



GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB
SOCIAL WELFARE & BAIT-UL-MAAL DEPARTMENT
12-M MODEL TOWN, EXT. LAHORE.
PH: 042-99232184

Dated Lahore, the 03rd July, 2025

ORDER

NO. SO(Inst.)1-12/2024: To align and Standardize the existing SOPs/Guidelines of Shelter Homes and Women Protection Centers in Punjab and to make them more comprehensive to better serve the victim of any form of violence, the "Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Shelter Home in Punjab" are hereby notified.

(JAVED AKHTAR MAHMOOD)
SECRETARY
Social Welfare & Bait-ul-Maal Department

NO.& DATED EVEN:

A copy is forwarded for information and necessary action to:-

1. The Director General, Social Welfare & Bait-ul-Maal, Punjab.
2. The Director General, Punjab Women Protection Authority.
3. The Additional Secretary, SW&BM, Department.
4. The Directors (Admn), (P&E), (Programs) and (CRPD), Directorate General, SW&BM, Punjab.
5. The Deputy Secretaries (Admn) and (Technical), SW&BM, Department.
6. All the Divisional Directors, SW&BM, Punjab.
7. All the Incharges of Shelter Homes, Punjab.
8. All the Incharges of Women Protection Centers in Punjab.
9. PS to Secretary, SW & BM Department.
10. Master file/personal file.


(QALBI MUNIR) 03/07/25
SECTION OFFICER (INST.)

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

FOR

THE SHELTER HOMES IN PUNJAB

(Shelter Homes for Women in Distress)



Social Welfare & Bait-ul-Maal

Department Government of the Punjab

Pakistan

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PREFACE

Women represent over half of Pakistan's population, yet many continue to face entrenched systemic barriers that limit their access to education, healthcare, economic participation, and protection from violence. In Punjab, challenges such as gender-based violence, poverty, illiteracy, inadequate healthcare, and the denial of basic human rights remain especially acute for women and girls in vulnerable communities.

Recognizing the critical need to address these disparities, the Government of Punjab remains firmly committed to promoting gender equity and creating an enabling environment where women and girls can fully realize their social, economic, legal, and political potential. The government continues to develop and implement gender-responsive policies, targeted programs, and strategic initiatives aimed at inclusive and sustainable development across the province.

A flagship effort in this regard is the establishment of Women Shelter Homes (Dar-ul-Aman) across all districts of Punjab under the mandate of the Social Welfare & Bait-ul-Maal Department (SWD). These Shelter Homes serve as safe, rights-based spaces for women and girls facing violence, exploitation, or abuse, offering protection, psychosocial support, legal aid, and reintegration pathways.

To ensure these facilities operate effectively and safeguard the dignity and rights of residents, comprehensive Shelter Home Guidelines were initially developed in 2007 with technical support from the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ). These guidelines were the result of extensive consultation with stakeholders, including key government departments, legal experts, and civil society organizations such as Aurat Foundation, Shirkat Gah, Dastak, and Médecins du Monde (Mdm).

In 2015, the guidelines were revised to reflect new insights, global best practices, and lessons learned through monitoring and evaluation conducted in partnership with Mdm. Since 2015, SWD has implemented significant reforms to improve institutional capacity, accountability, and quality of care in Shelter Homes. A major milestone has been the in-house deployment of specialized professionals, notably Women Medical Officers (WMOs) and psychologists, to provide residents with continuous access to medical and mental health services. This integration has fostered a more trauma-

informed, holistic approach to care, enhancing rehabilitation outcomes for women in crisis.

In response to evolving needs and emerging global standards in social protection and gender justice, SWD has recently undertaken a further revision of the Shelter Home guidelines in consultation with Punjab Women Protection Authority, UNFPA, Rozan, Dastak Charitable trust and a key contribution of departmental review team. The updated guidelines reflect a stronger emphasis on human rights, survivor-centered service delivery, transparency, and inter-agency coordination. They also aim to embed principles of gender sensitivity, inclusive access, and sustainability into day-to-day Shelter Home operations.

Through these ongoing efforts, the Government of Punjab reaffirms its dedication to transforming Shelter Homes into resilient support systems and advancing the broader vision of gender equality, dignity, and empowerment for all women and girls in the province.

