



Guidelines
Social Regulatory Standards

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
RESIDENTIAL SERVICES**

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STANDARDS
AUTHORITY

Feedback

We appreciate feedback about this draft proposal for the Guidelines on Social Regulatory Standards for Domestic Violence Residential Services. This document may be viewed on www.scsa.gov.mt or www.meae.gov.mt. The general public is invited to provide their feedback on the proposed guidelines for service providers and submit any other suggestions or comments. These can be submitted by email on regulations.scsa@gov.mt, or by mail at the following address: Regulation and Standards Office, Social Care Standards Authority, 469, Bugeia Institute, St Joseph High Road, Santa Venera, SVR 1012. The general public may also phone on **2549 4446** for assistance on how to send feedback.

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Introduction to the Guidelines

These guidelines establish the level of the service that is expected to be delivered by service providers. They guide service providers to take decisions in relation to:

- the sufficiency of services in shelters in the field of domestic violence;
- the choice of workers, who should be adequate and competent to carry out the work entrusted to them; and
- the manner in which these services should be managed.

Notification

Masculine nomenclatures within the guidelines also refer to feminine.

Principles on which the Standards and Guidelines are based

These Social Regulatory Standards are being established with the understanding that whoever makes use of such services has the right for access to quality care. This should be based on the following basic principles: dignity, privacy, right for choice, safety, realising potential, equality, individuality and diversity. These principles should, however, be realised in line with the rules and the philosophy of the service and the care needs of each individual.

This means that all individuals are able to:

- be treated with respect at all times;
- enjoy meaningful relationships;
- have their privacy and property respected;
- live their life without unnecessary intrusion;
- make their own choices;
- get information on all options available to them;
- feel safe and secure in an environment free from abuse and discrimination;
- reach their goals and make full use of available resources;
- be treated equally to others irrespective of ethnic background, language, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability and faith;
- be valued for who they are;
- develop their abilities; and
- complain responsibly without being intimidated and/or discriminated.

Glossary

'After-care plan' means a plan that shall be developed with the individuals availing of the service and that should help them in their transition to lead a more autonomous life after moving out of a shelter. This plan shall encourage individuals to sustain the progress made during their stay at a shelter thus to continue to work towards obtaining their goals and address their needs. Individuals shall be encouraged to keep in touch with groups and networks of support that can assist whenever required.

'Authority' means the Social Care Standards Authority, as established by virtue of Article 5 of the Social Care Standards Authority Act (Cap. 582).

'Children' means persons under eighteen (18) years of age.

'Competent person' means a person who has the appropriate theoretical and, or practical knowledge and, or experience which render him capable and, or authorised to undertake specific activities, in line with national legislation, standards or directives issued by the applicable authorities.

'Crisis intervention' means an immediate responsive action to a state of distress presented by an individual. Individuals get the support they need to revert back to their proper functioning by being sensitively approached by a competent person who would identify a crisis, assess impacts of such crisis situation on the individuals involved and intervene using safe, effective and tested measures.

'Dependant person' means a person who relies on any other person/s for support of any kind in case this person cannot carry out some things on his own. Dependant persons may be children, persons with disability, persons with mental health problems and elderly, amongst others.

'Domestic Violence' shall have the same meaning assigned to it by Article 2 of the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act (Cap.581).

'Helpline' means a free-of-charge support service delivered 24/7 through a telephone line that individuals can use to receive immediate assistance and advice for their requests pertaining to domestic violence. A chat-line is an alternative method of receiving support which involves sending an SMS or engage in an online chat which shall also be available 24/7.

'Holistic assessment' means the process by which the staff identifies the needs and aspirations of individuals in relation to their health, personal, emotional, spiritual and psychological care, protection and social networking, family support and which services should be delivered to satisfy these needs and aspirations.

'Independent representative' means a person who is independent from any aspect of the service and from any agency involved in the provision of service, working in the name of the person availing himself of the service or in his interest. The representative shall carry out such work after having been formally appointed to do so by the individual in whose name the said representative is acting, or as stipulated by law, such as in the case of guardianship.

'Interdisciplinary team' means a team made up of a number of professionals from a range of disciplines working collaboratively to deliver comprehensive care that addresses the needs of individuals availing themselves of the service. The team works for a common purpose, shares common goals and responsibilities and mobilises resources to fulfil its role.

'Key worker' means a worker responsible for co-ordinating the individuals' action plan.

'Management' means a person or persons who act on behalf of the service provider to provide leadership to the staff and to oversee and control the proper functioning of the services offered to individuals.

'Outreach services' means services which are developed with the aim of reaching out to citizens in a community to encourage them to identify their needs, potential and

any limitations. Resources are provided for individuals to access services and available support networks. Outreach services are fundamental especially amongst marginalised groups, families and individuals in the community. Ultimately, the most appropriate support interventions are delivered through a number of generic and specialised services.

‘Performance indicator’ means an active descriptor of what service providers need to do to ensure service outputs that support the quality indicators.

‘Personal support plan’ means a document that is based on a holistic assessment of the individuals that specifies how the individuals’ needs and aspirations are going to be met. It also includes the resources required to fulfil such plan. If services are required by a family as a unit, in case children are accompanying the individuals, the support plan will be compiled to reflect the situation and the exigencies of all individuals within the family.

‘Persons who experience domestic violence’ means persons who have experienced or who are still experiencing domestic violence and who may potentially avail or who actually avail of services within a shelter. These persons would either be still living with their perpetrators or else may have fled from their perpetrators and made contact with shelter services themselves or have been referred by respective agencies working in the field of domestic violence. Efforts shall be made so that persons who experience domestic violence are reached through accessible means whilst also ensuring that any information on services and support is made available in places where such persons are most likely to attend.

‘Policies and procedures’ means documents¹ released by management that regulate how the service shall operate.

¹ Refer to Annex IV: Manual of Policies and Procedures

‘Quality indicator’ means a statement that sets out the requirements to achieve compliance with a standard.

‘Risk assessment’ means the identification of potential or actual hazards that may cause harm to individuals and that may therefore interfere with their safety, security and overall wellbeing. The service provider shall examine the probability of the identified risks to occur, who would most likely be affected if such risks manifest themselves and what measures shall be taken to reduce the likelihood that the identified risks develop or if they actually develop what shall be done to reduce adverse impacts.

‘Service provider’ means a person or an organisation that provides support through a range of services offered to individuals.

‘Shelter’ means a residential facility where temporary accommodation shall be offered to individuals who experience some form of domestic violence and whose safety might be at risk. Shelters shall offer a homely and secure accommodation for such individuals until it is safe for them to move out following a thorough assessment of the situation. This shall apply both for first stage emergency shelters that offer accommodation and support usually in times of crisis and pronounced risk and also for second stage shelters which would be a step closer towards the successful reintegration of the individuals in the community.

‘Specialised support services’ means services that are usually required by individuals or groups who present complex needs and who might be at risk themselves or may be of risk to others. Specialised services are usually recommended when generic services or mainstream interventions prove insufficient to cater for the identified needs.

‘Staff’ means a person engaged by the service provider, wherein one of the person’s responsibilities is to provide individual and group support and care. Staff members may also assume administrative duties simultaneously with their caring roles. Staff

members working in the administration of an organisation or a centre oversee the planning and implementation of organisational plans and actions and the enforcement of rules and procedures.

'Volunteers' means persons who offer their help in a range of activities to support other people without getting remunerated financially for their work. Mutual benefits shall exist in the relationship between the volunteers and the organisation in which they are volunteering.

Standard 1: Effective and respectful intervention procedures

Standard Statement:

This standard promotes rights that ensure that service delivery shall be fair, transparent, accessible and comprehensive to be able to respond to evolving needs. Persons who experience domestic violence shall be supported to have a smooth and safe transition both upon entering the service as well as when they move out and shall be ensured protection at all times.

Quality Indicators:

1. The service provider shall safeguard the right of persons who experience domestic violence to access quality services in an easy and fair manner.
2. A helpline or a chat-line service, if available, shall be offered on a 24/7 basis, shall be free of charge and shall be delivered by competent staff.
3. The service provider shall ensure that admission and intake procedures are delicately planned and implemented for the safety of the persons who experience domestic violence.
4. The service provider shall ensure that persons who experience domestic violence are supported to prepare themselves to move on in a planned manner after being discharged from the service.

Standard 1: Effective and respectful intervention procedures

Quality Indicator 1

1.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall safeguard the right of persons who experience domestic violence to access quality services in an easy and fair manner.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 1.1 Operational strategies with regards to prevention, education, awareness raising and outreach work shall be in place and ensured through a proper analysis of gender and violence.
- 1.2 Service provision shall be anti-discriminatory, fairly distributed and respects the diversity of those who would potentially receive the service especially of those who are faced with multiple discrimination.
- 1.3 Efforts shall be sustained to reach out to individuals in mental health hospitals, rehabilitation centres, ethnic minorities, migrants, asylum seekers, persons with disabilities, the elderly, the LGBTIQ community and prostitutes amongst others.
- 1.4 Entities and authorities such as the courts of justice, the police, schools, hospitals and social services, amongst others shall have the right information on existing services in the area of domestic violence so that they can provide the general public with the necessary contact details and information in case of need.

