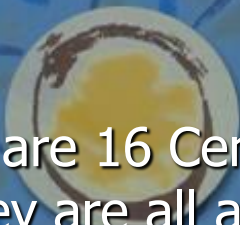


THE ROLE OF CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WORK IN SOCIAL SYSTEM OF SLOVENIA

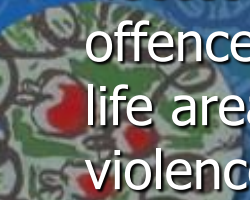

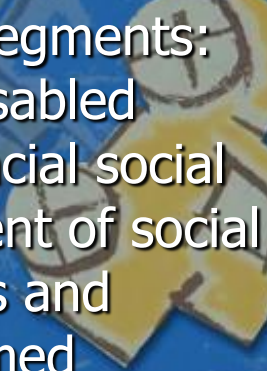
Sendi Murgel





There are 16 Centres for Social Work in Slovenia, with 63 local units. They are all autonomous and independent and arranged all over the country in a way that enables every user to have a free and equal access to all the services and rights that Centres for Social Work provide. All Centres for Social Work are united into Association of Centres for Social Work (scsd.si).

Their field of work is very extensive and includes numerous segments: working with children, parents, families, elderly people, disabled people, etc. Centres also deal with certain rights, i.e. financial social assistance, child benefit, arranging exemption from payment of social welfare services, etc. They also carry out different services and legislation enables them to take coercive measures if deemed necessary. The Centres also deal with perpetrators of criminal offences, both adults and minors. They thus deal with many different life areas of the people – its users (one of the areas is also domestic violence – working with victims and perpetrators).





Centre for Social Work as an institution is an organizer, promoter and executor of social policy, and also an assistant and supervisor of the user.

Working areas of Centre for Social Work:

■ FAMILY RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

- Maternity leave and compensation
- Paternity leave and compensation
- Child care leave and compensation
- The entitlement to part-time work and paid social security contributions
- The entitlement to payment of social security with four or more children
- The compensation for nursing mother
- Parental allowance (for unemployed mothers and fathers – 365 days)
 - Childbirth grant (is a lump-sum benefit in cash)
 - Large family allowance (an annual benefit intended for families with at least three children)
 - Child benefit

SOCIAL SECURITY

- Financial social assistance
- Protective allowance
- Various subsidies and reduced payments
- Public scholarship
- Rights for persons with special needs
- Family helper
- Personal assistance

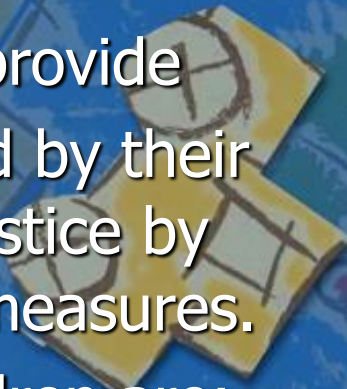





FAMILY CODE

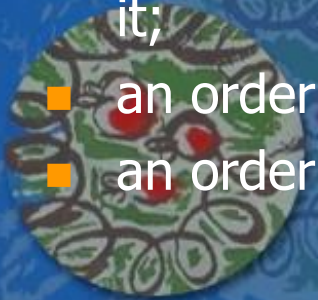
Pursuant to this Code, Centres for Social Work have wide authorizations to make sure children's rights, benefits and interests are exercised and at the same time they provide support to their parents. If children are endangered by their parents, the proposal is given to The Court of Justice by Centre for Social Work to implement protective measures.

Measures that are at disposal for protection of children are:

- Interim injunctions
 - Emergency removal of a child
 - Measures of a more permanent nature
- 
- 

Interim injunctions:

- an order by which the child is taken away from the parents and placed with another person, in a crisis center, in foster care or in an institution;
- an order to enter the apartment or other premises in which the child is located, against the will of the parents;
- an order prohibiting or restricting contact;
- an order on the manner of conducting contacts;
- an order on the upbringing and care of a child;
- child support order;
- an order prohibiting the crossing of the state border with a child;
- an order for the eviction of a violent member from a shared apartment;
- an order prohibiting the child from approaching persons who endanger it;
- an order on insurance on the property of the parents or the child;
- an order for a medical examination or treatment.