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 **“Resident”** shall mean a woman and/or her minor child admitted to the Shelter Home.
- 1.2 **“Incharge”** shall mean the Assistant Director of the Shelter Home(s) entrusted with the day to day affairs of the Shelter Home(s).
- 1.3 **“Court”** shall mean any court of competent jurisdiction within the territorial limits of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
- 1.4 **“Rules and procedures”** shall mean any rules and/or procedures framed by the Social Welfare Department, Government of the Punjab, under these Standard Operating Procedures.
- 1.5 **“Crises Cases”** shall mean women who arrive with i) injuries and require medical attention, ii) rape survivors who need to be reported and sent for medico-legal examination (if not referred by court), or iii) traumatized women who need immediate Psychosocial support. In cases involving a life threat (self-referred case), the area police must be informed immediately.
- 1.6 **“Informed consent”** shall mean that women coming to the Shelter Homes are provided complete information regarding available services (e.g. medical care, psychological support, legal aid, their rights and other institutional services etc.) enable them to give their approval freely without coercion.
- 1.7 **“Residential area”** shall mean the part of the building reserved for the residents of the Shelter Home. It shall include the resident’s bedrooms, the washrooms, a kitchen, a service room, a classroom and a leisure room.
- 1.8 **“Administrative area”** shall mean the part of the building that is reserved for the Shelter Home management and visitors.
- 1.9 **“Public area”** shall mean any space (indoor or outdoor) within the boundary walls of the Shelter Home, excluding the residential and administrative areas.

2. PRINCIPLES

These are the underlying objectives to be achieved in the pursuit of protecting and empowering the women residing in Shelter Homes.

- 2.1 The protection and well-being of the residents shall be the first and foremost priority.
- 2.2 These standard Operating Procedures shall ensure the protection of the rights and the dignity of the residents.
- 2.3 All the residents shall be treated with due respect for their inherent dignity and value as human beings. This respect should be reflected in the attitude and conduct of the Shelter Home staff during interaction with residents.

- 2.4 Beneficence (doing good) and non-maleficence (avoiding harm) shall be the essential purpose of working with the residents.
- 2.5 The residents shall be given opportunities to participate in all decisions pertaining to their lives and well-being.
- 2.6 Every Decisions shall be made after obtaining a written an informed consent from the residents.
- 2.7 Records and identities of the residents shall be kept confidential to ensure their privacy, respect and dignity.
- 2.8 Residents shall not be used for publicity purposes, even for the image building of the Shelter Homes.
- 2.9 Crisis cases shall be addressed on a priority basis without any undue delay.
- 2.10 In cases of conflict of interest, priority shall be given to the protection and the well-being of the residents.
- 2.11 There shall be no discrimination on the basis of class, caste, religion, profession or any other status of the residents.
- 2.12 Periodic evaluations shall be incorporated in the management system of the Shelter Homes to maintain the quality of services for the residents.

3. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs) FOR THE SHELTER HOME STAFF

Apart from ensuring smooth functioning of the Shelter Homes, these Standard Operating Procedures have been formulated to guarantee the protection of the residents from possible mistreatment by service providers, the Shelter Homes Incharge, staff and/or any threat from the abusers and/or their accomplices. The Shelter Homes Incharge shall ensure provision of the following services (described in the fifth section of these SOPs) to residents either directly (as per provision of PC-1) or through referrals.

- 3.1 There shall be no discrimination on the basis of class, caste, religion, profession or any other status of the residents.
- 3.2 Periodic appraisals shall be incorporated into the management system of the Shelter Homes to maintain the quality of services for the residents or through referrals:
 - a) Psychological services
 - b) Medical services
 - c) Legal aid
 - d) Socio-educative, religious and vocational services etc.

- 3.3 Each Shelter Homes Incharge shall formulate a safety plan and provide its staff with appropriate training to deal with the residents, ensuring the security of staff, management, service providers (referral services) and residents. The Shelter Homes Incharge shall be responsible for arranging
- a) Security through Police guards or watchmen hired by SWD
 - b) Staff training (as per needs of the staff, including the Incharge)
 - c) Support services (professional, technical or logistic)
- 3.4 The Social Welfare Department, Government of the Punjab shall ensure that the Incharge shall not hold any other additional charge or responsibility.
- 3.5 The Social Welfare Department, Government of the Punjab, shall ensure the security of the staff and the residents of the Shelter Homes through close coordination with District governments.
- 3.6 Any progress pertaining to the legal cases must be shared with the concerned resident and/or with those authorized by the resident in this regard.
- 3.7 All Shelter Homes staff shall respect the Rules, responsibilities, and regulations as described in the annex (A.3).
- 3.8 The Social Welfare Department, Government of the Punjab shall ensure training of the Shelter Home staff through regular training sessions to support continuous improvement in service quality. The Shelter Homes staff shall also be encouraged to identify their training needs through periodic appraisals.
- 3.9 Each Shelter Home's Incharge shall ensure that the staff members actively participate in training sessions, preferably on the following topics:
- a) Sensitization topics: domestic violence, gender issues, legal literacy, family laws, psychological distress, Trauma informed care etc.
 - b) Technical skills: team management, financial and administrative management, educational and vocational skills.
- 3.10 The training sessions shall be conducted by, certified private or public institutes. During and after these sessions, the progress of the Shelter Homes staff shall be assessed based

on a clearly defined assessment criteria, provided in advance to the Incharge.