- 1.5 When developing educational, outreach, prevention, community or residential services efforts shall be made to avoid gender biases, stereotypes and other misinformed assumptions.
- 1.6 Outreach and educational programmes shall be developed to increasingly expose the dynamic nature of domestic violence which can affect both men and women, to increase efforts to prevent incidents of violence and abuse and to increase awareness of the impacts on children.
- 1.7 Outreach and educational services shall increase awareness of available services including providing useful information on helplines, shelters, community services and services related to social work and counselling, amongst others.
- 1.8 Relationships shall be maintained and nurtured with organisations from the local community that are of fundamental value when it comes to acquiring information about different target groups especially when it comes to addressing persons experiencing poverty and social exclusion.
- 1.9 The management shall contribute to service improvement by identifying trends, strengths, limitations and barriers of access to services and commit to analyse situations and propose solutions to address specific geographical requirements.

Standard 1: Effective and respectful intervention procedures

Quality Indicator 2

2.0 Quality Indicator: A helpline or a chat-line service, if available, shall be offered on a 24/7 basis, shall be free of charge and shall be delivered by competent staff.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 2.1 If a helpline or chat-line service is offered, its number or details shall be made known across all types of media and clearly visible in buildings such as hospitals, police stations, health centres, local councils and community-based centres amongst others.
- 2.2 Such services shall be professionally and ethically delivered; thus staff recruitment, training and supervision shall be carried out in due time and in an effective manner².
- 2.3 The staff responsible for calls received through a helpline or messages received through a chat-line shall be able to at least speak, write and understand fluently both Maltese and English.
- 2.4 More effort shall be exerted so that the service becomes increasingly accessible by attempting to introduce other languages as well.
- 2.5 Being that a helpline or chat-line may be an individual's first point of reference, the staff delivering such services shall be trained and supervised on how to provide support through these means especially on how to approach such

² Refer to Standard 7: Service Quality Management

individuals with sensitivity and empathy, being able to listen attentively and detecting emotions and how to provide them with reassurance.

- 2.6 The staff receiving calls through a helpline or who assist the individuals through a chat shall be given specialised training and support so as to be able to acquire and process only the necessary information about the individuals in a diligent manner in line with Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation³.
- 2.7 The staff delivering such services shall assure the individuals that all confidential measures are taken whilst handling their queries and shall explain to such individuals what information about them may be required, why it is needed and whether it is necessary to be shared with others.
- 2.8 Staff receiving calls or attending the individuals through chat lines shall be able to clearly explain the next step to the individuals by providing information that may be useful to them or to actually refer the individuals to the most appropriate support networks keeping in mind their safety at all times.
- 2.9 Any information given to the individuals shall be accurate, complete and up-to-date and should by no means mislead the individuals and so the staff shall ensure that the source from where information is acquired is reliable.
- 2.10 Monitoring and evaluation of the helpline and chat-line services shall be due in a regular manner both in terms of service efficacy therefore immediate response to the demands of the individuals and also when it comes to the technical aspect of operating such services⁴.

³ Refer to the Data Protection Act (Cap. 586 of the laws of Malta) and Regulation (EU) 2016/679

⁴ Refer to Annex IV: Manual of Policies and Procedures

Standard 1: Effective and respectful intervention procedures

Quality Indicator 3

3.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall ensure that admission and intake procedures are delicately planned and executed for the safety of the persons who experience domestic violence.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 3.1 Service provision shall be sustainable and able to provide support and care on a long-term basis as required.
- 3.2 The availability and accessibility of services in times of crisis shall be due 24/7.
- 3.3 Immediate and crisis intervention strategies shall be in place and regularly monitored and evaluated.
- 3.4 If a case requires immediate attention due to pronounced vulnerability and high risk, especially where children are involved, rapid response and assistance shall be provided without unwarranted delays.
- 3.5 Fair, transparent and non-discriminatory procedures shall be part of the process when carrying out assessments.
- 3.6 Referrals and assessment processes shall be performed without unnecessary delays to avoid putting the individuals at risk.
- 3.7 An acknowledgment letter shall be issued upon a request for service and the source of referral shall be informed about the processing of the application.

- 3.8 During the initial discussion the staff shall, with immediate effect, assess whether the safety of the individuals or their significant others is at stake so as to prevent further incidents from happening.
- 3.9 Upon admission, an immediate assessment of an individual's physical, psychological, emotional, behavioural and cognitive functioning is undertaken especially in times of crisis.
- 3.10 A full, comprehensive assessment shall then be compiled within 24 hours of admission.
- 3.11 Assessments shall be sensitively carried out in light of an individual's personal attributes of age, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, sex, religion, ethnicity, language, and physical, mental, intellectual, sensory or social abilities.
- 3.12 If medical assistance is required upon admission, this is provided after consulting with the individuals involved.
- 3.13 Upon initial contact, persons who are signalling that they may be experiencing domestic violence, or any other form of abuse shall be sensitively and empathically approached and encouraged to discuss what they are experiencing in a private setting.
- 3.14 The staff shall assure the individuals that that they are not alone, that they are understood and that they shall be supported consistently and in a way that suits them best.
- 3.15 The individuals' perspective shall be given due importance so that one would be able to understand, explore and examine the problems faced, their needs and also their priorities.
- 3.16 Given the point of view of the individuals in question as well as the compiling of a comprehensive assessment, the staff shall be able to put forward any

suggestions and/or alternatives that may deem suitable for the same individuals and which shall be part of their safety plan.

- 3.17 The individuals shall choose whether or not to go to a shelter and shall not be forced to stay if they decide not to, however they shall be supported to understand the risks and consequences of leaving.
- 3.18 Despite stipulating a period of stay in the shelter, an assessment shall be carried to evaluate the risk of moving out, thus decisions to prolong the time or offer an alternative service shall be taken in light of individual circumstances.
- 3.19 The management shall evaluate the financial situation of the individuals when it comes to allocating fees for service provision and should be flexible according to individual situations.
- 3.20 If there are rules restricting service provision due to the age and gender of children residing in shelters, alternative accommodation or other services that the family can avail from shall be identified and the necessary support shall be given to help the individuals and their families access them.
- 3.21 If a shelter service is requested and there is no space or else admission may not be possible due to incompatibility with the service's rules, an alternative accommodation which is suitable and safe for the individuals shall be sought.
- 3.22 During the intake process, it shall be determined whether the individuals are currently availing or have in the past availed of other services, be them therapeutic, residential or community in nature, so as to better tailor service provision and offer the necessary assistance.
- 3.23 A proper handover of information about individuals, both when receiving a referral and when referring to other agencies, shall be made in line with respective data protection regulation⁵.

⁵ Refer to Data Protection Act (Cap. 586 of the laws of Malta) and Regulation (EU) 2016/679

- 3.24 Efforts shall be made to ensure that the transition from one service to another is smooth and does not cause unnecessary risks to the individuals involved for example in the case of a second stage shelter.
- 3.25 Service provision shall revolve around capacity building, thus focusing on enhancing the strengths and bolstering the resilience of a person and providing support to improve them.
- 3.26 Individuals shall not be denied service provision unless they show resistance to abide with the rules of the service or if their safety, the safety of their dependants, the safety of other individuals availing of the service or of the staff working at the service is at risk.
- 3.27 A person shall not be discriminated on the basis of re-accessing a service if there is no plausible justification stating otherwise.
- 3.28 The environment from where the services are offered shall be inclusive, informal and non-clinical where non-bureaucratic and person-oriented systems are adopted and are accessible to everyone.

Standard 1: Effective and respectful intervention procedures

Quality Indicator 4

4.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall ensure that persons who experience domestic violence are supported to prepare themselves to move on in a planned manner after being discharged from the service.

Performance Indicators

The service provider ensures that:

- 4.1 The service shall have written procedures regarding the discharge from the shelter.
- 4.2 The staff shall support individuals in planning their future and an after-care plan shall be devised together with the individuals where potential support services and options shall be identified for sustained care.
- 4.3 The staff shall support the individuals towards community reintegration and social inclusion by assisting them in creating links with services and groups in the community.
- 4.4 The individuals shall be involved in assessing the possible risks for themselves or others when they leave the shelter, whether in a planned or an unplanned manner.
- 4.5 At least two weeks before the termination of the service, the individuals shall attend a meeting together with the key worker and other professionals involved in their care to discuss the way forward and to ensure that all the necessary arrangements are in place for a safe discharge.