■ **Interim order of supervised contacts:**

The court may, by an interim order, decide that the contacts shall be made in the presence of a professional person of the centre for social work or the institution in which the child was placed. It may last for a maximum of nine months. The professional person shall monitor the course of contacts and once a month prepare a report on the course of contacts, which shall be sent to the court. (Article 163)



- **Emergency removal of a child**

If the child is shown to be so severely endangered that its benefits can only be secured by the immediate removal of the child from the parents, the Centre for Social Work shall take the child and place him or her with another person, in a crisis center, foster care or institution. before the court decides on the application for interim measures. The Centre for Social Work may be assisted by the Police in the act of immediate confiscation of a child. (Article 167)








■ Measures of a more permanent nature:


- Restriction of parental care
- Decision on medical examination or treatment
- Restriction or withdrawal of the right of contact
- Deprivation of a child to parents
- Placement of a child in an institution
- Deprivation of parental care

Before the Court decides on a measure of a more permanent nature, the Centre for Social Work shall draw up a plan for assistance to the family and the child. A report on the implementation of the aid plan is submitted to the court once a year.

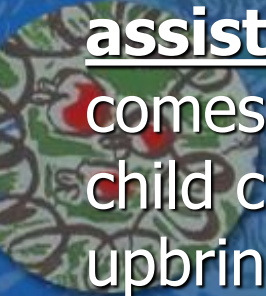
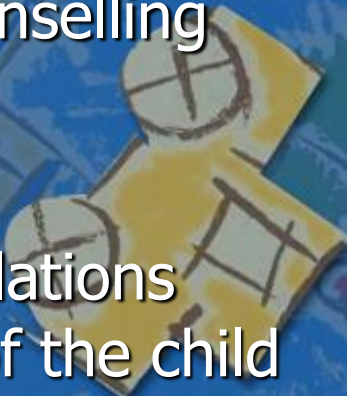


The Centre for Social Work and The Court of Justice has the authorization to regulate **guardianship** regarding both adults and children – children may have guardian assigned to them if they do not have parents or if parent do not take care of them. A guardian is assigned when there is a collision of interests between the parents and the children (when concluding businesses among themselves or when there is a dispute, etc.).

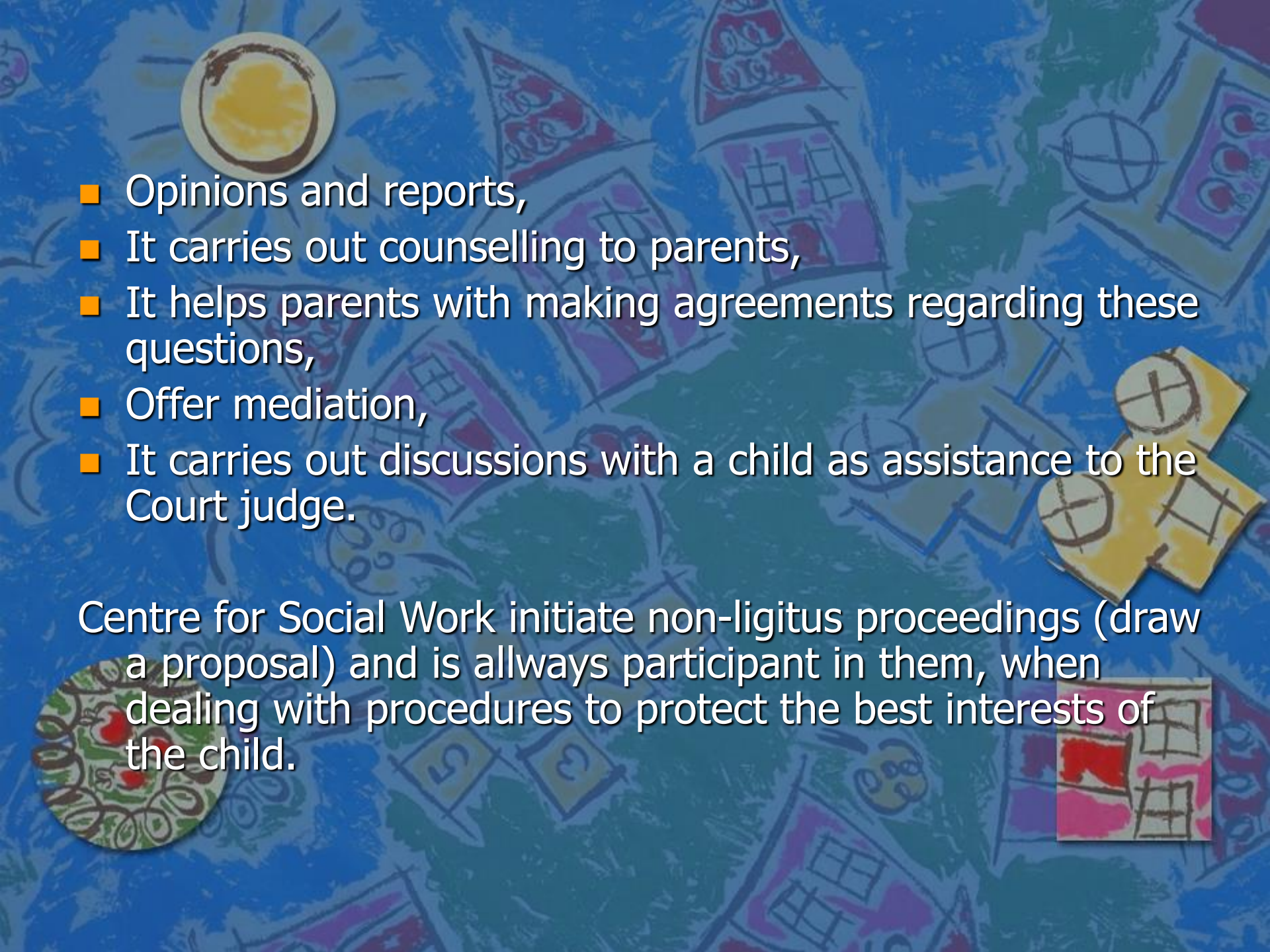
Centre for Social Work may start a procedure at Court regarding **foster care for children**. A child shall be placed in foster care if he or she does not have a family, if for various reasons he or she is unable to live with his or her parents, or if the child's physical and mental development is endangered in the environment in which he or she lives. The purpose is to enable the children healthy growing up, education, sustainable personal development and developing capacities for independent life and work.