- 3.11 Specific training sessions on the implementation of these guidelines shall be organized for the Incharges of all Shelter Homes of Punjab. The Incharge shall share the information, provided during these training sessions, with other Shelter Home staff members.

4. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH THE RESIDENTS

- 4.1 Consent of the resident shall be considered informed only when:
- a) All relevant information is conveyed to the resident.
 - b) All possible advantages and disadvantages of a decision are discussed with the resident.
 - c) It is given without any stress, pressure, or coercion.
 - d) The resident is in a safe and comfortable setting.
 - e) It is obtained by an individual from the Shelter Homes whom the resident is comfortable with.
 - f) Consent shall be taken in writing.
 - g) Verbal consent shall only be considered sufficient in situations where no legal requirement or documentation is necessary to provide a specific service.
- 4.2 The Confidentiality of the residents must be maintained. Names, addresses, or any other identifying information about the residents or the families shall not be disclosed within the Shelter Home, to other institutions, or to the media.
- 4.3 Any decision regarding the sharing of a resident's information shall be made only after consulting the resident.
- 4.4 Residents shall not be used to advance the interests of the Shelter Home or any service provider. Such use will be deemed exploitative and shall render the offender liable to legal actions.
- 4.5 Confidentiality must also be ensured through strict control of resident records. Records shall be accessible only to the concerned staff of the Shelter Homes and those who have been authorized by the residents in this regard.
- 4.6 Residents shall have free and easy access to their records and files.
- 4.7 Only individuals with relevant expertise shall address the needs of the residents.
- 4.8 Residents shall be provided full information related to their case (legal, medical, psychological etc). No information shall be withheld.
- 4.9 Decisions of the residents shall not be influenced in any way.

- 4.10 All the residents and their families shall be informed about these Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) as a right, using an audio recording or by reading them out.
- 4.11 In case of adult residents, their consent shall be considered final.
- 4.12 For child resident, decision in the best interest of child shall be made by the Shelter Home. Where there is disagreement over the best interest, decisions must be made using clearly defined steps and in consultation with service providers and the Advisory Committee, while following the Guidelines for the Protection of Dignity and Rights of Survivors of Violence.
- 4.13 Residents shall be provided a private, secure, and comfortable environment to discuss their situations and explore the possible course of action.
- 4.14 Room allocation shall be made after categorizing residents into groups: single residents and residents with children.

5. THE RESIDENTS' RIGHTS

- 5.1 All residents shall have equal access to all Shelter Home facilities, including medical checkups, food, bedding, clothing, awareness sessions, vocational training, psychological and legal support, and other services offered.
- 5.2 Cases referred by the Court shall be handled with utmost caution and permission to leave the premises shall be granted in case of emergency. The Incharge shall ensure proper security for such residents.
- 5.3 Every resident shall enjoy freedom of choice regarding matters concerning their person. However, for court-referred residents, the Incharge may restrict movement as necessary. Every resident shall enjoy freedom of choice and decision regarding anything that concerns the resident's person. However, in cases where the residents have been referred by the Court, the Shelter Homes Incharge shall be allowed to curtail the freedom of movement of the said resident.
- 5.4 Residents shall be entitled to receive visitors under strict security measures and with their consent. All visitors must sign the visitors' register and undergo identity and security checks. Written consent (on a prescribed form) must be obtained from residents for each visit, except in court-mandated cases. The residents shall have access to telephone facilities. However, personal mobile phones shall not be allowed. Facilities to send and receive mail via post or courier shall be provided. Privacy of all communication must be

respected.

- 5.5 Residents may make complaints, suggestions, or requests about personal or communal matters. These should be submitted verbally or in-writing.
- 5.6 The Incharge shall ensure all reasonable requests are considered and accommodated, based on available resources and capacity. Responses shall be prompt, empathetic, fair, and transparent.
- 5.7 All written communications under this section shall be addressed to the Shelter Home Incharge.
- 5.8 If a complaint is made against the Incharge, it shall be addressed to the Director General, Social Welfare Department, Government of the Punjab, who shall ensure proper investigation and necessary action. Residents shall have free access, during office hours, to any personal record held by the Shelter Home, including electronic records. Copies shall be provided upon request.
- 5.9 Any resident who may be required to be present before the Police for the purpose of any investigation, court appearance or in connection with any other judicial proceeding shall be given in to the custody of the Police subject to receipt of a notice and/or warrant in writing expressly requiring the presence of such resident provided the relevant police party consists of at least one female police officers.
- 5.10 The Incharge shall ensure that all local emergency phone numbers including but not limited to police, fire brigade, medical, rescue are displayed in communal areas within the Shelter Home.

6. PROTECTION GUIDELINES (see Annex-A.2)

7. SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS

The following are the specific services to be provided to residents by the Shelter Homes. In certain cases, these services may be delivered through a referral system. All services, programs, and activities provided to residents within Shelter Homes shall be offered free of cost, ensuring equal access to opportunities for personal development, rehabilitation, and empowerment.

