



Victim Support Services Mapping - Portugal

Types of services and supports provided

Public Entities services

There are some public entities that provide some responses to victims. When it comes to **National Health System Response**, the Portuguese state seek to ensure an equal and appropriate access to health care, according to specific victim's needs. Furthermore, to prevent secondary victimization, the victim is only subjected to medical examination if these results could be extremely important and necessary to help the investigation of the crime. This medical exam should be done after the crime be reported and cannot be repeated. The victims with special protection needs may be assisted by health care services of their host structure area, as an alternative to health care services of their residence, and they are free from pay health care user fees.

The **National Commission of Victims Protection** is another public entity, who is responsible for receiving, analyzing and deciding the claims of compensation to be granted by the State, which are presented by victims of violent crimes or by victims of domestic violence. This commission is ruled by the Portuguese Ministry of Justice.

The **Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG)**, ruled by the council of ministers, who ensure the implementation of public policies on citizenship, promotion and defense of gender equality and the fight against domestic and gender violence, human traffic, among other forms of violence. CIG is responsible for the creation of the National Support Network for Victims of Domestic Violence, and for the National Trafficking Victims Support and Protection Network (RAPVT), created in 2013.

The **National Commission for the Promotion of Rights and the Protection of Children and Young People (CPCJ)** aims to contribute to the planning of State intervention and the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the initiatives taken by public entities and the community to promote the rights and protect children and young people, namely by the Local Commissions of Protection of Children and Young People.

At last, the **Police Special Departments for Victims of Domestic Violence** are responsible for domestic violence prevention, first line intervention, risk assessment, protection (e.g. tele-assistance), and criminal investigation.



NGOs Response services

There is many Non-Profit Organizations (NGOs) and Local Projects (joining public and nonpublic entities as partners) that provide support to victims in many intervention areas: legal support, psychological and social support, health care, etc.

Examples of good practice/models

1- CIG - Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality

The **Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG)**, ruled by the council of ministers, is responsible for the implementation of public policies and coordinating the National Plans, instruments that ensure the promotion and defense of gender equality and fight against gender violence, domestic violence and trafficking in human beings. CIG created a «**National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030 – Portugal + Equal**», which is composed by three action plans among 3 areas: - Action Plan to equality between women and men; - Action plan to prevention and combat against violence against women and domestic violence; and - Action plan to combat discrimination by sexual orientation, gender and expression identity and sexual characteristics.

CIG is also responsible for the National Plans to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence and Gender-based Violence and coordinate the **National Support Network for Victims of Domestic Violence**. In order to increase the local responses and support services to victims of domestic violence, CIG signed cooperation protocols with counties throughout the country, and with public entities (e.g. social security, security forces, health, education, etc.), and private organizations as NGO's, in order to promote the creation of new attendance structures and support services to victims of domestic violence. Thus, the victims can be assisted in support structures of their location/region. This partnership also includes the protocols established between CIG and organizations as "Institute of Housing and Urban Rehabilitation" and "National Association of Portuguese Counties", and the cooperation between them aims to empowered and give a better and more efficient answer to these victims when they need to find a new place to live, making available some houses with low rent that the victims can pay for.



Furthermore, CIG is responsible for the National Plans to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and coordinate **the National Trafficking Victims Support and Protection Network (RAPVT)**. From 2007 to 2017, CIG has been implemented three national plans of prevention and combat against Trafficking in Human Beings, cooperating with many public entities and civil society organizations. Currently, CIG is implementing the fourth National Plan of prevention and combat against Trafficking in Human Being 2018-2021. This national plan aims to increase the knowledge about the trafficking, ensure a better access of victims to their rights, and qualify the practitioner's intervention and promote combat against crime organized.

- **National Support Network for Victims of Domestic Violence**

The **National Support Network for Victims of Domestic Violence**, coordinated by CIG, is composed by **133 assistance structures**, with multidisciplinary teams, who give, by phone or in person legal information, psychological and social support, free of charge; **39 home shelters**, to women, up to a 6 months period, victims of domestic violence without kids, or with their minor kids or children with disabilities; and **26 emergency shelters**, to urgent reception of victims in the same conditions.