- 4.6 The individuals shall be encouraged to keep contact with the community after they leave the shelter and shall be ensured that they will be given support whenever they require.
- 4.7 To safeguard the safety and privacy of the individuals, any contact made with the individuals after moving out of the shelter shall be made if the individuals have consented this whilst still availing of the service.
- 4.8 If the individuals have to leave suddenly or due to an emergency, the move shall occur with the minimum possible risk for themselves and others and according to the service's policy on discharge. The reasons for the discharge shall be clearly documented.
- 4.9 With the individuals' consent, unless otherwise required by legal conditions imposed, significant professional workers and persons responsible for the individuals' care shall be notified within 24 hours about an emergency or sudden discharge. These persons shall be provided with any required documentation in line with data protection regulation⁶.
- 4.10 If upon discharge the individuals' health and safety is perceived to be at risk, the staff shall notify relatives, significant others or professionals with the consent of the individuals or if there are legal conditions requiring otherwise.
- 4.11 If the individuals have children, the impact of the discharge on their children shall also be given due consideration to ensure that the children are not being put at risk due to this move.

⁶ Refer to Standard 5 for more information regarding Data Protection measures.

Standard 2: Individualized and Holistic Service Planning

Standard Statement:

This standard promotes rights that ensure that service provision shall be guaranteed by an agreement established between the persons who experience domestic violence and the service provider. The service provider shall also ensure that a person-centred support plan is devised upon a holistic assessment carried out for every individual requesting the service.

Quality Indicators:

1. The service provider and the persons who experience domestic violence who wish to avail of the service shall enter into a written agreement, which sets out the terms and conditions for receiving the service.
2. The persons who experience domestic violence shall be given support to identify and discuss aspects of their life they feel they need to be assisted in and the staff shall provide the necessary support as part of a thorough planning process.

Standard 2: Individualized and Holistic Service Planning

Quality Indicator 1

1.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider and the persons who experience domestic violence who wish to avail of the service shall enter into a written agreement, which sets out the terms and conditions for receiving the service.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 1.1 All individuals shall be introduced to the principles and values that define the service.
- 1.2 Once accepted into the service, the individuals, or their representatives, shall be fully involved in developing the details of the service agreement to which they agree.
- 1.3 The individuals, or their representatives, shall be provided with a dated copy of this written service agreement in a format that they can understand and which both themselves and the service provider sign.
- 1.4 The individuals shall be supported so that they can understand provisions in the agreement.
- 1.5 The individuals shall give their consent to a number of provisions as established in the service agreement.

- 1.6 The service agreement (both the original and any subsequent updates) shall specify the terms and conditions⁷ of the service, which shall be fulfilled accordingly irrespective of whether the individuals are availing of services in a first stage emergency shelter or a second stage shelter.
- 1.7 The service agreement shall be reviewed when decisions taken on the personal support plan may entail changes in the provisions of this agreement or if there is a request from behalf of the individuals or their representatives.
- 1.8 The service shall be terminated or extended in partnership with the individuals bearing in mind their needs and expectations.
- 1.9 The wellbeing of the individuals in question, their families and significant others, the staff, the management and other individuals availing of the service shall be ensured at all times when deciding on termination and extension.
- 1.10 The service shall have policies and procedures⁸ that are easily accessible and are written down in a manner which individuals can understand.
- 1.11 The staff shall read, explain and help the individuals understand the service's policies and procedures.

⁷ Refer to Annex II: Service Agreement

⁸ Refer to Annex IV: Manual of Policies and Procedures

Standard 2: Individualized and Holistic Service Planning

Quality Indicator 2

2.0 Quality Indicator: The persons who experience domestic violence shall be given support to identify and discuss aspects of their life they feel they need to be assisted in and the staff shall provide the necessary support as part of a thorough planning process.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 2.1 Planning of services shall be established upon the principle that the individuals shall assume their right to control their lives as much as possible, if they are able to do so.
- 2.2 An independent representative may be appointed to provide support in situations when the individuals cannot control their life as desired.
- 2.3 The personal support plan⁹ shall be developed in light of individual experiences, thus it shall take into account the nature and duration of violence encountered, the environment in which the individuals dwell in including any relationships as well as the physical, emotional, psychological and socio-economic status of the individuals, amongst others.
- 2.4 Due attention shall be given whenever the individuals manifest that they are victims of other sorts of discrimination (for example in case of persons with

⁹ Refer to Annex III: Personal Support Plan

disability, asylum seekers, persons who make part of an ethnic minority group or being substance abusers) which may aggravate their situation.

- 2.5 A key worker shall be assigned to every individual to be responsible for the drawing up and the implementation of the personal support plan and keeps regular contact with the individuals and with all those involved in providing support.
- 2.6 The personal support plan shall be developed together with the individuals and any decision and information pertaining to the individuals shall be recorded in such plan.
- 2.7 The individuals shall have a personal support plan in place irrespective of whether they are availing of services in a first stage emergency shelter or a second stage shelter. However, the depth and comprehensiveness of such plan shall be determined according to the type of service provision being offered.
- 2.8 The personal support plan shall reflect the individuals' hopes, choices, needs, strengths and responsibilities.
- 2.9 The individuals together with the staff shall establish goals, which enable them to work on the issues for which they are seeking help of which shall be part of their safety plan.
- 2.10 The individuals together with the staff shall identify what support and skills are required for the individuals' safety, wellbeing and healthy quality of life and the staff shall give the necessary support to develop such skills.
- 2.11 The individuals or their representatives shall understand the plan, which should be accessible to them whenever they need it and are given a copy of this document upon request.
- 2.12 The individuals shall sign both the original copy and subsequent amendments to the plan.

- 2.13 The staff shall explore options for supportive action including coping mechanisms and shall consult with the individuals about what would be the most sustainable and effective approach for support given their realities.
- 2.14 Staff members shall adopt proactive approaches that allow for monitoring of individual cases so as to sustain the impact of the interventions applied.
- 2.15 The individuals shall commit themselves to work on the agreed plan and the staff shall help them to do so.
- 2.16 The individuals together with the staff, and the management if necessary, shall engage in case reviews to discuss progress made. Frequency of such interventions depends on the distinctive needs of the individuals.
- 2.17 The staff and the management shall justify and explain any decisions taken which may alter the personal support plan, after effectively involving the individuals and acknowledging their needs and aspirations whilst helping them understand how these decisions will impact their life.
- 2.18 With the assistance and coordination of an interdisciplinary team, when necessary, the established plan shall be used to determine whether needs are being met, whether there are any gaps in service provision and what action is required to tackle these gaps.
- 2.19 If the individuals have persons who are dependent on them the needs of these persons shall also be acknowledged and support shall be given to the individuals to fulfil the roles they assume on this regard including any legal responsibilities.

Standard 3: Rights, Self-Empowerment and Wellbeing

Standard Statement:

This standard promotes rights that ensure that the persons who experience domestic violence shall be guaranteed a holistic, respectful, and dignified approach to care with the aim of safeguarding social justice and fundamental human rights whilst promoting wellbeing, autonomy and zero tolerance to violence of any kind.

Quality Indicators:

1. The service provider shall safeguard the right of the persons who experience domestic violence to lead the social, cultural, and religious lifestyle they endorse in conformity with the rules of the service.
2. The service provider shall ensure that any information is delivered in a timely, complete, and suitable manner for the persons who experience domestic violence to understand without the need for them to feel obliged to give something in return for acquiring any information.
3. The persons who experience domestic violence shall be provided with the necessary support to exercise their right to lead a safe life without fear of aggression and behaviour that threatens their wellbeing whilst fulfilling their responsibilities to maintain a safe environment for themselves and those around them.
4. The service provider shall promote active participation of the persons who experience domestic violence and shall encourage them to exercise personal choices and realise their full potential.

5. The service provider shall be aware of the dietary requirements and food choices of the persons who experience domestic violence.
6. The service provider shall ensure that children residing in the shelter are provided with suitable and age-appropriate services and are consulted to ensure that the best support is delivered.

Standard 3: Rights, Self-Empowerment and Wellbeing

Quality Indicator 1

1.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall safeguard the right of the persons who experience domestic violence to lead the social, cultural, and religious lifestyle they endorse in conformity with the rules of the service.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 1.1 All the individuals shall be treated with respect and dignity in every aspect of their life, including personal care, healthcare, social activities and community life.
- 1.2 The individuals shall be assisted to continue receiving social benefits which they are entitled to.
- 1.3 All the individuals shall be supported in exercising their civil rights.
- 1.4 The individuals shall be encouraged to participate in physical activities that aim to help them keep themselves physically fit.
- 1.5 When the individuals inform the management of leaving the service, they shall be given back any saved money and/or any personal belongings being securely kept in a designated place, in accordance with the prior agreement established between the service provider and the individuals.
- 1.6 A programme of activities and events shall be developed with the contribution of the individuals availing of the service which shall include both activities to

be organized by the service provider itself and also those organized by third parties and other entities.

- 1.7 The individuals shall be continuously consulted when designing projects and programmes so that service provision continues to evolve around those needs and issues of concern that the individuals are truly confronted with from time to time.
- 1.8 The staff shall ensure that it is properly informed about the implications of the individuals' social, cultural, religious or spiritual beliefs for the same persons' benefit and that of others.
- 1.9 The individuals shall be given the required opportunity and support to practice their beliefs in line with the service's rules; however, they can opt not to practice anything at all.
- 1.10 The individuals shall not be obliged to participate in any social event, entertainment and activities organised by the service provider, even more if these go against their religion or faith.