7.1 CASE WORK

- 7.1.1 The In-Charge (IC) of the Shelter Home is responsible not only for administrative and

managerial functions but also for designing and implementing individualized rehabilitation plans for each resident. These plans may include counseling, vocational training, job placement, educational opportunities, or, where appropriate, support for marriage or family reintegration.

- 7.1.2 A key aspect of this process is comprehensive case work, which enables a detailed understanding of each resident's background, needs, recovery trajectory, and future goals. Effective case work promotes both psychosocial well-being and successful rehabilitation, aligning with the core mission of the Shelter Home as a secure, empowering, and transformative space. Conversely, lack of structured case work can compromise service delivery and hinder residents' reintegration into society.
- 7.1.3 Case work must begin upon admission and be maintained consistently throughout the resident's stay. All progress, interventions, and outcomes related to each case should be documented and included in the monthly reports submitted to relevant authorities, ensuring transparency, accountability, and continuity of care.
- 7.1.4 Conduct initial interviews and assessments at the time of admission to understand each resident's background, needs, and vulnerabilities. Identify cases requiring immediate psycho-social, medical, legal, or protection-related interventions.
- 7.1.5 Develop personalized rehabilitation plans in collaboration with the resident, the psychologist, and other service providers.
- 7.1.6 Establish short- and long-term goals related to health, safety, education, livelihood, and social reintegration. Foster trusting relationships to ensure residents feel heard, supported, and empowered.
- 7.1.7 Coordinate with external stakeholders such as legal aid organizations, vocational training institutes, healthcare facilities, and other government departments.
- 7.1.8 Ensure prompt referrals for any services not available within the Shelter Home.
- 7.1.9 Maintain accurate and confidential case files for each resident. Monitor the progress of each case and document interventions, milestones, and challenges.
- 7.1.10 Support residents in transitioning out of the Shelter Home, whether through job placement, further education, or independent living arrangements. Respond swiftly to emergencies or incidents involving residents, and coordinate immediate support as needed.
- 7.1.11 Ensure that protection protocols are followed in cases of abuse, threats, or health related emergencies.
- 7.1.12 Collaborate closely with Shelter Home staff, including the IC, psychologist, security

personnel, and vocational trainers, to ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to care.

7.2 MEDICAL CARE

- 7.2.1 The appointment of full-time Women Medical Officers (WMOs) at each Shelter Home by the Social Welfare Department marks a significant advancement in resident healthcare. A medical examination of each resident shall be conducted at the time of admission. The SOPs mandate a comprehensive medical assessment of resident covering physical, reproductive, and observable mental health concerns.
- 7.2.2 The WMO shall ensure that a comprehensive medical profile is completed for each resident at the time of admission or within 24 hours, using the department-specified performa. Daily check-ups and follow-up consultations shall be carried out based on the individual medical needs of each resident, as assessed by the WMO.
- 7.2.3 The WMO shall conduct follow-up consultations at least three times per week and ensure that all relevant documentation is properly maintained.
- 7.2.4 The WMO shall organize health awareness sessions for both residents and staff at least twice a week on topics such as general and personal hygiene, EPI vaccination, skin conditions including scabies, diarrheal diseases, tuberculosis, dengue fever, heatstroke, pregnancy, ANC/PNC, contraceptive methods, management of hypertension, diabetes, basic first aid, and response to medical emergencies.
- 7.2.5 In cases where the WMO post is vacant, Shelter Home staff shall maintain regular contact with volunteer doctors (preferably female) or engage part-time doctors, including gynecologists, from the nearest government hospital or a registered private clinic to ensure medical profiling of residents on the specified performa.
- 7.2.6 Where the WMO post is vacant, the Shelter Home Incharge shall arrange visits by a lady doctor atleast twice a week and maintain consistent liaison with her to ensure the follow-ups. Additionally, health awareness sessions mentioned in section 7.2.3 shall be organized for both residents and staff at least once a week.
- 7.2.7 The Shelter Home Incharge shall maintain liaison with the nearest government hospital, where residents may be referred in case of an emergency.
- 7.2.8 A medical record for each resident shall be maintained by the Shelter Homes. It shall be handed over to the resident at the time of discharge, while one copy shall be retained in the Shelter Homes' records.
- 7.2.9 The doctor and the Shelter Homes Incharge shall be responsible for ensuring the

- 7.2.10 A pharmacy stocked with basic medicines shall always be available for use by the WMO or any visiting doctor at the Shelter Homes.
- 7.2.11 The Shelter Homes Incharge shall coordinate with the Health Department to ensure timely vaccinations.
- 7.2.12 In case of a pregnant resident, the Shelter Homes Incharge shall ensure pre and post natal care from a reputable Government or Non-Government Hospital. If a child is born to a resident during her stay at the Shelter Home, this information shall not be recorded on the child's birth certificate.
- 7.2.13 In the event of childbirth, the Shelter Homes Incharge shall make adequate arrangements for delivery in a nearby government or non-government hospital.

