

Operational Standards and Indicators on Reception including Vulnerability-related Aspects



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About the guide

Why was this guide created? The mission of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) is to facilitate and support the activities of EU Member States and Schengen associated countries (EU+ countries ⁽¹⁾) in the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). In accordance with its overall aim of promoting the correct and effective implementation of the CEAS and of enabling convergence, the EUAA develops common operational standards and indicators, guidelines and practical tools.

How was this guide developed? This guide was created by experts from across the EU, with valuable input from the European Commission, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) ⁽²⁾. The development was facilitated and coordinated by the EUAA. Before its finalisation, a consultation on the guide was carried out with all EU+ countries through the EUAA Network of Reception Authorities and the Steering Group of the EUAA Vulnerability Experts Network. We would like to extend our thanks to the members of the working group who prepared the drafting of this guide.

Who should use this guide? This guide is primarily intended for reception officers and decision-makers, as well as policymakers in the national reception authorities. Additionally, this tool is useful for quality officers and legal advisers, as well as any other person working or involved in the field of international protection in the EU context.

How to use this guide. The operational standards and indicators in this guide can support national reception authorities and other actors in setting up and maintaining quality reception systems and facilities.

How does this guide relate to national legislation and practice? This is a soft convergence tool. It is not legally binding and reflects commonly agreed standards as adopted by the EUAA Management Board in March 2026.

How does this guide relate to other EUAA tools? The EUAA, *Operational Standards and Indicators on Reception including Vulnerability-related Aspects*, March 2026 should be used in conjunction with other available practical guides and tools. All EUAA practical tools are publicly available online on the EUAA website: <https://euaa.europa.eu/practical-tools-and-guides>

Disclaimer

This guide was prepared without prejudice to the principle that only the Court of Justice of the European Union can give an authoritative interpretation of EU law. Following an initial period of implementation of the Pact, this document may require updating, as needed.

⁽¹⁾ The 27 EU Member States, complemented by Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

⁽²⁾ Note that the finalised guide does not necessarily reflect the positions of UNHCR and FRA.





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List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
AMMR	Asylum and Migration Management Regulation — Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on asylum and migration management, amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1147 and (EU) 2021/1060 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 604/2013
APR	Asylum Procedure Regulation — Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU.
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
COI	country of origin information
CSO(s)	civil society organisation(s)
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EU	European Union
EU Charter	Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
EU+ countries	EU Member States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
GBV	gender-based violence
GDPR	Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)
Member States	EU Member States
NGO(s)	non-governmental organisation(s)





Abbreviation	Definition
QR	Qualification Regulation — Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC and repealing Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council.
RCD (2024)	2024 Reception Conditions Directive — Directive (EU) 2024/1346 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection.
Refugee Convention	The 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees and its 1967 Protocol (referred to in EU asylum legislation and by the CJEU as ‘the Geneva Convention’).
THB	trafficking in human beings
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees





Introduction

Background

Standard conditions for the reception of applicants sufficient to ensure them an adequate standard of living and comparable living conditions in all Member States should be laid down. ⁽³⁾

The 2024 Reception Conditions Directive (RCD (2024)) leaves a considerable degree of discretion to define what constitutes a dignified standard of living and how it should be accomplished. At the same time, national reception systems differ greatly in the set-up and modalities for the provision of reception conditions. A similar situation arises regarding the reception of applicants in a vulnerable situation, with the legal instruments providing broad discretion to Member States on how to identify vulnerability and respond to special needs.

With the aim to help Member States in implementing key provisions of the EU asylum acquis, to achieve greater convergence across Europe in the provision of reception conditions, and with the ultimate goal of strengthening the CEAS at an operational level, since 2016 the EUAA has developed practical guides and operational standards and indicators on reception based on legal provisions as well as existing practices and recommendations ⁽⁴⁾. This guide merges and updates existing operational standards and indicators ⁽⁵⁾ in one in line with the Pact on Migration and Asylum ⁽⁶⁾.

The RCD (2024) explicitly refers to standards and indicators on reception to be developed by the EUAA ⁽⁷⁾ indicating that

⁽³⁾ Recital 11 of Reception Conditions Directive (RCD (2024)): Directive (EU) 2024/1346 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection, (OJ L 22.5.2024), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202401346.

⁽⁴⁾ Article 13(2) EUAA Regulation: Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 (OJ L 468, 30.12.2021), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R2303&qid=1673429421917>: 'The Agency shall, on its own initiative or at the request of the Management Board or the Commission, develop operational standards, indicators, guidelines and best practices related to the implementation of Union law on asylum.'

⁽⁵⁾ EASO, *Guidance on reception conditions: standards and indicators*, December 2016, <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/guidance-reception-conditions-standards-and-indicators>; EASO, *Guidance on Reception Conditions for Unaccompanied Children: Operational Standards and Indicators*, December 2018, <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/guidance-reception-conditions-unaccompanied-children>; EUAA, *Guidance on Reception: Operational standards and indicators*, May 2024, <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/guidance-reception-operational-standards-and-indicators>. EUAA, *Guidance on Vulnerability in Asylum and Reception: Operational standards and indicators*, May 2024, <https://euaa.europa.eu/publications/guidance-vulnerability-operational-standards-and-indicators>.

⁽⁶⁾ European Commission: Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, 'Pact on Migration and Asylum', 21 May 2024, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_en.

⁽⁷⁾ Article 31(1) RCD (2024).





Member States should be required to take into account, in their monitoring and control systems, available non-binding operational standards, indicators, guidelines and best practices regarding reception conditions developed by the Asylum Agency. ⁽⁸⁾

Purpose and scope of the guide

The overall objective of these operational standards and indicators is to support Member States in the implementation of key provisions of the Pact on Migration and Asylum, addressing modalities related to the reception of individuals seeking international protection, including persons in situations of vulnerability.

This guide has been designed to serve multiple **purposes**, as follows.

- At **European policy level**, it harmonises the operational and technical application of the Pact by promoting commonly agreed practices.
- At **national policy level**, it supports Member States in establishing fair and efficient reception systems that comply with the CEAS, support reforms or developments in the area of reception, provide a framework for setting and/or further developing reception standards.
- At **operational level**, it aims to support Member States in establishing and/or assessing whether their practices are in line with the provisions of the CEAS.

This guide does not intend to prescribe a method for the provision of reception conditions the identification of vulnerability or the assessment and response to special needs. Nor does it endeavour to create a model for the perfect reception system. Its aim is to compile commonly agreed standards, indicators and good practices which already apply and/or are considered achievable across Member States in order to foster convergence. This guide does not cover detention as per Articles 10 to 13 RCD (2024).

The primary target group of the practical guide are national reception authorities' managers, policy makers and quality assurance officers. In addition, the tool provides guidance for operational officers working in the reception setting, including those tasked in supporting applicants in a vulnerable situation, as well as any other person working or involved in the field of reception of applicants for international protection in the EU context.

A number of different actors are often involved in the provision of material and non-material reception conditions, the identification of vulnerability and the assessment and response to special needs. This includes, for example, state, regional or local service providers as well as intergovernmental or civil society organisations (CSOs). Nevertheless, the ultimate responsibility for the application of the standards lies with Member States authorities.

⁽⁸⁾ Recital 64 RCD (2024).





Importantly, Member States may introduce or retain provisions in the field of reception for applicants or that are specific to applicants in a vulnerable situation that are more favourable than those included in this guide. Under no circumstances should this guide be understood as an invitation to lower existing standards, but rather as an encouragement to reach, as a minimum, the benchmarks developed herein.

Structure and format of the guide

The guide starts with an introductory section that provides background information, defines its purpose and structure and clarifies the concepts of standard, indicator, additional remark and good practice, as well as the terminology used (see [How to read the guide](#)).

The guide is then divided in two parts.

- **Part I – Reception system** includes sections [1. Organisation of the reception system](#) and [2. Modalities for the provision of reception conditions](#). The standards and indicators in this part focus on the set - up of the reception system at structural level when decision needs to be taken centrally.
- **Part II – Reception facility** includes sections [3. Facility administration](#), [4. Material reception conditions](#), [5. Non-material reception conditions](#), and [6. Identification, assessment and response to special needs](#). The standards and indicators in this part cover aspects related to the management of reception facilities and the day-to-day provision of reception conditions.

How to read the guide

When reading this guide, the following aspects should be taken into account.

- Each thematic section includes **standards, indicators, additional remarks** and **good practices** that should be read in accordance with the definitions provided below.

Standard	describes a commonly agreed practice that is considered achievable by all Member States. Standards aim to ensure the establishment of fair and efficient asylum and reception systems in compliance with the provisions set out in the Pact.
Indicator	is what can be observed and/or measured to demonstrate whether the operational standard is achieved. Indicators listed under each standard should be understood as cumulative without an order of hierarchy.
Additional remarks	highlights specific points of attention, particular circumstances or exceptions for applying the indicator. In light of the different national contexts, the applicability of the additional remarks might vary across Member States.
Good practice	refers to practices that Member States are encouraged to consider adopting in their national systems, even though they do not constitute commonly agreed practices.





- Each thematic section starts with an introductory part that defines its scope, outlines the methodological framework used to draft the standards and indicators and clarifies the terminology used therein.
- The **Legal reference** box under each thematic section refers to the relevant legislative instruments and articles when this is deemed helpful to guide the reader through the standards and indicators elaborated therein.
- At the time of drafting, the RCD (2024) has not yet entered into application and there is no jurisprudence from the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) specifically interpreting the provisions of the RCD (2024). Parts of the existing **jurisprudence** of the Court in relation to Directive 2013/33/EU will still be relevant where the underlying legal provisions and principles have been carried over into the new RCD (2024) and it is mentioned in relevant boxes.
- The guide uses a set of icons to help readers identifying the indicators that apply to specific target groups.

Each icon is associated with a specific target group and appears next to indicators that are relevant to that group. In some cases, multiple icons may appear if the indicator is relevant to more than one group.



In addition, there is one general icon, 'General Population' that represents indicators relevant to all four target groups. When this icon is shown, it means the indicator applies broadly and should be considered by all groups.



- An [Annex 1 - EUAA Resources](#) lists the available EUAA products to support Member States in meeting the standards and indicators elaborated.

Guiding principles

The principles listed below are integral to the standards and indicators included in this document. They should be observed when dealing with applicants in a vulnerable situation.

- **Transparency and accountability:** the provision of reception conditions should be based on transparent and fair rules and decision-making procedures. Notwithstanding the relevance of additional actors in the implementation of specific tasks in national reception systems (e.g. CSOs, private sector), the overall responsibility to achieve the highest levels of transparency and accountability lies with the reception authority. Authorities and staff are accountable to applicants and mechanisms to provide feedback in an informed manner are in place. Such accountability commits those providing support to applicants, especially those in a situation of vulnerability 'to





work within a framework of quality standards, principles, policies and guidelines, and promotes training and capacity building activities, ensuring the involvement of those assisted' ⁽⁹⁾.

- **Confidentiality:** all personnel working with applicants for international protection is bound by the principle of confidentiality as enshrined in national law in relation to any information obtained in the course of their work and in the application of these standards and indicators.
- **Data protection:** any processing activity (e.g. recording, storing, communicating) vis-à-vis the data related to an applicant must be in compliance with the general data protection regulation (GDPR) ⁽¹⁰⁾ and in accordance with national legislation. It is very important to ensure that the processing of personal data is lawful, adequate, relevant and proportionate to specific purposes in the context of the work carried out ⁽¹¹⁾. National rules governing the retention period of personal data should be respected.
- **Consideration for special needs:** provision of reception conditions must be adapted to the special needs of applicants. Applicants with special reception needs are not limited to the categories included in the non-exhaustive list ⁽¹²⁾ of Article 25 RCD (2024).
- **Do no harm:** when working with applicants it is very important that actions do not expose them to further harm ⁽¹³⁾.
- **Respect diversity:** authorities and staff working with applicants 'shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity' ⁽¹⁴⁾.
- **Integrity:** authorities and staff working with applicants must act with integrity by not abusing the power or the trust of the applicant and/or their family ⁽¹⁵⁾.

⁽⁹⁾ European Commission – Humanitarian Aid, *The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*, 2008, paragraph 45, https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/media/publications/consensus_en.pdf.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (OJ L 119, 4.5.2016) (GDPR), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016R0679>.

⁽¹¹⁾ See Article 5 GDPR.

⁽¹²⁾ The non-exhaustive list includes 'minors, unaccompanied minors, persons with disabilities, elderly people, pregnant women, lesbian, gay bisexual trans and intersex persons, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, for example victims of gender-based violence, of female genital mutilation, of child or forced marriage, or violence committed with a sexual, gender, racist or religious motive.

⁽¹³⁾ European Commission, *The European Consensus on humanitarian aid*, 2008, paragraph 42 see [footnote 9](#); Sphere, *The Sphere Handbook – Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response*, 2018, <https://handbook.spherestandards.org/en/sphere/#ch001>; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *Applying better Programming Initiative – Do no harm*, 2016, p. 10, https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/2016_ApplyingBPI-DoNoHarm.pdf.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Article 22 of the European Union, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, 26 October 2012, 2012/C 326/02 (EU Charter), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12012P%2FTXT>.

⁽¹⁵⁾ UNHCR, *UNHCR Emergency Handbook – Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, 11 October 2023, <https://emergency.unhcr.org/protection/protection-principles/protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-psea>; UN, *Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policies and Protocols*, <https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/policies-and-protocols>; European Commission, Migration and Home Affairs, *EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse – Child sexual abuse*, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/child-sexual-abuse_en.





- **Fundamental rights:** every human being must be valued and respected. This guide should be applied in accordance with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights ⁽¹⁶⁾ and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (EU Charter). The rights enshrined in the EU Charter that correspond to the rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights ⁽¹⁷⁾ must, in accordance with Article 52(3) EU Charter, be interpreted in the light of the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), including Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Fundamental rights

- **Human dignity:** it stipulates that a human being has an innate right to be valued, respected and to receive ethical treatment ⁽¹⁸⁾.
- **Right to life:** it prohibits the death penalty or execution and stipulates the duty to take preventive measures in situations where there is a real and immediate risk to the life of an individual ⁽¹⁹⁾.
- **Prohibition of torture:** it stipulates that no one can be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment ⁽²⁰⁾.
- **Equality and non-discrimination:** ‘[e]veryone is equal before the law’ ⁽²¹⁾ and ‘[a]ny discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited’ ⁽²²⁾.
- **Principle of non-refoulement:** it is the obligation of states to refrain from expelling or returning a person in any manner whatsoever to a situation where they may face persecution and/or torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment ⁽²³⁾.
- **Right to asylum:** everyone has the ‘right to seek and enjoy protection’ ⁽²⁴⁾ from persecution in other countries. Member States must ensure that each person, whether an adult or a child, has the right to make an application for international protection on their own behalf or through their relative or representative ⁽²⁵⁾.

⁽¹⁶⁾ UN General Assembly, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3712c.html>.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Council of Europe, *European Convention on Human Rights, as amended by Protocols Nos. 11, 14 and 15*, ETS No. 005, 4 November 1950, <https://www.refworld.org/legal/agreements/coe/1950/en/18688>.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Article 1 EU Charter.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Article 2 EU Charter.

⁽²⁰⁾ Article 4 EU Charter.

⁽²¹⁾ Article 20 EU Charter.

⁽²²⁾ Article 21 EU Charter.

⁽²³⁾ Article 33(1) UN General Assembly, Convention relating to the status of refugees, Geneva, 28 July 1951, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 189, p. 137, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3be01b964.html>.

⁽²⁴⁾ Article 14(1) Universal Declaration of Human Rights, see [footnote 16](#).

⁽²⁵⁾ Article 18 EU Charter.





- **Best interests of the child:** it is a threefold concept which includes a substantive right, a fundamental and interpretative legal principle and a rule of procedure that is aimed at ensuring the full and effective enjoyment of all the rights recognised in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and of which the primary consideration is to ensure the holistic development of the child ⁽²⁶⁾.

Note on terminology

This note clarifies the main recurrent concepts in the guide, providing some key definitions to guide the reader across the standards and indicators.

Accommodation/reception centre v. accommodation/reception facility

The applicability of some of the standards and indicators elaborated in this guide varies depending on whether the physical place where applicants are housed is exclusively a collective facility or rather includes other forms of accommodation, for examples private houses.

To reflect this distinction, the terms ‘accommodation centre’ and ‘reception centre’ should not be understood as synonyms of the terms ‘accommodation facility’ or ‘reception facility’. For the purpose of this guide, the following definitions apply:

- ‘accommodation centre’ or ‘reception centre’: any place used for the **collective** housing of applicants (as per Article 2(10) RCD (2024)) that guarantees an adequate standard of living (as per Article 19(2) RCD (2024));
- ‘accommodation facility’ or ‘reception facility’: any place for the housing of applicants, (**collective or not**). It encompasses accommodation/reception centres as well as private houses, flats, hotels or other premises adapted for housing applicants (as per Article 20(1)(c) RCD (2024)).
- In light of the above definitions and given their broader meaning, ‘accommodation facility’ and ‘reception facility’ are used more frequently to indicate any place for the housing of applicants. The term ‘accommodation centre’ or ‘reception centre’ is only used when the standards and indicators specifically apply to collective reception facilities only.

Reception officer

‘Reception officer (or staff)’ refers to practitioners who are in direct contact with applicants for international protection in a reception context, irrespective of their employer (the state,

⁽²⁶⁾ Recitals 35, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 62 and Articles 26 and 27 RCD (2024) referring to the best interests of the child; European Migration Network Glossary, navigate to letter B for the definition of ‘best interests of the child’, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary_en; Article 3 UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1577, p. 3, 20 November 1989, <https://www.refworld.org/legal/agreements/unga/1989/en/18815>; Article 24 EU Charter.





a CSO, a private contractor, a municipality, etc.). Reception officers can include social workers, education and health care staff, registration officers, interpreters, facility managers, administration/coordination staff.

Human resources

‘Human resources’ encompasses both employees who operate in reception facilities in direct contact with applicants for international protection (reception officers), and employees who are not in a direct contact with applicants, but contribute to the functioning of the reception system (e.g. admin support, cleaning personnel).

Reception officers working with children

‘Reception officer (or staff) working with children’ refers to any profile of staff working with children, including those who are not specialised in child protection.

Child protection officer

‘Child protection officer (or staff)’ refers to a child protection specialist. A child protection officer is therefore a professional working for a competent authority or other organisation engaging with a child, family members and guardians directly to uphold the best interests of the child and whose roles it is to ensure that a child’s needs are assessed and addressed in a timely, child-centred, and rights-based manner to ensure a child’s overall protection and safety and to prevent and manage risks to the extent possible. Depending on the national context, child protection officer may be affiliated with a dedicated child protection authority, a juvenile court, a social welfare office, or another relevant administrative body tasked with safeguarding children’s rights.

Persons in a vulnerable situation

The preferred terms to refer to applicants who are in need of special reception conditions are ‘persons in a vulnerable situation’ or ‘person in a situation of vulnerability’ rather than ‘vulnerable persons’ to avoid the risk of stigmatisation.

Representative

The term ‘representative’ is used in line with the meaning of Article 2(13) RCD (2024), in relation to unaccompanied minors and also for adults without legal capacity.

Residents

The focus of this guide is on applicants for international protection. However, in some sections (1.1 Data collection, 1.9.2 Staff Capacity, 3.1 Security and Safety, 3.3 Individual File, 3.4 House rules, and 3.5 Complaint and Response Mechanism), the term ‘resident’ is used since some elements are relevant for all people living in the reception facility despite their legal status (e.g. applicants, persons who received a final decision rejecting their application, persons who were granted protection, persons awaiting a transfer, beneficiaries of temporary protection where relevant).





Part I – Reception system





1. Organisation of the reception system

1.1. Data collection

‘Data collection’ is the systematic process of gathering and acquiring information from various sources with the purpose of generating meaningful insights and knowledge. It involves the collection, organisation, recording and transmission of relevant data for analysis and decision-making.

In the field of reception, data collection may serve different purposes:

- to identify the needs of applicants in order to provide adequate reception conditions in compliance with Articles 20, 22, and 25 RCD (2024);
- to assess and optimise the effectiveness of the reception system at a central and/or local level, including for the purpose of preparedness and contingency planning, as provided in Article 32 RCD (2024);
- to enable authorities to make evidence-based decisions about the organisation of reception systems and allocation of necessary resources, as prescribed by Articles 7 and 33 RCD (2024);
- to enable assessment and control of the level of reception conditions, as prescribed by Article 31 RCD (2024).

To achieve these objectives, the competent reception authority should have access to the information below.

- Data on the accommodation facilities, including information on the number and typology of reception facilities, indication of which target group can be accommodated (e.g. families, single men, single women, unaccompanied children) and information on the capacity of each facility.
- Data on the number of persons accommodated, including information on their legal status, profiles, family composition, assessed special reception needs, and time-stamped data related to the day of arrival and departure from the reception facility. Data on occupancy needs to be collected for all residents, including persons to whom protection has already been granted or denied and who are still hosted in reception facilities and persons awaiting a transfer to another EU+ country.
- Contact details of the residents, including their current address, telephone number and email address if available, to reach out to them in case of need, including for verification of presence.

With these elements in place, Member States authorities can have an overview of their reception capacity and occupancy, enabling them to make more efficient operational decisions to: better manage their reception system; better plan for adequate reception conditions for all applicants, including those with special reception needs; better respond to crisis situations.





As outlined above, the collection of detailed data at a local and/or central level is for operational purposes only. Based on such data, Member States' reception authorities can perform an internal assessment and plan their operational needs accordingly. This becomes possible only if data on places available in each facility and applicants accommodated or in need of accommodation are regularly updated and timely transmitted by the reception facilities to the competent authorities at a central or local level.

Furthermore, reception facilities should be ready to transmit to the competent authorities additional data that may be needed for other purposes, when so required by national law. This can include, for instance, data related to financial or material allowances and services granted to each applicant.

Data protection considerations and compliance with the GDPR and with Article 8 EU Charter are particularly relevant for the standards and indicators elaborated in this section. Member States must ensure that only the data strictly necessary for the provision and monitoring of reception conditions is collected and that it is processed solely for clearly defined and lawful purposes, in line with the principles of data minimisation and purpose limitation (see also Section [6.5. Confidentiality](#)). Applicants' data protection rights must be ensured at all times, including the right to be informed about the collection, storage and use of their data and the right to access it.



Articles [7](#), [22](#), [25](#), [31](#), [32](#), [33](#) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 1. A centralised data management system is in place and updated.

Indicator 1. Data on reception facilities and on the capacity of each facility are available at central or local level and are updated on a regular basis, ideally on daily basis.



- **Additional remarks:** data on reception facilities should include information on the number of accommodation facilities, their location, typology, and capacity status (regular, buffer, emergency ⁽²⁷⁾) as well as indication on the target group that can be accommodated therein (e.g. families, single men, single women, unaccompanied children, etc).

This indicator, in the part requiring an update on a regular basis, should be read with flexibility in situations falling within the scope of Article 20(10) RCD (2024).

⁽²⁷⁾ Emergency capacity refers to additional capacity which can be deployed in a short time in situations referred to in Article 20(10), point (b) and needs to be updated only in case of changes.





Indicator 2. Data on applicants accommodated are available at central or local level and are updated on a regular basis, ideally on daily basis.



- **Additional remarks:** data on applicants for international protection accommodated in the reception system should include general information on the applicant (e.g. age, sex, citizenship) and on their legal status (e.g. applicants, persons who received a final decision rejecting their application, persons who were granted protection, persons awaiting a transfer, beneficiaries of temporary protection where relevant), their profile (e.g. single men, single women, unaccompanied child, family) and possible special reception needs (e.g. individual accommodation, facilities for single women, accessible accommodation, special diet requirements, access to specialised medical services close to the facility). In addition, data should include for each applicant the date of arrival and the date of departure from the reception facility. In the latter case, data should also indicate the reason for departure (e.g. abandonment, transfer to another reception facility, end of procedure etc.). In case of abandonment, the day in which the abandonment was determined should be recorded.

Contact details of the residents (current address, telephone number, email address) should be collected to be able to contact the applicant in case of need, including for verification of presence.

For the notion of abandonment, see also Section [2.3. Reduction or withdrawal of reception conditions](#).

Indicator 3. Data on applicants residing outside reception facilities and receiving financial allowances and/or vouchers to cover all or part of material reception conditions, are available at central or local level and are updated on a regular basis.



- **Additional remarks:** for this indicator, see also Section [2.1. Material reception conditions through financial allowances or vouchers](#).

Indicator 4. Data on individual payments of financial allowances or vouchers to cover material reception conditions are available at central or local level and are updated on a regular basis.