Among the new responses created, there is some structures dedicated to attend:

- LGBTI victims (3 assistance structures and 1 emergency shelter);
- Women victims of sexual violence (2 assistance structures);
- Men victims of sexual violence (1 assistance structures);
- Women with disabilities (1 home shelter);
- Men victims (1 home shelter);

As a public victim's support structure, CIG has a national helpline, free of charge, anonymous, confidential, and available 24/7, that aims to provide information to victims of domestic violence. The practitioners are trained to attend victims of domestic violence, to explain the information about their rights, resources, and services at national territory, and where victims can get psychological, legal, and social support. CIG also have victims support offices on Lisbon and Oporto, that provides free psychosocial and legal support. CIG have a transportation service for victims of domestic violence, that ensure a save road transportation of victims and their relatives (e.g. children) from home to home



shelters; it is also responsible for the transportation of victims of trafficking in human being to processual steps and to home shelters, when this service is required by the field teams who worked with victims at home shelters or by the multidisciplinary teams who give support, in a first place, to this kind of victims.

- **National Trafficking Victims Support and Protection Network (RAPVT)**

The National Trafficking Victims Support and Protection Network (RAPVT) was created in 2013 by CIG and seeks to improve the cooperation, the spread of information and communication between regional and local entities from whole country, and share strategies to identify situations and work with victims of trafficking more efficiently. The main goal is to promote an efficient protection and reintegration of victims into the society.

This network involves many private and public organizations, as NGO's and public entities such as CIG (Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality), the High Commission for Migration (ACM), the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Immigration and Borders Service (SEF), Portuguese Criminal Police (PJ), the Working Conditions Authority (ACT), the Directorate-General for Health (DGS), the Social Security Institute (I.P) and the Observatory on Trafficking in Human Beings (OTSH).

- **Local Network for Victims of Family Violence and Domestic Violence (IVN)**

In one of Porto's counties – Matosinhos – it was created a Local Network for Victims of Family Violence and Domestic Violence (IVN). This network emerges due to the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination (CIG), and its' aim is to prevent and improve the responses to family violence situations, making the intervention faster and more effective in these violent situations.

The IVN is made up of several organization such as: Matosinhos' city hall, CIG (Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality), the Public Prosecution's Office, security forces (PSP and GNR), health services (local health centers and a specialized psychiatric and mental health hospital), CPCJ (Nacional Commission for the Promotion of Rights and the Protection of Children and Young People), the Social Security Institute – Porto's District Centre, Portuguese Red Cross of Matosinhos, Plano i Association – API,



the Association for the Integrated Development of Matosinhos, the Employment Center, the *MatosinhosHabitat* – the County’s Housing Business, and other institutions that are integrated in the county’s Social Network, such as mayoralty councils, school groups and IPSS’s.

The creation of the IVN is the result from an intersectional cooperation work to develop an integrated model of action, in response to the problem of violence, which is identified by the social network partner entities as urgent.

This network allows us to harmonize and concentrate the efforts of the various in-field partners, while trying to find the most efficient response to fight and prevent the violence in family contexts issue in this county.

According to national 2017 data, 79% of domestic violence victims are females, which represents a large obstacle towards gender equality and women’s exercise of their citizenship. This data also emphasizes a large tendency to the normalization of violence in romantic relationships between young people, which is also an area where the IVN intervenes as a preventive measure.

Beyond this network, since 2017 the Matosinhos county in collaboration with APi - Plano i Association - have created a response structure directed towards the LGBTI community, which offers institutional support in domestic and family violence cases that emerge in this population.

2- APAV - Portuguese Association for Victim Support

The **APAV - Portuguese Association for Victim Support** - is a non-profit organization with statutory objective to inform, protect and support citizens who have been victims of crime and their relatives. This organization is assisted by volunteers, which supports victims of crime, in a personal, sensitive, and professional way, through the provision of free and confidential services.