7.3 PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

- 7.3.1 The psychologist must ensure that all residents undergo a preliminary psychological assessment during their initial consultation, following the obtainment of informed consent.
- 7.3.2 This assessment should include, but is not limited to, the following components: basic demographic information, presenting concerns, developmental and family history, mental health history, mental status examination, social and functional assessment, trauma and safety screening, identification of self-harm or other high-risk behaviors, and initial clinical impressions with recommendations for further psychometric evaluation or therapeutic interventions, if necessary.
- 7.3.3 The evaluation must be conducted by the departmental psychologist within 24 hours of admission followed by the case work (performed by the Incharge), or no later than 48 hours, to determine the resident's mental health status and immediate psychosocial needs.
- 7.3.4 The psychologist shall conduct follow-up consultations based on the findings of the initial assessment and the individual needs of each resident. The frequency and focus of these sessions shall be determined by the resident's psychological status, treatment goals, and ongoing progress, ensuring continuity of care and timely interventions. The follow-up sessions shall be documented on the prescribed performa.
- 7.3.5 Group counselling sessions shall be held at least twice a week, and appropriate documentation shall be maintained. Participation in group sessions will be voluntary and requires informed consent. Session topics may include, but are not limited to: emotional regulation, trauma informed care, stress and anxiety management, self-esteem building, interpersonal relationships, communication skills, conflict resolution,

and resilience development.

- 7.3.6 If the post of psychologist is vacant, the Shelter Home Incharge shall ensure that a qualified volunteer psychologist visits the shelter at least twice a week to conduct initial psychological assessments and follow-up consultations as needed. Additionally, group counselling sessions shall be held weekly, covering the topics outlined in Section 7.3.5. Proper documentation of all sessions must be maintained in accordance with departmental formats.
- 7.3.7 The Shelter Homes Incharge shall coordinate with NGOs, the Special Education Department, Home department or the District Headquarters Hospital to arrange the services of a volunteer psychologist.
- 7.3.8 In cases of psychiatric issues or disorders, the psychologist may refer residents to a psychiatric hospital (written referral approved by the IC) within the first week of admission. The Shelter Homes Incharge shall maintain liaison with the psychiatric department of the nearest government hospital.

7.4 LEGAL AID

- 7.4.1 Every resident who expresses the need for legal support and provides informed consent shall be offered appropriate legal advice and assistance. The Shelter Home Incharge shall facilitate this process in a timely and respectful manner.
- 7.4.2 Residents shall receive comprehensive information about all legal courses of action relevant to their case. This includes a clear explanation of the potential consequences, risks, and benefits of each option, enabling them to make informed decisions regarding legal recourse.
- 7.4.3 The Shelter Home Incharge shall maintain active coordination with the District Women Protection Officer to ensure seamless access to legal resources. A designated Law Officer from the Women Protection Centre shall visit the Shelter Home at least twice a week to provide legal sessions and one-on-one legal assistance to residents.
- 7.4.4 The volunteer lawyer or the notified pool of lawyers working with the Shelter Home shall maintain regular liaison with Bar Councils, judicial officers, relevant NGOs, and civil society organizations. This collaboration aims to leverage broader legal support networks for the benefit of residents seeking justice or legal remedies.
- 7.4.5 The Shelter Home Incharge shall ensure that the volunteer lawyer is well-acquainted with, and strictly adheres to, the Terms of Reference (ToRs) established and notified by the Social Welfare Department for the pool of volunteer lawyers providing services in shelter facilities.

- 7.4.6 The volunteer lawyer shall provide residents with regular, clear, and timely updates on the status of their legal cases pending before the courts, including guidance on next steps and any required documentation or court appearances.
- 7.4.7 The Shelter Home Incharge shall ensure that volunteer lawyers conduct monthly legal awareness sessions for residents. These sessions shall focus on women's and children's legal rights, especially under Pakistani and Punjab-specific pro-women laws, such as the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, the Domestic Violence Act, and other relevant statutes.