Indicator 5. Data on applicants requested to cover, contribute to, or refund the costs of their reception are collected at central or local level and are updated on a regular basis.



- **Additional remarks:** for this indicator, see also Section [2.2. Assessment of the applicant's resources and contribution to reception conditions](#).



Standard 2. The reception facility maintains up-to-date data ready to be transmitted to the competent authorities when requested.

Indicator 1. The reception facility maintains an updated inventory of the essential equipment in the reception facility and in the rooms.



- **Additional remarks:** *essential equipment in the reception facility includes cooking facilities, sanitary equipment, furniture, communication equipment (phones, Wi-Fi, etc.). Essential equipment in the rooms includes furniture. If the equipment needs to be replaced, this should be indicated in the inventory.*

Indicator 2. When falling under its competence, the reception facility maintains time-stamped data relating to financial or material allowances and services granted to each applicant.



Indicator 3. The reception facility maintains data on any critical incidents that occur in its premises.



- **Additional remarks:** *for this indicator, see also Section [3.1. Security and safety](#).*

Indicator 4. The reception facility maintains data on the complaints lodged by applicants and on the actions taken to address them.



- **Additional remarks:** *for this indicator, see also Section [3.5. Complaint and response mechanism](#) and Section [6.4. Response](#).*



Practical example – How to organise a robust data management system

An efficient data management system should be primarily able to provide reception authorities with a real-time overview of the capacity and occupancy of their reception system. Such a system should embed privacy into its design and IT architecture and, when needed, it should undergo a data protection impact assessment. It should enable reception authorities to effectively assign every new applicant in need of accommodation to an available place taking into account, where applicable, the allocation to a geographical area and the applicant's special reception needs. As such, the data management system should include detailed information on available beds in each reception facility and on applicants to be accommodated. In addition, the system should record information on possible restrictions of freedom of movement applied to the applicant.

The following serves as an example to illustrate how to organise the data management system.

- If applicable, assign a unique identifier to the geographical area.
- Assign a unique identifier to each reception facility, including information on the typology.





- Assign a unique identifier to each room in each reception facility specifying for each room the capacity, size and an indication of the target population that can be received (e.g. families, single men, single women, unaccompanied children).
- Assign a unique identifier to each bed.
- Ensure that the data management system is capable of distinguishing between beds that are available for the general population and those that are dedicated to a specific population only (e.g. unaccompanied children, single women).
- Ensure that the data management system is capable of distinguishing between beds that are unavailable because occupied, reserved, unavailable due to family unity, technical reasons, co-living reasons etc. When a bed is unavailable due to malfunctions/repairs in the room/facility, an indication on the date it is expected to become available again can be included.
- Assign a unique identifier to each applicant, including information on citizenship, age, gender, legal status, duration of stay in reception, profile (e.g. single men, single women, unaccompanied children).
- Assign a unique identifier to each family, in accordance with the definition of Article 2 RCD (2024) and in line with the principle of family unity.

If separate data management systems are used for collecting data on the reception facilities and on the applicants accommodated, the data sets can be linked and cross-referenced, for instance, through the occupied beds.

1.2. (Re)allocation mechanism to a suitable accommodation facility

Without prejudice to the existence of national dispersal systems regulating the distribution of applicants across the territory of Member States, allocation and re-allocation of an applicant to a suitable accommodation facility should be implemented in line with Articles 7, 14, 20, and Articles 26(5) and 27(9) RCD (2024), taking into account the principle of family unity and best interests of the child as well as respect for any special needs of the applicant. Importantly, compliance with these principles is not only relevant upon entry into the reception system but also at the moment of reallocating or transferring applicants to a different reception facility. In line with Article 20(7) and Article 27(9) RCD (2024), transfers of applicants to another facility should only take place when necessary.

When the provision of material reception conditions is subject to the allocation of the applicant to a designated reception facility in line with article 7, Member States have a mechanism to verify the actual residence of the applicant. In case of non-compliance material reception conditions normally available might not be provided.

The element of transport of the applicant to the reception facility (transport from the place of registration to the assigned accommodation facility or transport between two reception facilities in case of a transfer) is important for an effective (re)allocation system. However,



the transfers of applicants from one reception facility to another must take place only when necessary. This section does not apply to transport aimed at enabling applicants to access relevant services located outside the accommodation facility. Similarly, this section does not apply either to transfers operated between countries, e.g. under the Asylum and Migration Management Regulation ⁽²⁸⁾ (AMMR).



Articles [7\(3\)](#), [14](#), [20](#), [26\(5\)](#), [27\(9\)](#) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 3. A mechanism is in place to (re)allocate applicants to available suitable accommodation facilities taking into account their needs.

Indicator 1. Guidelines and criteria are in place to determine the most suitable accommodation in respect of the special needs and objective factors of the applicant



- **Additional remarks:** *objective factors could refer to the cultural, linguistic and religious background of the person, the gender of the applicant (e.g. transgender persons) and individual considerations linked to, for example, employment, vocational training or existing family links.*

Indicator 2. Data on capacity and occupancy, in particular on the availability of reception places suitable for applicants with special needs, is available at central or local level.



- **Additional remarks:** *see also Section [1.1. Data collection](#).*

Indicator 3. The outcome of the assessment of special needs is taken into account in the (re)allocation process.



- **Additional remarks:** *Member States can use standardised templates to transfer information on the special needs in respect of confidentiality and data protection requirements.*

See also Section [6.3. Assessment](#).

⁽²⁸⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1351 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on asylum and migration management, amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1147 and (EU) 2021/1060 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 (OJ L, 2024/1351, 22.5.2024), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1351/oj>.

Indicator 4. Reception facilities receive information on the (re)allocation of applicants in particular of persons with special needs, before the arrival of the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** *receiving information in advance allows the reception facility to adequately prepare for the arrival and the accommodation of applicants.*

Indicator 5. There is a possibility to transfer an applicant as a result of identified special reception needs.



- **Additional remarks:** *in particular, safety considerations e.g. in the case of victims of trafficking in human beings (THB), sexual and gender-based violence, torture or other serious forms of psychological and physical violence could necessitate the reallocation of the applicant to a different reception facility (see also Section [6.3. Assessment](#)).*

Indicator 6. When an applicant is reallocated to a more suitable reception facility, the individual file of the applicant, in particular of persons with special needs, is transferred to ensure the continuity of treatment with respect of data protection and confidentiality requirements.



- **Additional remarks:** *see also Section [6.5. Confidentiality](#).*

Indicator 7. Unaccompanied children are accommodated with adult relatives, in a foster family, in accommodation centres with special provisions for minors or in other accommodation suitable for their age and needs.



Indicator 8. A person undergoing age assessment is accommodated in an appropriate facility or dedicated area and benefits from all the safeguards for minors as listed in the RCD (2024).



- **Additional remarks:** *in deciding where to accommodate a person claiming to be a child, authorities take into account the individual circumstances and assess potential risks for both the person concerned and the other residents, be them unaccompanied children or adults. Alternatively, authorities can accommodate persons undergoing age assessment in dedicated facilities or dedicated areas within a facilities, to separate them from both unaccompanied children and unrelated adults.*

Indicator 9. The transfer of unaccompanied children should be limited to a minimum and only occur when serving the best interests of the child, for example for better access to family members or educational services.



- **Additional remarks:** *in particular, safety considerations such as in the cases of children who were victims of THB, sexual and gender-based violence, torture or other serious forms of psychological and physical violence, could necessitate the re-allocation to a different reception facility if the special needs become apparent at a later stage. See also Section [3.1. Security and safety](#).*



Indicator 10. Unaccompanied children turning 18 are allowed to stay in the same place/area if possible.



- **Additional remarks:** special measures should be taken place when transferring an unaccompanied child turning 18 to an adult reception facility. The transfer should be carefully organised together with both the reception facilities and the unaccompanied child.

Good practice

Families with children attending school are transferred at the end of the school year during the school holidays.

The transfer of unaccompanied children attending schools (e.g. in downsizing situations) is organised taking into account continuity of education, the child's personal curriculum and the timeline of the school year.

Standard 4. An effective mechanism is in place to prioritise the (re)allocation of applicants with special needs.

Indicator 1. Criteria on the basis of safety and health considerations define priority cases for (re)allocation.



- **Additional remarks:** safety considerations that necessitate priority (re)allocation include (non-exhaustive list): domestic violence, victims of THB, sexual and gender-based violence, torture or other serious forms of psychological and physical violence.

Indicator 2. (Re)allocation of priority cases is done as early as possible and in line with national law.



- **Additional remarks:** immediate (re)allocation implies that the procedure for (re)allocation starts once the special needs related to the safety and health considerations have been assessed and decided upon.

Depending on the national system, (re)allocation can take several days. Member States should regulate the maximum duration to minimise risks, prevent deterioration of physical and mental health conditions and prevent life-threatening situations.

Good practice

A number of reception places remain vacant to allow for immediate allocation of applicants in a vulnerable situation in specific circumstances.



Standard 5. In the (re)allocation process, family unity is respected and, when children are involved, (re)allocation is in line with the principle of the best interests of the child.

Indicator 1. Family members as defined in Article 2 RCD (2024) are accommodated together with their agreement.



- **Additional remarks:** *the agreement of family members to be accommodated together is obtained on a voluntary basis. Safety considerations should be taken into account to allow for possible exceptions.*

Indicator 2. Unaccompanied children who are siblings (as defined in Article 27(9) RCD (2024)) are accommodated together with their agreement.



- **Additional remarks:** *the agreement of siblings to be accommodated together is obtained on a voluntary basis, taking into account the age and the gender of the siblings and their best interests. If an unaccompanied child is with their adult sibling(s), they can be exceptionally accommodated with their adult sibling(s) in adult reception facilities taking into account the best interests of the child, age, gender and degree of maturity. The best interests of the child must be continually assessed and monitored by social workers, other reception officers and their representatives. Safety considerations should be taken into account to allow for possible exceptions. In order to avoid separation, if an unaccompanied child is transferred, their sibling(s) should be transferred too.*

Indicator 3. Families with children are accommodated together, provided that this is in line with the best interests of the child.



- **Additional remarks:** *special attention should be paid to the situation of married children.*

Indicator 4. Unaccompanied children who are married and are parents can be accommodated together with their spouses and their children if this is in line with the best interests of the unaccompanied child and in accordance with relevant national law.



- **Additional remarks:** *Accommodation with a spouse is only permissible if fully lawful under national law and in line with international child protection norms⁽²⁹⁾. Where concerns exist, the child must be referred to child protection services immediately.*

The best interests of the child must be continually assessed and monitored by social workers, other reception officers and the child's representative in order to identify possible sexual exploitation, forced marriage or THB. Unaccompanied children below the national age of consent must be accommodated separately from their spouse.

In cases of child marriage, a multidisciplinary team needs to assess the best interests of the child immediately after arrival. The assessment should involve a team comprising at least a social worker, a medical professional and a representative. If the

⁽²⁹⁾ See UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1989, see [footnote 26](#).



assessment is not done upon arrival, measures should be put in place so as to protect the unaccompanied child.

Unaccompanied children who are single parents should be accommodated together with their child/children, taking into account the principle of the best interests of the child (including the best interests of the child who is also a parent). The best interests of the child must be continually assessed and monitored by social workers, other reception officers and the child's representative. Safety considerations should be taken into account to allow for possible exceptions.

Indicator 5. Where possible and appropriate, family unity should be respected with regard to members of the broader family.



- **Additional remarks:** *depending on the national arrangements and upon agreement of the applicants, members of the broader family (including relatives outside the definition of Article 2(3) RCD (2024)) could also be accommodated together.*

Indicator 6. A maximum of one family is allocated per bedroom.



- **Additional remarks:** *The scope of the family definition would depend on the practice of the Member State concerned.*

Good practice

Provide special reception facilities with day care/nursery in order to allow children who are also parents to attend school.

Standard 6. The applicant's transport to the accommodation facility is organised and coordinated in an effective way.

Indicator 1. A mechanism is in place to regulate the applicant's transport to the accommodation facility.



- **Additional remarks:** *the mechanism is applicable to different situations, such as transport from the place of registration to the assigned reception facility as well as transport between two reception facilities in case of a transfer.*

Indicator 2. The mechanism specifies the modalities in which the applicant should reach the accommodation facility.



- **Additional remarks:** *reception authorities provide the applicant with information and means to reach the accommodation facility.*

Information on how to reach the facility must include the address and the related contact point.

Means to reach the facility can include the direct organisation of transport by the Member State or the provision of related costs (e.g. through reimbursement or tickets).



If the receiving facility is located within reasonable walking distance, the applicant can be requested to reach it with their own means. The assessment of ‘reasonable walking distance’ takes into account different elements, including the local environment and safe available infrastructure for walking.

See also Section [1.7. Location](#).

Transport to the reception facility must be adapted to the applicant’s special needs.

Indicator 3. The mechanism specifies a reasonable timing within which the applicant should reach the accommodation facility.



- **Additional remarks:** *to determine what constitutes ‘reasonable time’, different parameters should be taken into account, including the available transport options and the geographical distance.*

Indicator 4. The mechanism regulates the coordination process between the receiving accommodation facility and the reception authority.



- **Additional remarks:** *reception authorities notify the receiving accommodation facility of the applicant’s expected arrival and of any special reception needs. The notification of expected arrival should reach the facility before the applicant arrives.*

Similarly, the receiving accommodation facility notifies the reception authorities upon the applicant’s arrival/non-arrival.

Notifications can be done in different ways, including by encoding it into a centralised database.

For this indicator, see also Section [1.1. Data collection](#).

Indicator 5. Transportation to the reception facility is adapted to the special needs of the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** *examples include the provision of special transportation (social and medical escort).*

Standard 7. When the provision of material reception conditions is subject to the allocation of the applicant to a designated reception facility, Member States have a mechanism to verify the actual residence of the applicant.

Indicator 1. The applicants’ presence in the accommodation facility is verified on a regular basis.



- **Additional remarks:** *e.g. through an entry-exit system, reporting, food distribution check.*

For this indicator see also Section [1.1. Data collection](#).





Indicator 2. The applicant is informed about the allocation to a specific reception facility and of the mechanism for verifying the actual residence.



1.3. Allocation to a geographical area

As part of the mechanisms available to Member States to manage their national reception systems, there is the possibility of allocating applicants to a geographical area in which they can move freely ⁽³⁰⁾. This is to ensure the efficient processing of applications for international protection or to distribute applicants in a geographically homogenous manner within the country. Member States can combine the allocation to a geographical area with mechanisms to verify that the applicants are residing in the allocated accommodation ⁽³¹⁾.

No formal administrative decisions are required to allocate an applicant to a geographical area. However, Member States need to keep track of the geographical allocation of applicants, preferably in an integrated case management system and must provide relevant information to the applicant on the assigned geographical area and its boundaries.

The geographical area must be sufficiently large, allow access to infrastructure and not affect the applicants' private life ⁽³²⁾. Within the area, applicants must have effective access to all reception conditions and to procedural guarantees. If it has been established that the applicant has not been granted those rights within the assigned geographical area, they need to be reallocated to a different suitable area.

If an applicant wants to leave temporarily the allocated geographical area, they can request permission to do so. When the request is for duly justified, urgent and serious family reasons or for necessary medical treatment which is not available within the geographical area, Member States have to grant permission. Each request should be assessed individually, objectively and impartially. If permission is not granted, the applicant must be informed in writing and they can appeal. In case of appeal, free legal assistance and representation are to be made available to ensure effective access to justice. The applicant is not required to ask for permission to attend appointments with the authorities and courts outside the geographical area to which they are allocated, but they have to notify the competent authorities in advance.

To allocate applicants to a geographical area, Member States must lay out in their national law the conditions governing the mechanism for such allocation and inform the European Commission and the EUAA accordingly.

⁽³⁰⁾ Article 8 RCD (2024).

⁽³¹⁾ Article 7 RCD (2024).

⁽³²⁾ Article 8(3) RCD (2024). On the concept of sphere of private life, see also European Court of Human Rights, *Guide on Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights - Right to respect for private and family life*, February 2025, https://ks.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr-ks/guide_art_8_eng.





Recital 18 RCD (2024)
Articles 7, 8, 23(2)(a), 29 RCD (2024)
Articles 9(4), 41(1)(e) APR

Standards and indicators

Standard 8. In case Member States allocate applicants to a geographical area, they ensure that applicants have effective access to their rights under the RCD (2024) and to the procedural guarantees in the asylum procedure within the assigned geographical area.

Indicator 1. Applicants can move freely within the geographical area.



Indicator 2. The geographical area is sufficiently large and allows access to necessary public infrastructure.



• **Additional remarks:** *necessary public infrastructure should include at least the following:*

- *access to health and employment centres (if applicable), education and vocational training;*
- *services such as banks, post office, supermarkets.*

Indicator 3. The allocation to a geographical area allows applicants to develop relationships with others, including relationships of a professional or business nature.



Indicator 4. A mechanism is in place to assess the suitability of geographical areas for the allocation of applicants.



Indicator 5. Guidelines are in place to ensure family unity when allocating applicants to a geographical area.



Indicator 6. Within the geographical area, applicants with special needs have access to adequate support.



• **Additional remarks:** *if applicants cannot access adequate support within the assigned geographical area, they need to be reallocated to a different suitable area.*

Indicator 7. A mechanism is in place to match the needs of the applicants with a suitable geographical area.



Good practice

In the allocation of applicants to a geographical area, consider whether the applicant has members of the broader family in the country and whether it is possible to allocate them to an area close to their family.



Standard 9. Information is provided to the applicant on their allocation to a geographical area, including on the geographical boundaries of that area, on their rights and their obligations.

Indicator 1. Information is provided as soon as possible and no later than three days from the making of the application or within the timeframe for its registration.



- **Additional remarks:** see also Section [5.1. Provision of information and counselling](#).

Indicator 2. Information is provided on the mechanisms to verify residence in the assigned geographical area.



Indicator 3. Information is provided on the possibility to request permission to leave the area and on the obligation to notify to the reception authorities of any appointments with other authorities.



Indicator 4. Information is provided on the consequences of leaving the area without permission.



Good practice

An authorisation form to request permission to leave the geographical area is provided by the authority to the applicant.

Standard 10. Upon request of the applicant to temporarily leave the geographical area, Member State assess the request individually, objectively and impartially.

Indicator 1. A mechanism for applicants to temporarily leave the geographical area is in place and includes clear processes, timeline and a prioritisation system.



- **Additional remarks:** in case of appointments with the authorities and courts, the applicant only needs to notify in advance the competent authority without asking for permission.

The prioritisation system ensures that urgent situations are dealt with timely.

Indicator 2. Criteria to define duly justified, urgent and serious family reasons, or necessary medical treatment are in place to ensure the granting of the permission.



Indicator 3. If permission is not granted, the written decision indicates to which authority an appeal may be lodged and within what time limit from its notification.



- **Additional remarks:** if the appeal or a review is done before a judicial authority in line with national law, free legal assistance and representation is made available to the applicant, in line with Article 29(2) RCD (2024). See also Section [1.5. Appeals](#).



Standard 11. When the provision of material reception conditions is subject to the allocation of the applicant to a designated geographical area, Member States have a mechanism in place to verify that the applicant resides in that geographical area and to exchange information on non-compliance with relevant actors.

Indicator 1. The applicants' residence in the geographical area is verified on a regular basis.



- **Additional remarks:** when the allocation to a geographical area is combined with the implementation of Article 7 RCD (2024), the same mechanisms to verify that the applicant is residing in the allocated accommodation is used (e.g. an entry-exit system, regular reporting, food distribution check). Other forms to verify residence of the applicant in the geographical area can be used, e.g. virtual reporting with geo-localisation.

See also Section [1.1. Data collection](#) and Section [1.2. \(Re\)allocation mechanism to a suitable accommodation facility](#).

Indicator 2. When an applicant leaves the geographical area without permission, channels and procedures are in place to exchange information between relevant actors.



- **Additional remarks:** relevant actors can include reception authorities or implementing partners, asylum authorities and law enforcement (e.g. local police, border guards, etc.).

The reception authorities swiftly communicate to the law enforcement (e.g. local police, border guards, etc.) where the whereabouts of the applicant are unknown in order to locate the applicant and inform the services providing support to the applicant.

The allocated geographical area is indicated in the applicant's documents referred to in Article 6 RCD (2024) and Article 29(1) Asylum Procedure Regulation (APR) ⁽³³⁾.

1.4. Restrictions of freedom of movement

As part of the mechanisms available to Member States to manage their national reception systems, there is the possibility to apply restrictions of freedom of movement to applicants. Member States must transpose Article 9 RCD (2024) into their national law.

The restriction of freedom of movement is translated into the decision to assign an applicant to a mandatory place of residence as the only place where they can benefit from material

⁽³³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1348 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 establishing a common procedure for international protection in the Union and repealing Directive 2013/32/EU (OJ L, 2024/1348, 22.5.2024), <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1348/oj>.





reception conditions in the country. Additionally, Member States can also require the applicant to regularly report to the competent authorities at a specified time or at reasonable intervals.

It is important to highlight that both the assigned residence and the reporting obligations should not disproportionately affect the rights of the applicant under the RCD (2024) and that the applicant can request permission to reside temporarily outside the specific designated place. Member States must take decisions objectively and impartially on such requests for permissions.

If the applicant fails to comply with any of the decided measures of restrictions of freedom of movement, the following consequences may apply:

- no material reception conditions are available at any other place (Article 9(1) RCD (2024));
- the material reception conditions received in that place may be reduced (Article 23(2)(a) RCD(2024));
- the applicant may be detained (Article 10(4)(c) RCD (2024));
- the application is considered implicitly withdrawn (Article 41(1)(e) APR) in case of repeated non-compliance with reporting obligations or a failure to remain available, and if the person cannot demonstrate that that failure to remain available was due to circumstances beyond their control.

The decision on the application of restrictions of freedom of movement must be guided by the principles of necessity and proportionality.

The application of restrictions of freedom of movement is mandatory in the asylum border procedure (Article 43 and Articles 54(1) and 45(1) APR). Under the asylum border procedure applicants are required by the Member State to reside near the external border, in a transit zone or at other designated areas. Therefore, in this context, Member States do not need to assess the necessity of the restrictions of freedom of movement but only their proportionality ⁽³⁴⁾.

The application of restrictions of freedom of movement is optional in the regular and accelerated asylum procedures other than its mandatory application in the asylum border procedure.

In this case, the necessity of applying restrictions of movement is decided at national level and needs to be assessed against two criteria:

1. whether there are reasons related to public order;
2. whether the decision aims to effectively prevent the applicant from absconding.

⁽³⁴⁾ For more information on the application of the asylum border procedure. see EUAA, *Practical Guide on the Asylum Border Procedure*, March 2026, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/practical-guide-asylum-border-procedure>.





Reasons related to public order can relate either to the applicant's own situation (e.g. violent behaviour) or to the general situation in which the applicant finds themselves (e.g. mass arrivals, riots in the area, major public event nearby).

Reasons related to the risk of absconding are to be assessed looking at the wider situation of the applicant, in particular when applicants have not complied with their obligations under the AMMR (e.g. obligation to remain in the Member State where they are required to be present) or in cases where applicants who have been recently transferred after absconding to another Member State ⁽³⁵⁾. Factors to consider are the previous history of compliance with procedural requirements, degree of cooperation, active participation in community or support networks, links in the Member State, and whether the application for international protection has been rejected as inadmissible or manifestly unfounded.

When restriction of freedom of movement is mandatory and when a Member State opts for applying restrictions of freedom of movement whose necessity has been established, the principle of proportionality needs to be ensured. The decision must be taken on an individual basis considering the relevant aspects of the individual situation of the applicant, including their special reception needs.

The applicant must be informed in writing, in language they understand, of the decision to apply restrictions of freedom of movement in their case. The decision must detail the reasons in fact and law (if applicable) for applying the restrictions, the consequences of non-compliance, and how to appeal or request to review.

Decisions regarding restrictions on freedom of movement may be appealed. In addition to the appeal – but not instead of it – Member States may provide for an *ex officio* review to be conducted by a judicial authority if the decision has been applied for more than two months.

In accordance with recital 19 RCD (2024), decisions restricting freedom of movement must not result in detention – defined as ‘the confinement of an applicant by a Member State within a particular place, where the applicant is deprived of his or her freedom of movement’ ⁽³⁶⁾.

The RCD (2024) draws a clear distinction between ‘restrictions of freedom of movement’ (Article 9) and ‘deprivation of freedom of movement’ (Articles 10 and 11), attaching different conditions and safeguards to each case. If the restrictions imposed, considered individually or cumulatively, amount to a situation comparable to deprivation of liberty, such measures constitute *de facto* detention, regardless of the way they are labelled in national systems. For specific examples, see case-law below.