Centre for Social Work has no authorization to take measures regarding adults, although they can provide them with **services**, which they can join on a voluntary basis - at the Centre for Social Work , as well as in other institutions (non-governmental institutions, associations, counselling centres, etc).



Court of Justice is a body, which regulates family relations and make decisions on measures for protection of the child in Slovenia, and at the same time frequently acquires the **assistance of the Centre for Social Work** . When it comes to a parental divorce, the matters regarding parent-child contacts, trusting parents with childcare and upbringing, and matters regarding alimonies, the Centre gives recommendation to the Court on the following subjects:

- 
- Opinions and reports,
 - It carries out counselling to parents,
 - It helps parents with making agreements regarding these questions,
 - Offer mediation,
 - It carries out discussions with a child as assistance to the Court judge.

Centre for Social Work initiate non-litigious proceedings (draw a proposal) and is always participant in them, when dealing with procedures to protect the best interests of the child.



Centre for Social Work is involved with working with families in different ways.

The Centre is involved with social prevention within different array of implemented programmes. The purpose of social prevention is to prevent the occurrence of social distress and difficulties, which are mainly connected with dysfunctions within the family system. Because of this the family has to be placed in the centre of preventive activities. Such prevention is more general than specific, where education regarding quality realization of family roles and tasks has preventive effect for a wide spectrum of deviation phenomena.



Besides the measures that are taken by the Court and are proposed by Centres for protection of children, they also provide services defined by Social Protection Act.



Services carried out by Centre for Social Work are:

- First social assistance,
- Personal help,
- Assistance to family, which includes help for the family for its home and at home,
- Institutional care – placing older persons in institutions.


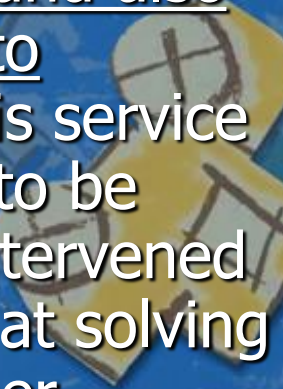
First social help includes:

- Help with identifying and determining social distress and difficulties,
 - Assessment of possible solutions,
 - Informing the rightful claimant about all possible forms of social care services and benefits they can apply for.
- 
- 




Centre's most typical service in the area of family assistance is surely to **provide help to the family for its home.**

This involves professional **counselling** and **assistance** with re-establishing relations among family members and also taking care of children and educating the family to implement its role in everyday life. The aim of this service is to help non-functional families; the family has to be looked upon as a whole. In this way it is being intervened inside a family environment. Assistance is aimed at solving concrete family problems with mobilisation of inner potential and providing the family with the necessary capacity.




A system is implemented for carrying out services, education and supervision.