That way, APAV aims to promote the protection and support available to victims of crime in particular those victims with fewer economic resources, to achieve this by means of information spread, personalized counseling and guidance, and all kinds of assistance moral, social, legal, psychological and economic; to liaise with all relevant entities and stakeholders the police, social security agencies, health centers, local authorities,



autonomous regions, and any other private or public bodies dealing with crime and victims of crime; and to foster and promote social solidarity, particularly through the creation of networks of volunteer collaborators and social sponsors, as well as through victim-offender mediation and other practices for restorative justice.

APAV supports victims by providing emotional support and specialized support that is free of charge and confidential. They offer psychological, legal, and social support, and this is provided by a group of Victim Support Officers adequately trained and prepared to provide quality support that meets the different needs of victims of crime.

APAV have a victim support helpline, and a national **Network of Victims Support Offices (GAV)**, present in many major cities around the country, and it counts with 18 Victims Support Offices all over the country. These are local offices that provide support services to victims of crime and their families in their communities.

APAV has **two home shelters** for women victims of domestic violence and their children, and **one CAP (Center of Reception and Protection) for female victims of THB**.

Furthermore, APAV created 3 Networks of Specialized Support, such:

- **RAFAVH - Support to Family and Friends of Victims of Homicide:** The experts listen the victims, or their families and friends, and give specialized support in order to overcome the impact of the crime in their lives;
- **CARE - Support to Children and Youngsters victims of Sexual Violence:** This network seek to promote emotional balance, information gathering, need assessment, clarification about rights, psychological and social support, follow-up on joint efforts of the judicial system (e.g. testimony for future memory), preparation of reports to support the victim, support in requesting compensation or support from families and/or school community;
- **UAVMD - Support Unit for Migrant and Discrimination Victims:** The Migrant Victim Support Unit is a specific support unit created by APAV and co-financed by the European Fund for the Integration of Third Countries. The goal of this unit is addressing the problems of a specific group, which is a preferred target group for various types of crimes due to its vulnerability and providing the lacking specialized support. The practitioners give support to foreign nationals (migrants, refugees, or others) that have been victims of crime, and are trained to support



victims of trafficking in human being, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, hate crimes and discrimination.

3- APF - Family Planning Association

The “**Family Planning Association**” (APF) is another NGO that was created under the mission of helping people to make free and conscious choices about their sexual and reproductive lives and to promote positive parenting. It thus intervenes in the field of sexual and reproductive rights and health (SSHR), combating sexual and gender violence and promote human rights, and also in the field of victims of trafficking in human beings (THB) and victims of female genital mutilation (FGM).

APF has been involved in the identification and assistance to victims of trafficking since 2008. Furthermore, this organization is responsible for managing the **EME Teams - Regional Specialized Multidisciplinary Teams for the Assistance of THB Victims**, and for the management of the **CAP - Center of Reception and Protection of Female Victims of Human Trafficking**. These services arose from the formal protocol between public entities such Social Security Institute (I.P), Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG), Minister of Internal Administration and Minister of Justice.

- **EME Teams - Regional Specialized Multidisciplinary Teams for the Assistance of THB Victims**

In 2012, APF created the **EME Teams - Regional Specialized Multidisciplinary Teams for the Assistance of THB Victims**, that provide specialized assistance to different types of THB victims.

The EME Teams are working according the IV National Plan to Prevent and Against Trafficking in Human Beings 2018-2021. As main goal they seek to promote security and life quality to victims and increasing their autonomy and empowerment.

There are 5 EME Teams across the country, that operate on regional level, and the practitioners work with victims through specialized intervention and in collaboration with many local actors and local entities to signalized, identify, and integrate victims of trafficking.



The practitioners also develop professional training about THB and public campaigns that seeking to raise awareness about the trafficking phenomenon, once this subject still an often-invisible reality in Portugal.

Furthermore, the EME Teams counts with a helpline to give support to potential victims of trafficking, that works 24h per day. The EME Teams project came to enhance the National Trafficking Victims Support and Protection Network (RAPVT), and aims to improve the cooperation and communication between local entities to protect victims of THB.