Recitals 19, 22 RCD (2024)
Articles 9, 10(4) and 29 RCD (2024)
Article 9(4) and 41(1)(e) APR

⁽³⁵⁾ See Article 17(4) AMMR, recitals 15 and 16 RCD (2024) and Article 9(1) RCD (2024).

⁽³⁶⁾ Article 2(9) RCD (2024).







CJEU, *FMS v OIF* ⁽³⁷⁾
 ECtHR, *R.R. v Hungary* ⁽³⁸⁾
 ECtHR, *J.R. and others v Greece* ⁽³⁹⁾
 ECtHR, *Amuur v France* ⁽⁴⁰⁾
 ECtHR, *Ilias and Ahmed v Hungary* ⁽⁴¹⁾

Standards and indicators

Standard 12. The decision to apply restrictions of freedom of movement is necessary, proportionate and takes into account relevant aspects of the individual situation of the applicant, including their special reception needs.

Indicator 1. When restrictions of freedom of movement are applied, Article 9 RCD (2024) is transposed into national law. 

- **Additional remarks:** *when Member States intend to apply the optional restrictions of freedom of movement in the regular or accelerated asylum procedures (in addition to their mandatory application in the asylum border procedure), criteria for assessing the risk of absconding and the reasons related to public order are also identified.*

Indicator 2. When restrictions of freedom of movement are applied in the regular or accelerated asylum procedures, the decision of restrictions of freedom of movement is taken for reasons related to public order or to prevent the risk of absconding. 

- **Additional remarks:** *this corresponds to the application of the principle of necessity.*

⁽³⁷⁾ Judgment of the Court of Justice of 14 May 2020, *FMS and others v Országos Idegenrendészeti Főigazgatóság Dél-alföldi Regionális Igazgatóság, Országos Idegenrendészeti Főigazgatóság*, joint cases C-924/19 PPU and C-925/19 PPU, EU:C:2020:367, paragraphs 216-231, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/SUM/?uri=CELEX:62019CJ0924_RES&qid=1771326283624&rid=1. Summary available in the EUAA Case Law Database, <https://caselaw.euaa.europa.eu/pages/viewcaselaw.aspx?CaseLawID=1092>. See also Judgment of the Court of Justice of 17 December 2020, *Commission v Hungary*, case C-808/18, paragraphs 157-166, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/SUM/?uri=CELEX:62018CJ0808_RES&qid=1771326455036&rid=1. Summary available in the EUAA Case Law Database, <https://caselaw.euaa.europa.eu/pages/viewcaselaw.aspx?CaseLawID=1428>.

⁽³⁸⁾ Judgment of the ECtHR of 2 March 2021, *R.R. and Others v Hungary*, No. 36037/17, ECLI:CE:ECHR:2021:0302JUD003603717, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-208406%22%5D%7D>. Summary available in the EUAA Case Law Database, <https://caselaw.euaa.europa.eu/pages/viewcaselaw.aspx?CaseLawID=1617>.

⁽³⁹⁾ Judgment of the ECtHR of 25 January 2018, *J.R. and others v Greece*, No. 22696/16, ECLI:CE:ECHR:2018:0125JUD002269616, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-180319%22%5D%7D>. Summary available in the EUAA Case Law Database, <https://caselaw.euaa.europa.eu/pages/viewcaselaw.aspx?CaseLawID=27>.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Judgment of the ECtHR of 25 June 1996, *Amuur v France*, No. 19776/92, ECLI:CE:ECHR:1996:0625JUD001977692, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-57988%22%5D%7D>.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Judgment of the ECtHR of 21 November 2019, *Ilias and Ahmed vs. Hungary*, No. 47287/15, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/fre#%7B%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-198760%22%5D%7D>. Summary available in the EUAA Case Law Database, <https://caselaw.euaa.europa.eu/pages/viewcaselaw.aspx?CaseLawID=860>.





Reasons related to public order can relate either to the applicant's own situation (e.g. violent behaviour) or to the general situation in which the applicant finds themselves (e.g. mass arrivals, riots in the area, major public event nearby). Reasons related to the risk of absconding are to be assessed looking at factors related to the previous history of compliance including Article 17(4) AMMR, degree of cooperation, active participation in community or support networks, links in the Member State, and whether the application for international protection has been rejected as inadmissible or manifestly unfounded.

Indicator 3. The decision on restrictions of freedom of movement takes into consideration the individual situation of the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** *the circumstances of the applicant can be understood through information collected during the whole asylum procedure, including the screening. Additional information regarding the special needs of the applicants can also be found in their individual file in the reception system.*

The best interests of the child are the primary consideration for any decisions on the use of restrictions on children's freedom of movement (for all children, be them accompanied, unaccompanied or separated).

Where restrictions of the freedom of movement are applied in the border procedure, the specific reception and procedural needs of the applicant must be met. If this is not possible, the authorities must authorise the applicant to enter the territory and apply the appropriate procedure (ref. to standards and indicators of Asylum).

Indicator 4. The decision on restrictions of freedom of movement is assessed against proportionality.



- **Additional remarks:** *in order to assess the proportionality of the decision, the reasons for determining the necessity of the measure as well as the individual situation of the applicant, including special needs, are taken into account. This can result in different types and intensity of restriction, also in reference to reporting obligations. Due regard must be given to the cumulative effects of the actual restrictions on the person.*

Indicator 5. When the decision is reviewed by the judicial authority on its own initiative (*ex officio*), a mechanism to effectively report both the decision and its underlying justification to the judicial authorities is implemented.



Standard 13. The decision on restrictions of freedom of movement details the reasons for it, the consequences of non-compliance and the appeal procedure(s) and is provided to the applicant in writing in a language that they understand.

Indicator 1. The decision states the reason in fact and, where relevant, in law for the restrictions of freedom of movement.





Indicator 2. The decision outlines the specific designated place of residence and, where applicable, the modality of reporting obligations.



- **Additional remarks:** *the competent authorities can decide on the exact modalities of the restrictions (place of residence and reporting obligations), issue the individual decision and notify it to the applicant based on the information received from the asylum authorities on the exact stage of the procedure the applicant is in and on the circumstances underlying the restrictions of freedom of movement.*

Indicator 3. The decision indicates to which authority an appeal may be lodged and within what time limit from its notification.



- **Additional remarks:** *if the appeal or a review is done before a judicial authority in line with national law, free legal assistance and representation is to be made available to the applicant, in line with Article 29(2) RCD (2024).*

See also Section [1.5 Appeals](#).

Indicator 4. The notification of the decision includes information on the consequences of non-compliance.



Indicator 5. The notification includes information on the possibility of requesting to reside temporarily outside the specific place indicated in the decision.



- **Additional remarks:** *see also [Standard 14](#).*

Indicator 6. The notification of the decision is provided to the applicant in a language that they understand, using clear and plain terms, and takes into consideration the age and special needs of the applicant.



Good practice

The notification of the decision includes contact information (phone number and email address) of a focal point to whom the applicant can address any questions or concerns they may have regarding the decision on the restriction of freedom of movement.

Design template/model decisions to be used for standard situations (e.g. applicants in border procedures, in a take back procedure, in a take charge procedure under Article 33 AMMR) without prejudice of the principles of necessity, proportionality and the consideration of the individual situation of the applicant.

Develop standard operating procedures for different reporting obligations to be applied to specific groups of applicants.

Consider remote or digital reporting where appropriate.





Standard 14. Upon request of the applicant to reside temporarily outside the designated place, Member State assess the request objectively and impartially.

Indicator 1. A mechanism for applicants to request permission to temporarily reside outside the specific place designated and for them to receive feedback is in place and includes a prioritisation system.



- **Additional remarks:** *the mechanism should not pose an excessive procedural burden on to the applicant who makes the request.*

In case of appointments with authorities and courts, the applicant only needs to notify in advance the competent authority without asking for permission.

The prioritisation system ensures that urgent situations of the applicants are dealt with timely.

Indicator 2. If permission is not granted, the Member State provides the applicant with a justified reason.



- **Additional remarks:** *the notification of the decision is provided to the applicant in a language that they understand, using clear and plain terms, and takes into consideration the age and special needs of the applicant. The decision indicates to which authority an appeal may be lodged and within what time limit from its notification.*

Good practice

Special consideration is given to applicants with close relatives (siblings, aunts/uncles, cousins) residing in the same Member State and assigned to other places of residence.

Standard 15. When restrictions of freedom of movement are applied, reception conditions and respect of fundamental rights are in place for all applicants.

Indicator 1. Access to reception conditions under the RCD (2024), including health care, education, family unity and access to the labour market (where relevant) is guaranteed.



- **Additional remarks:** *access to labour market is often not relevant when persons are awaiting transfers (Article 21 RCD (2024)) and is never granted where the Member State has accelerated the examination of the asylum application (Article 17(1) RCD (2024)).*

Indicator 2. The reception conditions provided in the specific designated place of residence meet the specific reception and procedural needs of applicants in a vulnerable situation.



- **Additional remarks:** *if reception conditions provided in the specific designated place of residence do not meet the specific needs of the applicant in situations of vulnerability, the applicant is referred to a suitable place.*

Indicator 3. The reception conditions of applicants whose freedom of movement has been restricted are monitored and assessed for compliance with the provision of the RCD (2024) and fundamental rights.



- **Additional remarks:** *the assessment also determines whether the restrictions of freedom of movement potentially amount to de facto deprivation of liberty.*

Standard 16. When restrictions of freedom of movement are applied, Member States have a mechanism in place to verify the actual residence of the applicant in the specific designated place and to exchange information on non-compliance with relevant actors.

Indicator 1. The applicants' residence in a specific designated place is verified on a regular basis.



- **Additional remarks:** *e.g. through an entry-exit system, daily reporting, food distribution check, mandatory language courses and/or other trainings organised on spot in the accommodation centre.*

Taking into consideration the proportionality of the measure, the reporting modalities and regularity can vary. Reporting obligations should be adapted to the applicant's individual circumstances and not be excessively frequent. The modalities and timing flexibility of reporting are also important for applicants with reduced mobility, who are pregnant or breast feed, for young children, etc.

See also Section [1.1. Data collection](#).

Indicator 2. Channels and procedures are in place to exchange information between relevant actors when a person is found to not comply with this provision.



- **Additional remarks:** *relevant actors can include reception authorities or implementing partners, asylum authorities, law enforcement (e.g. local police, border guards, etc.), judicial authorities, etc.*

The reception authorities swiftly communicate to the asylum authorities whether the applicant repeatedly does not comply with the provisions under Article 9(2) RCD (2024), so that the asylum authorities proceed with the withdrawal of the application.

The reception authorities swiftly communicate to the law enforcement (e.g. local police, border guards) that the whereabouts of the applicant are unknown in order to locate the applicant and inform the services providing support to them.

The police swiftly communicate the reception authorities if the person is found outside the specific designated place of residence without permission.

Clear communication channels are established between the reception authorities and the judicial authorities for cases when detention needs to be applied.

Good practice

An alert system is in place automatically notifying the chain stakeholders about changes in the situation of the applicant that need follow-up actions.

1.5. Appeals

Decisions relating to the granting, withdrawal or reduction of reception conditions, decisions refusing to grant the permission to temporarily leave the allocated geographical area and decisions related to restriction of freedom of movement may be the subject of an appeal as provided for in national law.

The possibility of an appeal or a review, in fact and in law, before a judicial authority must be granted at least in the last instance, for decisions related to the granting, reduction and withdrawal of benefits, the refusals of the permission to leave a geographical area and the restrictions of freedom of movement which affect applicants individually. For decisions related to the restriction of freedom of movement, in addition to the appeal (but not instead of it), Member States may provide for an *ex officio* review to be conducted by a judicial authority if the decision has been applied for more than two months.

In the cases of an appeal or a review before a judicial authority Member States have to ensure that free legal assistance and representation is made available. This consists of the preparation of the appeal or request for review, including at least the preparation of the required procedural documents and participation in the hearing before the judicial authorities.

To provide free legal assistance and representation, legal advisers or other suitably qualified professionals must not have interests that conflict or could potentially conflict with those of the applicant. Member States may also provide that free legal assistance and representation are granted only by legal advisers or other counsellors who are specifically designated under national law or by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) accredited under national law.

If the applicant has sufficient resources or when the appeal or review is considered to have no tangible prospect of success, Member States may decide not to grant free legal assistance and representation. When this decision is taken by an authority which is not a court or tribunal, the applicant has the right to an effective remedy before a court or tribunal against that decision and, for that purpose, is entitled to request free legal assistance and representation.

The requests for free legal assistance and representation must follow specific procedural rules. These can be set up by Member States or follow existing rules for domestic claims of a similar nature. In any case these rules do not render access to free legal assistance and representation impossible or excessively difficult for the applicant.



Articles [8\(5\)](#), [9\(5\)](#), [29 RCD \(2024\)](#)

Standards and indicators

Standard 17. Access to appeal or review of decisions affecting the provision of reception conditions is ensured.

Indicator 1. When a decision affecting the provision of reception conditions is notified to the applicant, information on how to access appeal or a review procedure is provided.



- **Additional remarks:** see also Section [5.1. Provision of information and counselling](#).

Indicator 2. Clear deadlines are established to submit an appeal or a request for review.



Indicator 3. Decisions restricting the freedom of movement are appealed or reviewed, in fact and in law, before a judicial authority.



- **Additional remarks:** according to national law, other decisions affecting reception conditions can be appealed or reviewed before a judicial authority.

Indicator 4. Free legal assistance and representation is available when an appeal or a review is done before a judicial authority.



- **Additional remarks:** this consists of the preparation of the appeal or request for review, including at least the preparation of the required procedural document, and participation in the hearing before the judicial authorities on behalf of the applicant.

There can be a decision not to grant free legal assistance and representation when the applicant has sufficient resources or when the appeal or review is considered to have no tangible prospect of success. In this case, if the decision has been taken not by a judicial authority, the applicant has the right to an effective remedy before a court or tribunal against that decision. For this purpose, the applicant is entitled to request free legal assistance and representation.

Member States may also request total or partial reimbursement of any costs incurred where the applicant's financial situation has improved considerably during the asylum procedure or where the decision to provide free legal assistance and representation was taken on the basis of false information supplied by the applicant.

Monetary or time limits may be imposed. However, these limits must not arbitrarily restrict access to free legal assistance and representation.

Indicator 5. Legal advisers or other suitably qualified persons whose interests do not conflict or could not potentially conflict with those of the applicant provide free legal assistance and representation.



- **Additional remarks:** legal advisers or other counsellors must be specifically designated under national law to assist and represent applicants. When free legal



assistance and representation are provided by NGOs, these must be accredited under national law.

Indicator 6. A mechanism to request free legal assistance and representation is in place.



- **Additional remarks:** Member States can apply existing rules for domestic claims of a similar nature when this does not render access to free legal assistance and representation impossible or excessively difficult.

1.6. Preparation and planning for the establishment of a new accommodation centre

This section sets standards and indicators aimed to guide national reception authorities in the process of planning and preparing the set-up of a new accommodation centre, once the decision to establish it has been taken.

The standards and indicators elaborated in this section reflect common practices that give shape to Article 20(1) RCD (2024) concerning the in-kind provision of housing.

Consequently, this section does not cover situations where:

- accommodation is provided in the form of financial allowances or vouchers;
- extra capacity is created within an already active accommodation centre;
- applicants are hosted in private houses or flats.

The elements covered in this section do not follow a strict chronological order as Member States practices on the subject differ greatly. However, they set a number of key steps to take prior to opening a new accommodation centre. These include, as a minimum:

- have a procedure in place to regulate and coordinate the opening process;
- identify sites and/or buildings that could be used for accommodation purposes, assessing their adequacy on the basis of predetermined criteria;
- put in place all necessary actions to have the accommodation centre ready before its formal opening.

These steps may not cover all the tasks necessary in the specific local context. Similarly, it may not always be possible to perform all steps in contexts characterised by disproportionate pressure or high influx.



Article 20(1) RCD (2024)



Standards and indicators

Standard 18. The opening of an accommodation centre follows defined procedural steps and is properly coordinated.

Indicator 1. A standardised procedure that prescribes the steps to take for opening a new accommodation centre is in place.



- **Additional remarks:** *the procedure can be established at the central or local level. In the latter case, different procedures may apply across the country.*

Indicator 2. The procedure prescribes who is responsible for the overall coordination, implementation and reporting to the central or local level.



Indicator 3. Coordination actions among relevant authorities and stakeholders are taken prior to opening the accommodation centre.



- **Additional remarks:** *coordination actions can take several forms, e.g. information sessions, meetings, roundtables. The competent authorities for the reception of applicants vary across Member States. Depending on rules applicable in each Member State, institutions that may be involved in the coordination process can include educational institutions, hospitals, police, municipalities or border guards.*

Indicator 4. The local community is informed of the setting up of an accommodation centre, when appropriate.



- **Additional remarks:** *information activities can take different forms, e.g. leaflets, written communications, radio broadcasts or open days.*

Factors such as the likelihood of violent contestations can contribute to make a decision on when and how to inform the local community.

Good practice

Create an operational manual/toolkit explaining the different steps to take prior to opening a new accommodation centre.

Set up a committee that includes local residents to facilitate the establishment of a new accommodation centre, including by collecting concerns of the local population and finding possible solutions.

Standard 19. Sites and/or buildings to be used for accommodation purposes are identified and assessed in an adequate and coordinated manner.

Indicator 1. Sites and/or buildings to be used as accommodation centres are identified based on reception needs.





- **Additional remarks:** *reception needs can encompass different elements, including: the number of people expected to be accommodated in the new accommodation centre; the profiles of applicants to be hosted (e.g. single adult men, families, unaccompanied children) and their corresponding special reception needs; the functions assigned to the facility, which may vary according to the typology of centre and include for example registration, medical check, intake and information provision, accommodation, healthcare and administrative support.*

All these elements should be taken into account during the identification process in order to determine which site or building better responds to the identified reception needs.

An additional important parameter to consider is the location. The suitability of a location depends on the type and functions assigned to the centre. For example: proximity to the national border for first reception facilities; accessibility of services and means of transport for long-term stay facilities; availability in the area of healthcare and other specialised services for facilities dedicated to applicants with special needs.

Sites or buildings may be owned by the authorities or made available by other bodies, including private ones.

Indicator 2. Information about the local environment and services in the vicinity of the reception facility is available and used to determine the suitability of the location where applicants with special needs are accommodated.



- **Additional remarks:** *the available information can cover, for example, information concerning relevant services (e.g. education and healthcare), information on public infrastructure (e.g. pavements and playgrounds) and neighbourhood characteristics (e.g. the natural environment, industrial activity, community support and education).*

Indicator 3. The suitability of sites and/or buildings is assessed based on the analysis of available documentation and the outcome of on-site visits.



- **Additional remarks:** *available documentation can include: land rights certificate, soil certificate, building permits, plans of the site or building, technical documentation ⁽⁴²⁾, documentation on connection to essential infrastructure (sewage, electricity, potable water), reports of certified external auditors, including asbestos and hazardous materials reports, sanitary and fire protection reports issued by competent authorities.*

The suitability assessment of a site should consider several criteria, such as size available, topography, environment, soil composition, risks of natural or artificial hazards, wildlife, former and current use of the site, security, public infrastructure, water, electricity, services nearby, road accessibility.

⁽⁴²⁾ For example, high tension cabin, installation certification, low voltage, heating installation, heating, ventilation and air conditioning plans, electrical plans.





The suitability assessment of a building should additionally consider whether the existing rooms and surrounding areas can be transformed and adapted to the functions of the centre and to the needs of the residents and staff.

When planning the establishment of a new accommodation centre, Member States should take into account previous assessments conducted on the same site or building, if available.

Indicator 4. The suitability assessment specifies the infrastructural interventions required as well as their estimated duration and financial outlay expected.



- **Additional remarks:** *the availability of financial resources should be analysed before proceeding to set up the accommodation centre.*

Indicator 5. In the process of identifying and assessing the sites and buildings, the competent reception authority acts in coordination with other relevant actors.



- **Additional remarks:** *depending on national legislation, other relevant actors can include competent sanitary (inspection) services, fire department, etc.*

Good practice

In consultation with other stakeholders, create a list of empty sites and existing buildings suitable to be converted or used for accommodation purposes, catering for the needs of different profiles of applicants for international protection.

Standard 20. The accommodation centre is ready to operate efficiently and safely before its formal opening.

Indicator 1. Essential infrastructure and utilities, compliant with relevant regulations, function properly.



- **Additional remarks:** *essential infrastructure and utilities that need to be in place before the opening of an accommodation centre are generally regulated by national law and may require the involvement of different public authorities. They include for example connection to water, electricity, gas, sewage system, heating, security infrastructure.*

Indicator 2. Essential furniture and equipment, compliant with relevant regulations, are in place.



- **Additional remarks:** *essential furniture and equipment include, for example: beds and mattresses, office computers and related equipment, security and safety equipment (such as first-aid kits, fire extinguishers, a set of keys for all doors) in line with relevant protocols (e.g. evacuation protocol).*





Indicator 3. A mechanism is in place to ensure coordination, reporting and data exchange between the accommodation centre and the central or local level.



- **Additional remarks:** *before a new accommodation centre is opened, necessary arrangements are made to ensure that collection, recording and transmission of data from the accommodation centre to a centralised database are adequately planned and organised.*

For this indicator, see also Section [1.1. Data collection](#).

Indicator 4. Staff, including persons in charge of managing the accommodation centre and those responsible for delivering necessary services, are identified and appointed.



- **Additional remarks:** *depending on national legislation, necessary services may vary. If the daily operation of the accommodation centre is outsourced to an external actor, the minimum number of staff required and the different profiles should be specified in the contract with the external provider.*

For this indicator, see also Section [1.9. Staff](#).

Good practice

Ensure a right balance between experienced staff (who can manage and coordinate the start-up of the new accommodation centre and support proper communication with the headquarters) and unexperienced staff (for which training is recommended).

Carry out a risk assessment before formally opening an accommodation centre.

1.7. Location

The standards and indicators included in this section refer to the location of the premises in relation to the environment. The location of the reception facility may have a strong influence on other aspects of the reception system, including the accessibility of relevant services (e.g. health services, legal aid or services related to the different instances of the asylum procedure). Therefore, the standards and indicators included in this section are closely linked to those of the following sections. This means that the choice of where to set up the accommodation facility should be made with full consideration given to other aspects of reception conditions addressed in the different sections of this document.

At the same time, some of the definitions used within this section (e.g. what constitutes a ‘reasonable walking distance’, an ‘adequate duration of a journey’ or ‘regularity of organised transportation’) are to be understood depending on the type of service to be accessed and the frequency of the need to access this service. For example, where children need to access school, access needs to be possible on a daily basis and the duration of the commuting should be short. At the same time, the duration of travel to facilitate the applicant’s participation in the





personal interview could be longer, in particular if transportation is provided by the responsible authority. It is generally understood that reception facilities should be located in areas that are designated for residential use.



Articles [7\(2\)](#), [8](#), [9\(4\)](#) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 21. Effective access to relevant services is ensured, such as public services, school, health care, social and legal assistance, a shop for daily needs, laundry and leisure activities.

Indicator 1. Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** for example, applicants with substantially reduced mobility should not be expected to access relevant services by walking. Alternative arrangements should be made in such cases.

Indicator 2(a). The relevant services are provided within the reception facility.



OR

Indicator 2(b). The facility is located at a reasonable walking distance from relevant services and the available infrastructure is safe for walking.



- **Additional remarks:** this indicator should be developed in relation to a maximum specific distance, taking into account the national context and the environment, such as whether there is a footpath available, whether the area is very hilly, etc.— for example, maximum 3 km to public services in general and 2 km to health care facilities and school.

OR

Indicator 2(c). Relevant services are accessible by public transport and the duration of the journey is reasonable.



- **Additional remarks:** the assessment of whether the duration of the journey is reasonable needs to be made in relation to the type of service and the regularity with which it needs to be accessed by the applicant (e.g. the time needed for a child to go to school by public transport, the time needed for the applicant to travel to the personal interview). Additionally, the regularity of public transport should be taken into account to verify whether it allows the applicant to effectively avail themselves of the service by taking a return journey. Accessibility by public transport should be understood as transport costs being reimbursed or transport being free of charge when needed, as a minimum, for the following: receiving health care and medication,



participating in the asylum procedure and receiving legal assistance, and accessing education for children enrolled in school.

OR

Indicator 2(d). Relevant services are accessible through organised transport provided by the Member State.



- **Additional remarks:** *the regularity of the transport provided by the Member State should be specified.*

Indicator 3. Specialised services are accessible according to the special needs of the applicant.



Good practice

Define the location of the reception facility with the purpose of accommodating applicants in the longer term with a view to enabling interaction between the applicants and the local population, in order to avoid isolation and facilitate integration in the longer term.

