotherapists, family therapists and graduates in psychology and other social sciences-related fields. The services aim to assist victims in times of crisis by providing them with prompt aid to meet their immediate needs, carrying out a risk assessment with the victim, helping them develop a safety plan, as well as providing ongoing support.</p> <p>Following the launch of the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Strategy and Action Plan in November 2017, Aġenzija Appoġġ engaged in the planning, development and capacity building of the Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Service throughout 2018. This service's development was in line with the Legislation and the Strategy, which identified Aġenzija Appoġġ as the designated agency to carry out Risk Assessments with all victims of violence following a report to the police. The strategy had identified the 'Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour Based Violence (DASH, 2009-2016) Risk Identification and Assessment and Management Model', also known as the DASH Risk Assessment Model, as the national tool to be used with victims of violence.</p> <p>Thus, the FSWS set up the Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Service, and the professionals working in this were trained in the DASH Risk Assessment Model. A scoping exercise was recently conducted around risk assessment tools, and the Danger Assessment was identified as a more appropriate tool to identify risks of lethality.</p>

	<p>The <b>Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Service</b> works at all hours of the day and week and responds to all requests made by the members of the Malta Police Force through the Gender-Based and Domestic Violence Police Unit.</p> <p>Additionally, the <b>Domestic Violence Unit</b> aims to provide quality social work service to adults and their children suffering abuse in family and intimate relationships. The DVU is committed to the promotion of a society with zero tolerance for violence. It provides support to victims of domestic violence and their children at the time of crisis by providing them with immediate assistance to meet their immediate needs, helping them develop a safety plan, as well as providing ongoing support.</p> <p>Female victims and their children requiring immediate protection and safe housing can access <b>Ghabex Emergency Shelter</b>. The residents not only receive shelter and meet their basic needs in the shelter, but they also work therapeutically on their journey from leaving an abusive environment towards their empowerment. The children are offered group therapy, and individual sessions between mothers and their children are carried out, especially when the children are not of the same age cohort.</p> <p>The <b>STOP! The Violence and Abuse Service</b> focuses on the safety of victims by providing support services to perpetrators of intimate partner violence and child-to-parent violence. This service aids the person perpetrating the violence to become aware of, understand, and take responsibility for their behaviour, ultimately encouraging change.</p> <p>The support services collaborate with other FSWS services, such as Supportline-179 (enhanced national helpline) and other services offered by other state agencies and NGOs.</p>
<p><b><u>Evaluation of practice:</u></b>  <i>Please explain how you evaluate the practice, and what the results were/are so far</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feedback through people’s experiences of services</li> <li>- Feedback from staff and leaders</li> <li>- Feedback from partners, e.g. regulators/inspection agency</li> <li>- Quantitative data collected internally</li> </ul> <p>Furthermore, a group of ESN experts carried out a formal service evaluation of the service between the 23rd and 31st of May 2023. Among the strengths are a committed staff – engaged, highly qualified, passionate staff group who are focused on achieving the best outcomes for those they serve and a clear and engaged leadership.</p>
<p><b><u>Links to supporting documents:</u></b>  <i>e.g. website or report of the practice</i></p>	<p><a href="https://fsws.gov.mt/en/appogg/Pages/Domestic%20Violence%20Unit/domestic-violence-unit.aspx">https://fsws.gov.mt/en/appogg/Pages/Domestic%20Violence%20Unit/domestic-violence-unit.aspx</a></p> <p><a href="https://fsws.gov.mt/en/appogg/Pages/Domestic%20Violence%20Unit/child-to-parent-violence-service.aspx">https://fsws.gov.mt/en/appogg/Pages/Domestic%20Violence%20Unit/child-to-parent-violence-service.aspx</a></p>

	<p><a href="https://fsws.gov.mt/en/appogg/Pages/Domestic%20Violence%20Unit/ghabex-emergency-shelter.aspx">https://fsws.gov.mt/en/appogg/Pages/Domestic%20Violence%20Unit/ghabex-emergency-shelter.aspx</a></p> <p><a href="https://fsws.gov.mt/en/appogg/Pages/Domestic%20Violence%20Unit/stop-the-violence-abuse-service.aspx">https://fsws.gov.mt/en/appogg/Pages/Domestic%20Violence%20Unit/stop-the-violence-abuse-service.aspx</a></p>
<p><b><u>Comments and tips, i.e. for people willing to use your Practice</u></b></p>	<p>A person-centred approach is key when working with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence and intimate partner violence, as different persons have different needs and experiences of trauma.</p> <p>The service users and their children become equal partners in planning their care and support, ensuring that the care plan meets their needs, goals, and outcomes. Workers at the Domestic Violence Services are coached and trained in working with the service user rather than working for the client. This person-centred care runs through both individual meetings and group settings, especially in the emergency shelter where service users live in a small community.</p>