Standard 3: Rights, Self-Empowerment and Wellbeing

Quality Indicator 2

2.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall ensure that any information is delivered in a timely, complete and suitable manner for the persons who experience domestic violence to understand without the need for them to feel obliged to give something in return for acquiring any information.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 2.1 Enough information shall be provided on general aspects of service provision¹⁰.
- 2.2 The individuals shall be provided with information about other services available to them including community, residential and therapeutic services and shall be assisted to make the necessary contacts if requested.
- 2.3 Enough information shall be made accessible on all possible options and rights that the individuals and their children may be entitled to, be them legally, financially, socially, culturally or medically related, amongst others.
- 2.4 Any required information shall be presented in a format that can be understood by the recipients and support shall be provided whenever assistance is requested for further explanation.
- 2.5 Information about available hospitals and preventive care services shall be provided, if requested, and support shall be offered to acquire such services.

¹⁰ Refer to Annex I: Information on Service Provision

2.6 The individuals shall be informed about all services related to family therapy both those offered in-house and also those offered outside the service which shall provide the necessary guidance for families to develop skills to better manage their life to reduce the risk of poverty, social exclusion and crisis.

Standard 3: Rights, Self-Empowerment and Wellbeing

Quality Indicator 3

3.0 Quality Indicator: The persons who experience domestic violence shall be provided with the necessary support to exercise their right to lead a safe life without fear of aggression and behaviour that threatens their wellbeing whilst fulfilling their responsibilities to maintain a safe environment for themselves and those around them.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 3.1 The rights that the individuals shall be entitled to and the responsibilities that they shall assume once residing in the shelter shall be well explained to all the individuals upon their admission.
- 3.2 A culture of non-violence shall be promoted and shall be demonstrated not only between adults, including members of staff and the management, but also between adults and children.
- 3.3 Communication amongst and between the staff at all levels, residents and children shall always be respectful and constructive.
- 3.4 Fairness and impartiality shall be endorsed in all aspects of service provision especially when distributing resources, providing information and giving any kind of support.

- 3.5 The individuals shall have reasonable time to consider their choices, take decisions and express their feelings.
- 3.6 The key worker shall be available to the individuals under his/her care and should ensure that enough time is allocated for every individual encounter.
- 3.7 If the individuals request a change in their key worker they shall be supported to discuss with authorised persons the possibility for such change to take place. Support is given to understand any limiting factors related to this choice.
- 3.8 Support sessions shall be aimed towards ensuring the individuals' safety and wellbeing by being able to address the needs identified by them and imparting knowledge and teaching skills that are needed for them to get through the complex process of dealing with violence.
- 3.9 Individual support sessions shall be held on a regular basis of which frequency is agreed with the individuals depending on the level of need.
- 3.10 Support sessions shall be delivered professionally however retaining an informal and flexible ambience for the individuals to feel at ease.
- 3.11 The staff shall support the individuals to work through and reflect upon the issues they face rather than telling them what they should do so that they become more self-reliant and able to come up with solutions themselves.
- 3.12 Any language or communication needs of the individuals shall be identified, and arrangements shall be made to address such needs whenever possible.

Standard 3: Rights, Self-Empowerment and Wellbeing

Quality Indicator 4

4.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall promote active participation of the persons who experience domestic violence and shall encourage them to exercise personal choices and realise their full potential.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 4.1 Efforts shall be made to encourage self-advocacy and ensure that the individuals are supported to take decisions themselves without being judged or coerced, if this does not put them at risk.
- 4.2 The necessary support shall be provided for the individuals to be able to manage their own life and address their needs on their own as much as possible as long as this does not cause them harm.
- 4.3 Individuals shall have reasonable time to consider their choices and prepare for events that they need to attend to (such as review meetings, hospital appointments and court hearings) and are given time to express their feelings, views and decisions.
- 4.4 If the individuals have an independent representative, in case they are unable to express themselves, the staff shall listen to what the representative has to say on behalf of the individuals as if they are expressing their views themselves.
- 4.5 The individuals shall be given the opportunity to avail from advocacy services, if they request so and they have financial means to do so, and to appoint an

independent advocate that would support them to access their rights, acquire any information they request and voice their opinion.

- 4.6 The individuals shall be given all the required support to decide on whether or not to file an official police report with the ultimate decision to be always of the individuals.
- 4.7 The individuals shall be given the required assistance to access opportunities and services that are necessary for enhanced autonomy such as those related to employment, educational prospects, affordable housing and self-care.
- 4.8 The individuals shall be encouraged to remain actively involved within their community and so shall be supported to engage in meaningful activities which they enjoy themselves in and which help them practice and improve their talents and reach the identified goals.
- 4.9 Diversity shall be treated as an opportunity rather than a threat thus individual differences shall be understood and respected to foster a more inclusive and active environment.
- 4.10 The individuals shall be viewed as potential contributors in their own development and so efforts shall be sustained to acknowledge their expertise, strengths and advice.
- 4.11 The individuals shall be given the opportunity to spend time on their own in accordance with the policies and procedures adopted by the shelter.
- 4.12 The individuals shall continue carrying out their financial, legal and personal activities when is convenient to them, unless there are legal reasons preventing this or if this goes against the service's regulations.
- 4.13 The staff shall provide the necessary assistance in case the individuals feel that they should return to their household, during or after their stay at the shelter,

whereby the probabilities and consequences of such decision are analysed together with the individuals.

Standard 3: Rights, Self-Empowerment and Wellbeing

Quality Indicator 5

5.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall be aware of the dietary requirements and food choices of the persons who experience domestic violence.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 5.1 If meals shall be prepared by the staff in the shelter, these shall be nutritionally balanced and prepared in a way that respects the individuals' ethnicity and religion.
- 5.2 Meals shall be hygienically prepared and are well presented.
- 5.3 Meals shall be prepared and stored in places which are registered with the Food Safety Commission¹¹ and which comply with any other public health requirements.
- 5.4 Any stored food shall be regularly checked to ensure that its expiration date has not been exceeded.
- 5.5 Any staff preparing, cooking and serving food shall have a valid certificate in food handling.

¹¹ In conformity with the Food Safety Act XIV of 2002, as amended by Legal Notice 426 of 2007; and Acts XXIX of 2007 and VI of 2011 of the Laws of Malta.

5.6 Those individuals residing in the shelter who would prepare food for the others, not just for themselves, shall also take all necessary precautions and measures and thus should have a valid certificate in food handling.

Standard 3: Rights, Self-Empowerment and Wellbeing

Quality Indicator 6

6.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall ensure that children residing in the shelter are provided with suitable and age-appropriate services and are consulted to ensure that the best support is delivered.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 6.1 The children shall be given their space and have their privacy, rights and individuality acknowledged and respected.
- 6.2 The staff working with the children shall be responsive and sensitive to the children's needs and shall adopt the right behaviour at all times.
- 6.3 The physical environment shall be child-friendly and a pleasant place where the children feel comfortable.
- 6.4 If there are school-aged children residing in the shelter, there shall be a comfortable space for them to carry out their schoolwork.
- 6.5 The interests, wishes, opinions and expectations of the children shall be acknowledged and respected, where possible.
- 6.6 Services shall be well managed to better fit the needs of the children and so any required adjustments to the services are performed, where possible.

- 6.7 The relevant consent forms, both those included with the service agreement and others required during service provision shall be duly signed by the parents or the legal guardian.
- 6.8 The children shall also be provided with support sessions that are age-appropriate in which they feel safe and comfortable.
- 6.9 The children shall enjoy quality care that provides for age-appropriate social, cultural and leisure activities whilst residing in a shelter.
- 6.10 The children shall be encouraged to contribute in the planning and organisation of activities that are age-appropriate for them.
- 6.11 The children shall not be forced to participate in activities held within or outside the shelter.
- 6.12 Individuals with children shall be educated to better deal with child related matter and to fulfil their parental roles including the ability to identify and address concerns in a timely and adequate manner.

Standard 4: Safeguarding Safety and Security

Standard Statement:

This standard promotes rights that ensure that the service provider shall promote systems that guarantee the safety and security of persons who experience domestic violence and the staff working with them with the ultimate aim to enhance their experience and overall well-being.

Quality Indicators:

1. The environment from where services shall be delivered shall be welcoming, safe, accessible, and free from avoidable risks.
2. The service provider shall respect the privacy of the persons who experience domestic violence within the limits of guaranteeing the safety and security of all other individuals, the staff and the management at all times.
3. The service provider shall deal effectively and in a timely manner whenever the persons who experience domestic violence, or their representatives, express concern or submit a complaint.
4. The service provider shall ensure that the health condition and needs of the persons who experience domestic violence are well known by the management and the staff, if this might have an effect on service provision in any way.