Limit the duration of the journey by public transport to a maximum of 1.5 hours or 1 hour for health care or shopping for daily needs.

Involve the local resident population in the definition of the location of a reception facility.

1.8. Sharing of information among authorities

A key element of an effective reception system is ensuring the efficient and secure exchange of information between the relevant national authorities. This is particularly critical in the identification and support of applicants with special reception needs; in the identification of cases for responsibility (e.g. family unity or dependency) and for solidarity under the AMMR and the identification of cases where the type of asylum procedure has an impact on reception rights (e.g. Articles 9, 17 and 23 RCD (2024)); in the coordination among authorities following the results of the screening; and in the implementation of Article 21 RCD (2024) and its linkages with application of Article 9 RCD (2024).

The overarching aim is to build an integrated data and case management system where relevant information accompanies the applicant across all procedural phases and supports the effective management of reception, while respecting confidentiality and data protection standards. Vulnerabilities and special needs of the applicant are clearly recorded as they have an impact on both the asylum procedure and reception. Cooperation between authorities should be transparent, efficient and focused on ensuring appropriate standards of protection and support for applicants.

With the introduction of the screening, it is of utmost importance that the agreed procedures include how information collected at screening stage is shared with reception authorities in a timely, structured and secure manner. When vulnerabilities and special needs are identified

during the screening or the preliminary health and vulnerability check, the relevant findings should be shared without delay with the competent reception authorities on a need-to-know basis. Reception authorities will have to take such findings into account when carrying out the vulnerability assessment and the medical screening, if applicable.

Standards and indicators

Standard 22. Appropriate coordination among competent authorities as regards the reception of applicants is in place.

Indicator 1. Agreed procedures define the coordination mechanism and information exchange modalities.



- **Additional remarks:** *procedures include the appropriate legal basis for the processing of personal data and identify whether the competent authorities act as joint controllers or as distinct data controllers.*

Indicator 2. A data and case management system, preferably integrated, is in place and embeds appropriate technical and organisational measures for the secure storage and exchange of information between authorities.



- **Additional remarks:** *the system should have different levels of access to data depending on the authority, roles of staff, legal mandate (e.g. access to sensitive data such as Eurodac, the Schengen Information System (SIS), health related information). To ensure the efficiency of the case management system, the latter should include, as a minimum, the following data: personal details, identified security threats, Eurodac records, legal status, stage and type of the procedure, allocation, special needs and support needed.*

Good practice

The case management system records the staff responsible for each case, even if pertaining to different stakeholders, to facilitate exchange of information.

1.9. Staff

In light of the diversity of national reception system, the tasks, qualifications and training needs of staff working with applicants in the reception context differ among EU Member States.

This section looks at the obligations incumbent on Member States, reception authorities and reception facilities' managers to: allocate the necessary resources to accommodation facilities, including the necessary staff, translators and interpreters, so that they can function efficiently; guarantee and promote staff well-being, also in light of the stressful and difficult environment to which staff is exposed. Where the implementation of reception measures involves local or regional authorities, CSOs or international organisations, these must likewise be adequately resourced.



1.9.1. Training

The RCD (2024) underlines the obligation of Member States to ensure that staff directly responsible for implementing the directive are adequately trained to respond to the specific needs of applicants, including children. This training must incorporate relevant core parts of the European asylum curriculum, as well as the tool for identifying applicants with special reception needs developed by the EUAA ⁽⁴³⁾.

Having sufficient and adequately trained staff is a necessary precondition to enable the processes of prevention, identification, assessment and response to vulnerabilities and special needs. It requires special attention, specific training and dedicated resources to guarantee that special needs are taken into account in an appropriate way. The RCD (2024) focuses also on other types of vulnerabilities, stressing that persons working with victims of torture and violence, including health professionals, must be appropriately trained and continue to receive appropriate training on those persons' needs and appropriate treatments (including necessary rehabilitation services).

Moreover, without prejudice to the need to provide specific training to reception officers working with applicants with special reception needs, all training should be aligned to the broader framework of a code of conduct specifying the key concepts and principles underlying the work in the reception context.

In addition, all persons working with minors, including representatives of unaccompanied children, must receive initial and continuous appropriate training on the rights and needs of children, including child safeguarding standards, in light of their tasks that include identifying and addressing their special needs, supervising, and counselling.



Article [20\(8\)](#), [25\(2\)](#), [26\(6\)](#), [28\(2\)](#), [33](#) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 23. Reception officers are sufficiently qualified.

Indicator 1. Each reception officer has clear terms of reference (job description).



Indicator 2. Each reception officer is qualified in accordance with national law and regulations concerning their job description, including applicable confidentiality and data protection rules.



⁽⁴³⁾ EUAA, IPSN-Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs, <https://ipsn.euaa.europa.eu/ipsn-tool>.





Indicator 3. Child protection staff are qualified in accordance with national law and regulations concerning their job description.



- **Additional remarks:** *to ensure the day-to-day care and protection of unaccompanied children, staff responsible for the reception and care of unaccompanied children should be qualified to address and act upon their special reception needs and have the necessary training and skills concerning: child protection and safeguarding the situation of unaccompanied children in migration, child development, the roles and responsibilities of staff involved, child rights regarding child protection, child development, child rights and communicating with children.*

Indicator 4. Staff working with children in the reception context do not have a record of child-related crimes and offences, or crimes and offences that lead to serious doubts about their ability to assume a role of responsibility with regard to children.



- **Additional remarks:** *the process of assessing the qualifications of the reception officer should involve these verifications.*

Standard 24. Reception officers are provided with the necessary and appropriate training.

Indicator 1. Each reception officer has a thorough and timely introduction into their role, including on the applicable code of conduct.



- **Additional remarks:** *induction training should take place as soon as possible (or immediately after) the reception officer has been employed. Depending on the role assigned to the reception officer, the induction should include the standards of the applicable reception law and/or regulations and relevant national and EUAA tools.*

Indicator 2. A clear training curriculum including the training requirements for each functional group exists.



- **Additional remarks:** *the training curriculum includes relevant core parts of the European asylum curriculum related to reception conditions as well as the tool for identification of applicants with special reception needs developed by the EUAA.*

Indicator 3. Training is provided in a regular manner and depending on the need.



- **Additional remarks:** *a long-term training programme should be developed, envisaging regular refresher training. Training should also be provided if there are any substantial changes in applicable law and practice.*

Indicator 4. As a minimum, the training provided includes gender and age-specific concerns and the situation of applicants with special needs, in particular with regard to child protection and safeguarding standards for children, including unaccompanied children, as well as initial and specialised training on the identification of persons with special needs and on the identification of victims of torture, victims of violence and





victims of THB, cultural training, awareness of mental health issues, recognising signs of radicalisation, first-aid, fire safety and conflict management.

- **Additional remarks:** depending on the division of tasks, training is provided according to the profession/function. Staff working night shifts should also receive minimal training on the topics mentioned above as well as training regarding specific challenges that might occur during nighttime.

Additional modules included in the national curriculum can range from computer skills and foreign languages to a course on infectious diseases.

Indicator 5. Staff who are not child protection specialists working at night in a reception facility for unaccompanied children receive as a minimum initial and continuous appropriate training about the rights and needs of children, including those relating to any applicable child safeguarding standards, and have the necessary information on the specific situation of the unaccompanied children in the accommodation centre.



Indicator 6. Without prejudice to the need to provide specific training to staff working with unaccompanied children in the reception context, all training should be aligned to the broader framework of a code of conduct specifying the key concepts and principles underlying the work in the reception context.



Good practice

Identify training opportunities for reception officers working with unaccompanied children. Examples of training topics that can be relevant are:

- trauma-informed practice;
- working with children suffering from anxiety who have been trafficked or who are bereaved;
- fostering resilience;
- independent living;
- access to education/training/labour market; to organise training through agreements with relevant actors (universities, lawyers, psychologists, etc.).

Identify training methods that enable and encourage staff to perform work duties in a uniformed and coherent form.

Organise yearly training sessions on the rules of conduct for staff.





Standard 25. Staff are sufficiently qualified to provide adequate support to applicants with special needs.

Indicator 1. Minimum qualifications for each position are clearly defined.



Indicator 2. All staff members working with applicants in a vulnerable situation meet the necessary qualifications as specified in their job description to undertake their role, according to the national law.



- **Additional remarks:** every job description and vacancy notice should indicate educational and professional requirements and the years of experience relevant for the post. Personal aptitude and disposition for working with applicants in a vulnerable situation may also be a requirement or an advantageous element in the vacancy notice.

Roles and responsibilities are regularly reviewed and assessed to check if any additional needs have emerged.

Indicator 3. The reception facility has to provide for sufficiently qualified staff to carry out the day-to-day care of unaccompanied children.



Standard 26. An appropriate and up-to-date training curriculum on how to identify applicants in a situation of vulnerability and how to assess and respond to the most common special needs is defined.

Indicator 1. A training curriculum for staff lists the minimum training requirements regarding vulnerability according to the roles and responsibilities of staff.



- **Additional remarks:** the curriculum includes relevant core parts of the European asylum curriculum related to reception conditions as well as the tool for identification of applicants with special reception needs developed by the EUAA.

The training curriculum is regularly updated if the population and profiles change. Some training courses might be more relevant than others depending on the context.

For this indicator, see also Section [6.2. Identification](#) and Section [6.3. Assessment](#).

Indicator 2. Staff receive adequate training courses on vulnerability-related issues according to their roles and responsibilities.



- **Additional remarks:** for this indicator, see also Section [6.2. Identification](#) and Section [6.3. Assessment](#).

Indicator 3. An attestation of having completed the training courses on vulnerability and special needs is provided.




Good practice

An accreditation system by a recognised entity provides formal attestation of having completed the training courses.


Information for interpreters about minimum requirements for training are publicly available on the national website(s) of asylum and reception authorities.

Training is delivered for focal persons specialised in the response to certain special needs, for example for victims of THB, domestic violence, etc. These training courses cover the specific situation of the target group, the targeted response for these specific persons, the role of reception staff and which other stakeholders are involved as well as the coaching/guidance of reception staff in their response.

Standard 27. Rules of conduct are applicable to and observed by all staff.

Indicator 1. Rules regulating the conduct of staff in reception facilities are in place. 

- **Additional remarks:** *the rules of conduct can be embedded in different documents, such as the work contract, job description attached to the work contract, a specific code of conduct or other documents such as confidentiality agreements. Rules of conduct should include reference to confidentiality, fundamental values and deontology, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, anti-corruption, behaviour and health and security.*




Indicator 2. A system is in place to report and follow up on breaches of the rules of conduct. 

- **Additional remarks:** *such system guarantees that alleged breaches to the rules of conduct are followed up appropriately, ensuring anonymity of the person reporting the alleged breach.*

Good practice

When the rules of conduct are contained in a stand-alone document (e.g. code of conduct), the latter is signed by each staff member.

Standard 28. Interpreters/translators are prepared for communicating with applicants in a vulnerable situation.

Indicator 1. Interpreters/translators receive induction training or information sessions on asylum and the role of the interpreter.   

- **Additional remarks:** *the training courses provided include relevant parts of the European Asylum Curriculum. Depending on national circumstances, interpreters/translators can be hired externally, however they still need to meet certain requirements, including training.*

Indicator 2. Interpreters/translators receive adequate training on vulnerability-related issues.



- **Additional remarks:** *the training courses should cover at least aspects related to translating terminology related to vulnerability. Interpreters can receive refresher training courses. The training courses provided include relevant parts of the European Asylum Curriculum.*

Indicator 3. Interpreters/translators receive training courses on ethical standards and on the code of conduct.



- **Additional remarks:** *ethical standards or codes of conduct for interpreters describe the standards that interpreters are expected to uphold in the exercise of their functions. The training courses provided include relevant parts of the European Asylum Curriculum.*

Indicator 4. Glossaries on common terminology related to medical terms, vulnerability and special needs and support services are available for interpreters/translators.



Standard 29. The awareness of other stakeholders who are in regular contact with applicants is promoted.

Indicator 1. Regular awareness-raising sessions and/or alternative arrangements are in place for persons who are not considered ‘reception officers’ but are nevertheless in contact with applicants due to their profession/function.



- **Additional remarks:** *awareness-raising sessions could focus on migration-related aspects in general and cultural aspects in particular. These could be organised, for example, for education personnel, external health services, security personnel in the facilities or cleaning personnel.*

1.9.2. Capacity

Standards and indicators

Standard 30. Human resources are allocated in an adequate number to provide services in an effective manner.

Indicator 1. An adequate number of human resources for each reception facility is defined by the competent reception authorities and deployed accordingly.



- **Additional remarks:** *different parameters can be taken into account to determine what constitutes an adequate number, such as: capacity of the facility or total number of applicants hosted in the facility (occupancy or average occupancy over a period of*



time); range of services to be provided and/or working hours/days to be guaranteed for the services to be provided in an effective manner ⁽⁴⁴⁾.

For this indicator, see also Section [1.10 Contingency planning and preparedness](#).

Indicator 2. Specific arrangements are in place to ensure on-call duty of reception officers.



- **Additional remarks:** depending on national legislations and practices, different categories of reception officers may be required to work on call, such as managerial staff, interpreters or health professionals.

Indicator 3. When justified and possible, the gender composition of reception officers is adapted to the profiles of the resident population.



- **Additional remarks:** in accommodation facilities hosting women and men, the gender composition of reception officers should allow for applicants to request support from an interpreter or medical professional of the gender of their choice.

Good practice

Elaborate a human resources plan (including anticipation of staff turnover).

Have the staff/residents ratio embedded in law.

Define different ratios according to specific categories of reception officers.

Define the weekly hours to be guaranteed by each reception officer in relation to each service provided in the facility, as well as in relation to the capacity and/or occupancy of the facility.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ In line with Article 33(2) RCD (2024), seasonal fluctuations in the number of applicants should also be taken into consideration to determine the adequate number of staff: 'Member States shall allocate the necessary resources, including the necessary staff, translators and interpreters, for the implementation of this Directive, taking into account seasonal fluctuations in the numbers of applicants ...'.



Figure 1. Example of staff ratio

Professional roles	Capacity or occupancy											
	up to 50		from 51 to 100		from 101 to 300		from 301 to 600		from 601 to 900			
	Units	Hours/week Hours/day On call	Units	Hours/week Hours/day On call	Units	Hours/week Hours/day On call	Units	Hours/week Hours/day On call	Units	Hours/week Hours/day On call	Units	Hours/week Hours/day On call
Director(s)												
Administration officer(s)												
Finance officer(s)												
Day-time operator(s)												
Night-time operator(s)												
Social worker(s)												
Interpreter(s)												
Doctor(s)												
Nurse(s)												
Psychologist(s)												
Information provision officer(s)												
Local language teacher(s)												
Other												

Disclaimer. The professional roles listed in the table are for illustrative purposes only and do not necessarily correspond to those envisaged in all Member States. The table was inspired by the Italian framework governing reception facilities (*Schema di capitolato di appalto dei servizi di accoglienza*). For more information, visit the website of the Italian Ministry of Interior, <https://www.interno.gov.it/it/amministrazione-trasparente/bandi-gara-e-contratti/nuovo-schema-capitolato-appalto-fornitura-beni-e-servizi-relativi-alla-gestione-e-funzionamento-dei-centri>.

Standard 31. An adequate number of staff members is allocated to provide equal and sufficient support to children and applicants in a vulnerable situation, including in emergency situations.

Indicator 1. The number of staff responsible for handling cases of applicants in a vulnerable situation is defined and implemented by the competent authorities.



- **Additional remarks:** *the number of allocated staff will take into account different parameters, for example, the predicted number of applicants in a vulnerable situation, the range of services to be provided and/or the working hours per day guaranteed for the services to be provided in an effective manner.*

The number of allocated staff also includes interpreters that are specifically trained on interpreting for applicants in a vulnerable situation.

Indicator 2. Gender composition is considered among staff members allocated to support applicants in a vulnerable situation.



- **Additional remarks:** *it is important to ensure the gender composition of the staff, including interpreters, to be able to respond to the needs of the applicants. For example, female victims of GBV may find it more difficult to tell their story to a man.*

Indicator 3. Focal points are appointed to support the case managers in their response to the special needs of the applicants.



- **Additional remarks:** *focal points specialised on certain special needs of applicants, for example on needs based on sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics, GBV, domestic violence and THB have a coaching role. The focal points keep up to date with relevant developments in terms of law, policies and the available services.*

Indicator 4. A plan is developed to ensure the deployment of additional staff in case the number of applicants for international protection rises to ensure the adequate support is available for applicants in a situation of vulnerability.



- **Additional remarks:** *in emergency situations, it is important not only to ensure the deployment of additional staff, including interpreters, but also that each staff member knows their area(s) of responsibility.*

Standard 32. Adequate interpreter support is available to respond to the needs of applicants in a vulnerable situation.

Indicator 1. Interpreter support is provided for at least all common languages.



- **Additional remarks:** to determine the common languages, elements such as population and country of origin should be taken into consideration. Interpretation support should also include international sign language. Interpretation can be provided remotely or in situ. However, in the case of remote interpretation, an assessment should be conducted to ensure that it is a suitable option in light of the needs of the applicant.

Indicator 2. The timeline to find an interpreter is determined.



- **Additional remarks:** a timeline indicates the maximum time to find an interpreter, either in situ or remotely. In the case of rare languages, if an interpreter cannot be found in the established timeline, other solutions should be provided.

1.9.3. Staff well-being

It is a crucial for Member States to guarantee staff well-being. The welfare of staff is regarded as a holistic concept that contains physical, mental and safety dimensions. It is important to acknowledge that working with people in a vulnerable situation can put additional stress on the welfare of staff. Therefore, measures should be implemented to avoid burnout and high turnover of staff. In order to support the well-being of the staff, it is important to have mechanisms to manage critical incidents (which can be defined as sudden, unexpected and overwhelming events, beyond the realm of expected experiences). Incidents, including critical ones may occur in reception facilities and during the asylum procedure. They can take different forms, such as threats or harm to the physical safety and mental health of applicants and/or staff, including to life; material damage; disruption of daily life; acts of aggression, harassment or abuse; conflict situations; and violence (verbal or physical).

Standards and indicators

Standard 33. The physical and mental well-being of staff is promoted and protected.

Indicator 1. Measures are taken to promote and protect the physical and mental well-being of staff.



- **Additional remarks:** measures can take different forms, such as mentoring, coaching, information and/or training sessions particularly aimed at identifying and preventing signs of stress and burn-out also in light of the difficult environment to which staff is exposed. Measures can also include support activities carried out by professionals working within the reception facility or external service providers. Formats can also be different, including individual or group counselling or sessions with a specialist

(e.g. psychotherapist, psychologist). Measures should also target staff in managerial positions.

For this indicator, see also Section [3.1. Security and safety](#) and Section [1.10 Contingency planning and preparedness](#).

Indicator 2. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided according to the circumstances.



- **Additional remarks:** PPE is anything that workers use or wear to protect themselves against risks at work. PPE can include gloves, safety glasses, shoes, masks, etc. Relevant PPE is provided according to the circumstances, e.g. outbreak of contagious diseases.

Indicator 3. Adequate workspace and equipment is provided to each staff member, taking into account the functions individually performed and in line with applicable national legislation.



- **Additional remarks:** what constitutes adequate workspace, in terms of furniture and equipment, is generally regulated in detail by national law. Nevertheless, as a minimum, each workstation should include one desk, one chair per person, sufficient lockable storage space and ICT and communication equipment, depending on the functions performed by the staff member. It should guarantee lighting, heating/cooling system as appropriate and cleanliness. Workstations can be shared by reception officers working on different shifts, provided there is enough storage for personal items. ICT and communication equipment can include computers, software, internet access, devices to communicate inside the reception facility (e.g. walkie-talkies) when needed.

Good practice

Develop a staff welfare strategy and communicate it through relevant channels to all staff. The strategy should prescribe the supporting measures and indicate who is responsible for their implementation. It should be updated according to the risks and needs identified. The participation of reception officers with different functions in this process is recommended.

Mainstream resilience, ways of coping in stressful situations and self-care throughout the duration of employment of the staff member, with particular attention paid to the selection process and the onboarding of new reception officers.

Standard 34. Specific support is provided to staff working with applicants in a vulnerable situation whose own well-being is affected.

Indicator 1. Information and training courses are provided on how to request and access support.





- **Additional remarks:** training courses aim to develop skills on how to identify signs of stress and how to prevent it. Training courses should also target staff in managerial positions.

Indicator 2. Specific support activities are provided to staff to promote and protect mental and physical well-being.



- **Additional remarks:** these support activities may take different formats such as individual or group counselling or sessions with a specialist (e.g. psychotherapist, psychologist). Specific activities can be provided to staff exposed, for example, to vicarious trauma and burnout. This support can be provided by professionals working within the facility or by external service providers.

Indicator 3. Peer support structures are in place to provide advice and information.



Indicator 4. Trained focal points or team leaders are appointed and provide additional assistance and coaching to staff dealing with persons with special needs.



Good practice

Focus group sessions are organised with reception officers where difficult cases or situations are analysed and advice is provided on how to handle them.

Standard 35. Specific support is provided to staff who have experienced a critical incident.

Indicator 1. An independent, trained focal person (or team) is appointed and can be consulted after critical incidents.



Indicator 2. Clear guidance is in place for managers on how to follow up after a critical incident.



Indicator 3. Staff and their managers know how to request and access specific support after a critical incident has occurred.



1.9.4. Evaluation

Standard 36. Management, supervision and accountability of staff working with unaccompanied children is ensured via regular adequate support and at least yearly monitoring.

Indicator 1. A regular monitoring mechanism of staff performance is in place to ensure day-to-day care of unaccompanied children.





- **Additional remarks:** *when the performance review identifies gaps, those are addressed through targeted support, including tailored training.*

Good practice

Provide for a periodic peer review on the implementation of the day-to-day care of unaccompanied children.

Standard 37. The performance of the interpreters/translators is systematically evaluated.

Indicator 1. The feedback of applicants and/or staff on the performance of the interpreters/translator is regularly collected.



- **Additional remarks:** *it is important to give the possibility to both the applicant and staff to evaluate the work of the interpreter/translator. The feedback can be collected in an anonymous manner every time an applicant has benefitted from the interpretation of a given interpreter. Feedback can be periodically collected through samples.*

When forms are provided to applicants in a vulnerable situation for collecting their feedback, the forms need to be adapted to their needs. The evaluation, when negative, should also be accompanied by proposed measures to improve future performances, including, for example, further training.

Indicator 2. A procedure exists to address poor performance and/or breaches of the code of conduct's ethical and professional standards.



- **Additional remarks:** *depending on the gravity of the breach, this can also bring to the end of the collaboration with the interpreter in question.*

1.10. Contingency planning and preparedness

Contingency planning in the context of reception refers to a structured approach composed of a set of measures to deal with a possible disproportionate pressure on a Member State reception system and to enhance its efficiency. As per recital 67 RCD (2024), 'a situation of disproportionate pressure may be characterised by a sudden and massive influx of third-country nationals and stateless persons to the extent that it places an extreme burden even on a well-prepared reception system'.

The contingency planning template and manual developed by the EUAA in 2024 provides Member States with objectives and instructions to develop their national contingency plans covering both asylum and reception. This encompasses five main components: scope and objectives, governance, scenarios and preparedness measures, response plan and review and adjust.





An endorsed and operational national contingency plan contributes to a well-prepared system with sufficient human, material and financial resources and infrastructure to effectively prepare and respond to possible pressure and crisis situations. It can also contribute to ensure that, in any circumstances, applicants for international protection have access to health care and a standard of living in accordance with Union law, including the EU Charter, and international obligations.

The national contingency plan includes situations falling under Article 20(10)(b) RCD (2024) where Member States can exceptionally derogate from the general standards on the provision of material reception conditions in duly justified cases and for a reasonable period that must be as short as possible. If the situations falling under Article 20(10)(b) materialise, the Member State should inform without delay the Commission and the EUAA when a) the contingency plan is activated; b) the reasons for providing those different material conditions cease to exist. Situations falling under Article 20(10) RCD (2024) are to be considered exceptional and any deviation from the ordinary provision of material reception conditions should be justified and documented. In this sense, systemic inefficiencies and/or deficiencies in the reception system do not fall within the scope of this Article. Indeed, any derogation from the ordinary provision of material reception conditions is based on the assumption that, in ordinary operating conditions, the capacity of the reception system is adequate to properly accommodate expected inflows, including a buffer capacity for occasional increases and seasonal peaks.