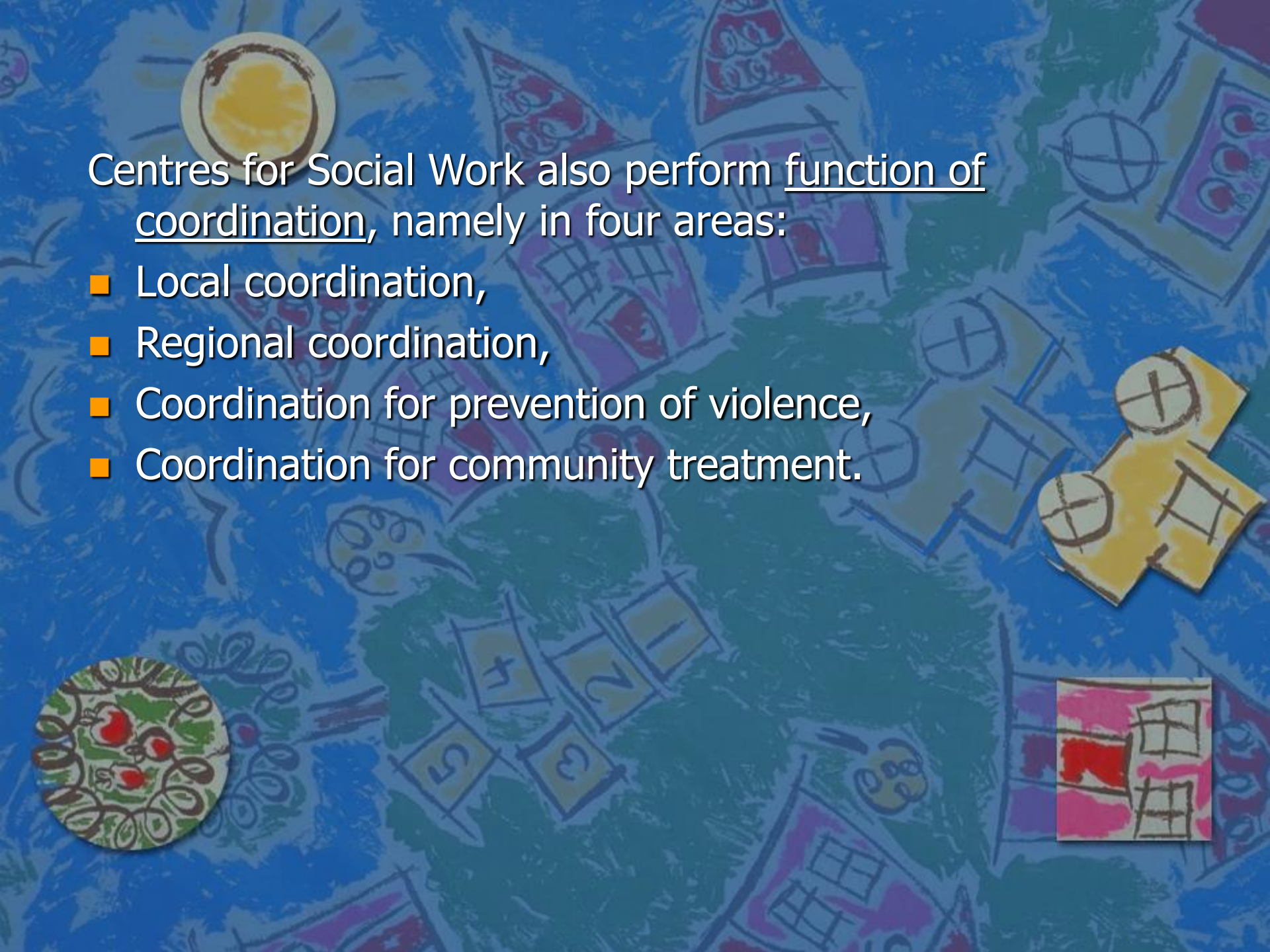
Beside services that are provided by Centres for Social Work, they also provide programmes, which are additionally financed by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and which are projects that may last only one year, and sometimes several years.

These programmes involve many volunteers, which provide children with learning assistance, they also organize camps and workshops, spend afternoons with them and actively guide them toward quality leisure time activities.



Different programmes are also oriented towards prevention of all kinds of addictions, towards provision of families with psychosocial help, towards self-help groups in different areas and towards youth workshops, etc.







Centres for Social Work also perform function of coordination, namely in four areas:

- Local coordination,
- Regional coordination,
- Coordination for prevention of violence,
- Coordination for community treatment.





Tasks of local coordination as a coordinator of programmes and services within a local network are:

- Determining offer of programmes within a local community and user guidance,
 - Juncture of diverse executors (determining the needs),
 - Interconnection of systems at a local level,
 - Cooperation with new programmes planning and development,
 - Organisation of professional support from governmental and non-governmental sector.
- 



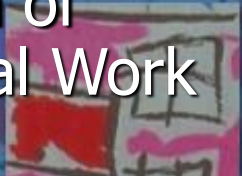


Centre's for Social Work duties involve reconciliation and interconnection of social care field with an aim to ensure users diverse forms of help and also to open the possibilities for social inclusion.



