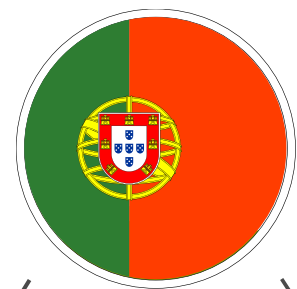


BRIEF 10

GAT IN-Mouraria

Lisbon, Portugal

ID CARD



Lisbon, Portugal

PROJECT TITLE.

GAT IN-Mouraria (INM)

MAIN OBJECTIVE.

GAT IN-Mouraria is a community-based center for integrated responses aimed to reduce the risks and harm associated with drug use.

TARGET AUDIENCE.

People who use drugs and people experiencing homelessness

IN NUMBERS.

686

individuals benefited from the INM in 2024

554

individuals were either rough sleeping, in accommodation subsidised by public rent assistance, squats, cars, shelters and Housing First solutions

242

individuals used the address of INM as their residency in 2024

SUMMARY.

GAT IN Mouraria, opened in 2013, is a community-based center offering rapid, anonymous, and free testing for HIV, hepatitis B/C, and syphilis, mainly for people who use drugs. Services include peer counseling, health and social support, condom and harm reduction material distribution, and a drop-in space. Open to all within capacity, the center also advocates for the rights of drug users and contributes to knowledge production. Registered with the Health Regulatory Authority (E126027)

CONTACT.



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Project description

A Local Solution to Structural Barriers

GAT IN Mouraria was established in 2013 in one of Lisbon's oldest and most diverse neighbourhoods, known for its high concentration of migrants, low-income residents, sex workers, and people who use drugs. It operates within a nationally recognised framework rooted in Portugal's public health-oriented drug policy, especially since the decriminalisation of drug use in 2001. Despite this progressive approach, many marginalised populations still face barriers to healthcare due to stigma, bureaucracy, or limited accessibility. In response, Grupo de Ativistas em Tratamentos launched the centre to bridge these gaps.

Peer-Led, Low-Threshold, Integrated Care

Grounded in harm reduction and peer-led models, the centre offers low-threshold, community-based services through a multidisciplinary team that includes harm reduction specialists, peer workers, doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. Care is delivered in a non-judgemental, inclusive environment where peer workers with lived experience play a key role in building trust and fostering dignity. Their involvement helps reach people who are often excluded from mainstream services, and ensures the support is relevant and accessible.

Sustained Impact Through Public Investment

To deliver its services, GAT IN Mouraria receives funding primarily from ACSS (Central Administration of the Health Service), the Municipality of Lisbon, the Institute for Addictive Behaviours and Addictions (ICAD), and the Social Security Institute (ISS). Since its opening, the centre has significantly improved access to healthcare for regular users, notably through support with managing therapies and increasing health literacy. Strong peer involvement continues to enhance trust, reduce risk behaviours, and improve overall physical and mental health outcomes.

TIMELINE

2013

Opening of the service.

2019

Opening of Hepatitis C decentralised medical centre.

2020

Start of mental health support service: psychiatrist and psychologist.

2021

Opening of safe consumption room.

2024

The authorisation for the safe consumption room was formalised.

Inspiration note

Meeting People Where They Are, Not Where Systems Expect Them to Be

GAT IN-Mouraria is a powerful example of how services can become genuinely accessible, inclusive, and rooted in dignity. In a context where traditional systems often exclude the most vulnerable, this project stands out for its practical and human-centred approach.

People who use drugs and experience homelessness face overlapping forms of exclusion—unstable housing, discrimination in healthcare and housing markets, and rigid, underfunded support structures. Legal and bureaucratic barriers, such as drug-related criminalisation or unclear residency status, can make even basic healthcare out of reach. Many existing services remain built on abstinence-based or one-size-fits-all models, detached from the lived realities of the people they aim to support. Meanwhile, gentrification and NIMBYism further isolate these communities from the networks they depend on.

A Model Built on Trust, Dignity, and Realism

Within this difficult environment, GAT IN-Mouraria plays a vital role. By offering low-threshold, community-based, and harm reduction-oriented services, the centre fills crucial gaps left by mainstream systems. It does not wait for people to conform—it adapts to their realities, both physically and emotionally. The integration of peer workers is key to its effectiveness: they foster trust, reduce stigma, and ensure that the support remains grounded in lived experience.

The project's outcomes reflect a model that places human connection and inclusion at its core—elements still too often missing from conventional systems.



Martinho Dias
Peer worker at CRESCER, Portugal

Gat IN Mouraria, established in 2013 in Lisbon's historic Mouraria district, stands as a beacon of community-led harm reduction. The centre offers a comprehensive range of services, including rapid testing and harm reduction materials.

Notably, it employs individuals with lived experience as Peer Workers, ensuring that interventions are empathetic and grounded in real-world understanding.

People have access to healthcare, social support, and peer counselling. This model enhances the quality and accessibility of care for people experiencing homelessness and substance use.