This section focuses in particular on reception systems whose normally available housing capacity and buffer capacity are exhausted, e.g. because of persisting high and unprecedented influx. The standards and indicators below take into account the ability of Member States to anticipate, manage and respond to situations of strain by: having in place preparedness measures; planning and swiftly activating extra housing capacity; deploying in a fast and effective manner stocks and supplies through flexible procurement modalities; mobilising human resources needed to tackle the exceptional situation.

The purpose of this section is not to prescribe a specific type of reception modality but rather to ensure that reception conditions provided in a situation falling within the scope of Article 20(10) RCD (2024) respect the human dignity of the applicant and the fundamental principles enshrined in the RCD (2024). Indeed, even in situations that justify the activation of Article 20(10), reception conditions should ensure the full respect of a standard of living in line with Union law, including the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and international obligations.

Applicants' basic needs⁽⁴⁵⁾ must be met and any derogation must not exceed a reasonable period that must be as short as possible. Member States should put in place all efforts to ensure that the standards and indicators applicable in normal circumstances are progressively achieved.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ The concept of basic needs was elaborated by the CJEU which shaped it by referring to the full respect of human dignity. In that regard, respect for human dignity requires applicants not finding themselves in a situation of extreme material poverty that does not allow that person to meet their most basic needs such as a place to live, food, clothing and personal hygiene, and that undermines their physical or mental health or puts that person in a state of degradation. Judgment of the Court of Justice of 12 November 2019, *Haqbin v Federaal Agentschap voor de opvang van asielzoekers*, C-233/18, ECLI:EU:C:2019:956, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/SUM/?uri=CELEX:62018CJ0233_RES&qid=1770991165041&rid=1. Summary available in the EUAA Case Law Database, <https://caselaw.euaa.europa.eu/pages/viewcaselaw.aspx?CaseLawID=853>.





Given the diversity of reception set-ups across Member States, responses to exceptional situations may differ substantially also in consideration of different variables, such as the size and duration of the influx, available resources, specific characteristics of the arriving population, weather conditions, geographical location of the entry point, etc.

Recital 66, 67 RCD (2024)

Articles 20(10), 27, 32 RCD (2024)

Recital 26 APR



Recitals 8, 9, 12, 13 AMMR

Articles 2(24)(25), 7, 9, 10, 11 AMMR

Recitals 4, 5, 13, 36, 45, 59, 60 Contingency and Force-majeure Regulation ⁽⁴⁶⁾

Articles 1(4), 2, 3(6), 7, 11(2), 16(1) Contingency and Force-majeure Regulation

Recitals 20, 23 EUAA Regulation



CJEU, *S.A. and R.J v Ireland*, ⁽⁴⁷⁾

Court of the Hague, *Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland* ⁽⁴⁸⁾

Standards and indicators

Standard 38. An adequate national contingency plan is established and maintained in line with the EUAA contingency planning template and the national framework.

Indicator 1. The national contingency plan includes all mandatory elements indicated in the template developed by the EUAA.



Indicator 2. The filled template of the contingency plan and its revision is submitted timely to the EUAA upon every adoption.



Indicator 3. The contingency plan is revised when circumstances change and at least every three years.



Indicator 4. A procedure is in place in the national system to request the EUAA support, if needed.



⁽⁴⁶⁾ Regulation (EU) 2024/1359 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 addressing situations of crisis and force majeure in the field of migration and asylum and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1147 (OJ L, 2024/1359, 22.5.2024), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202401359.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Judgment of the Court of 1 August 2025, *S.A. and R.J v Ireland*, C-97/24, ECLI:EU:C:2025:594, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A62024CJ0097&qid=1771406667847>. Summary available in the EUAA Case Law Database, <https://caselaw.euaa.europa.eu/pages/viewcaselaw.aspx?CaseLawID=5180>.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Judgment of the Court of The Hague of 6 October 2022, *Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland (VWN) v The Dutch state and the COA*, C/09/633760 KG ZA 22-733, ECLI:NL:RBDHA:2022:10210, <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/details?id=ECLI:NL:RBDHA:2022:10210>. Summary available in the EUAA Case Law Database, <https://caselaw.euaa.europa.eu/pages/viewcaselaw.aspx?CaseLawID=2822>.





Indicator 5. The contingency plan is developed and maintained in a coordinated manner with the relevant actors.



- **Additional remarks:** *relevant actors can include other national authorities such as the asylum authority, bodies responsible for the representation of unaccompanied children, local and regional authorities, CSOs and international organisations.*

Indicator 6. The contingency plan ideally reflects and is either integrated in or integrates other relevant national contingency plans.



Good practice

A testing exercise is carried out to test the contingency plan.

Standard 39. Adequate preparedness measures are in place.

Indicator 1. Preparedness measures addressing situations of temporary exhaustion of housing capacity are defined, included in the contingency plan, and adopted.



- **Additional remarks:** *preparedness measures are part of broader contingency planning and standard operating procedures. In federal or decentralised Member States, preparedness measures should be composed of coordinated subnational mechanisms. Situations of a temporary exhaustion of normally available housing capacity may include unprecedented high influx (it is recommended to have a numerical definition of 'high influx' applicable at national level).*

Indicator 2. Preparedness measures envisage different scenarios and, for each scenario, the response to be activated with the related activation mechanisms in place.



- **Additional remarks:** *when developing preparedness measures, it is of utmost importance to formulate realistic scenarios of anticipated situations of disproportionate pressure and crisis and to identify the responses that need to be taken in each scenario, including responsible actors and timeframe. For each scenario, preparedness measures should specify early alert triggers for different levels of alertness, linked to identified thresholds (e.g. a certain increase of arrivals over a defined period of time; exceeding a predefined occupancy rate for a period of time).*

Indicator 3. Preparedness measures clearly specify the roles and responsibilities of the competent authorities and other stakeholders involved in the process, as well as coordination mechanisms between stakeholders.



- **Additional remarks:** *the coordination within the reception authority as well as between the latter and other authorities (especially those in charge of asylum) are of utmost importance for the successful implementation of preparedness measures.*



Preparedness measures in federal or decentralised Member States may be further composed of coordinated subnational mechanisms.

Indicator 4. Preparedness measures are adequately communicated in advance to all authorities and staff members involved in their implementation.



- **Additional remarks:** *communication can take different forms, including ad hoc sessions or written guidelines (e.g. a manual).*

Indicator 5. Preparedness measures are assessed and updated as needed (e.g. due to changed circumstances) and at least every three years.



Good practice

Carry out exercises to test the preparedness measures with all actors that have a role in the process.

Standard 40. Extra housing capacity, procurement modalities, adequate stocks and supplies are planned in an effective manner.

Indicator 1. Preparedness measures contain clear plans on how to adapt housing capacity in a timely manner.



- **Additional remarks:** *the creation of extra housing capacity can take different forms, such as: increasing capacity within an active accommodation centre; expanding capacity through the acquisition of new locations; making use of empty reception facilities identified as contingency sites; raising the occupancy rate in the reception system (e.g. by suspending planned renovation works); providing applicants with material reception conditions in the form of financial allowances rather than in kind provision of housing, in line with national law and regulations; promoting outflow measures to prevent the system from becoming overcrowded (e.g. by speeding up the outflow of applicants in the Dublin procedure, by speeding up the outflow of those who are granted international protection or who are not entitled to reception).*

Indicator 2. A mapping of the premises that can be quickly acquired or adapted in situations of temporary exhaustion of housing capacity is available.



Indicator 3. Procurement modalities that allow for quick adaptation to changing needs are in place.



- **Additional remarks:** *procurement procedures should ensure flexibility and short processing time without prejudice to transparency and public tendering rules. Different procedures can be used, including framework agreements that allow for the fast adjustment of quantities (e.g. food, non-food items, interpretation services) or procedures that allow for the immediate start of negotiation for a contract with a supplier in case of an unexpected calamity.*



Indicator 4. A minimum stock of supplies to be deployed in a fast and effective manner is available as part of the preparedness measures.



- **Additional remarks:** *preparedness measures should define the type and quantity of stock and supplies. Stocks can include tents, beds, mattresses, heating devices, generators, non-food items such as hygienic items and blankets.*

Good practice

Establish a network of housing capacity suppliers to expedite the acquisition of new housing capacity.

Establish cooperation agreements with other actors (e.g. the army, civil society organisations (CSOs)) for the purchase, transport, storage and installation of beds, tents, supplies etc.

In the process of reception facilities acquisition or adaptation, consider sustainable solutions which allow to retain the facility instead of closing and reopening it as needed.

Standard 41. Qualified human resources are planned and used in an effective manner.

Indicator 1. Preparedness measures envisage how to rapidly increase and mobilise an adequate number of human resources in case of an exceptional situation.



- **Additional remarks:** *human resources can be increased in different modalities, including through reallocation of own staff, secondment from other authorities, recruitment of new staff, use of an external pool. The definition of 'adequate number' can take into account different parameters such as: capacity of the facility or total number of applicants hosted in the facility (occupancy or average occupancy considered over a period of time), range of services to be provided and/or working hours/day to be guaranteed for the services to be provided in an effective manner.*

See also Sub-section [1.9.2 Capacity](#), under Staff.

Indicator 2. Flexible modalities are used to ensure the most effective use of existing human resources, envisaging 24/7 presence to ensure safety.



- **Additional remarks:** *flexible modalities can include different forms, such as shifts, rotation, etc. Existing human resources should be timely informed about potential changes affecting their job description. A flexibility clause should be introduced in job descriptions, outlining tasks that are expected to be performed in case of exceptional situations.*

Indicator 3. New staff appointed to deal with the exceptional situation receive basic training as soon as possible after appointment.





- **Additional remarks:** *basic training can include sessions on: code of conduct, first aid, fire prevention, asylum law, internal procedures, special needs and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Such trainings can also take the form of on-the-job training, ensuring the pairing between experienced and unexperienced staff.*

Indicator 4. Measures are taken to promote and protect the mental and physical well-being and to prevent burn-out of staff dealing with the exceptional situation.



- **Additional remarks:** *for this indicator, see also Section [1.9.3 Staff well-being](#).*

Good practice

Promote to the extent possible measures for staff retention after the exceptional situation ends.

Offer open-ended employment contracts with a clause stipulating that the contract will terminate when the exceptional situation ends. This can be a good compromise between flexibility and giving a longer-term perspective to the new staff under temporary contracts.

Train staff to also perform basic functions of other roles so that tasks can be flexibly re-assigned in case of an exceptional situation.

Standard 42. The activation of exceptional modalities in the provision of material reception conditions as per Article 20(10)(b) RCD (2024) is duly justified and documented.

Indicator 1. The activation of exceptional modalities is based on evidence (numerical data and reports, among others) that demonstrates the exceptional situation.



Indicator 2. The decision to activate exceptional modalities is formally taken and include a specific description of such modalities and their estimated duration.



- **Additional remarks:** *the authority competent for issuing a decision to activate exceptional modalities may be different across Member States, in accordance with applicable national legislation. The duration of exceptional modalities can be extended if the conditions persist.*

Indicator 3. The facilities and/or areas within facilities operating under exceptional modalities are clearly specified and identifiable.



- **Additional remarks:** *the typology of facilities used in emergency contexts can include temporary housing solutions such as containers, tents and gyms, as long as basic needs are covered.*



Standard 43. The provision of material reception conditions through exceptional modalities is as short as possible and fully respects the human dignity of the applicant.

Indicator 1. In all circumstances, material reception conditions provided through exceptional modalities cover basic needs, including provision of a shelter with access to functioning sanitary infrastructure, provision of food and water, provision of necessary clothing, personal hygiene products and non-food items, provision of basic information, provision of necessary healthcare.



- **Additional remarks:** while some level of discretion is given to the Member States in order to determine the level of acceptable deviation from ordinary circumstances, such deviation must always take into account the human dignity of the person. Member States should provide applicants with at least: bedding in a place with functioning heating/cooling system depending on the weather conditions; access to functioning infrastructure (toilets, showers and sinks); three meals per day (or cash equivalent for children or in other justified cases); water in sufficient quantity; a minimum number of adequate clothing to those who do not possess any; bedlinen and a towel; personal hygiene products; access to necessary healthcare including at least emergency care and essential treatment of illnesses and serious mental disorders; basic information.

Indicator 2. Material reception conditions provided through exceptional modalities respect the principles of family unity, best interests of the child, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as the special reception needs of persons in a vulnerable situation.



Indicator 3. Applicants are transferred to ordinary facilities as soon as it is practically feasible, with prioritisation given to persons with special reception needs, families and children.



- **Additional remarks:** the FIFO principle (first in first out) for all other categories of applicants can be applied to guarantee a fair and transparent transfer policy from exceptional reception modalities to ordinary ones. To ensure the application of the FIFO principle, the applicant's date of arrival in the facility operating under exceptional modalities needs to be recorded. In this regard, see also Section [1.1. Data collection](#).

Indicator 4. Efforts to ensure the gradual achievement of the standards and indicators applicable in ordinary circumstances are documented in progress reports.





2. Modalities for the provision of reception conditions

2.1. Material reception conditions through financial allowances or vouchers

While maintaining the objective of harmonisation and equal treatment of applicants which includes the aim to ensure comparable living conditions, the RCD (2024) leaves a significant degree of discretion to Member States to freely organise their reception systems. This is subject to ensuring a standard of living which guarantees the applicant's subsistence, protects their physical and mental health and respects their rights under the Charter and the RCD (2024) ⁽⁴⁹⁾. Such cumulative guarantees are hereinafter referred to as 'adequate standard (of living)'.

Member States may decide to provide material reception conditions (including housing, food, clothing, personal hygiene and a daily expenses allowance) in kind, in the form of financial allowances or vouchers or as a combination thereof. Member States should ensure that material provisions are at an equivalent standard irrespective of the form in which they are provided, and that their access is always effective.

When providing material reception conditions through financial allowances or vouchers, Member States must ensure that the amount enables effective access to the material reception conditions they are provided for. To reflect differences in national contexts, no common European level is determined as benchmark.

Member States may grant less favourable treatment to applicants, as compared to nationals, where material support is fully or partially provided in kind or where the levels applied for nationals aim to ensure a higher standard of living than the one that is required for applicants. Member States must inform the European Commission and the EUAA on the levels established. Depending on the situation, the Member State may need to put in place measures to address barriers (e.g. discrimination, administrative obstacles, eligibility rules for social/affordable housing) to ensure that the relevant material reception conditions are effectively available to applicants.

To ensure the suitability and the amount of material reception conditions provided through financial allowance or vouchers, Member States must ensure a timely and effective identification and assessment process to detect vulnerabilities and special needs. The level of financial allowances or vouchers should be adapted to meet any special reception needs, ensuring the allocation of adapted/additional resources enabling applicants to effectively access relevant support. The situation of the applicant should be monitored regularly and the provisions adjusted accordingly. If effective access to reception conditions cannot be ensured

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Recitals 5, 11, and 71 RCD (2024).





or when there are safety concerns (such as in the case of THB), material reception conditions should be provided in kind.

Where Member States ensure housing through financial allowance or vouchers, specific administrative arrangements need to be adapted. In particular, an individual file needs to be established and kept up to date for all applicants living outside reception facilities, to ensure that the Member State can monitor the situation of applicants in the system. Member States should clearly describe the terms and conditions for the provisions of material reception conditions through financial allowance or vouchers. Applicants residing outside a reception facility should be included in a data monitoring mechanism to facilitate presence verification in the national reception system. This allows to issue updated reports and to allocate resources. To guarantee access to non-material reception conditions (such as health care, education, language, civic education or vocational education courses, support to address special reception needs, administrative support, social counselling) and to legal assistance, information provision to applicants residing outside the reception facility should include dedicated contact details and physical contact points.



Recitals 5, 11, 60, 71 RCD (2024)

Articles 2(6), 2(7), 2(8), 19(1), 19(2) 19 (7) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 44. When Member States provide material reception conditions through financial allowances or vouchers, they guarantee an adequate standard of living that allows effective access to those conditions.

Indicator 1. The material reception conditions to be provided in the form of financial allowances or vouchers are defined at central level.



- **Additional remarks:** *the type of material reception conditions and the modalities of provision of the financial allowances or vouchers are to be defined too (e.g. financial allowances on a card or cash, paper or electronic vouchers).*

Indicator 2. The method for the calculation of the financial allowances or vouchers is determined to allow an adequate standard of living.



- **Additional remarks:** *the method for the calculation is determined on the basis of the levels established by the Member State to ensure an adequate standard of living for nationals. Depending on the national context, this may be minimum income benefits, minimum wages, minimum pensions, unemployment benefits and social assistance benefits.*

Member States may grant less favourable treatment to applicants as compared to nationals where material support is fully or partially provided in kind or where the





levels applied for nationals aim to ensure a higher standard of living than the one that is required for applicants.

The method for calculation also needs to consider the estimated cost for each type of material reception condition. When material reception conditions are provided partially in kind and partially as financial allowances or vouchers, the amount should be calculated proportionally.

When reducing or withdrawing material reception conditions in application of Articles 21 or 23 RCD (2024), Member States could potentially reduce the rate of the daily allowance. However, when other material reception conditions are provided through financial allowances or vouchers the calculation of the amount needs to always cover basic needs.

Indicator 3. Mechanisms are in place to identify possible barriers that may prevent applicants from effectively accessing material reception conditions when these are provided through financial allowances or vouchers.



- **Additional remarks:** such barriers can be discrimination, administrative obstacles, eligibility rules for social/affordable housing etc. If the barriers cannot be addressed, Member States ensure the provision of material reception conditions in kind.

Indicator 4. The amount of financial allowances or vouchers is periodically re-assessed.



- **Additional remarks:** the periodic re-assessment could be informed by changes in provisions for nationals, changes in the cost of living or inflation, feedback by applicants on the sufficiency of provisions. The periodicity of the re-assessment should be in line with the one for the social welfare benefits provided for nationals.

Indicator 5. The levels of the financial allowances or vouchers are shared with the European Commission and the EUAA.



- **Additional remarks:** the information provided to the European Commission and EUAA could also include the method for the calculation of the levels.

The information should be transmitted, for example, upon each revision of national rates.

Indicator 6. The amount of the financial allowances or vouchers is adapted to the family composition and special reception needs.



- **Additional remarks:** when financial allowances or vouchers are not provided to each individual applicant but for the entire family, the responsible authorities in the Member States need to adapt their amount in accordance with the number of adult and child recipients. Member States may give access to supplementary provisions in kind taking





into consideration gender and age-specific concerns (e.g. cost for newborns, school costs) and special reception needs (e.g. dietary requirements, impairments devices).

Indicator 7. The financial allowances or vouchers are provided to the applicant from the making of the application until the person is allowed to remain on the territory as an applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** *if not possible, the material reception conditions must be provided in kind from the making an application until when the other forms are accessible.*

Indicator 8. The financial allowances or vouchers are accessible and provided regularly (at least once a month).



- **Additional remarks:** *the regularity of the provision of financial allowances or vouchers should be determined according to the purpose and the form chosen.*

For example, if a card system is in place, this needs to be accessible to the applicant and Member States should enable access to banking services or provide pre-paid vouchers.

Good practice

A mechanism to monitor the individual situation of the applicant is in place to ensure that the amount and/or the provision in kind of material reception conditions is adapted to their needs.

Standard 45. The modalities for receiving financial allowances or vouchers to cover for material reception conditions are defined in writing, are accessible and are communicated to the applicant.

Indicator 1. Written rules on the terms and conditions for receiving financial allowances or vouchers are available to each applicant, in clear writing and in a language that the applicant understands or is reasonably supposed to understand.



- **Additional remarks:** *these rules can include the duration of the financial allowances or vouchers (if temporary), their scope, purpose and amount, the required place of residence (if applicable), the duty to report administrative changes and any employment revenues, contact details of the responsible authorities, information on the possibility and modality to lodge a complaint or to appeal decisions related to the granting of reception conditions. This information can be included in the information provision to applicants. See also Section [5.1. Provision of information and counselling](#).*

Indicator 2. Applicants sign the written rules and receive a copy of them, while another copy is kept on file.





2.2. Assessment of the applicant's resources and contribution to reception conditions

Member States can require an applicant to cover, contribute or refund the costs of material reception conditions and health care when they have sufficient means. This is not a reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions. However, if the applicant has concealed financial resources and has therefore unduly benefitted from material reception conditions, this is a ground for reduction of material reception conditions in accordance with Article 23(2)(d) RCD (2024).

Similarly, applicants may be requested to cover or contribute to the cost of early integration measures, such as language courses, civic education courses and vocational training courses. In case of appeal, Member States may decide not to grant free legal assistance and representation where the applicant has sufficient resources. They might also request total or partial reimbursement of any costs incurred where the applicant's financial situation has improved considerably during the asylum procedure or where the decision to provide free legal assistance and representation was taken on the basis of false information supplied by the applicant.

All cases mentioned above are 'may clauses' in the RCD (2024), meaning that Member States have the option to apply them but are not required to do so. To resort to such options, Member States must have transposed the relevant provisions in their national laws.

To evaluate if the applicant can be requested to cover, contribute or refund parts of the costs for material reception conditions and/or health care, Member States need to put in place a mechanism to assess their resources and determine whether they are sufficient to ensure an adequate standard of living. The assessment carried out by Member States should respect the principle of proportionality and take into account the individual circumstances of the applicant and the need to respect their dignity or personal integrity, including any special reception needs. Applicants should at no time have to take loans to pay for reception conditions.



Recital 61 RCD (2024)

Articles 18(2), 19(4), (5), (6) and (7), 23(1) and (2), 29(1), (3) and (5) RCD (2024)

Article 17(2)(a) APR

Standards and indicators

Standard 46. When Member States require an applicant to cover, contribute to or refund the costs of reception conditions, a mechanism is in place to assess the applicant's resources and determine whether they are sufficient to ensure an adequate standard of living.

Indicator 1. The mechanism prescribes criteria to assess the amount required to cover the costs for each material reception condition, for health care, for early integration measures as well as for legal assistance and representation.





- **Additional remarks:** Member States can decide to assess the resources of an applicant when they have been working for a reasonable and defined period of time.

Indicator 2. The mechanism prescribes criteria to assess the applicant's resources and the amount the applicant is required to cover for each of the material reception conditions, taking into account their effective cost.



Indicator 3. The mechanism takes into account the effective accessibility of material reception conditions, health care, early integration measures and legal assistance and representation.



- **Additional remarks:** this is valid in particular when the Member State decides to not provide material reception conditions because the means of the applicant are considered sufficient to ensure an adequate standard of living in line with Article 19(3) RCD (2024).

Indicator 4. The assessment carried out by Member States respects the principle of proportionality and take into account the individual circumstances of the applicant and the need to respect their dignity or personal integrity, including any special reception needs.



- **Additional remarks:** the means of the applicant must be sufficient to ensure an adequate standard of living which guarantees subsistence, protects their physical and mental health and respects their rights under the Charter.

The Member State's option to request such contributions is not intended as a sanction mechanism. Any such decision should give due consideration to the applicant's individual circumstances, including the stability of their income, family situation and composition, and other relevant factors.

Indicator 5. Adequate information is provided to applicants about the contributions required on their part, how their resources are assessed, the obligation to report any changes in their income, the consequences of concealment and the possibility of appealing this decision to request financial contribution.



- **Additional remarks:** see standard 47 [below](#).

Indicator 6. A system to ensure accurate recording and consistent tracking of the applicant's contributions is in place.



Good practice

Working applicants have to self-declare their employment income via an online form/tool. The contribution that needs to be paid is automatically calculated.



When applicants with employment income do not file a declaration, the reception authority can access the database of the relevant national authority to check the applicants' actual income deriving from the quarterly declaration/contribution of work activities in line data protection rules. Based on this data, a letter is sent requesting a contribution of a percentage of the gross wage earned. To support self-declaration, applicants who choose to self-declare their income are asked to contribute less and on a monthly basis.

Standard 47. Member States notify to the applicant the decision to request financial contribution or to not provide material reception conditions and how to appeal it.

Indicator 1. The decision outlines the reason for it, the amount requested as contribution or which material reception conditions will not be provided, the methods and frequency of payments, as well as the consequences for late payments and for concealing resources.



Indicator 2. The decision is notified in writing to the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** *the written notification serves as an official document that can be referenced to by both the individual and the relevant authorities. The format and the language of the decision should take into consideration the needs of the applicants.*

Indicator 3. The decision indicates to which authority an appeal may be lodged, within what time limit from its notification, and includes information on how to access legal assistance.



2.3. Reduction or withdrawal of reception conditions

The reduction or withdrawal of reception conditions can apply in specific circumstances.

Article 23 RCD (2024) refers to cases of reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions. This provision is optional and leaves a considerable degree of discretion to the competent authorities. Specific attention is paid to the situation envisaged by Article 23(1)(b) and Article 23(2)(e) where serious or repeated breaches of the rules of the accommodation centre or violent behaviour⁽⁵⁰⁾ may lead not only the reduction of material reception conditions but also to their withdrawal, maintaining basic needs.