Standard 4: Safeguarding Safety and Security

Quality Indicator 1

1.0 Quality Indicator: The environment from where services shall be delivered shall be welcoming, safe, accessible, and free from avoidable risks.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 1.1 The location and design of the shelter shall reflect the objectives of service provision.
- 1.2 The shelter shall be accessible to everybody¹².
- 1.3 Efforts shall be sustained so that the shelter's environment remains as homely as possible and so the individuals shall be involved when taking decisions pertaining to restructuring and innovation.
- 1.4 The service shall have procedures pertaining to housekeeping¹³ which the individuals are required to adhere to, and which shall address both the private living quarters where the individuals and families are hosted, and the common and recreational areas.
- 1.5 The premises shall be kept clean, hygienic and free from offensive odours and intrusive sounds.

¹² The shelter should conform to building regulations as stipulated by the Planning Authority and the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability.

¹³ Refer to Annex IV: Manual of Policies and Procedures

- 1.6 There shall be conformity with relevant legislation¹⁴ to avoid and control the spread of infection.
- 1.7 The shelter shall be well-maintained and in a good state of repair to avoid safety hazards.
- 1.8 Together with the management, proactive and preventive measures shall be taken to reduce the likelihood of risk which shall be ensured by carrying out a thorough risk assessment of the facility at least once yearly or whenever there is a situation that may change risk levels.
- 1.9 A risk assessment shall also be carried out for every individual availing of the service as part of their safety plan which shall primarily take into consideration the nature of the violence experienced thus shall be highly specialised and personalised and allows individuals to give their opinion on their perception of risk.
- 1.10 The premises from where services shall be delivered shall not be easily identifiable in terms of having logos or signage that may indicate it being a shelter as this may intensify the level of risk for the individuals within the shelter.
- 1.11 All the staff, management and the individuals shall be instructed about emergency procedures and everyone should understand what to do in such situations.
- 1.12 Emergency evacuation plans shall be clearly displayed in the premises and appropriate signage shall be put up in designated locations indicating emergency exits and assembly points, amongst others.
- 1.13 Indoor and outdoor communal spaces shall be able to accommodate all the individuals comfortably at any given time.

¹⁴ Refer to Public Health Act (Cap. 465 of the Laws of Malta)

- 1.14 The bedrooms shall have adequate personal space so as to respect the dignity and privacy of the individuals.
- 1.15 Any venue where any type of contact with the individuals is made, be it the initial contact or subsequent encounters, shall be secure, private and free from avoidable interruptions.
- 1.16 Any designated play areas for children shall be safe and offer a pleasant environment for them.
- 1.17 Any furniture within the building shall be purposely adapted to ensure child safety in case children reside in the shelter.
- 1.18 Persons in the premises shall be aware that CCTV surveillance cameras are installed and are in operation and so there shall be visible signs around the premises indicating this.
- 1.19 Video recordings by means of CCTV surveillance shall not be subject to any misuse and so justification of the system's necessity and any processing activities of data gathered shall be in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation.
- 1.20 The use of cameras, including CCTV, shall be restricted to entry ways, passages, lifts and stairs for security and safety reasons only in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations.
- 1.21 Any cameras installed, especially those in meeting rooms, shall be strictly non-auditory and individuals making use of such rooms shall be aware of the installation of such surveillance cameras.
- 1.22 If transport is provided as part of the service, there shall be clear policies and procedures that ensure that any person using transport is safe during the journey.

- 1.23 Both critical and non-critical incidents shall be dealt with effectively and promptly so as to prevent issues from escalating and having more severe impact on the individuals.
- 1.24 In case of challenging behaviour or any violent situation, restrictive care shall only be exerted if other interventions fail and for the minimum duration possible and as stipulated by law.
- 1.25 Any incident or accident shall be clearly documented, reported to the management and investigated accordingly by the management and, if required and as legally permitted, by relevant authorities.
- 1.26 Where required, adaptations to the service shall be carried out to safeguard the health and safety of the individuals availing of the service as well as of others.
- 1.27 Professionals, relatives, representatives or other persons shall be informed of incidents or accidents with the consent of the individuals involved or if this is legally required.
- 1.28 The staff shall ensure that the shelter is free from bullying, harassment and any other form of abuse to ensure physical and emotional safety to all those present at the shelter.
- 1.29 Individuals shall not be discriminated against on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, age, race/ethnic origin, religion/belief, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, language, family responsibilities, mental health status or physical, intellectual, sensory or social abilities. Allegations of discrimination shall be fully investigated according to established procedures.
- 1.30 If any of the individuals' behaviour challenges the principles of the service, they shall be provided with professional support after being properly assessed in line with the procedures and rules of the service.

- 1.31 The staff shall inform the individuals about other services they can refer to which can help them in the eventuality that they are requested to stop using the service, due to the service's rules and procedures.
- 1.32 If the shelter shall be refurbished or renovated, or there shall be temporary or permanent movement to another location or venue, the Social Care Standards Authority shall be notified with immediate effect.
- 1.33 Certificates, reports and other documents confirming that the service complies with all relevant legislation and procedures such as service registration with the authority shall be displayed around the premises, in a location which is easily visible to all the individuals availing of the service and visitors.
- 1.34 If workers from the authority require the individuals to take part in the inspection of the service that they are receiving, the latter shall be given the opportunity to do so and are free to decide whether to participate or not.
- 1.35 The most appropriate support interventions shall be identified and applied in case there are legal conditions restricting the individuals' rights in some way or another.
- 1.36 The individuals shall be encouraged to participate in regular evaluations of service provision to ensure that this remains relevant to their individual needs from time to time.

Standard 4: Safeguarding Safety and Security

Quality Indicator 2

2.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall respect the privacy of the persons who experience domestic violence within the limits of guaranteeing the safety and security of all other individuals, the staff and the management at all times.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 2.1 Security measures shall be in place to ensure that the individuals residing in the shelter remain safe and secure especially when it comes to disclosing information on the address of the facility.
- 2.2 The individuals' personal space shall be respected within the boundaries of creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment for themselves and others.
- 2.3 The staff shall knock on bedroom, restroom and bathroom doors and wait for the individuals' permission before entering. The individuals can close and lock doors, but the staff shall be able to open them in case of an emergency, as explained in the service's regulations.
- 2.4 The individuals shall be able to discuss their needs with the staff in a confidential and private manner.
- 2.5 If for any reason the perpetrator needs to be contacted, an intermediary such as a social worker or legal officer shall be appointed so as to avoid that such communication harms the individuals in any way.

- 2.6 A policy on visitors shall be developed to safeguard the rights and safety of all residents and that ensures that precautionary and security measures are in place to avoid unforeseen risks on this regard.
- 2.7 The service shall have a policy on the management of mail and the staff shall explain this clearly to all the individuals upon moving into the shelter. This policy enables the individuals to receive personal mail securely and be informed from where to collect it.
- 2.8 The individuals shall have access to a telephone, internet and/or mobile phone in accordance with the service's procedures and are provided with clear explanations if use is restricted.

Standard 4: Safeguarding Safety and Security

Quality Indicator 3

3.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall deal effectively and in a timely manner whenever the persons who experience domestic violence, or their representatives, express concern or submit a complaint.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 3.1 The individuals shall be able to discuss any concern they might have with any of the staff, the management and third parties including a higher authority, at an appropriate time and in a confidential and private manner, without fearing retribution.
- 3.2 The individuals shall be informed on how to provide feedback or submit a complaint about service provision to the service provider or any other relevant third parties.
- 3.3 The individuals shall be informed about the procedure to submit a complaint in a formal manner directly to the Social Care Standards Authority.
- 3.4 The management shall acknowledge all concerns and complaints put forward by the individuals and other persons and gives account of proceedings and outcomes of the investigation whilst ensuring that remedial action is taken in due time.
- 3.5 The individuals shall be able to quickly contact one of the staff members when they require help or in case of an emergency through an intercom or alarm for example.

Standard 4: Safeguarding Safety and Security

Quality Indicator 4

4.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall ensure that the health condition and needs of the persons who experience domestic violence are well known by the management and the staff, if this might have an effect on service provision in any way.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 4.1 The individuals or their representatives shall provide adequate information of any health and/or medical condition, allergies and medicine and/or medication if this is required to be known amongst the staff and the management to ensure that the individuals' wellbeing is safeguarded at all times.
- 4.2 The service shall have clear policies and procedures¹⁵ with regards to the preparation, administration and management of medicine and medication.
- 4.3 The management and the staff shall adhere to relevant regulation when it comes to storing and disposing medicine, medication and supplements safely if medicine and/ or medication needs to be administered during provision of service.
- 4.4 In the event that the individuals are feeling unwell and feel that they need healthcare services, the staff shall contact the appropriate persons and/or authorities as agreed in the service agreement.

¹⁵ Refer to Annex IV: Manual of Policies and Procedures

- 4.5 The name, duties, responsibilities and authority of each person involved in the process of managing medicine or medication shall be clearly documented and known amongst the individuals in the service.
- 4.6 Any medication being administered shall be prescribed by the doctor and used solely by the individual that it was prescribed to.