7.5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC REHABILITATION

- 7.5.1 The Shelter Home Incharge shall make necessary arrangements to conduct regular vocational training sessions within the premises either through departmental vocational instructor or referral partners. These trainings shall aim to equip residents with practical skills that support self-reliance and long-term rehabilitation. Training areas may include stitching, embroidery, cooking, handicrafts, and other income-generating activities.
- 7.5.2 The Vocational Instructor shall maintain daily attendance records for vocational training classes and conduct weekly group sessions women on skill development and livelihood-related topics.
- 7.5.3 The Shelter Home Incharge shall liaise with Sanatzar (Government-run vocational training centers) and other recognized vocational institutes to arrange short- and long-term skills development programs for residents. In this regard, external instructors may be invited to conduct sessions on-site.
- 7.5.4 All residents shall be given equal opportunities to attend these learning sessions, and vocational training programs. Special efforts shall be made to tailor these opportunities based on the age, interests, and educational background of each resident. Basic literacy and numeracy programs shall also be offered for those without formal education.
- 7.5.5 In coordination with the Sanatzar Manager, the Incharge shall arrange short-term skills courses such as candle making, jewelry design, stitching, art and craft, and home décor. Women who complete the training successfully shall be registered as skilled workers, and efforts will be made to provide them with home-based work or orders to enhance their financial independence. The Sanatzar Manager shall facilitate connections with markets or buyers to help residents monetize their skills.
- 7.5.6 Women who have completed vocational training shall be registered as workers by the Manager Sanatzar and engaged in income-generating activities. This initiative aims to promote their financial independence and empower them to contribute productively to

society. Opportunities for skill enhancement and market linkage support may also be facilitated to strengthen their economic sustainability. Women shall be provided with information on income generating activities and available jobs.

- 7.5.7 Residents shall be provided with information about vocational training institutes to help them acquire skills that support their self-reliance and employability after leaving the Shelter Home. Additionally, guidance and support may be offered to facilitate their enrollment in such programs.
- 7.5.8 The Shelter Homes Incharge shall ensure adequate opportunities for the display and sale of products made by the residents.
- 7.5.9 The money collected from the selling of the products made by the residents will be given to them.

7.6 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 7.6.1 The In-Charge shall ensure that daily religious classes are conducted by the designated Religious Instructor (where the position is filled), or alternatively, through referral partners.
- 7.6.2 The Religious Instructor shall maintain daily attendance records for religious classes and conduct weekly group sessions with children and women on various religious topics. However, all residents shall be allowed to practice their faith freely and without restriction.

7.7 EDUCATIVE SESSIONS FOR CHILDREN

- 7.7.1 Every child residing with his or her mother in the Shelter Home shall be provided with age-appropriate educational opportunities and encouraged to participate in group learning activities. Educated women among the residents shall also be encouraged to support the learning process by teaching other women and children.

7.8 RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 7.8.1 Recreational activities inside the Shelter Homes shall be organized for the residents on a regular basis. Special occasions such as Eid, Christmas, Ashura, etc., shall be observed and celebrated. Incharge shall maintain proper record of such activities.

8. OTHER SERVICES/FACILITIES

- 8.1 All communal areas at the Shelter Homes shall be freely accessible to all the residents at all times without any restriction, unless necessitated by repair or maintenance work. The residents shall be offered the possibility to visit public areas at least twice a week.
- 8.2 The Incharge shall ensure that a strict hygiene routine is followed by all the residents in respect of all communal areas. To enable compliance with this sub-rule, clearly marked

waste disposal receptacles shall be provided and cleared and/or cleaned at least once every day.

- 8.3 The Incharge shall ensure that leisure rooms are equipped with at least one *television*, maintained in good working order, books, newspapers, board or card games for free use by the residents.
- 8.4 All rooms shall have hygienic conditions. They shall be well-ventilated and regularly cleaned.
- 8.5 The residents shall be provided with meals at least three times a day according to pre-specified schedules. Meals must consist of 2250K cal per person, which shall be provided through a balanced diet consisting of meat or vegetables or lentils and fruit.
- 8.6 Any resident and/or child of a resident shall be provided with clothing items if the resident and/or child does not own appropriate clothing. Clothing, for the purposes of this sub-rule, means shalwar kameez, dupatta, shoes, socks, undergarments, slippers, and appropriate items for the winter season, i.e., shawl, sweater, etc.
- 8.7 Provision for drinking water at appropriate temperature shall be made at all meal times.
- 8.8 The Incharge shall also ensure safe storage for cash and/or jewelry belonging to a resident. Such items shall be stored with a receipt of items or cash. Personal belongings kept in the Shelter Home's safe shall be returned to the resident upon departure from the Shelter Homes, after signing the receipt.
- 8.9 The Shelter Home Incharge shall subscribe to selected newspapers, magazines, and educational or inspirational books for the common reading area. These materials should be age-appropriate, culturally sensitive, and aligned with the interests of residents to encourage reading and general awareness.
- 8.10 The Incharge shall maintain appropriate transportation, which shall be reserved for use by the residents and the staff of Shelter Homes only for official purposes.
- 8.11 If a resident needs to go outside the premises of the Shelter Homes for medical care or is required to be present by a law enforcement agency or a court, they shall be provided with transport maintained for this purpose. The Incharge shall ensure proper security arrangements. If considered appropriate by the Shelter Home's Incharge, a resident shall be accompanied by a woman constable, who shall be asked to escort the resident under a formal request by the Shelter Home Incharge. The Incharge shall maintain a first aid facility for the residents and shall ensure regular training sessions for the residents and the staff of the Shelter Homes on the use of this facility.
- 8.12 The Incharge shall ensure the installation and maintenance of fire extinguishers, as well

as training by Rescue 1122 for the Shelter Homes staff on the use of these extinguishers.