⁽⁵⁰⁾ The RCD (2024) does not provide definitions for the situations referred to in its Article 23(2)(e), namely seriously or repeatedly breaching of the rules of the accommodation centre and violent and threatening behaviour in the accommodation centre. Based on the range of scenarios reported by Member States, the European Migration Network (EMN) defined the serious breach of the rules of an accommodation centre as 'any event or act that may cause material damage to the facilities or compromise the physical or moral integrity of other persons – both residents and staff'. See EMN, *Sanctions/measures applicable to applicants for international protection who commit serious breaches of the rules of accommodation centres or display seriously violent behaviour, 2022*, <https://www.emn.at/sites/default/files/2022/08/emn-inform-2022-sanctions-applicable-to-applicants-for-international-protection-committing-serious-breaches.pdf>.



The last standard in this section looks into the notion of abandonment as per Article 23(2)(a) RCD (2024), including abandoning a designated geographical area under Article 8 or place under Article 9, considering its recurrence in practice across all Member States.

Article 21 RCD (2024) refers to cases of withdrawal of material and non-material reception conditions. To ensure effective management of the asylum and reception systems of a Member State, it is essential that each applicant remains in the Member State which is responsible for processing their applications. The interlinks between the AMMR and the RCD (2024) are enhanced in order to reduce reception-related incentives to secondary movements. In this framework, applicants are not entitled to the reception conditions set out in Articles 17 to 20 of the directive from the moment they have been notified a transfer decision to the Member State responsible for their application. Reception conditions are withdrawn only in the Member States other than the one where the applicant is required to be present.

In cases when the applicant is in the place where they are requested to be, but a transfer decision has been issued based on other criteria (e.g. family unity), reception conditions need to be provided.

Similarly, when the applicant is not in the Member State where they are required to be present and the competent authorities of the Member State in which the applicant is present have reasonable grounds to believe that the applicant might have been subjected to trafficking in human beings ⁽⁵¹⁾.

Member States should ensure a standard of living in accordance with Union law, including the EU Charter, and international obligations – meaning they should provide for the applicants' basic needs. Access to health care and, for children, access to education have to be provided in any circumstances.

Any case of reduction and withdrawal of reception conditions should be based on decisions taken individually, proportionally as well as in a justified, objective and impartial way, taking into consideration the situation of the applicant concerned, especially if they have any special reception needs. Information on the rights and obligations of the applicant vis-à-vis the decision is to be provided, including the possibilities and modalities of appeal. In case of appeal, free legal assistance and representation are made available to ensure effective access to justice.

In cases referred in Article 21 RCD (2024), Member States can notify the decision to withdraw reception conditions as a separate decision or as part of the transfer decision.

Situations regulated by Article 20(10) RCD (2024) fall outside the scope of this section. Similarly, this section does not apply when material reception conditions are not provided by the Member State, for example when the applicant refuses them on the grounds that they can cover autonomously for their own accommodation and living.

⁽⁵¹⁾ Article 18(3) AMMR.





Recital 22, 47 RCD (2024)
Articles 21 and 23 RCD (2024)
Articles 17 and 18 AMMR
Articles 1 and 2 Directive 2011/36/EU

Standards and indicators

Standard 48. When applying Article 23 RCD (2024), any decisions for reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions are taken in an individual, objective, impartial, proportional and justified manner.

Indicator 1. The decision for reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions negatively affects only the person concerned.



- **Additional remarks:** *consequences that affect family members of the applicant should be taken into account and prevented to the extent possible.*

Indicator 2. The decision for reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions is proportionate and takes into account the applicant's vulnerabilities and/or special reception needs.



- **Additional remarks:** *for this indicator, see also see [Standard 49](#) that further elaborates on the proportionality of the mechanism.*

Indicator 3. The decision clearly indicates which material reception conditions are reduced or withdrawn and substantiates the reasons for the reduction or withdrawal.



- **Additional remarks:** *the adapted modalities for the provision of material reception conditions are indicated in the decision and they should take into account the needs of the applicant.*

If reduction or withdrawal is the result of serious breaches of house rules or violent behaviour, decisions should make reference to any available staff reports on the alleged breaches or behaviour and/or written warning notes notified to the applicant.

Indicator 4. The decision specifies for which duration the reduction of material reception conditions applies.



Indicator 5. The decision for reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions is issued and duly signed by competent bodies in accordance with national legislation.





Indicator 6. The decision is notified in writing to the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** *the decision should be notified in writing to allow the applicant to exercise their right to appeal in line with Article 29 RCD (2024). The decision should be notified in a language that the applicant understands or is reasonably supposed to understand. If not possible, adequate arrangements should be in place to ensure that the applicant understands the reasons and the content of the decision.*

Indicator 7. In the cases mentioned by Article 23(3) RCD (2024), the applicant is notified about the justified decision of the authority to reinstate only partial material reception conditions.



Indicator 8. The decision indicates to which authority an appeal may be lodged and within what time limit from its notification.



- **Additional remarks:** *if the appeal or a review is done before a judicial authority in line with national law, free legal assistance and representation is made available to the applicant, in line with Article 29(2) RCD (2024). See also Section [1.5. Appeals](#).*

Indicator 9. Whenever material reception conditions are reduced or withdrawn, basic needs are ensured.



Standard 49. A standardised mechanism describing the consequences for serious or repeatedly breaches of house rules or violent or threatening behaviour is in place and is timely communicated to the applicants.

Indicator 1. A mechanism regulating the situations described in Article 23(2)(e) leading to the reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions is applicable to all reception facilities.



- **Additional remarks:** *the mechanism should be established at central or local level to ensure its uniform application. Consequences can take different forms, such as reduction of services, exclusion from communal activities or transfer to another facility.*

Indicator 2. The mechanism clearly defines the situations described in Article 23(2)(e) which may lead to the reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions.



- **Additional remarks:** *the mechanism should in particular specify which breaches of the house rules are considered ‘serious’ and what qualifies a behaviour as ‘violent or threatening’, in line with Article 23(2)(e) RCD (2024).*

Indicator 3. The mechanism clearly prescribes who is responsible for the reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions.





Indicator 4. The mechanism prescribes mandatory reporting to competent authorities in case of breach of national law.



- **Additional remarks:** where relevant, reporting to competent authorities should take into consideration protection issues that may arise (e.g. adherence to GBV protocols to protect the victim).

Indicator 5. The mechanism provides for a hearing before a decision for the reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions is taken.



Indicator 6. Adequate and timely information about the mechanism is provided to the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** information should be provided upon the applicant's arrival in the facility and should also focus on the consequences of breaching the house rules. For this indicator, see also Section [3.4. House rules](#).

Indicator 7. In line with the principle of proportionality, the mechanism envisages gradual measures prior to the imposition of withdrawal or reduction of material reception conditions, taking into account the severity and/or frequency of house rules serious breach or of violent behaviour as well as the specific vulnerability and/or special reception needs of the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** gradual measures can take different forms, such as warning notes. In the case of applicants in a vulnerable situation, the applied reduction should also be accompanied, when need be, by referral to appropriate psychosocial care and support. See Section [6.4. Response](#).

Standard 50. Material reception conditions are reduced or withdrawn once abandonment of the geographical area or place of residence is determined, in line with Article 23(2)(a) RCD (2024).

Indicator 1. The applicants' residence in the accommodation facility is verified on a regular basis.



- **Additional remarks:** for this indicator, see also Section [1.3. Allocation to a geographical area](#) [1.4. Restrictions of freedom of movement](#).

Indicator 2. A reasonable margin of time is ensured before abandonment is determined.



- **Additional remarks:** what constitutes 'a reasonable margin of time' should be defined by Member States in national law. Abandonment should be determined only after all legitimate means to communicate with the applicant have been exhausted.

Indicator 3. The applicant is informed about their obligation to present themselves in the accommodation facility for residence verification.





Indicator 4. The verification of residence in the accommodation facility does not create excessive burden on the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** verification of residence is organised in a flexible manner, in order not to unnecessarily disrupt or impede the daily activities of the applicant.

Standard 51. When a decision is issued on a transfer in accordance with AMMR and on the related withdrawal of relevant reception conditions, the withdrawal of relevant reception conditions is proportionate, takes into account the individual situation of the applicant, and ensure basic needs.

Indicator 1. When a decision is issued on a transfer, material reception conditions, access to employment, and access to language, civic education and vocational training courses are withdrawn only in the Member States other than the one where the applicant is required to be present.



Indicator 2. The applicant is informed on which reception conditions are withdrawn.



- **Additional remarks:** this information can be included in the decision notified to the applicant.

Indicator 3. Health care, education for minors, support to special reception needs, and provision of basic needs are always ensured taking into account the individual situation of the applicant.



Indicator 4. Guidelines are in place to determine basic needs based on the individual circumstances of the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** the circumstances of the applicant can be understood through the information collected during the whole asylum procedure including the screening. Additional information regarding the special needs of the applicant can also be found in their individual file in the reception system.

Indicator 5. Standardised procedures are in place to exchange information between reception and AMMR authorities.



Standard 52. Decisions for reduction or withdrawal of reception conditions based on Article 21 RCD (2024) are duly notified and include information on appeal.

Indicator 1. The decision is notified in writing to the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** the decision should be notified in writing to allow the applicant to exercise their right to appeal in line with Article 29 RCD (2024). The decision should be notified in a language that the applicant understands or is reasonably supposed to understand. If not possible, adequate arrangements should be in place to ensure that the applicant understands the reasons and the content of the decision.





Indicator 2. When the transfer decision does not include the withdrawal of the relevant reception conditions, a separate decision is issued.



Indicator 3. The decision indicates to which authority an appeal may be lodged and within what time limit from its notification.



- **Additional remarks:** *if the appeal or a review is done before a judicial authority in line with national law, free legal assistance and representation is made available to the applicant, in line with Article 29(2) RCD (2024).*

Such a decision could be appealed together with the transfer decision under Article 43 AMMR. If a separate decision is issued, the withdrawal decisions can be appealed under the procedure laid down in national law under Article 29(1) RCD.

See also Section [1.5. Appeals](#).

2.4. Assessment of reception conditions

‘Assessment of reception conditions’ refers to the set of activities that Member State authorities carry out to observe, check and control, on a regular basis, the quality of reception conditions in their facilities, to ensure compliance with national and EU standards. Such an assessment is mandatory under Article 31 RCD (2024) which prescribes that Member States must put relevant mechanisms in place to ensure that appropriate guidance, monitoring and control of the level of reception conditions are established. In doing so, Member States should take into account available non-binding operational standards, indicators, guidelines and best practices on reception conditions developed by the EUAA, including the ones laid down in this document.

In this sense, the term ‘assessment of reception conditions’ does not refer to the monitoring mandate that the EUAA⁽⁵²⁾ gradually started in 2024, covering the operational and technical application of all aspects of the CEAS. Nor does it refer to monitoring activities carried out by actors or institutions other than reception authorities (e.g. international organisations, ombudspersons).

The assessment of reception conditions can serve different purposes, including: verify the correct functioning of the overall system (compliance function); discourage the misuse of public funds (preventive function) especially in countries where services in reception facilities are outsourced to third actors; identify gaps and take corrective measures (corrective function). When conducted using common standards and indicators, the assessment of reception conditions ultimately contributes to reduce divergences among reception systems in different countries, fostering harmonisation and ensuring equal treatment of applicants for international protection in reception throughout the EU+.

⁽⁵²⁾ See Chapter 5 – Monitoring in EUAA Regulation.



The ultimate responsibility to ensure the efficiency of the reception system as well as the adequate level of provision of material reception conditions lies with the state authorities.



Article 31(1) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 53. A mechanism to assess reception conditions in reception facilities is in place.

Indicator 1. A standardised mechanism to assess reception conditions is defined and adopted.



- **Additional remarks:** *the assessment mechanism can derive from existing law and/or be established by competent reception authorities at central or local level. In the latter case, different mechanisms may apply across the country.*

Indicator 2. The mechanism takes into consideration available, non-binding operational standards, indicators, guidelines or best practices on reception conditions developed by the EUAA.



Indicator 3. The mechanism clearly indicates who is responsible for assessing reception conditions.



- **Additional remarks:** *depending on the national system, different actors may be involved in the assessment of reception conditions.*

Indicator 4. The mechanism defines the areas to be assessed.



- **Additional remarks:** *the assessment should focus in principle on all reception conditions, including the areas covered by this guide. The assessment should encompass all services provided inside the accommodation facility, including those provided by third parties.*

Indicator 5. The mechanism clearly provides a timeline for conducting the assessment of reception conditions.



- **Additional remarks:** *the assessment of reception conditions in reception facilities should be carried out on a regular basis. To do so, an assessment plan should be developed in advance by reception authorities. The frequency at which reception facilities are assessed can vary across Member States and can depend on different factors, such as the number of reception facilities to be assessed and/or the human resources allocated to this function. The assessment can also be reactive, i.e. triggered by reports of incidents or irregularities.*



Indicator 6. The mechanism clearly prescribes the methodology and tools to conduct onsite assessment visits and to report findings.



- **Additional remarks:** *the assessment methodology and tools for onsite visits can derive from existing law; it should be based on the principle of triangulation of information, that entails using multiple methods and sources of information to validate and ensure the accuracy of findings. Sources of information can include direct observation, documentation, reception facility staff and applicants. Tools that can be used to collect information from key sources can include: questionnaires addressed to the managers of the reception facility and/or to the applicants (including anonymous questionnaires); focus group discussions with selected reception officers or applicants (men, women or children); surveys; quality audit checklists.*

An assessment report should be elaborated after every onsite visit. The report should: analyse the information collected; describe any findings; make time-bound recommendations for the improvement of reception conditions in the assessed areas; point out any identified good practices. The report can be addressed to different recipients as appropriate, for example competent reception authorities or managers of the facility.

The personnel in charge of assessing reception conditions should be properly trained on the methodology and tools.

Indicator 7. The mechanism prescribes follow-up measures.



- **Additional remarks:** *actions should be timely taken to implement time-bound recommendations formulated in the assessment report. Recommendations can include different measures and ultimately lead to the closure of a reception facility, in case of serious inefficiencies or irregularities.*

Good practice

Develop a digital tool for assessing reception conditions based on quality standards and indicators.

Create specific rules of conduct applicable to the personnel in charge of assessing reception conditions.

Every five years, conduct an external and independent evaluation of the assessment mechanism.

Provide feedback to persons who have provided information, where appropriate.

Review regularly the progress on recommendations' implementation.

After the assessment, conduct formal coordination meetings with relevant stakeholders in the reception facility as a part of a regular follow-up system, to ensure that any gaps are addressed in a timely manner.

Draw up a recommendations' implementation matrix and identify who is responsible to follow up on each recommendation and within which timeframe.

Systematically analyse and disseminate identified good practices that could be replicated in all reception facilities.





Part II – Reception facility





3. Facility administration

3.1. Security and safety

In this section, the term ‘security’ relates to protection from deliberate threats or acts of violence. The term ‘safety’ relates instead to accidental hazards such as road accidents, fire, diseases and natural hazards.

Ensuring a safe and secure environment for all whilst providing material reception conditions to applicants is a priority. To this end Member States have developed operational security and safety procedures in response to the identified risks concerning both applicants and staff working in reception facilities. Incidents, including critical ones (that can be defined as sudden, unexpected and overwhelming events, out of the range of expected experiences) ⁽⁵³⁾ may occur in reception facilities. They can take different forms, such as threats or harm to the life, physical safety or mental health of applicants and/or staff; material damage; disruption of daily life; acts of aggression, harassment or abuse; conflict situations; violence (verbal or physical). Most of the activities to prevent conflicts and violence, as well as to react to critical situations, are undertaken by the reception officers working in the facility. They are the ones monitoring the situation on a daily basis and usually reporting security threats to the competent authorities. To this end, it becomes crucial for Member States to have in place a formal procedure to prevent and manage incidents, including critical ones.

Adequate security of the reception facility, its furniture and its equipment should be ensured in line with applicable national legislation and regulations and with the overall goal of ensuring a safe living environment for the applicants for international protection as well as the personnel working in the reception facilities.



Articles [20](#) and [22](#) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 54. Sufficient security measures are in place.

Indicator 1. A risk assessment is carried out on a regular basis, taking into account external and internal factors.



⁽⁵³⁾ See UNHCR, Dealing with critical incidents and trauma (staff), 2023, <https://emergency.unhcr.org/> and EUAA, Critical Incident Management in the Field of Asylum and Reception, 2022, p. 8, <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/critical-incident-management-field-asylum-and-reception>



- **Additional remarks:** factors to take into account for the risk assessment are: security issues expressed by the applicants, the conditions and location of the reception facility, attitudes of the local resident community, number of people to be accommodated, composition of nationalities among residents of the reception facility, gender and family status of applicants, applicants with special needs accommodated there and incidents in the past.

Indicator 2. Adequate security measures are introduced based on the outcome of the risk assessment.



- **Additional remarks:** these measures could include, for example: facilitating access control by setting up a fence around the reception facility, ensuring the 24/7 presence of a staff member, ensuring sufficient light in the outside areas of the premises and a video monitoring system, restricting public access where needed for the safety of the applicants and the inclusion of security-related aspects in the 'house rules'.

Indicator 3. It is possible to report security issues (e.g. theft, violence, threats, hostility from external community) to the responsible personnel in a safe manner.



- **Additional remarks:** applicants should be informed about the reporting line in case of security incidents.

Indicator 4. The numbers for emergency calls are displayed in a visible place and a phone is available.



Indicator 5. Security measures focus on the detection and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.



Indicator 6. Specific arrangements have been made for applicants with special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** specific measures should be put in place to ensure the security of all applicants, in particular those with special needs related to their age, family status, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation and physical or mental health problems. Specific security arrangements should also be in place for victims of THB, sexual and gender-based violence, torture or other forms of psychological and physical violence. These measures could for example include the possibility to accommodate applicants with a different sexual orientation separately from other applicants of the same sex, or the transfer of an applicant who is at risk of becoming or has become subject to GBV (see [Standard 3](#) on the (re)allocation of applicants to available suitable accommodation facilities taking into account their needs) or offering a protected space for children to play which is free of hazards. In facilities hosting unaccompanied minors specific preventive measures should be in place to prevent children going missing.

Indicator 7. A free-of-hazards protected space for children to play is provided.



Indicator 8. Fire safety of the facilities is taken care of according to national legislation.



- **Additional remarks:** *there could be a facility-specific rescue plan including, for example, the regularity of fire drills, the number and location of smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.*

Good practice

To encourage the reporting of violence, make available spaces where specific groups can express security concerns in private.

Use of a system for the recording or filing of security incidents.

Standard 55. Access to accommodation centres is adequately controlled.

Indicator 1. A mechanism to control access to accommodation centres is in place.



- **Additional remarks:** *access control to accommodation centres can take different forms, including but not limited to: an electronic entry exit system enabling to have a real-time overview of applicants inside the premises; access through badges or ID; 24/7 presence of a guard. Access control can also be implemented for private houses, flats, hotels etc. through different means. For this indicator, see also Section [3.4. House rules](#).*

Indicator 2. A procedure regulating the access of non-residents is in place.



- **Additional remarks:** *access restrictions can be applied to non-residents. They can be implemented in different ways, e.g. issuing ad hoc permits to enter the premises, keeping a list of authorised persons, specifying access restrictions for non-residents in the house rules. In line with Article 20(1)(c) RCD (2024), access of family members, legal advisors or counsellors, persons representing UNHCR and relevant civil society organisations recognised by the concerned Member State in order to assist the applicants can only be limited on certain grounds. For this indicator, see also Section [3.4 House rules](#).*

Standard 56. Reinforced security infrastructure takes into account the aim of facility.

Indicator 1. External reinforced security infrastructure is proportionate to the aim of the facility.



- **Additional remarks:** *while it is recognised that external security infrastructure in accommodation centres is needed also to protect residents, its disproportionate use*

should be avoided. In this sense, sensors and surveillance systems such as fence-pointing cameras are considered more adequate options to secure the perimeter around the external fencing than concrete external walls with razor blade wire and wire-mesh fences. This indicator is applied with flexibility in case of facilities that have been repurposed to accommodate applicants, when external reinforced security infrastructure was already in place.

Indicator 2. Internal fencing between residential areas is minimised as much as possible to guarantee freedom of movement.



- **Additional remarks:** *exceptions include the use of internal fencing in safe zones for applicants in a vulnerable situation, zones with restricted direct access to applicants (administration, finance, logistics, etc.) and places fenced off for the safety of residents and employees (such as generators, waste management sites, water tanks).*

Standard 57. A procedure is in place to manage critical incidents.

Indicator 1. Procedures are in place to address critical incidents and potential threats for residents and/or staff.



- **Additional remarks:** *a non-exhaustive list of incidents and potential threats involving residents includes: incidents with an aggressive resident; occupation of official premises, riots or mob violence; acts of vandalism; consumption of alcohol or drugs in the reception facility; threats and attempts of self-harm and suicide; hunger and thirst strikes. Procedures responding to incidents and potential threats for residents and staff are developed based on the risk assessment and are primarily applicable in large-scale accommodation centres ⁽⁵⁴⁾.*

The incident-management procedure can include the following elements: anonymous and safe reporting of incidents; timely communication, both internally and with the competent authorities; clear and documented instructions on who can be contacted (e.g. police, medical services); standardised recording and reporting templates for quick and effective incident management; post-incident support to other affected residents and staff.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ A non-exhaustive list of procedures includes: an emergency response plan after disasters, e.g. earthquake or wildfire evacuation; fire safety guidelines for staff and residents; specific procedures in the following cases: pandemic or other major health crisis; incident with a suspicious object/vehicle; incident with a suspicious parcel; threat from chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear agents; risk of armed or terrorist attack; hostage-taking or kidnapping; mass casualty/active shooter incident.



Indicator 2. Signs on specific types of hazards identified in the reception facility and on actions prohibited in the premises are visibly displayed in places accessible by all applicants.



- **Additional remarks:** signs can take different forms, including diagrams, pictograms or written messages. For this indicator, see also Section [3.4. House rules](#).

Indicator 3. Critical incidents and actions taken to address them are recorded.



- **Additional remarks:** critical incidents should be recorded in a specific register. Recording can include information about the applicant(s) involved and their profile, the types and timing of incidents, as well as the specific actions taken for dealing with the incident. For this indicator, see also Section [1.1. Data collection](#).

Good practice

Establish multisectoral and/or interinstitutional teams at local level to ensure ongoing cooperation and exchange of information between relevant parties, e.g. reception facility staff, medical personnel, psychologists, social workers, security, police.

Hold cooperation meetings with local authorities, fire brigades, police etc. in regard of the local emergency management plan.

In accommodation centres, install alarm systems that can be activated by staff to broadcast warning signals and voice messages. In the absence of a voice alarm system or its failure, megaphones can be used instead.

Organise exercises (e.g. evacuation exercises) to adequately respond to critical incidents together with the residents/staff of the facilities.

Establish a risk reduction plan taking into account the profile of residents, the size and location of the facility, environmental factors, neighbourhood etc.

Organise 'exploratory walks' within the facility with applicants and staff to identify together potential risks. Such walks can be organised in dark hours and/or with specific groups of applicants (e.g. women).

Standard 58. Staff working with unaccompanied children in a reception facility are able to early identify safety and wellbeing risks for children.

Indicator 1. A standard risk assessment to identify the safety risks around unaccompanied children is in place.



- **Additional remarks:** this instrument could serve as a checklist or interview guideline that helps staff to assess, based on available information, whether unaccompanied children run the safety risk of harm in the sense of abuse, neglect, exploitation or violence now or in the future, in- or outside the reception facility.





Indicator 2. Safety risks of unaccompanied children are assessed in the first week upon arrival and this is repeated regularly at least every 6 months.



- **Additional remarks:** *it is recommended that the risk assessment take place during or as soon as possible after the intake in the reception facility but no later than a week upon arrival.*

Indicator 3. Safety risks are systematically assessed.



- **Additional remarks:** *the situation of unaccompanied children can change under the influence of their environment (in or around the reception facility). Therefore, the identification or reassessment of risks is an ongoing process and will thus preferably take place every three to six months, or whenever triggered by a change in circumstances or an event*

Indicator 4. The outcome of the risk assessment is discussed in a multidisciplinary context in order to plan follow-up actions and necessary care.



- **Additional remarks:** *the representative or other specialised actors shall be involved in the risk assessment or its outcome.*

Standard 59. Reception staff working with children ensures the reduction of safety risks to an absolute minimum.

Indicator 1. The necessary care and appropriate reception facility based on the risk assessment is provided within a week after arrival.