Standard 5: Handling and Safekeeping of Data and Information Dissemination

Standard Statement:

This standard promotes rights that ensure that the service provider shall comply with data protection measures when it comes to using, processing, retaining and disseminating confidential information pertaining to the persons who experience domestic violence.

Quality Indicators:

1. The service provider shall keep a record of important documentation and other relevant information relating to the persons who experience domestic violence in line with respective laws¹⁶ and regulations.
2. The service provider shall ensure appropriate safe keeping and sharing of information pertaining to the persons who experience domestic violence in line with respective laws and regulations

¹⁶ Refer to the Data Protection Act (Cap. 586 of the laws of Malta) and Regulation (EU) 2016/679

Standard 5: Handling and Safekeeping of Data and Information Dissemination

Quality Indicator 1

1.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall keep a record of important documentation and other relevant information relating to the persons who experience domestic violence in line with respective laws¹⁷ and regulations.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 1.1 The individuals shall have the right to their personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, if they make such a request in writing.
- 1.2 The individuals shall be informed from the outset why their personal information is required and how it is intended to be used. This is explained in simple terms and in an open way in the service agreement where there is also reference to relevant consent forms.
- 1.3 Any personal information pertaining to the individuals availing of the service shall be processed according to the Data Protection Act.
- 1.4 Any information gathered on perpetrators shall be adequately recorded and evaluated rigorously according to the above-mentioned law.
- 1.5 Personal information pertaining to the individuals within the service shall only be requested and used solely for the purpose of providing adequate support, care

¹⁷ Refer to the Data Protection Act (Cap. 586 of the laws of Malta) and Regulation (EU) 2016/679

and safety to the individuals thus, only the relevant information shall be gathered from behalf of the individuals.

- 1.6 The staff shall be aware of when to ask for certain information and how much to ask of it.
- 1.7 Personal information and details pertaining to both the individuals availing of the service and the staff shall be valid thus shall be reviewed accordingly and kept up to date from time to time.

Standard 5: Handling and Safekeeping of Data and Information Dissemination

Quality Indicator 2

2.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall ensure appropriate safekeeping and sharing of information pertaining to the persons who experience domestic violence in line with respective laws and regulations

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 2.1 All the staff and the management shall demonstrate their ability to adhere to general data protection regulation by presenting relevant policies, measures and strategies of compliance as part of the policy on confidentiality.
- 2.2 All confidential information about the individuals and families availing of the service shall be securely stored and shall only be shared with others with their consent and as established in the service agreement, unless the law requires otherwise.
- 2.3 The staff shall inform the individuals about when and why certain information cannot be kept confidential and who has access rights in accordance with the policies and procedures of the service and relevant laws.
- 2.4 There shall be absolute commitment by all the staff and the management to adhere to respective laws and regulations when it comes to handing over and storing data such as progress reports, discharge letters, case notes and case reviews, amongst others.

- 2.5 The staff and the management who keep record of interventions shall ensure that any document is compiled in a transparent and clear manner keeping in mind that such documentation may be requested following court or other legal orders.
- 2.6 To ensure protection of data against unauthorised access, loss, damage and inappropriate handling, a competent person, usually a data protection officer, shall be appointed to give proper instructions to all the staff on data protection issues including regulations and consequences of any breach.
- 2.7 The service shall have a clear retention policy that specifies retention periods for different types of data gathered so as to avoid personal data being kept unnecessarily.
- 2.8 All the individuals availing of the service shall understand and respect boundaries with regards to confidentiality.

Standard 6: Interagency Collaboration and External Relations

Standard Statement:

This standard promotes rights that ensure that the service provider shall identify and sustain relationships that are significant to the persons who experience domestic violence and that do not expose them to unnecessary risks. The service provider shall ensure collaboration with external entities so as to establish effective and cohesive partnerships to preserve the individuals' right of engagement to an integrated service system.

Quality Indicators:

1. The service provider shall communicate with significant persons close to the persons who experience domestic violence and retains such contact if this does not harm the same individuals.
2. The service provider shall develop and sustain relationships with external entities, professionals and other persons so as to provide the most appropriate care using gender-sensitive means.

Standard 6: Interagency Collaboration and External Relations

Quality Indicator 1

1.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall communicate with significant persons close to the persons who experience domestic violence and retains such contact if this does not harm the same individuals.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 1.1 The staff and the management shall be able to demonstrate their understanding of the relationship that exists between the individuals and their families or significant others so as to determine the ability of the latter to contribute to informal and/or formal support for the individuals.
- 1.2 Families and persons significant to the individuals shall be supported to establish useful contacts with professionals and relevant services so that they work for the benefit of the individuals.
- 1.3 The staff shall respect the individuals' family members, representatives and significant others, value the opinions of these persons, acknowledge their expectations of the service and provide information on how their concerns or comments will be dealt with.
- 1.4 Networks that the individuals and their families make part of shall be identified and sustained if it is in their best interest.

Standard 6: Interagency Collaboration and External Relations

Quality Indicator 2

2.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall develop and sustain relationships with external entities, professionals and other persons so as to provide the most appropriate care using gender-sensitive means.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 2.1 If the individuals have changing needs that cannot be met by the service, then, with their consent or that of their representatives, they shall be referred to other professionals or entities who can give the level and type of care that they need.
- 2.2 Sharing of information with external entities, professionals and/or other persons shall be purposeful, in line with the Data Protection Act and in line with relevant policies developed by the management of the service.
- 2.3 There shall be awareness of the functions and contact details of other services that can meet the needs presented by the individuals and their family members to ensure a more holistic and coordinated response to care but also to avoid duplication of services.
- 2.4 Potential networking opportunities aiming at enhancing the self-esteem and sense of belonging of the individuals shall be identified especially amongst highly vulnerable and marginalised groups.

- 2.5 In the presence of children residing in the shelter, there should be collaboration with schools, training institutions and educative programmes so that children continue to receive (compulsory) education, quality tuition and have access to resources just like any other child their age.
- 2.6 There shall be active communication with personnel from child protection and child welfare services, programmes for substance abusers and for persons with mental health issues, associations supporting women including young mothers and homeless shelters amongst others, that can intervene when required.
- 2.7 The individuals shall be assisted to make the necessary contacts with social welfare and social security departments when information is required on incentives and benefits that the individuals may be entitled to and that can help them be more economically secure.
- 2.8 Information shall be acquired on specialised support services in case these are required by the individuals.
- 2.9 The individuals shall be supported to understand that in some instances it may be useful for child protection authorities to intervene whilst ensuring that they are given the chance to take decisions in the best interest of their child.
- 2.10 The work with police and security guards, amongst others, shall be sustained so that these can intervene promptly when required so as to avoid having the safety of the individuals being put at risk.
- 2.11 Peer support systems shall be strengthened by providing the opportunity for the individuals to engage in support groups that can contribute to their wellbeing.
- 2.12 Efforts shall be made so that any collaboration with third parties is done in such a way as to avoid the individuals being prejudiced or stigmatised.

2.13 Information shall be conveyed in a consistent manner across agencies so as to avoid individuals being misinformed and misled when using multiple services.

2.14 The management of the service shall continuously be on the search for funding opportunities and to acquire resources and facilities that aim at improving service provision and to make the service increasingly accessible for more persons.

Standard 7: Service Quality Management

Standard Statement:

This standard promotes rights that ensure that the management and the staff shall be accountable to deliver quality support and care in the most respectful and transparent manner whilst themselves maintaining their wellbeing and enhancing their personal and professional development through support and guidance.

Quality Indicators:

1. The service provider shall ensure professional and ethical practice that is safe and appropriate to the emerging needs of the persons who experience domestic violence.
2. The service provider shall implement transparent recruitment and selection strategies.
3. The service provider shall plan for staff supervision, continuous training and development as well as improvement in service provision.

Standard 7: Service Quality Management

Quality Indicator 1

1.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall ensure professional and ethical practice that is safe and appropriate to the emerging needs of the persons who experience domestic violence.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 1.1 The staff and volunteers shall know how to put all policies and procedures into practice and operate in a manner that is consistent with the values and philosophy of the service.
- 1.2 The management, the staff and volunteers shall be aware of and shall understand respective laws and regulations that are pertinent in the field of domestic violence and shall be well informed of any amendments made to such laws and regulations and of any new regulations coming into force.
- 1.3 Service coordination and general operational functions shall be ethically carried out using gender-sensitive methods.
- 1.4 The staff and volunteers shall use methods designed according to up-to-date knowledge and best-practice guidelines in accordance with the service's philosophy and objectives.
- 1.5 The management and the staff shall maintain effective communication between them through regular staff meetings and debriefing sessions especially when faced with challenging cases presenting heightened levels of crisis and trauma.

