

Mother and baby unit in Gabrovo, Bulgaria

<u>Organisation(s):</u>	SOS Children's Villages Bulgaria	
<u>Country:</u>	Bulgaria	
<u>Contact:</u>	policy@esn-eu.org	
<u>Theme:</u> Choose at least one option	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housing & Homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> Artificial Intelligence <input type="checkbox"/> Digitalisation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quality Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Labour Market Inclusion <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mental Health <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Person-Centred Care <input type="checkbox"/> Research & Use of Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:
<u>Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights:</u> Check the 20 principles here .	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Education, training, life-long learning <input 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19. Housing and assistance to homeless <input type="checkbox"/> 20. Access to essential services
<u>Current status of the practice:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Concept and Design Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Testing or pilot phase <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary practice that has terminated <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary practice that is ongoing and has a termination date <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Established and ongoing practice <input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Up and Transformation Phase <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)	
<u>Summary:</u> Please summarise the practice in maximum 3 sentences. This will be the	The "Mother and Baby Unit" is a community-based social service that provides temporary shelter for up to 6 months to pregnant women and mothers at risk of abandoning their children. The social service offers a safe environment, parental skills training, and psychological support during a challenging time for the mothers. The long-term goal is for the mothers to gain confidence and the capacity to care for their children independently and to create a secure family environment.	

<i>disclaimer of your project on our website.</i>	
<u>Context/ Social issues addressed</u> <i>Please explain the problem you attempt to solve with your practice.</i>	<p>The Mother and Baby Unit service is essential for preventing the abandonment of newborns. The reasons why mothers find themselves in crisis situations are highly diverse: from underage mothers or mothers living in residential types of social services to poverty, lack of housing, or a supportive environment.</p> <p>Frequently, the target group also includes women who are victims of domestic violence, seeking temporary shelter and a safe environment. This service is the only one-of-a-kind in Bulgaria. It offers temporary shelter and support from a multidisciplinary team that helps mothers build an independent life while ensuring their newborns and children are raised in a family environment.</p>
<u>Objectives:</u> <i>Please provide a maximum of three objectives in bullet points.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing a safe and supportive environment for the temporary accommodation of mothers and their babies in crisis situations; 2. Enhancing parenting skills through training, counselling, and support to build a stable family environment; 3. Promoting mothers' social and economic integration by facilitating access to education, employment, and preparation for independent living.
<u>Activities:</u> <i>Please describe the activities put in place to achieve the objectives (maximum 300 words).</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring a safe environment – providing temporary accommodation in a secure setting where the basic needs of the mother and child are met; - Individual counselling and psychological support – a multidisciplinary team of specialists works with the mothers to overcome emotional trauma, enhance their self-esteem, and build confidence in their role as parents; - Parenting skills training – conducting practical training and consultations that include baby care: hygiene, feeding, establishing routines, and early childhood development, to ensure the child's safety and well-being; - Social and legal support – assistance is provided in securing social benefits, finding employment, completing education, and protecting the rights of the mother and child; - Group activities and mutual support – meetings are organized for the mothers to share experiences, build social connections, and develop a sense of belonging; - Preparation for independent living – working on developing skills to cope with challenges outside the unit, such as budgeting, daily planning, and finding suitable housing.
<u>Outcomes:</u> <i>Please explain what the results were/are so far and how you evaluated this.</i>	<p>Bulgaria has 28 municipalities, yet only about 10 Mother and Baby Unit social services are available. This often results in mothers being placed in a different municipality, making it more challenging for the Child Protection Department to work with the extended family and to identify a supportive environment. Approximately half of the mothers who stay in the service manage to build an independent life afterwards. However, tracking success rates is difficult, as it is done voluntarily at the beneficiary's request. Mothers often settle in distant municipalities, further complicating the follow-up process.</p> <p>According to Bulgarian legislation, the social service is subject to quality control by the Agency for the Quality of Social Services, the municipality, and an annual internal monitoring process in accordance with the Procedure for Monitoring Social Services and Projects of the SOS Children's Villages Bulgaria Association. This year's inspection demonstrated that the service provides high-quality social care for mothers and their children.</p>

<p><u>Links to supporting documents:</u> <i>e.g. website or report of the practice</i></p>	<p>MBU_guidelines_10.08.2007_SS.doc</p> <p>Strengthening_families-External-publication-2023.pdf – page 21</p>
<p><u>Comments and tips</u> <i>i.e. for people willing to use your Practice</i></p>	