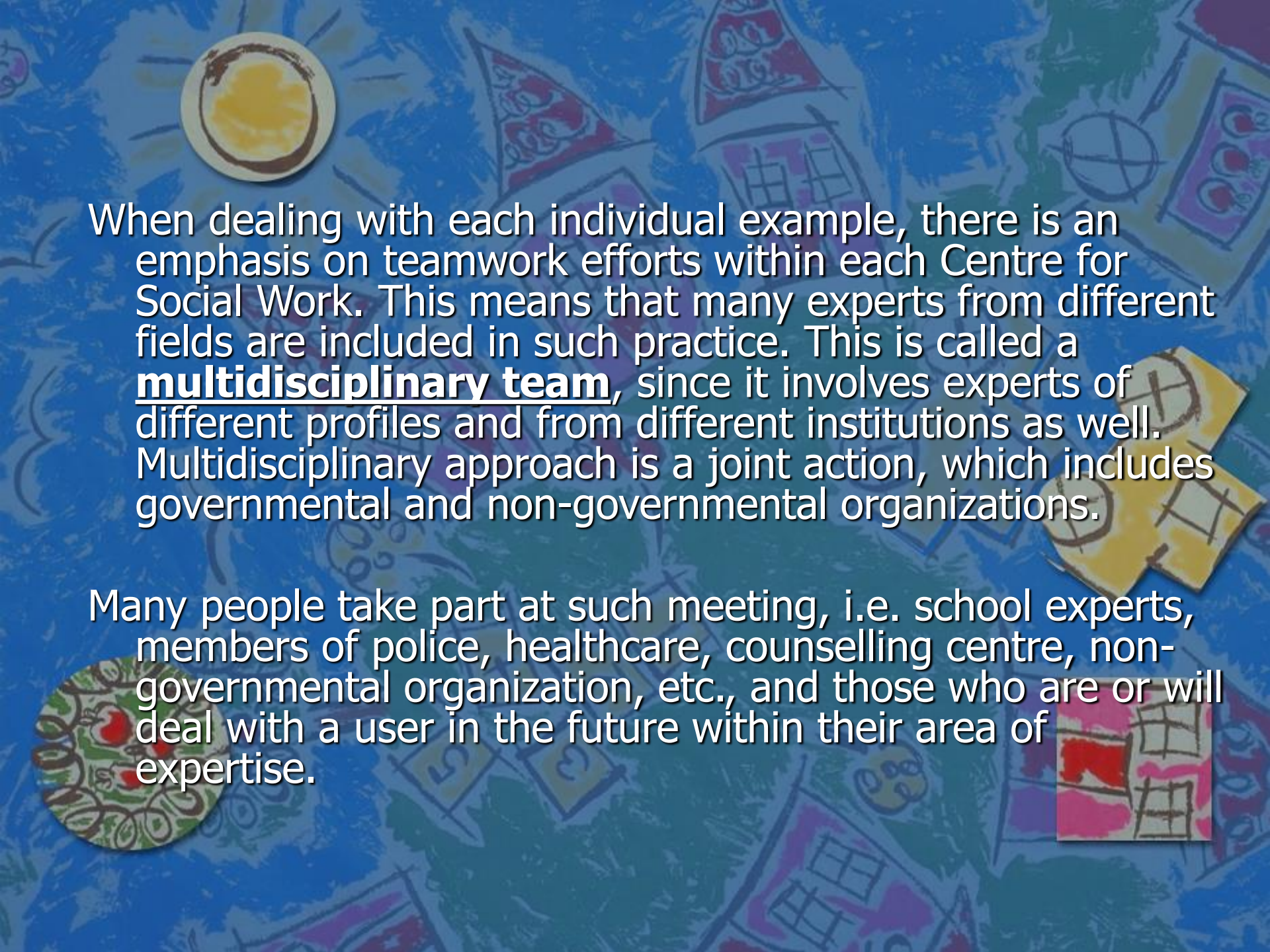


Regional coordination at Centres for Social Work means that they have taken over the role of a system facilitator, a stimulator of new programmes and a provider of information at regional or inter-municipal levels.

Their role of offering professional programme support is becoming indispensable. Executors of non-governmental organizations and private persons set up the programmes developed by Centres for Social Work as a juncture of diverse executors and facilitators who direct users into diverse help programmes. Where there is no network of executors or other executors' programmes and users have no possibility of choice, then the realization of services has to be organised by Centres for Social Work in cooperation with local community and users.