- **Additional remarks:** *a safe place to grow up is a basic need for all unaccompanied children.*

Indicator 2. Immediate action in acutely unsafe situations is taken by the reception authorities in order to eliminate the unsafe situation.



- **Additional remarks:** *when confronted with high security risks, such as signals of human trafficking and potential runaway behaviour to an unknown destination, it is important that professionals are able to recognise and know how they must act. If an unsafe situation occurs (threats from the trafficking network, threat of honour killings, bullying by roommates, etc.) it is important that professionals take action to establish a safe and stable situation as fast as possible.*

Indicator 3. Reception facilities have an alert instrument and ensure the systematic reporting and immediate response of missing unaccompanied children.



- **Additional remarks:** *as soon as it is noted that an unaccompanied child is missing, a missing person's report must be filed with the police and the youth welfare office should be informed. A child will be understood to be missing if they have left the facility without first informing the reception personnel and the child's whereabouts are*





unknown. The first step to take is to look for the unaccompanied child; the duration and intensity of the search depends on the age of the unaccompanied child, previous behaviour and observations, and on the context. For a child under 14 years old it is generally not acceptable to wait overnight. Information on the person has to be given to the police as accurately as possible regarding clothing/mobile phone number, etc. As soon as the unaccompanied child reappears, the police and youth welfare office are to be informed. Any information given by the police or the youth welfare office are to be considered.

Good practice

Temporarily confiscate mobile phones on arrival, in respect of the principle of the best interests of the child, where indicators of potential human trafficking are detected, in order to reduce the risk of contact with a potential trafficking network. In that case, ensure that phone calls can still be made under supervision and children should especially be offered the possibility of contacting family in the country of origin or another country to tell them they are safe.

Organise safe houses/specific facilities to protect unaccompanied children at risk of THB, forced marriage, etc. This may entail protective measures like the movement of the unaccompanied child to a rural location, supervised shelter and intensive guide.

Use a national alert system in order to find missing children, after consulting the police and representative to measure the impact of such a publication.

Standard 60. Unaccompanied children are properly informed on the subject of (de) radicalisation and staff share signals of (potential) radicalisation of unaccompanied children with the responsible authorities.

Indicator 1. When needed, the staff discusses the subject of radicalisation with unaccompanied children.



Indicator 2. Reception facilities have an alert instrument to report signals of radicalisation to the responsible persons and authorities.



Good practice

Make a report form available to social workers which they can fill out in cases of radicalisation and transmit to the competent public authorities.

Foster coordination and the exchange of data and information with other competent public authorities by developing or enhancing collaboration within common workgroups.

There should also be the possibility to hire a specialist on radicalisation or to have staff with specific knowledge to speak with the children.





3.2. Maintenance

The term ‘maintenance’ should be understood as a set of activities which are required and undertaken to conserve the original condition of the reception facility as much as possible and for as long as possible.

While the maintenance of the reception facility falls under the overall responsibility of the relevant authorities in the Member States, applicants may also be involved on a voluntary basis, if allowed by national legislation/regulations.

When unaccompanied children are involved, it has to be on an educational basis, taking into account the age of the unaccompanied child, who should be advised and supervised by staff.

In some cases, applicants’ involvement in maintenance activities can be remunerated as part of small jobs given out within the collective reception facility. In those cases, the process should be supervised by the responsible body or by a special company responsible for maintenance works.



Recitals 5, 11, 64 RCD (2024)
Articles 19(2), 20, 31 RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 61. The safety and proper functioning of the reception facilities is ensured through regular maintenance.

Indicator 1. The good functioning of the reception facility and its furniture and equipment is assessed on a regular basis.



- **Additional remarks:** *these checks should take place at least on a yearly basis. A checklist can help when carrying out the assessment.*

Indicator 2. Applicants have the possibility to report the need for maintenance and repairs.



Indicator 3. Repairs and replacements needed within the reception facility are carried out promptly and to an adequate standard.



- **Additional remarks:** *without prejudice to the fact that the overall responsibility for maintenance of the reception facility lies with the reception authority, certain maintenance tasks could be carried out by the applicants as part of small jobs — provided that these are remunerated and assigned on a voluntary basis. Unaccompanied children can carry out certain maintenance tasks voluntarily and on an educational basis. Assigning of such tasks should, take into account the age of the child, who should always be advised and supervised by staff.*

The overall supervision should lie in any event with the responsible body.





3.3. Individual file

This section focuses on the individual file that is created for each applicant upon arrival in the reception facility and records relevant information gathered by reception officers during the meetings conducted at the intake ⁽⁵⁵⁾ or during the applicant's stay in reception.

Member States are required to create an individual file for each applicant within three days from arrival to record their presence in the facility. Additional information will be progressively added to the individual file, as soon as it becomes available. Whenever possible, a well-documented individual file should be able not only to capture administrative, social and medical information, including special reception needs, but also to give a broader overview of the applicant's life in the reception facility. For instance, in case of applicants hosted in accommodation centres, the individual file should capture additional elements, such as their interaction with other residents and their active participation in the daily life of the facility. It should also report the actions undertaken over time to provide support to the applicant in different areas. As information can be gathered anytime during the stay in the facility, the individual file needs to be kept systematically up to date.

The RCD (2024) allows Member States to choose whether to provide housing to applicants in kind or through financial allowances. The standards and indicators elaborated in this section strictly apply to situations in which housing is provided in kind.

Data protection considerations and compliance with GDPR are particularly relevant for the standard and indicators elaborated in this section. As regards in particular the medical section of the individual file, it should be noted that 'data concerning health' constitute a special category of personal data ⁽⁵⁶⁾ and merit specific protection.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ The term 'intake' refers to the 'formal or informal procedure implemented by reception officers upon arrival of an applicant in a reception facility'. The intake can take various forms: it can be a single meeting or consist of different stages and can be conducted by one reception officer or by several ones with different functions (e.g. social worker, doctor). Its objectives include providing information to the applicant (e.g. house rules, rights and duties, available services, material reception conditions), collecting information from the applicant (e.g. social, legal, psychological, medical information), identifying persons in a vulnerable situation also in view of determining their allocation within the facility and their special reception needs. Indeed, the intake interview can be a privileged moment to obtain information relevant for the vulnerability identification process. As a core element of the intake, information needs to be provided in a time-specific and phase-specific manner and communicated in a clear way. Information provision sessions can be organised individually or collectively. In the latter case, the number of participants should be limited and groups should be homogeneous: participants should speak the same language or share other common characteristics (e.g. age, gender, country of origin, or belong to the same family) so that the transmission of information is effective. Various information channels should be used, including written information (e.g. for house rules) and oral explanations, also taking into account the special needs of the applicant (e.g. information should be accessible to blind, deaf and illiterate or low-literate residents and adapted for children). Interpreters and other means such as videos, leaflets, information boards, pictograms, should also support clear communication. In this sense, the intake can be considered as a two-way process in which the reception officer actively provides key information to the applicant who, in turn, shares with the reception officer important data that will be used to develop the applicant's individual file.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Article 9 GDPR 'Processing of special categories of personal data'.



**Articles 5 and 25(2)(b) RCD (2024)****Standards and indicators****Standard 62. An individual file is timely created and updated for each applicant.**

Indicator 1. Within maximum three days from arrival in the facility, an individual file is created for each applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** *the timeline of three days refers to the creation of the individual file for the purpose of registering the person's presence in the facility. At this stage, the file may contain limited information gathered during the intake meetings, such as personal data (name, gender, unique identifier) and information on family members in line with Article 2(3) RCD (2024).*

An individual file should also be created when material reception conditions are provided through financial allowances or vouchers.

Indicator 2. The individual file is systematically kept up to date.



- **Additional remarks:** *the individual file should be updated on a regular basis, especially when new information becomes available, such as information gathered by reception officers in the context of meetings, consultations and counselling sessions held with the applicant.*

When relevant, actions undertaken to support the applicant in different areas (social, medical, educational) should be also included.

Indicator 3. The individual file includes, as a minimum, the following administrative, social and medical sections:



- personal data, including information on family members in line with Article 2(3) RCD (2024);
 - legal status;
 - education, including literacy level and language skills;
 - vulnerability and special reception needs;
 - medical information relevant for providing adequate reception conditions.
- **Additional remarks:** *the individual file can be composed of one file only or of three different files (administrative, social and medical files). If administrative, social and medical information is gathered in one file only, access rights to the different elements should be managed in compliance with national legislation on professional secrecy and the GDPR. See also Section [5.2. Medical screening](#).*



The section on vulnerability and special reception needs must include information on the nature of the special reception needs, e.g. information on indicators related to vulnerability, (risk of) violence (e.g. gender-based or domestic violence, female genital mutilation), (risk of) THB, information on referral (e.g. to health counselling, medical or psychological care), including contact details of CSOs offering specialised services, together with a description of the visible signs or the relevant applicants' statements or behaviour. In particular, the individual file should give a broader overview of the applicant's life in the facility, such as respect of the house rules, interaction and conflicts with other residents, self-care, participation in social and/or pre-integration activities, presence of social network in the territory and, where applicable, working situation and interest expressed to reception officers towards voluntary return.

The individual file should include house rules signed by the applicant. When the individual file is in electronic format only, an electronic copy of the signed house rules should be kept therein. See also Section [3.4. House rules](#).

In line with the GDPR, the applicant can receive a copy of their individual file on request. In addition, the applicant has the right to ask for rectification of inaccurate personal data and have incomplete personal data completed.

Good practice

Create a standardised individual file template to be used in all reception facilities.

Create an electronic database to collect and update information on the applicant and ease the exchange of updates and information between operators in charge of different tasks/ areas inside the reception facility, in compliance with the GDPR.

3.4. House rules

The term 'house rules' refers to the document that lists the rules applicable within the accommodation facility and regulates the applicant⁽⁵⁷⁾ rights and obligations.

The RCD (2024) mentions house rules in the provision related to the reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions, envisaging that Member States may reduce or withdraw material reception conditions, including the daily expenses allowance, where an applicant 'has seriously or repeatedly breached the rules of the accommodation centre or has behaved in a violent or threatening manner in the accommodation centre;' ⁽⁵⁸⁾.

Although the practices differ widely across as well as within the Member States depending on the type of reception facility, house rules are an important instrument to ensure that a facility operates smoothly and remains a safe and peaceful environment for all.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ On the basis of the principle of non-discrimination, house rules are applicable and should be accessible by all those accommodated in the reception facility, irrespective of their status.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Article 23(2)(e) RCD (2024).





Information on house rules should be provided upon arrival in the facility, through different means, using clear and plain language and in a language that the applicant understands or is reasonably supposed to understand also taking into account the individual situation and needs of each applicant. Additionally, house rules should be also provided in writing, signed by each adult applicant and displayed in easily accessible areas. Where necessary, information on house rules must also be provided orally or, where appropriate, in a visual form such as by using videos or pictograms.

The RCD (2024) allows Member States to choose whether to provide housing to applicants in kind or through financial allowances. The standards and indicators elaborated in this section strictly apply to situations in which housing is provided in kind.



Articles 5, 23(2)(e) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 63. Written house rules are communicated and accessible to and signed by each applicant.

Indicator 1. Written house rules are in place in each reception facility.



- **Additional remarks:** written house rules can be in digital format or printed. In the latter case, pictograms and icons can be used to support the understanding of illiterate or low-literate applicants.

Indicator 2. Written house rules are provided to each applicant upon arrival in the facility.



- **Additional remarks:** when needed, house rules are explained to the applicant in a clear and non-technical language.

Indicator 3. Written house rules are visibly displayed in the facility, in areas accessible to all applicants.



- **Additional remarks:** house rules, complemented by pictograms, should be displayed in different languages, also taking into account the main languages spoken by the applicants hosted in the facility.

Indicator 4. Written house rules are signed by adult applicants.



- **Additional remarks:** reception officers should verify the applicant's understanding of the house rules they are signing, e.g. by reviewing them together and providing clarifications if needed. House rules could also be considered as signed 'indirectly' when they are embedded or annexed to another document (e.g. contract between the facility and the applicant). Signed house rules should be stored in the individual file of



the applicant. When the individual file is in electronic format only, an electronic copy of the signed house rules should be kept therein. See also Section [3.3. Individual file](#).

Good practice

Develop at the central level a standard template of house rules applicable to all reception facilities, allowing each facility to complement with its own specific rules.

Translate the standard template of house rules in different languages.

Have standardised house rules embedded in law.

Avoid technical and legal language when drafting the house rules.

Organise information sessions on a regular basis to remind applicants of applicable house rules.

Standard 64. House rules include relevant information on applicants' rights and obligations in the facility.

Indicator 1. House rules contain information on the use of the premises.



- **Additional remarks:** information can encompass indications on the modalities of accommodation (such as cohabitation with other applicants), rules applicable to the use of rooms and common areas, available equipment, supplies and furniture.

Indicator 2. House rules contain information on security and safety norms.



- **Additional remarks:** information can encompass indications on the use of heating, electric appliances and kitchens as well as on safety norms to be respected, e.g. dedicated areas for smoking, when available.

Indicator 3. House rules contain information on hygiene rules.



- **Additional remarks:** information can encompass indications on the (frequency of) hygienic products distribution, (frequency of) bedlinen and towel change, duty to keep accommodation clean.

Indicator 4. House rules contain information on peaceful cohabitation.



- **Additional remarks:** information can encompass indications on hours in which silence needs to be observed, as well as principles governing cohabitation, such as respect for others, for privacy and tranquillity, for cultural, political, religious and any other differences.

Indicator 5. House rules contain information on the possibility and modality to lodge a complaint.



- **Additional remarks:** for this indicator, see also Section [3.5. Complaint and response mechanism](#).



Indicator 6. If applicable, house rules contain information on opportunities available to the resident to actively participate and engage in the daily management of the facility.



- **Additional remarks:** for this indicator, see also Section [3.6. Applicants' participation and engagement in areas that affect their daily life in the reception facility](#).

Indicator 7. House rules contain information on rules applicable to access the facility.



- **Additional remarks:** information can encompass indications on hours to access the premises (including curfew, if applicable) and means provided to the applicants to access (i.e. cards, keys, electronic badges).

For this indicator, see also Section [3.1. Security and safety](#).

Indicator 8. House rules contain information on rules applicable in case of absence from the facility.



- **Additional remarks:** information can encompass indications on what is considered to be a justified absence, the duration of tolerated absence, the authorisation needed for an absence, the applicant's duty to inform about their absence.

For this indicator, see also Section [2.3. Reduction or withdrawal of reception conditions](#).

Indicator 9. House rules contain information on procedures applicable to inspection of individual premises by the staff, in line with applicable national legislation.



Indicator 10. House rules contain information on the conditions under which an applicant is entitled to stay in the reception facility, in line with applicable provisions in national law.



- **Additional remarks:** the applicant should be informed that their stay in the reception facility is in principle temporary and linked to certain conditions, such as the issuance of a final decision on their asylum application or termination of stay (due to forced return, voluntary departure, transfer to another facility, or early termination as a result of a sanction).

Indicator 11. House rules contain information on rules applicable to visits from external visitors.



- **Additional remarks:** information can encompass indications on the days and time when visits can be received, maximum duration of visits and requirement of prior authorisation to receive visits.

For this indicator, see also Section [3.1. Security and safety](#).



Good practice

House rules describe the procedure for room allocation and room transfer.

Organise information sessions to explain rules related to the rational consumption of utilities in the facility.

Standard 65. House rules provide information on prohibited behaviours and related sanctions.

Indicator 1. House rules clearly describe prohibited behaviours and actions.



- **Additional remarks:** *prohibited behaviours and actions can include: possession of weapons or ammunition, explosives or other items which pose a threat to public order; possession or use of drugs; possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages; disturbing peace and order in the facility, in particular by shouting, making excessive noise, intentionally triggering an alarm, threatening or being violent towards other residents and/or staff etc.; hosting overnight persons who are not authorised to stay in the facility; recording conversations, photographing or filming other residents or staff without their consent; destroying and/or damaging the property of the facility and the property of other residents.*

Indicator 2. House rules make reference to applicable sanctions in case of prohibited behaviours and actions, in line with national law.



- **Additional remarks:** *house rules should make reference to applicable national law related to unlawful behaviours as well as to applicable sanctions, including reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions. If behaviours are not reprehensible by law, house rules can elaborate minor sanctions such as an oral and/or written warning, temporary exclusion from activities organised in the facility, transfer to another facility.*

For this indicator, see also Section [2.3. Reduction or withdrawal of reception conditions](#).

3.5. Complaint and response mechanism

The term ‘complaint’ refers to an expression of dissatisfaction or a specific grievance that may be related to any aspect of the applicant’s daily life in the reception facility falling within the competence of reception authorities, including access to services, material conditions, collective life and treatment by staff. ⁽⁵⁹⁾

⁽⁵⁹⁾ On the basis of the principle of non-discrimination, the complaint and response mechanism is applicable and should be accessible by all those accommodated in the reception facility, irrespective of their status.



A complaint should be seen as an opportunity to improve the reception conditions at individual level (applicant), local level (reception facility) and national level (reception system). From this perspective, the complaint and response mechanism is to be considered an integral part of a quality system (in line with Article 31 RCD (2024)) as well as a way to promote the well-being of applicants and the respect of their rights. Indeed, a high number of complaints is not necessarily to be interpreted in a negative way. It can be also considered as an indicator of a well-functioning system in which applicants' voices are heard and their concerns are taken into account. In addition, an efficient complaint and response mechanism can strengthen accountability of the reception authorities towards applicants for international protection.

The possibility to submit a complaint is meaningful only if the complaint is carefully analysed and investigated, and if a response is provided. Each complaint should be handled in an objective way and justified feedback to the complainant should be given within a reasonable period of time.

Developing a complaint mechanism requires taking into account several elements, including: informing applicants and reception officers about its existence and the modalities to activate it; defining who is responsible to manage complaints and to follow up on them; defining an appropriate time for a response; putting in place a recording and reporting system.

This section focuses on a complaint and response mechanism at the level of the reception facility. However, Member States should grant access to such a mechanism also to applicants who are entitled to material reception conditions but are not accommodated in reception facilities (such as when housing is provided through financial allowance).

Data protection considerations and compliance with GDPR are particularly relevant for the standards and indicators elaborated in this section.



Article 31 RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 66. A well-structured complaint and response mechanism is in place.

Indicator 1. A standardised complaint and response mechanism is defined.



- **Additional remarks:** *the mechanism should be established by competent reception authorities at the central or local level.*


Indicator 2. The complaint and response mechanism defines the areas in relation to which a complaint can be lodged.





- **Additional remarks:** *areas in relation to which a complaint can be lodged should fall under the competence of reception authorities and can include any aspect of the applicant's daily life in the facility (e.g. accessibility and quality of services provided).*







Indicator 3. The complaint and response mechanism clearly indicates the modalities for lodging a complaint. 

Indicator 4. The complaint and response mechanism clearly indicates the modalities and timing for receiving a response. 

Indicator 5. The complaint and response mechanism clearly prescribes who is responsible for the management and follow-up of complaints. 

Indicator 6. Without prejudice to national legislation, the complaint and response mechanism indicates the modalities to escalate the complaint to competent higher authorities. 

- **Additional remarks:** *a complaint can be escalated in different situations, including when it was not responded to in due time or when the response was negative or not sufficiently justified.*

Indicator 7. Measures are taken to ensure that reception officers and applicants are adequately informed about the complaint and response mechanism. 

- **Additional remarks:** *measures to ensure that reception officers are informed on the complaint and response mechanism can take different forms, including dedicated awareness raising sessions.*

As for applicants, information about the possibility and modalities to lodge a complaint should be provided during the intake and should also be contained in the house rules. For this aspect, see also Section [3.4. House rules](#).


Information materials on the complaint and response mechanism should be available in several languages and be accessible to applicants. Adequate arrangements should be in place to ensure that the applicant is able to communicate with the personnel in charge of receiving a complaint or in charge of providing information about the possibility of lodging it.


Good practice

Have the complaint and response mechanism embedded in national law.

Organise specific training sessions about the complaint and response mechanism for all reception officers.

Standard 67. The complaint and response mechanism is accessible in a timely, safely and effective manner.

Indicator 1. A complaint can be lodged any time. 

Indicator 2. A complaint can be lodged in an anonymous and/or confidential manner. 





- **Additional remarks:** private settings, such as making use of a dedicated room, may be needed in certain cases, including for complaints that relate to misconduct by staff at the reception facility.

Indicator 3. A complaint can be lodged in writing, orally and/or by digital means.



Good practice

Install in the reception facility, in a place easily accessible and adequate to ensure privacy, letter boxes in which the applicant can insert a written complaint in an anonymous manner.

Create a help desk, a toll-free number or a dedicated email address to receive complaints.

Ensure that applicants can lodge a complaint to a person with a gender of their choice and/or to a person of trust.

Standard 68. The complaint and response mechanism is accessible to applicants in a vulnerable situation.

Indicator 1. Specific arrangements ensure that applicants in a situation of vulnerability can lodge a complaint.



- **Additional remarks:** modalities are tailored to specific needs, for example applicants that are illiterate or applicants with disabilities.

Indicator 2. Information materials and sessions on the existence and functioning of the complaint mechanism takes into consideration age, gender and any other characteristics or vulnerability of the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** staff in the reception facility are responsible for ensuring adequate information about the complaint mechanism regularly reaches applicants in a situation of vulnerability. For this indicator, see also Section [5.1. Provision of information and counselling](#).

Indicator 3. Legal or other representatives are adequately informed on the complaint and response mechanism, according to national law.



Indicator 4. A well-publicised, confidential and accessible procedure for internal complaints is established for unaccompanied children within the reception facility.



- **Additional remarks:** a simplified procedure is in place for unaccompanied children to make complaints on issues covering all reception conditions, including day-to-day care, housing, food, staff, leisure activities, etc. A complaint can be introduced orally or in writing by the unaccompanied child and/or their representative. The outcome is communicated to the unaccompanied child and to their representative.





Good practice

A specific focal point on vulnerability support and facilitate access to the mechanism.

When the complaint and response mechanism needs to be accessible to children, information is provided with a leaflet available in multiple languages and with infographics. The template for complaints is drafted in a child-friendly manner.

Complement existing complaint and response mechanisms with user-friendly IT applications or online forms to make access to the complaint mechanism easier.

Standard 69. Each complaint is responded to in a timely manner, giving priority to complaints dealing with situations of increased vulnerability or exposure to the heightened risk of vulnerability

Indicator 1. Actions are taken to timely address each complaint.



- **Additional remarks:** actions may take different forms, including acknowledging the receipt and providing individual feedback to each complaint, unless anonymous; taking immediate actions when, after analysis and investigation, the complaint proves to be well-founded.

Complaints are to be addressed within the timing specified in the complaint and response mechanism. Timing for responding should take into consideration the potential urgency as well as the specific circumstances of each complaint (such as whether the complaint appears to be reasonably well-founded, whether it was lodged by an applicant in a vulnerable situation, whether a delay in the response may produce negative effects).

Indicator 2. Criteria are in place to define priority situations.



- **Additional remarks:** the criteria define situations to prioritise, for example when an immediate intervention is required to stop a situation of imminent harm/risk as well as a clear timeframe for the response.

Indicator 3. Staff are aware of which cases need to be prioritised.



- **Additional remarks:** staff receive information about the complaints and response mechanisms and the priority criteria on a regular basis.

Good practice

A focal point on vulnerability explains to the applicant in an appropriate manner the outcome and follow-up of the complaint.





Standard 70. A recording and reporting system for complaints and responses is in place in each reception facility.

Indicator 1. All complaints and responses are recorded.



- **Additional remarks:** all complaints need to be recorded, regardless of the way they are lodged. Recording can take place in different ways, including through the use of a dedicated database or register.

For this indicator, see also Section [1.1. Data collection](#).

Indicator 2. Recording of complaints and responses includes as a minimum information on:



- the location where the complaint was lodged;
- the date in which the complaint was lodged and/or received;
- the progressive number of the complaint;
- the area(s) in relation to which the complaint was lodged;
- the type of actions taken to address the complaint;
- the processing time spent for addressing the complaint.

Indicator 3. Disaggregated information on complaints and responses that deal with vulnerabilities and special needs are recorded and collected.



- **Additional remarks:** the purpose is to identify trends and improve services. This information can cover aspects related to safety and security, aspects related to risk of increased vulnerabilities and aspects related to special needs that were not timely addressed. This information does not include personal data. For this indicator, see also Section [6.1. Prevention](#).

Indicator 4. All recorded complaints and responses are reported to the competent authorities, on request.



- **Additional remarks:** for this indicator, see also Section [1.1. Data collection](#).

Good practice

The database allows for the running of anonymous reports to analyse weak aspects of the reception facility or repeated themes.

Information on complaints and the response is publicly available.