- 1.6 The staff and volunteers shall perform their work according to the Code of Ethics and Code of Practice of their profession and the procedure drawn up by the management that shall reflect ethical practice in line with the mentioned codes.
- 1.7 The staff and volunteers shall be culturally sensitive and demonstrate the ability to communicate and interact with all the individuals in the best way possible, irrespective of the individuals' gender identity, sexual orientation ethnicity, beliefs, religion or cultural background.
- 1.8 Every effort shall be made by the staff and volunteers to be aware of the progressive needs and changing behaviour of the individuals and offer the required support at any point in time.
- 1.9 The staff and volunteers shall use appropriate language when speaking with or about the individuals availing of the service and must strictly avoid discriminatory jargon at all times.
- 1.10 The staff and volunteers shall be accountable to follow their job description and not carry out any tasks which do not fall within their competencies. Other duties shall only be performed if properly guided or trained and given that these fall within the limits of their sphere of work.
- 1.11 The staff and volunteers shall offer practical help (if and as required) to the individuals so that they are able to meet the people visiting them and to help persons with disability gain access to the building.
- 1.12 The staff and volunteers shall always be sensitive and supportive.
- 1.13 Staff members shall dedicate enough time and attention to each case that falls within their responsibility.
- 1.14 The staff and the management shall keep an open mind and must completely avoid prejudice and assumptions when it comes to giving individual support.

- 1.15 The staff members shall reflect on how they carry out their work and shall be committed to improve their practice to ensure that quality care and support are constantly provided.
- 1.16 The staff, especially that who makes the initial contact with the individuals, shall be trained to recognise any signs of domestic violence or any other abuse and be able to take the necessary actions using safe and tested measures.
- 1.17 The staff and volunteers shall know when and from whom they should seek help when they feel unable to cope with a particular situation or when they feel that an issue does not fall within their competence.

Standard 7: Service Quality Management

Quality Indicator 2

2.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall implement transparent recruitment and selection strategies.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 2.1 All the staff shall be adequately qualified, trained and/or experienced to carry out tasks according to current best practices.
- 2.2 The number of trained staff having the necessary skills shall always be sufficient to provide the required support and care, at all times.
- 2.3 An adequate number of staff shall be present to ensure that children residing in the shelter are well taken care of.
- 2.4 There shall be a qualified first aider¹⁸ and an equipped first aid box at all times.
- 2.5 The staff and volunteers working in the shelters shall be recruited and selected following a thorough process which includes:
 - 2.5.1 verification of identity;
 - 2.5.2 verification of qualifications;
 - 2.5.3 verification of police conduct; and
 - 2.5.4 verification of the Protection Of Minors Act certificate.

¹⁸ In conformity with the Workplace (First Aid) Regulation – Legal notice 11 of 2002, as amended by Legal notice 348 of 2011

- 2.6 Volunteers shall have the right qualities, values and attitudes to work with the individuals just as any other paid staff.
- 2.7 The staff shall attend a comprehensive induction process that is planned and organized meticulously by the management of the service and which shall also be supervised.
- 2.8 The individuals residing in the shelter shall be informed every time new staff starts working in the shelter.

Standard 7: Service Quality Management

Quality Indicator 3

3.0 Quality Indicator: The service provider shall plan for staff supervision, continuous training and development as well as improvement in service provision.

Performance Indicators:

The service provider ensures that:

- 3.1 Staff supervision, including performance appraisals, whether carried out formally or informally shall be part of the organization's strategic human resource management and development.
- 3.2 Efforts shall be maintained towards investing and enhancing staff development strategies which promote staff recognition amongst workers at all levels in the organization.
- 3.3 Group and individual supervision of the staff shall be carried out on a regular basis by a competent person appointed either from within or outside the service to identify any training and development needs required by the staff and volunteers.
- 3.4 Supervision shall be seen as an opportunity for staff to reflect on their own behaviour and practice, to review and improve their work and to feel comfortable discussing issues which may largely avoid them being burnt out and being less productive.
- 3.5 The service shall have a procedure for the continuous professional development and ongoing training of all the staff and volunteers in aspects that shall ensure that:

- 3.5.1 the staff and volunteers are more aware of and are non-judgemental towards individuals in aspects related to religion, culture, gender and sexual orientation of the individuals;
 - 3.5.2 the staff responsible for handling food acquires valid certification in food handling;
 - 3.5.3 drivers have a valid driving licence;
 - 3.5.4 adequate number of staff have a valid Basic First Aid certification¹⁹;
 - 3.5.5 adequate number of staff have a valid Mental Health First Aid certification; and
 - 3.5.6 the staff takes the required action in an emergency including a fire emergency.
- 3.6 The staff shall be given specialised and up-dated training when it comes to dealing with sensitive issues such as dealing with trauma, conducting risk assessments and dealing with crisis.
- 3.7 The staff shall be given the required support, especially mental and emotional support, through informal individual or team meetings and also professional interventions.
- 3.8 The wellbeing of the staff and volunteers shall be safeguarded, and support shall be given to maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- 3.9 There shall be commitment towards strengthening feedback mechanisms for all the staff, volunteers, the individuals availing of the service and other interested persons.
- 3.10 The staff, together with the management and if required other external entities, shall commit to SMART measures when choosing the most appropriate interventions to be applied for every individual seeking support.

¹⁹ In conformity with The Workplace (First Aid) Regulations - Legal Notice 11 of 2002 as amended by Legal Notice 348 of 2011

3.11 Continuous quality improvement shall be a meaningful part of the strategy and culture of the organization therefore the management shall continuously explore alternative operational approaches that could be more effective and reliable in both the short and long run.

Annex I: Information on service provision

Below is a non-exhaustive list of important information that should be available to those accessing a shelter service.

Details and contacts:

- i. details of the management, administration and professional care team;
- ii. the location of the shelter and a description of its physical environment
- iii. contact details of other useful services such as the Social Care Standards Authority.

Admission and discharge from the service

- iv. Written admission criteria and the client mix that one can expect to find in the shelter;
- v. The process of moving into the shelter;
- vi. Written procedure of what happens when the individuals are discharged from the service including what happens if the individuals have to leave before the stipulated duration of stay.

General information about the service:

- vii. details of the philosophy, aims and objectives of the service and how these will be achieved;
- viii. the maximum and minimum period of time that one can spend at the shelter;
- ix. list of services that the individuals can avail from as part of their programme;

- x. the day's structure and programme of activities that one can participate in while residing at the shelter;
- xi. eligibility and access to services;
- xii. rights and obligations of family members if these reside together as a unit within the shelter;
- xiii. what happens when services are not available to cater for particular requests;
- xiv. what happens when the individuals request a change of their key worker;
- xv. equal opportunities and working against discrimination, violence and bullying;
- xvi. any applicable charges incurred for using the service and the services covered by these charges;
- xvii. transport service availability and applicable fees;
- xviii. rights and responsibilities
- xix. rules and consequences should these be violated;
- xx. issues that require the consent of the individuals or their representatives;
- xxi. the conditions under which control over challenging behaviour can be exerted and how action is taken;
- xxii. declaration that the service abides with pertinent laws and regulations;
- xxiii. issues related with safe handling of medicine and medication

Policies and Procedures as established in Annex IV, which include:

- xxiv. the procedure related to data protection and confidentiality especially when it comes to collecting, safekeeping and disseminating personal information pertaining to the individuals;

- xxv. the procedure that enables the individuals and others to submit complaints and feedback;
- xxvi. the procedure on assigning rooms which also includes how one's wishes about room sharing are listened to and taken into account;
- xxvii. the procedure to be followed during an emergency situation.

Annex II: Service Agreement

The below is a non-exhaustive list of important information that can be found in the individuals' service agreement which largely depends on the type of service being delivered.

The agreement shall include:

- i. the signatures of everyone involved (including the individuals');
- ii. the date when the agreement was made;
- iii. the date the service starts being provided;
- iv. the duration of service delivery, if possible to indicate;
- v. clear information about whether there are financial charges associated with the service, the nature of these charges and to whom they are payable;
- vi. the name and profession of the service provider, the location from where the service is being provided and the frequency with which the service is provided;
- vii. consent by the individuals, or their representatives, for the sharing of information about them, in line with Data Protection Regulation;
- viii. consent by the individuals, or their representatives, for participating in organised activities and events unless otherwise required by legal conditions;
- ix. information about any health condition and/or nutritional requirements of both the individuals and children (if present) that might affect service provision;
- x. information about how to change any detail in the service agreement or how to terminate it;
- xi. information about the development of a personal support plan for the individuals as well as case reviews.

Annex III: The Personal Support Plan

The below is a non-exhaustive list of important information that can be found in the individuals' personal support plan.

The plan shall include:

- i. a holistic assessment of needs and interventions required such as those related to:
 - iii.i social work;
 - iii.ii individual and family counselling;
 - iii.iii peer support;
 - iii.iv risk profiling;
 - iii.v access to external services
 - iii.vi healthcare and medical assistance
 - iii.vii financial and legal assistance
 - iii.viii childcare and parental services
 - iii.ix job prospects and how these can be improved (if necessary);
 - iii.x housing including opportunity for supported accommodation.
- ii. personal dietary preferences and special requirements including allergies where applicable;
- iii. preferences with regards to hobbies and social, cultural, spiritual and leisure activities;
- iv. specific communication arrangements that are necessary to provide individuals with effective support;

- v. contact details of persons to be involved in case reviews (including professionals and relatives) including details of a person whom the individuals trust and that can be contacted in case of need. This person is identified by the individuals or the independent representative and can also be the independent representative him/herself.