- **Coordination for prevention of violence** is goal oriented towards monitoring, creation and complementing the system of assistance offered to everyone who is experiencing violence. The emphasis is placed on those who are at the greatest risk (children, disabled people, elderly people, women, etc.). The Centres' task is to develop and sustain a network of public and non-governmental institutions which are located in the region in the field of protection against violence, reconciliation of procedures and their cooperation, professional support and provision of qualifications to expert and lay public, raising sensitivity for these issues, carry out analysis of state of affairs in the area of violence within a region and connecting and coordinating activities on a national level.



When dealing with each individual example, there is an emphasis on teamwork efforts within each Centre for Social Work. This means that many experts from different fields are included in such practice. This is called a **multidisciplinary team**, since it involves experts of different profiles and from different institutions as well. Multidisciplinary approach is a joint action, which includes governmental and non-governmental organizations.

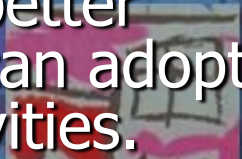


Many people take part at such meeting, i.e. school experts, members of police, healthcare, counselling centre, non-governmental organization, etc., and those who are or will deal with a user in the future within their area of expertise.



They try to solve cases in such way predominantly when it involves multi-layer situations and where numerous institutions are already involved – thus the activities and procedure is being coordinated and experts do not work one past another.

Multidisciplinary teams are based on team problem solutions of each individual case.



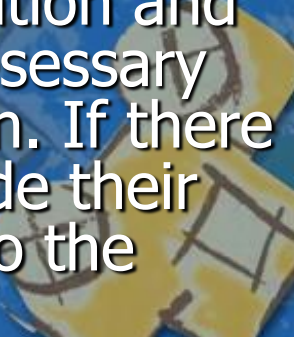
This can also involve permanent multidisciplinary teams, which meet on regularly bases to increase institutional cooperation and their greater interconnection, a better problem analysis and efficient joint action. They can adopt professional guidelines and protocols of joint activities.





Intervention services:

Intervention services are established on every Centre for Social Work, where professionals are on stand by outside their business hours. Upon receiving the notification from the Police about intervention, they assess the situation and independently and autonomously decide on the necessary actions and measures in the context of intervention. If there is a need for separation and accommodation outside their home, they have to find a solution and provide it to the victims.



Coordination of community treatment

Community treatment is the provision of assistance to persons who no longer need treatment in a psychiatric hospital or supervised treatment, but need assistance in psychosocial rehabilitation, daily tasks, living conditions and integration into everyday life on the basis of a treatment plan.

Coordinator mostly prepares following tasks:

- prepare, coordinate and supervise the implementation of the community treatment plan,
- organizes and leads the multidisciplinary team,
- provides professional and placement support to community treatment providers,
- takes care of the records of community hearings.

PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE


Domestic Violence Prevention Act (2008) specifically identifies various forms of domestic violence, cooperation between different authorities and organizations for the protection of victims and court actions.

Victims have a professional help and support from Centre for social work, where they draw a plan of help for victims with their assistance, they convene a multidisciplinary team, which helps to provide guidance for better treatment of victims. They have the right to companion in all procedures, regarding domestic violence.

Victims have the possibility to propose concrete measures in court in legal civil procedures to assure their safety and the right to stay in their family home, they have the right to free legal aid for these procedures.

According to Domestic Violence Act, Court may:




- prohibits entry into the apartment where the victim lives;
- prohibits staying in a certain vicinity of the apartment in which the victim lives;
- prohibit staying and approaching places where the victim is usually located (eg workplace, school, kindergarten...);
- prohibit contact with the victim in any way, including by means of distance and also through third parties;
- prohibit any meeting with the victim;
- prohibit the publication of the victim's personal data, documents from judicial and administrative files and personal records relating to the victim;
- decides on leaving the shared apartment to the victim.