9. SECURITY

- 9.1 The Shelter Home Incharge shall maintain regular communication and coordination with the Station House Officer (SHO) of the nearest police station. This collaboration is essential to ensure a prompt police response in case of emergencies and to enhance overall safety measures for both residents and staff.
- 9.2 The Social Welfare Department, Government of the Punjab, shall ensure the deployment of trained security personnel equipped with licensed arms. These guards shall provide round-the-clock protection to all Shelter Home residents, staff, and premises. Security personnel must also undergo periodic training in gender-sensitive protocols, emergency response, and the appropriate handling of vulnerable populations.
- 9.3 The Shelter Home Incharge shall ensure the 24/7 presence of female police constables within the premises. These constables will assist residents in matters requiring police intervention and shall serve as a protective and approachable security presence for women and children in the Shelter Home.
- 9.4 No male staff member shall enter resident-designated areas unless accompanied by a female officer or staff member, and only with prior permission from the Shelter Home Incharge. These restrictions aim to protect the psychological well-being and sense of security of the residents.
- 9.5 The Shelter Home Incharge shall collaborate with the SHO of the nearest police station to make special security arrangements for residents required to attend court hearings or other legal proceedings. These arrangements may include police escorts or increased patrolling in situations where residents are at risk of harm or intimidation.
- 9.6 Additional safety measures, such as perimeter patrolling, installation of at least eight (08) CCTV cameras in non-private common areas, and maintenance of a security logbook, shall be implemented to monitor entry, exit, and any unusual activity. These systems shall be reviewed regularly to address emerging security concerns.

10. PROCEDURES

10.1 ADMISSION

- 10.1.1 Any woman in distress who is referred to the Shelter Home through a Court, NGO, Women Protection Centers, Line Departments, Advisory Members, etc., or on her own will, shall be eligible to reside in the Shelter Homes.
- 10.1.2 Women with intellectual disabilities, i.e., psychiatric conditions, *may not be granted* admission, and the Incharge shall *refer* them to specialized services to ensure they

receive the necessary support, as they often require more tailored psychosocial assistance and trauma-informed care.

- 10.1.3 Women with communicable diseases may be referred to specialized services to ensure they receive the necessary support, as they often require more tailored medical assistance and care.
- 10.1.4 Any woman who is a victim of any form or threat of violence including physical, psychological, and sexual violence, as well as any woman facing life threats, is eligible to reside in the Shelter Homes if she gives her consent.
- 10.1.5 Residents taking refuge in the Shelter Homes accompanied by their children will be entitled to keep them in the institution.
- 10.1.6 However, male children above the age of 10 shall be referred to a Children's Home or the Child Protection Bureau while their mother resides in the Shelter Home. During her stay, the Incharge (IC) of the Shelter Home shall facilitate scheduled meetings between the mother and child upon her request. The IC is also responsible for maintaining regular telephonic communication between the mother and child to ensure emotional connection and psychological well-being throughout this period.
- 10.1.7 Custody of minor children should be obtained by the Shelter Homes through the Guardian Court.
- 10.1.8 Each Shelter Home shall maintain a proper record pertaining to the admission of each resident.
- 10.1.9 The Shelter Home Incharge shall ensure that an admission form is completed and signed by each and every resident without any coercion or pressure
- 10.1.10 An application for admission must state:
 - a) The name, age, and residence of the applicant
 - b) The reason for seeking shelter
 - c) Free and voluntary consent to reside in the shelter
 - d) Willingness to abide by the rules of the shelter
 - e) Whether there is any criminal case registered against the applicant or if she is required for investigation in any such case
 - f) Information on any pending civil or criminal litigation and whether legal aid is required
 - g) Name and age of minor children accompanying the applicant, along with a statement exonerating the institution from any responsibility, except the provision of facilities.

- 10.1.11 Applicants must put their thumb impression on the application, even if they have signed it.
- 10.1.12 The Incharge shall also ensure that each resident understands the rules and procedures before she signs the admission form and gives informed consent to abide by these rules.
- 10.1.13 The Shelter Home Incharge shall not be liable in any criminal or civil proceedings pertaining to awarding admission to a resident. The Incharge shall only be summoned by a Court and that too only in cases where her presence is essential for the interest of justice.
- 10.1.14 Women can be admitted to the Shelter Homes at any time of day or night by the Incharge, or in her absence, by the Warden during working hours, and by any staff member on duty in case of an admission outside working hours. A set of admission forms must be provided by the Incharge to the Warden on duty for use during off-hours and holidays.
- 10.1.15 Any woman who does not meet the eligibility criteria outlined above, who is diagnosed with a severe medical condition or psychiatric disorder, or whose presence may pose a risk to other residents, may not be admitted to the Shelter Home. For applicants without a court referral, the decision regarding admission shall be made within three (3) days by the Shelter Home Incharge, following consultation with the legal advisor, medical officer, and psychologist affiliated with the Shelter.
- 10.1.16 If necessary, the applicant may be referred to the Area Magistrate to obtain an official court referral. In cases where the Court or the Incharge determines that the woman is not eligible to reside in the Shelter Home, she shall be promptly referred to an alternative, appropriate Social Welfare institution within the province of Punjab, based on her specific needs and available facilities.