Annex IV: Manual of Policies and Procedures

The service provider shall develop comprehensive policies and procedures that cover all areas of service provision. The below is a non-exhaustive list of policies and procedures that should be included in the manual.

1.0 Operational policies and procedures

1.1 Confidentiality

1.2 Data Protection

1.2.1 Record keeping and access to records including:

1.2.1.1 Incident and accident reports;

1.2.1.2 Medical records;

1.2.1.3 Records of complaints

1.2.2 Consent of individuals

1.2.3 Retention of Personal Data and File Destruction

1.3 Admission and Termination

1.3.1 Voluntary and Involuntary Admissions

1.3.2 Re-admissions

1.3.3 Service Agreement

1.3.4 Voluntary and involuntary discharge

1.3.5 Aftercare services

1.4 Service Planning

1.4.1 Individuals with children

1.4.2 Adult siblings experiencing violence

1.4.3 Care for dependent persons

1.5 Personal Support Plan:

1.5.1 Review meetings

- 1.6 Intervention procedures
 - 1.6.1 Counselling
 - 1.6.2 Other support
- 1.7 Helpline/Chatline
 - 1.7.1 Availability of assistance in terms of hours per day
 - 1.7.2 Competence and training of staff attending to calls
 - 1.7.3 Technical measures
- 1.8 Behaviour management:
 - 1.8.1 Dealing with aggressive behaviour;
 - 1.8.2 Condemning and rectifying irregularities
- 1.9 Harassment policy:
 - 1.9.1 Sexual harassment
- 1.10 Allegations of discrimination
- 1.11 Abusive treatment in care
- 1.12 Allegations of bullying
- 1.13 Equality
 - 1.13.1 Aspects related to LGBTIQ
- 1.14 Relationships and sexual interactions
- 1.15 Complaints
- 1.16 Child Protection
- 1.17 Privacy of individuals and staff
- 1.18 Finances and money management
- 1.19 Consent forms
- 1.20 Transport:
 - 1.20.1 Service and maintenance of vehicles;
 - 1.20.2 Insurance and license;
 - 1.20.3 Conduct of drivers;

1.20.4 System of pick-ups and drop-offs of persons;

1.20.5 Support from the staff

1.21 Food and nutrition

1.22 Contributions and Donations

1.23 Lifestyle and Leisure

1.23.1 Free time

1.23.2 Social and cultural rights

1.23.3 Religion and beliefs

2.0 Staff

2.1 Code of Conduct and Ethical Performance towards individuals and other staff

2.2 Supervision

2.3 Recruitment

2.3.1 Employment contracts;

2.3.2 Job descriptions

2.4 Performance appraisals

2.5 Training and development

2.6 Staff meetings

2.7 Changing the key worker

2.8 Complaints by staff

2.9 Handover of work

2.10 Staff ratios

2.11 Volunteers

3.0 Health & Safety

3.1 Evaluation of service:

3.1.1 Self-evaluation;

- 3.1.2 Registration and inspection by the authority
- 3.2 Evaluation and management of risk
- 3.3 Environmental health
- 3.4 Health and safety
- 3.5 Injuries
 - 3.5.1 Self Harm
- 3.6 Medical procedures:
 - 3.6.1 Preparation of medicine;
 - 3.6.2 Safe administration;
 - 3.6.3 Safe storage;
 - 3.6.4 Safe disposal;
 - 3.6.5 Admissions to hospital;
 - 3.6.6 Contact with medical professionals.

4.0 Emergency Procedures

- 4.1 First Aid:
 - 4.1.1 Basic First Aid;
 - 4.1.2 Mental Health First Aid;
 - 4.1.3 Access to a defibrillator
- 4.2 Emergency management and evacuation
- 4.3 Fire safety
- 4.4 Medical emergency

5.0 Shelter Procedures

- 5.1 Room allocation
- 5.2 Adequate temperatures, lighting and ventilation in rooms

- 5.3 Common areas
- 5.4 Meeting Rooms
- 5.5 Housekeeping:
 - 5.5.1 Laundry
 - 5.5.2 Floor and Furniture Cleaning
- 5.6 Food preparation
 - 5.6.1 Use of kitchen
 - 5.6.2 Storage places
 - 5.6.3 Buying and disposing food
- 5.7 Personal belongings of individuals
- 5.8 Media and Communication
 - 5.8.1 Use of telephone
 - 5.8.2 Sending and receiving mail
 - 5.8.3 Social Media and use of internet
- 5.9 Entering and exiting the premises
- 5.10 Visitors
 - 5.10.1 Relatives and persons significant to individuals
 - 5.10.2 Professional workers and third parties
- 5.11 Maintenance of Property
 - 5.11.1 Voluntary and Involuntary damages to the property
 - 5.11.2 Maintenance of common areas
 - 5.11.3 Maintenance of play areas for children (if present)
 - 5.11.4 Maintenance of individual rooms
- 5.12 Certification and Maintenance of House Equipment and Installations
- 5.13 Regulation of noise and sound
- 5.14 Smoking and consumption of alcohol or other substances

Annex V: Useful Reference Material

- ✓ Access for All Design Guidelines 2011 (published by the then KNPD).
- ✓ Article 4 of the Residential Programs for Victims of Domestic Violence: Part 453 - Standards for Domestic Violence Shelters and Domestic Violence Programs. New York Codes, Rules and Regulations.
- ✓ Briefing Paper (No. 21-B 2011) on Interagency collaboration by Myfanwy McDonald and Kate Rosier from the Australian Institute of Family Studies.
- ✓ CHCCD412B Work within a community development framework published by the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012).
- ✓ Code of Practice for Specialist Family Violence Services for Women and Children: Enhancing the safety of women and children in Victoria (September 2006), published by Domestic Violence Victoria.
- ✓ Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services (2008). Gender Equality and Anti-Trafficking Division, Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs of the Council of Europe.
- ✓ Commonly used terms in cases involving domestic violence. District of Columbia Coalition Against Domestic Violence (DCCADV).
- ✓ Community Tool Box and frameworks for guiding, supporting and evaluating the work of community and system change. (Chapter 24, Section 7: Developing and Increasing Access to Health and Community Services). Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas, U.S.A.
- ✓ Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Istanbul, 11.V.2011.

- ✓ Crisis Intervention: An Opportunity to Change by Brenda A. Stevens and Lynette S. Ellerbrock (ERIC digest; EDO-CG-95-34).
- ✓ Data Protection Act, (Cap. 586) No. XX of 2018 of the Laws of Malta.
- ✓ Domestic violence and abuse Quality Standard (February 2016) published by Quality Standards Advisory Committee 1 at the Nice National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.
- ✓ Equality for Men and Women Act, (Cap.456) Act I of 2003, as amended by Legal Notice 427 of 2007; and Acts IV of 2009, IX of 2012, XVIII of 2014, and VII and XI of 2015 of the Laws of Malta.
- ✓ Food Safety Act, (Cap. 449) Act XIV of 2002, as amended by Legal Notice 426 of 2007; and Acts XXIX of 2007 and VI of 2011 of the Laws of Malta.
- ✓ Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act, (Cap. 581) Act XIII of 2018 as amended by Act XXIV of 2019 of the Laws of Malta.
- ✓ Human Services Quality Framework – Measuring quality, improving services (Version 4.0), Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, Government of Queensland.
- ✓ Mental Health Act (Cap. 525) Act XXII of 2012 as amended by Legal Notice 206 of 2017 of the Laws of Malta.
- ✓ Occupational Health and Safety Authority Act (Cap. 424) Act XXVII of 2000, as amended by Act XXXII of 2007; Legal Notice 426 of 2007; and Act X of 2013 and XXVII of 2019 of the Laws of Malta.
- ✓ Preferred Terminology - Replicating the UN multi-country study on men and violence: Understanding why some men use violence against women and how we can prevent it. Partners for Prevention: A UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV

Regional Joint Programme for Gender-Based Violence Prevention in Asia and the Pacific.

- ✓ Public Health Act (Cap. 465) Act XIII of 2003, as amended by Act III of 2004 and Legal Notice 427 of 2007 and Act X and XII of 2020 of the Laws of Malta.
- ✓ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).
- ✓ Shelter for Women and Girls at Risk of or Survivors of Violence (Shelter Module March 2013) by Tracy Gierman from the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses.
- ✓ Social Care Standards Authority Act (Cap. 582) Act XV of 2018 as amended by Act II of 2019 of the Laws of Malta.
- ✓ Supporting People's Empowerment & Engagement in Health and Care (2015) webinar by Dr Lourdes Ferrer, Director of Programmes at the International Foundation for Integrated Care based on a working paper developed with the Division of Health Systems and Public Health of the WHO Regional Office for Europe.
- ✓ Workplace (First Aid) Regulations, Legal Notice 11 of 2002 as amended by Legal Notice 348 of 2011 of the Laws of Malta.