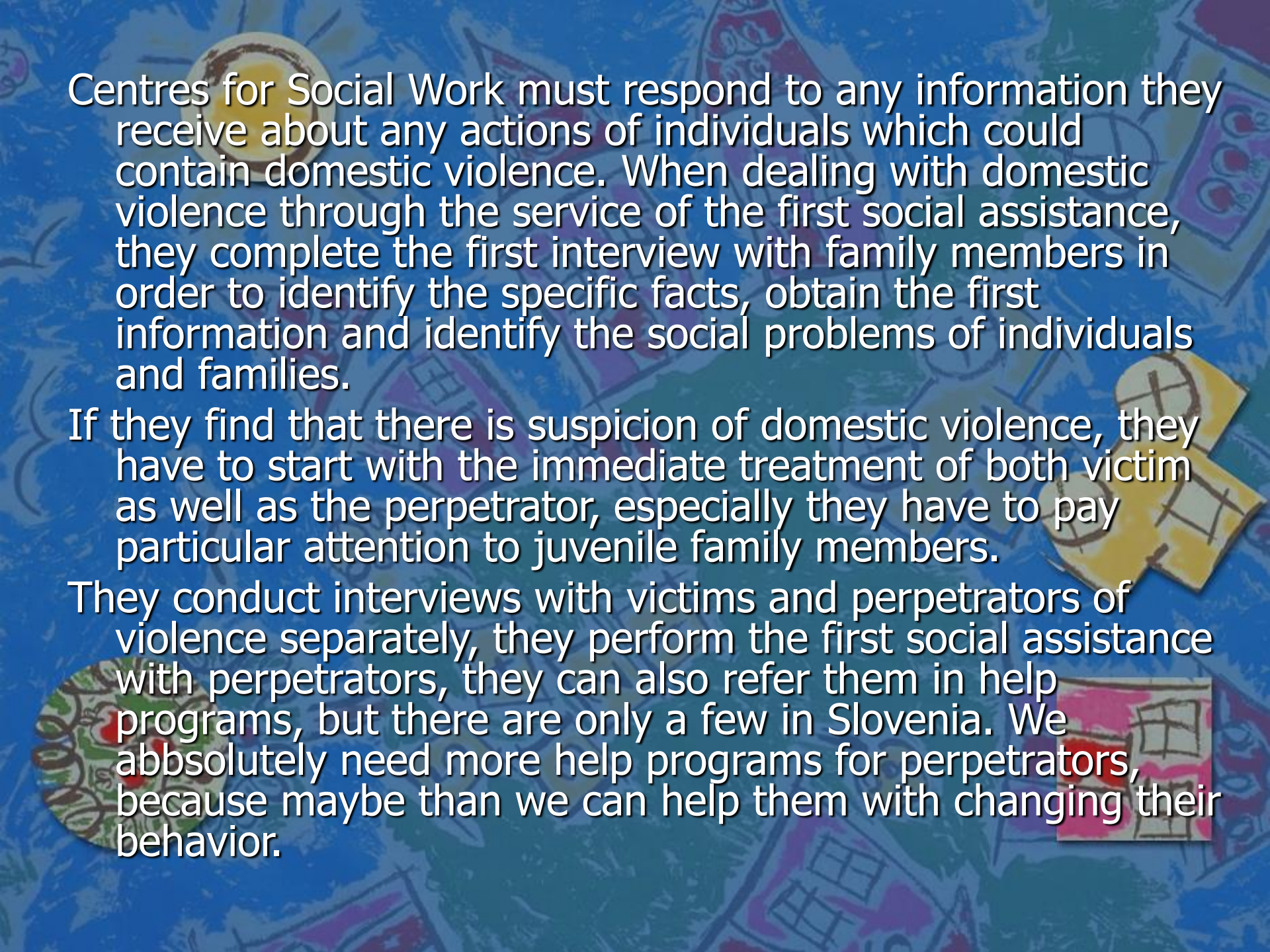


Role of Centres for Social Work according to Domestic Violence Prevention Act:

- elimination of direct hazard for victims,
- taking care for the victim's long-term safety by eliminating causes or circumstances in which violence is present,
- finding solutions of their social and material conditions required for existence.

The Centre for Social Work can refer the perpetrator of violence to corresponding educational, psychosocial and medical care programs that are provided by the authorities and organizations as well as NGOs.