- **CAP - Center of Reception and Protection for female victims of THB**

The CAP - Center of Reception and Protection is a national response for female victims of THB and their children, that works 24 hours per day, every day. The CAP aims to provide a safe reception, emotional stabilization and future social (re)integration of victims of trafficking and their children.

The CAP is managed by a multidisciplinary team and seek to promote multi-interventions focused on victims and their cases, their needs, and urgencies.

The practitioners provide psychological, medical, social, and legal support, promote recreational activities, educational and vocational training, integration into labor market, and draw a personal plan of intervention for each victim.

4 - GAIV | VSIO – Victim’s Support and Information Office

The VSIO – Victim’s Support and Information Office (in Portuguese, GAIV - Gabinete de Atendimento e Informação à Vítima) was created in 2014 by the Oporto’s Comand of Public Security Forces (PSP), who identified the necessity of a **multidisciplinary approach regarding the responses to the cases of domestic violence**. It is a support structure who works exclusively with victims, whilst the PSP’s department of Criminal Investigation works with the aggressors.

This service works 24 hour per day, seven days a week; it is a service free of charge and it provides psychological, legal and social support to victims. The team is made up of **15 police agents that have specific and permanent training regarding domestic violence**.



The VSIO works as a network and it has partnerships with entities such as the CPCJ, the DIAP, the INMLCF - National Institute of Forensic Sciences and Legal Medicine, enhancing networking, with faster and more effective responses towards the victims. This support center arises as a good practice not only because of the work that has been developed with other entities, but also due to the results that were achieved until now.

In the last six years there was given 12,400 support services in person. Some victims will seek this kind of service more than once. The VSIO team follows all the cases, even after they are closed.

Oporto's VSIO is the only one in the whole country and due to the fact that this is a **model of good practice** and due to the high number of victim's cases, the **PSP is already spreading the VSIO model to other counties** in the Oporto district, such as the Maia, Matosinhos and Vila Nova de Gaia's counties.

5 – Saúde em Português

Saúde em Português is a NGO, with international headquarters in Coimbra, Portugal, that develop numerous different actions aimed at different target groups, including victims of human trafficking. This organization is composed by a multidisciplinary team, considering their various fields of action, and seek to promote social and community integration aiming at the full development of the human person, respecting, and ensuring their rights and fundamental freedoms.

This organization is responsible for projects that seek to raise awareness on THB, for the training of strategic targets in areas like Gender Equality, Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking, and for the managing of CAP - Center of Reception and Protection for male victims of THB.

- **CAP - Center of Reception and Protection for male victims of THB**

The CAP - Center of Reception and Protection is a national response for male victims of THB, that can host up to 12 people, and it works 24 hours per day, every day. This CAP aims to provide to men and young men better life conditions, and enhance the feeling of trust, security, and stability, providing the appropriate care for their needs.



The CAP is managed by a multidisciplinary team that seek to promote a safe temporary host to male victims, and promote their physical and psychological health and well-being, and social integration, as well provide medical, social, psychological and legal support, educational and vocational training, and integration into labor market.

This service establishes formal protocols of collaboration with public entities such The Institute of Employment and Professional Training (IEFP) and the Coimbra Hospital and University Centre (CHUC).

6 – AKTO – Human Rights and Democracy

AKTO – Human Rights and Democracy – is a NGDO (Non-Profit Association and Non-Governmental Organization for Development), with headquarters in Coimbra, Portugal, that promotes Gender Equality and fight against Human Trafficking through the development of actions and project aimed at children, youth and adults.

- **CAP - Center of Reception and Protection for children and young people victims of THB**

This CAP – Center of Reception and Protection is a national response for children and young people victims of THB, that can host up to 7 children and/or young people, and it works 24 hours per day, every day. This CAP aims to provide physical and psychological health care, social and emotional support, and to promote the protection, well-being, the physical, social and emotional development and quality of life of children victims of THB, with specialized responses, and ensure that the responses come in time, according to the children’s specific needs.