10.2 *DURATION OF STAY*

- 10.2.1 The duration of the stay for a resident at the Shelter Homes shall be limited to three months.
- 10.2.2 For residents admitted through direct referrals or from institutions other than the court, the duration of their stay at the Shelter Home may be extended for an additional period of up to three months. This extension is contingent upon a formal recommendation from the Advisory Committee, which shall assess the resident's conduct and overall behavior during their stay.

- 10.2.3 The Advisory Committee's evaluation will consider various factors pertinent to the resident's individual circumstances, including but not limited to her age, background, general medical condition, and any other relevant aspects that may influence her rehabilitation and reintegration prospects.
- 10.2.4 It is imperative that all decisions regarding stay extensions adhere to the established legal frameworks and institutional safety protocols, ensuring that the well-being and rights of the resident are upheld in accordance with the provisions set forth under the Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act, 2016, and the and the Punjab Women Protection Authority Act, 2022.
- 10.2.5 Further extension requests shall only be submitted with the approval of the Advisory Committee to the Divisional Director. In special or exceptional cases, or in the event of conflicting circumstances, the extension may be granted with the approval of the Director General, Social Welfare Department. This provision shall not apply to court-referred cases.

10.3 *DISCHARGE*

- 10.3.1 Residents possess the constitutional right to voluntarily leave the Shelter Home at any time. However, to ensure proper documentation and safeguard the well-being of both the resident and the institution, it is mandatory for the resident to complete and sign an official discharge form along with consent form prior to leaving the premises.
- 10.3.2 If the resident has been sent by a court, she shall seek permission from the concerned court, in addition to signing the discharge slip, in order to be allowed to leave the Shelter Home.
- 10.3.3 If a resident has been referred by a Women Protection Centre, non-governmental organization (NGO), or any other institution, the Incharge shall provide written notification to the referring agency upon the resident's departure from the Shelter Home.
- 10.3.4 Each Shelter Home shall maintain a proper record of the discharge of every resident, and after seeking consent of resident, the discharge form shall be duly signed by the Warden or Supervisor and the Incharge Shelter Home

10.4 *WORKING DAYS AND HOURS*

- 10.4.1 The Incharge shall depute, following a rotation scheme, a Warden, Watchman, Security Guard and Driver to be present on off-days and during hours outside regular working hours in order to ensure continuous presence and security. If the Security Guard is on leave, she shall ensure that rest of the mentioned staff performs duty on his behalf along

with police security staff.

- 10.4.2 The Incharge shall ensure the 24/7 deployment of police security, including a Lady Constable. In exceptional situations, where police security is not available, private security guards or departmental Chowkidar shall be deputed.
- 10.4.3 The Incharge shall be required to make regular, unannounced visits to the Shelter Home during nights and public holidays to assess the functioning of the institution.
- 10.4.4 The Incharge shall remain accessible on phone calls and physically present at the times whenever residents require special assistance.

11. COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNAL RULES OF THE SHELTER HOMES

- 11.1 Upon admission, every resident shall be provided, by the Incharge or a designated staff member, with both written and oral information and guidance regarding the Rules and Regulations of the Shelter Home.
- 11.2 Every resident shall comply with the Rules provided under these guidelines. Audio recordings may be used to inform uneducated or person with disabilities (visual or hearing impaired etc) about their rights and responsibilities.
- 11.3 Corruption, threats, emotional, verbal, or physical abuse, forced labour, prostitution, decisions imposed, retention of residents' personal property (including money), and violations of a resident's privacy shall be considered misconduct. The Social Welfare Department shall be justified in taking appropriate action in such cases.
- 11.4 Disciplinary action may also be taken by the Social Welfare Department, Government of the Punjab, against the Shelter Home or any of its staff regarding any alleged misconduct brought to the department's notice.
- 11.5 Immediate action shall be taken against Shelter Home staff, referral service providers, staff of public institutions, consultants, or volunteers working with residents if found guilty of abusing their authority.
- 11.6 All service providers shall adhere to the rules, responsibilities, and regulations outlined in the annex.

Whereas it is expedient and necessary in the public interest and for good governance to provide measures for improving the efficiency and quality of services, the above guidelines are hereby approved.

Date: _____