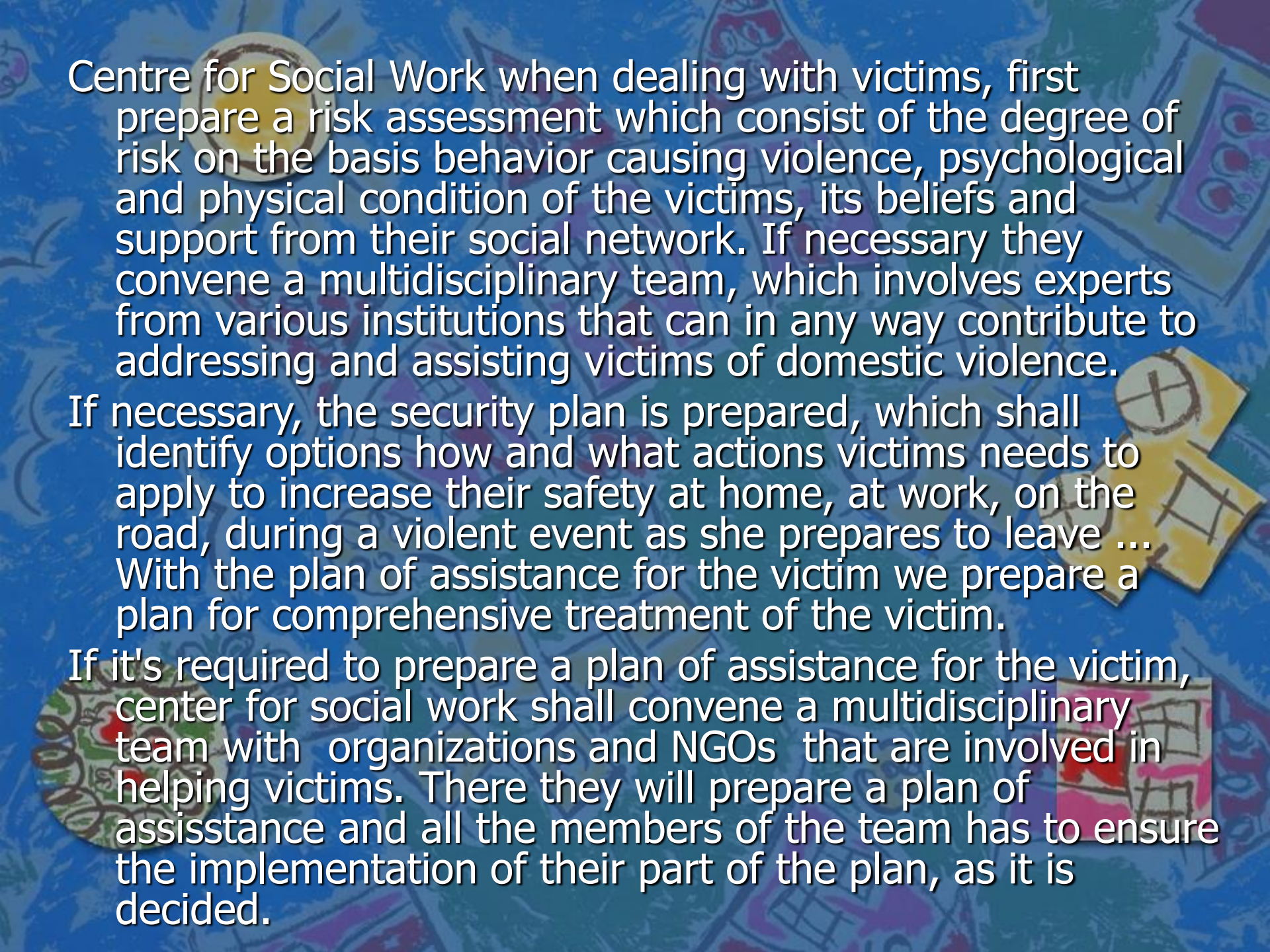




Centres for Social Work must respond to any information they receive about any actions of individuals which could contain domestic violence. When dealing with domestic violence through the service of the first social assistance, they complete the first interview with family members in order to identify the specific facts, obtain the first information and identify the social problems of individuals and families.

If they find that there is suspicion of domestic violence, they have to start with the immediate treatment of both victim as well as the perpetrator, especially they have to pay particular attention to juvenile family members.

They conduct interviews with victims and perpetrators of violence separately, they perform the first social assistance with perpetrators, they can also refer them in help programs, but there are only a few in Slovenia. We absolutely need more help programs for perpetrators, because maybe than we can help them with changing their behavior.



Centre for Social Work when dealing with victims, first prepare a risk assessment which consist of the degree of risk on the basis behavior causing violence, psychological and physical condition of the victims, its beliefs and support from their social network. If necessary they convene a multidisciplinary team, which involves experts from various institutions that can in any way contribute to addressing and assisting victims of domestic violence.

If necessary, the security plan is prepared, which shall identify options how and what actions victims needs to apply to increase their safety at home, at work, on the road, during a violent event as she prepares to leave ... With the plan of assistance for the victim we prepare a plan for comprehensive treatment of the victim.

If it's required to prepare a plan of assistance for the victim, center for social work shall convene a multidisciplinary team with organizations and NGOs that are involved in helping victims. There they will prepare a plan of assistance and all the members of the team has to ensure the implementation of their part of the plan, as it is decided.

Thank you for your attention.