3.6. Applicants' participation and engagement in areas that affect their daily life in the reception facility

In line with Article 20(9) RCD (2024), reception authorities are strongly encouraged to facilitate the participation and engagement of applicants in the management of material and non-material aspects of reception conditions. The same applies to children, in a manner appropriate to their age.

Notwithstanding the optional nature of the provision, in recent years Member States have put in place several practices to give shape to the participatory approach in areas that affect the applicants' daily life in the reception facility (for example through the establishment of advisory boards or councils that contribute to specific aspects linked to the stay in the facilities, such as composition of meals or calendar of activities).

In this perspective, the standard and indicators elaborated in this section focus on two different elements, i.e. enabling applicants to a) express their opinions and b) actively engage in the facility activities. By giving the applicant the opportunity to constructively propose improvements or changes, these elements can increase their sense of ownership in the process. In this sense, participation and engagement differ from a complaint, that can be considered as an expression of dissatisfaction or as a specific grievance.

Participation and engagement play important functions as they prevent the possible deterioration of the reception environment caused by a sense of frustration and lack of ownership. At the same time, they promote the applicant's dignity and well-being, encouraging and empowering them to become an active actor in proposing and finding solutions. This can lead, in turn, to create a better and safer reception environment for everyone.

Persons in a vulnerable situation may experience barriers to participating on an equal footing to others. This could mean that their views and needs are not considered to the same extent, producing potentially exclusionary effects. The voice and opinions of persons in vulnerable situations are often the most difficult to include in participation. Potential barriers range from not being able to voice your opinion due to illiteracy or physical handicaps, including hearing or speech impairments, to participatory activities being scheduled at a time unsuitable to applicants in a vulnerable position, such as single parents.

Standards and indicators elaborated in this section concern the actions that Member States can take to enable applicants to participate and engage in the daily life of the reception facility. Nevertheless, the applicant's willingness to do so remains a necessary pre-condition for these measures to be effectively implemented.

In view of the optional nature of the RCD provision, standards and indicators elaborated in this section provide guidance to the Member States that implement or intend to implement in their systems such measures.



**Article 20(9) RCD (2024)****Standards and indicators****Standard 71. Applicants are regularly involved in areas that affect their daily life in the reception facility.**

Indicator 1. Actions are taken to ensure that applicants are enabled to voice their views on a regular basis.



- **Additional remarks:** applicants, especially those who have been staying in the facility for a longer period of time, are enabled to voice their opinions and views on improving their daily life in the accommodation centre through different means, such as: surveys or questionnaires (e.g. on food, services, activities); suggestion boxes; creation of an advisory group inclusive and representative of applicants with different profiles (e.g. based on nationality, age and gender); group discussions (e.g. focus group discussions with members that are part of specific groups); meetings between the representatives of the residents and site managers. The management team should consider input from applicants to the extent possible and provide feedback on whether and how it has been taken into account. These actions can be carried out by the facility managers on their own initiative and/or upon specific request of applicants (e.g. as a response to complaints).

Indicator 2. Actions are taken to ensure that applicants willing to actively engage in activities carried out in the accommodation centre are enabled to do so.



- **Additional remarks:** applicants are enabled to engage on a voluntary basis in activities of the reception facility, such as cooking food, organising leisure and group activities, etc. Engagement should be as much as possible inclusive of applicants with different profiles (e.g. based on nationality, age and gender).

Good practice

Run satisfaction surveys in different languages using digital means and analyse the results with a view at improving the quality of reception.

Standard 72. Necessary procedures are in place to ensure that applicants in a vulnerable situation are regularly involved in areas that affect their daily life in the reception facility.

Indicator 1. Actions are taken to ensure that applicants in a vulnerable situation are enabled to voice their views on a regular basis.



- **Additional remarks:** applicants are enabled to voice their opinions and views through different means. This could be done through:

- surveys or questionnaires on proposals to improve everyday life in the reception facility (e.g. on food, services, activities);
- creation of an advisory group inclusive and representative of applicants with different profiles (e.g. nationality, age and gender);
- group discussions (e.g. focus group discussions with members that are part of specific groups);
- meetings between the representatives of the residents and site managers / all actors.

The management team should consider input from applicants to the extent possible and provide feedback on if and how it has been taken into account. These actions can be carried out by the facility managers on their own initiative and/or upon specific requests of applicants (e.g. as a response to complaints).

Indicator 2. All means provided to applicants to voice their views ensure the inclusion and representation of different profiles of applicants.



- **Additional remarks:** for example, if surveys are carried out, it needs to be ensured that they reach applicants in a vulnerable situation to collect their feedback. When applicants are grouped together to participate in activities, applicants representing different profiles and needs are invited to join.

Indicator 3. The means used to ensure that applicants voice their views are tailored to special needs and circumstances.



- **Additional remarks:** considerations related to age, gender and diversity are taken into account to tailor the means to the needs of applicants. Modalities to ensure the participation of applicants with special needs include, for example, having a sign language interpreter available to explain what an applicant with a hearing and/or speech impairment would like to say, or the need to find ways to adapt the written surveys for residents who are illiterate or have a low literacy level.

Depending on the activities organised to enable applicants to voice their opinions, additional time and flexibility might be granted according to the needs of the applicants. It is important that applicants with special needs are invited to participate in these activities and that they feel safe and secure in expressing their views.

Indicator 4. Actions are taken to ensure that applicants in a vulnerable situation engage in activities carried out in the reception facility.



- **Additional remarks:** applicants are enabled to engage on a voluntary basis in the reception facility activities, such as cooking or the organisation of leisure and group activities.



Good practice

Staff in the reception facility is assigned the responsibility of facilitating the involvement of persons in a vulnerable situation on areas that affect their daily life in the centre.

An IT application that can be downloaded on an applicant's phone or accessed through electronic devices is developed to collect feedback from the applicants.

An advisory group representing different profiles is created. For example, the creation of youth councils is an opportunity to create a communication channel between children and mentors.

Standard 73. Children's views and opinions are considered and acted upon, according to their age and maturity .

Indicator 1. Unaccompanied children are given safe and inclusive opportunities to express their views and opinions and for their views to be considered in line with age and maturity.



- **Additional remarks:** *The weighting for age and maturity is respected with regard to how those views are considered. Reception staff working with children may facilitate unaccompanied children to freely express their views by conducting individual and group meetings. Where relevant, a meeting report is drafted as a follow up. The child-friendly treatment by the staff members is important to create an environment conducive to child participation.*

Indicator 2. Unaccompanied children are provided with feedback explaining how their input was considered and influenced actions at least once a month.



- **Additional remarks:** *Positive follow up information or an explanation as to why this has not happened (and how children's concerns could be taken forward in other ways) may contribute to conflict prevention.*





4. Material reception conditions

4.1. Housing

Member States are free to choose from different types of housing provided to applicants as long as the special reception needs of the applicants are taken into consideration. The different arrangements range from accommodation centres to alternative arrangements, including private houses, flats, hotels or other premises adapted for housing applicants for international protection.

Moreover, the RCD (2024) provides Member States with the possibility to choose whether to deliver housing in kind or through financial allowances (Article 2(7)). On the one hand, where housing is provided in kind, the housing should comply with the standards outlined in this section; on the other hand, where Member States choose to provide applicants with a financial allowance to cover the costs of housing, this allowance should allow applicants to avail of housing which complies with the standards listed in this section.

At the same time, Member States' practice reflects the use of different types of housing, depending on the phase of the asylum procedure, including for example transit centres, first/initial reception centres, or special facilities for applicants in the AMMR procedure. Naturally, the functionality of premises might differ depending on the time period intended for applicants to reside in it. Therefore, the applicability of certain standards and indicators included in this section may depend on the type of reception facility chosen and on its purpose (e.g. long-term vs short-term residence of applicants). Wherever a standard only applies to a specific type of reception facility, this will be mentioned.

In this section, the term '(bed)room' is meant as a separate room, defined by four walls with a door which can be closed, a window that can be opened and a ceiling. When in accommodation centres or other shared facility, 'bedrooms' should always be understood as lockable rooms.

The term 'common areas' refers to a space where applicants eat and spend their leisure time. The size and set-up of the common area, as well as its functionality, depend on the reception facility in which the applicants are allocated. As such, 'common areas' might refer to one or more rooms which can be used by the applicants. With regard to bigger reception centres, 'common areas' might refer to a number of different rooms fulfilling multiple purposes, i.e. to eat, to carry out leisure activities or to take part in other collective activities (e.g. language classes, information provision). At the same time, smaller facilities might have one multi-purpose room which can be turned into a dining/living room or a room for carrying out leisure activities, depending on the need and time of the day. Provided that sufficient privacy can be ensured, the common area of smaller facilities, or parts of it, could equally serve for applicants to meet with social workers or legal advisers. Importantly, the term 'leisure activities' refers to activities involving not only children but also adults. This is based on the important link existing between the applicants' possibility to engage in leisure activities and their mental





health. The existence of space for leisure activities or the possibility for applicants to engage in collective actions (e. g. language classes, group information sessions or sport activities) serves an important purpose as it helps to bring more structure to their day and thus can help to decrease tensions arising from spending too much time without anything to do. This is particularly relevant during the initial phases of the asylum procedure when applicants might not (yet) be able to access the labour market or engage in formal training.

The term ‘sanitation’ refers to the process of keeping places free from dirt, infection, disease, etc. by cleaning and removing waste. In line with this, the term ‘clean’ refers to the absence of pests, bugs, germs and other hazards. The applicable sanitary standards outlined in this section apply to the entire reception facility, including private areas as well as indoor or outdoor common areas. Depending on the national context, the development and monitoring of these standards might be the responsibility of other relevant authorities (e.g. sanitation supervisory bodies).

While the maintenance of adequate sanitary standards falls under the overall responsibility of the relevant authorities in the Member States, applicants may also be involved. In practice, applicants tend to be responsible for the cleaning of the private areas. Unaccompanied children may also be involved depending upon their age and development levels.

In addition, depending on national legislation/regulations, other areas could be cleaned by the applicants on a voluntary basis. Unaccompanied children may be involved in such activities on an educational basis, taking into account their age and under the supervision and advice of staff. In some cases, this would also be remunerated as part of small jobs given out within the collective centre. In those cases, the cleaning process should be supervised by the responsible body or by a special cleaning company.

A detailed description of responsibilities relating to the cleanliness of the reception facility should be written down in the house rules.

Standards in this section in particular should be considered only minimum standards.



Articles [2\(7\)](#), [19\(2\)](#) and [20 RCD \(2024\)](#)

Standards and indicators


Infrastructure

Standard 74. The reception facility is in line with relevant national and local regulations.


Indicator 1. The reception facility is built in compliance with applicable local and national regulations.







Indicator 2. The reception facility is maintained and operated in compliance with relevant local and national regulations, taking into account all potential hazards. 

- **Additional remarks:** e.g. an evacuation plan for the accommodation centre is present and visible at all times; the routes for evacuation are free from obstacles; and fire extinguishers are accessible.

Indicator 3. Sufficient natural light and fresh air enter the bedrooms and common/living areas while curtains and/or shutters are available to shut out the light when needed. 


Indicator 4. An adequate temperature regulation system exists for all areas of the reception facility. 

- **Additional remarks:** the adequate temperature range would be determined in relation to the climate conditions in the location and the general standards applied for nationals.


Indicator 5. The bedrooms and common areas are protected from excessive environmental noise. 

- **Additional remarks:** environmental noise could for example be caused by machines, airplanes, trains, etc.


Standard 75. The inside and outside infrastructure of the reception facility designated to house applicants with reduced mobility is adapted to their needs.


Indicator 1(a). The reception facility is located: on the ground floor. 


OR


Indicator 1(b). There is an elevator adapted for use by persons with reduced mobility. 


OR

Indicator 1(c). Stairs are not more than a maximum number, according to the degree of reduced mobility. 

Indicator 2. The external approaches such as pathways or driveways have a firm, level surface. 

Indicator 3. The entrance is designed to allow for the access of applicants with reduced mobility. 

Indicator 4. Doorways and passageways inside the reception facility are wide enough for wheelchair users. 

Indicator 5. Grab rails exist for support in rooms and places that are used by applicants with reduced mobility. 





Indicator 6. Adapted sanitary infrastructure exists, including, for example, walk-in showers, grab rails, sinks and toilets at an appropriate height for wheelchair users, as well as a surface of bathroom and toilet rooms suitable for wheelchairs.



Standard 76. Suitable accommodation is available to provide response to the special needs of the applicants.

Indicator 1. Infrastructure conditions meet the applicant's special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** infrastructure conditions can include, but should not be restricted to:
 - minimum space (more square meters or less persons per bedroom), privacy (curtains/blinds);
 - accessibility (visual or acoustic guidance systems that allow barrier-free mobility for people with visual or hearing impairments);
 - furniture (additional wardrobes), private refrigerator (for storing medicine), baby beds, changing table, children's highchairs, child-friendly furniture);
 - sanitary infrastructure (baby bath, medical bed, walk-in shower, grab rails, sinks and toilets at an appropriate height for wheelchair users, appropriate flooring for the bathroom that is suitable for wheelchairs, short distance to sanitary provisions).

Indicator 2. A separate accommodation area within the reception facility is provided according to the special needs of the applicants.



- **Additional remarks:** for example, organise separate accommodation for pregnant girls and young mothers. Preparing for childbirth and creating a bond between the baby and the young mother requires specific expertise, a particular set up (nursery) and a calming environment.

Indicator 3. A protected area within the reception facility is available for applicants waiting to be transferred to a specialised facility.



- **Additional remarks:** for example, for potential victims of THB while waiting a transfer to a specialised facility. This should be established, however, in a way that avoids stigmatising or identifying/disclosing special needs.

Indicator 4. Alternatives to collective accommodation are available to allocate applicants according to their special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** Depending on the individual circumstances, in particular, where there are security, personal integrity and privacy concerns, collective accommodation might not be suitable for applicants with special needs. Alternatives to collective accommodation can include single rooms or individual housing, for example.





Single rooms can be provided in collective reception facilities, where applicants share other facilities and amenities (such as sanitary area(s) and the kitchen) or they can be part of individual housing. A minimum number of single bedrooms is ensured for persons with special needs. The assignment of single bedrooms should usually prioritise applicants with severe physical or mental illnesses; severe disabilities; LGBTIQ applicants; and pregnant women, for instance.

Individual housing can be provided in kind or cash allowances to cover accommodation costs, according to national law. Criteria to accommodate applicants with special needs in individual housing can include security concerns related to collective housing. The location of the reception facility should be determined with the purpose of accommodating applicants in the longer term with a view to enabling a continuity of the response to special needs.

Indicator 5. Secure accommodation and safe shelters are offered when there are safety and security concerns.



- **Additional remarks:** this is usually small-scale accommodation with a confidential address. Applicants at risk or victims of, for example, violence or THB should be referred to these specialised facilities.

Indicator 6. Facilities hosting children are adapted to their specific needs, allow for their physical and emotional care, and support their development.



Indicator 7. A safe room/area exists for children to play and to engage in open air activities in the reception centre itself.



Indicator 8. When children and their mothers are accommodated in mixed accommodation centres, separate sanitary facilities and a safe place are ensured.



Accommodation area

Standard 77. The space in the bedroom in accommodation centres is sufficient.

Indicator 1. A minimum space of 4 m² per person is provided for each applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** This indicator can be further clarified depending on whether the room accommodates applicants who are not related or family members. Age could also be taken into account, such as housing of families with infants and small children. Reference could be made to national legislation which defines the minimum living space per person, if such is stipulated.

Indicator 2. With regard to the minimum space of 4 m² per person, a minimum room height of 2.10 m is ensured.





Indicator 3. Sufficient space exists in the bedroom to place one bed and one cupboard for each applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** *Depending on the specific set-up, a table and a chair could be part of the essential furniture and should be taken into account unless provided for in common areas.*

Standard 78. The privacy of the applicants in accommodation centres is respected.

Indicator 1. A maximum of six single applicants are accommodated in one bedroom.



- **Additional remarks:** *the maximum number of persons per bedroom could also be determined based on the expected duration of their stay in such accommodation centres and on the availability of additional private space outside the bedroom.*

Indicator 2. A maximum of four unaccompanied children are accommodated in one bedroom.



Indicator 3. The access of adults to unaccompanied children areas/facilities is restricted.



- **Additional remarks:** *adults may visit units accommodating unaccompanied children within the visiting hours when the visit is agreed beforehand with the staff and the unaccompanied children concerned.*

Indicator 4. A room creating a private setting (inside or outside the premises) for meetings with the child's representative, legal aid providers, social workers, or other relevant actors is available, when needed.



Indicator 5. Separate bedrooms exist for single male and female applicants and no access is possible for applicants of the opposite sex.



- **Additional remarks:** *the restriction of access could be ensured via separate facilities and/or via a lock, without prejudice to security considerations of the reception facility. In particular, cupboards should be lockable if a facility hosts applicants with special needs, such as female applicants who might be at risk of GBV.*

Indicator 6. Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** *for example, unaccompanied minors should be provided with separate bedrooms and not be residing in the same room as adult applicants.*



Good practice

Provide a minimum passageway of at least 90 cm between the beds in order to allow for privacy.

Give children a personal key to their bedroom. This increases security for children who may be at greater risk of GBV, without prejudice to the security considerations of the reception facility.

Standard 79. The reception facility is sufficiently furnished.

Indicator 1. The furniture for each bedroom includes, as minimum:



- one individual bed; **AND**
- one lockable cupboard per person or family, big enough to hold personal belongings (such as clothes, medication or documents) without prejudice to security considerations of the reception facility; **AND**
- in facilities for unaccompanied children, study table and one chair per person either in the bedroom or the common areas.

Indicator 2. The furniture in the common/living area includes a sufficient number of tables and chairs.



Indicator 3. Facilities for unaccompanied children have a common living room, and all common/living areas are furnished in a homely and child-friendly manner also including a sufficient number of sofas and armchairs.



Indicator 4. In facilities where applicants are asked to cook for themselves, all of the following is provided and accessible:



- sufficient refrigerator volume per person; **AND**
 - sufficient shelf space per person/family; **AND**
 - a minimum access to a stove per person/family; **AND**
 - a minimum number of dishes, cups, cooking utensils and cutlery per person.
- **Additional remarks:** The sufficient refrigerator space could be further clarified by specifying the number of litres or shelves available per person/family.

Indicator 5. In facilities where catering services are provided, supervised training on food preparation is accessible for children and the following items are provided and accessible in the kitchen:



- sufficient refrigerator space, oven/stove, and shelf capacity is provided and accessible; **AND**
- sufficient number of dishes, cups, cooking utensils, and cutlery provided and accessible.



Indicator 6. Specific arrangements are available for applicants with special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** for example, infants should be provided with a baby bed, changing table and appropriate chair; persons with limited mobility should be provided with adapted furniture; and families with school-age children should be provided with a small table and a chair to allow children to engage in homework.

Standard 80. The reception facility has sufficient, adequate and functioning sanitary infrastructure.

Indicator 1. All applicants should have safe and effective access to a shower/bath and sink with hot and cold water and to a lockable, functional toilet which can be opened from the outside by staff for safety purposes.



Indicator 2. At least one functioning and lockable toilet per 10 applicants is accessible 24/7.



Indicator 3. At least one functioning shower or bath with hot and cold water is available per 12 applicants and is accessible for a minimum of 8 hours/day.



- **Additional remarks:** the ratio showers/applicants can be adapted if accessibility is ensured for longer periods during the day.

Indicator 4. In facilities for unaccompanied children, at least one functioning shower or bath with hot and cold water is available per 8 children.



- **Additional remarks:** the ratio shower/child can be adapted if accessibility is ensured for longer periods during the day.

Indicator 5. At least one functioning sink with hot and cold water per 10 applicants is accessible 24/7.



Indicator 6. If more than one shower is located in the bathroom, visual separation is ensured.



Indicator 7. Separate toilets, sinks and shower facilities exist according to gender (visibly and understandably marked) except for small reception facilities.



- **Additional remarks:** apartments, studios and other reception facility for less than eight persons could constitute exceptions.

Indicator 8. With regard to shared accommodation of applicants who are not family members, arrangements are in place to ensure that applicants may access the facilities safely and that the intimacy of the applicants is at all times respected.





Indicator 9. Arrangements are in place to ensure that clothes and towels can stay dry while applicants are taking a shower.



Indicator 10. Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** for example, daily access to a baby bath is possible for children under 2 years.

Unlimited access to sanitary facilities should be available to unaccompanied children who are parents, for taking care of babies and small children.

Good practice

Place the toilet in the same building as the bedroom and common areas and not outside.

Ensure that the shower facilities are individually lockable and that access is not restricted by time.

Pay attention to gender issues, women and child safety by placing the sanitary installations in the vicinity or at a safe distance with well-lit access.

Common areas

Standard 81. Applicants have sufficient space to eat.

Indicator 1. All applicants have the possibility to eat in a designated space.



- **Additional remarks:** it is possible for all applicants to eat in a canteen (in a bigger facility) or in a room where there is a table and a sufficient number of chairs. The place for eating could have other functions as well, as long as it is available for eating at certain times.

Standard 82. Applicants have sufficient space for leisure and group activities.

Indicator 1. Appropriate common areas for indoor and outdoor activities are provided according to the needs, including for leisure activities.



- **Additional remarks:** gender, age as well as the cultural background of applicants should be taken into account when setting up rooms for leisure activities in collective housing (e.g. for changing rooms). If possible, this could imply having separate rooms or hours during which rooms designated for leisure activities can be used.

Indicator 2. Where group activities are organised by the Member State, sufficient and adequate space is available.



- **Additional remarks:** the term 'group activity' refers for example to language classes, group information sessions, sport activities, etc.





Indicator 3. For children in collective facilities, access to a variety of leisure activities, including play, recreational and outdoor, appropriate to children's age is available within the accommodation facility **AND** additional activities may be accessible by public transportation or through organised transports provided by the Member State



Indicator 4. Children 0-12 have daily access to playgrounds and playrooms appropriate to their age **AND** Children 13-17 have weekly access to indoor and outdoor sport facilities



Good practice

Arrange a separate study room or specific hours in a multipurpose room where school homework can be done in peace.

Provide for the supervised presence of children in child-friendly spaces during the time the parents are taking part in group activities.

Sanitation

Standard 83. Private and common areas are kept clean.

Indicator 1. The reception centre observes a cleaning schedule.



- **Additional remarks:** for each area, it is mentioned how often and to what standard it must be cleaned.

Indicator 2. The cleanliness of private and common areas is checked on a regular basis.



- **Additional remarks:** checks take into consideration the applicants' needs for privacy.

Indicator 3. Cleanliness is checked when people move to another room or to a different reception facility.



Indicator 4. Where applicants are responsible for cleaning, they have access to necessary cleaning products and items as well as protection equipment such as gloves and masks.



- **Additional remarks:** if children take part in cleaning duties for educational purposes, it is important for staff members to consider their age, development levels and necessary support.

Good practice

Introduce a cleaning schedule which is written down in a clearly visible manner and verifiable by applicants.

Actively check by staff members that cleaning duties have been completed.





Standard 84. Kitchen and sanitary areas are kept clean and well maintained.

Indicator 1. The cleanliness of the areas is in line with local and national regulations and standards.



- **Additional remarks:** *these regulations could for example refer to regular operations to deal with rodents and vermin.*

Indicator 2. The areas are cleaned at least daily (in accommodation centres), or as often as necessary.



Indicator 3. In-depth cleaning of the areas takes place regularly.



- **Additional remarks:** *in accommodation centres, such in-depth cleaning could take place at least four times a year. Standards for the cleanliness of kitchens used by the applicants or for professional cooking differ.*

Standard 85. Applicants are able to do their own laundry or have it done on a regular basis.

Indicator 1. When the bed linen and towels are provided in kind and washed by the reception centre, they should be washed on a regular basis (at least every two weeks for bed linen and once per week for towels).



Indicator 2(a). Applicants should be able to do the laundry at least once a week.



- **Additional remarks:** *this indicator could be clarified in the national context by specifying the number of washing machines per set number of persons and corresponding adequate possibility to dry the laundry. When children do their laundry, they can do so independently or with the necessary supervision.*

OR

Indicator 2(b). Laundry services are available to the applicants at least five days per week (including the weekend).



- **Additional remarks:** *the laundry service should be sufficiently accessible, for example during at least 5 days per week (including the weekend).*

4.2. Food

The term ‘food’ includes food as well as non-alcoholic beverages. The standards included in this section are valid irrespective of whether applicants are provided with food in kind or in the form of financial allowances or vouchers. This means that Member States choosing to provide applicants with a financial allowance or vouchers to cover the costs of food need to ensure that it is sufficient to allow applicants to purchase food which complies with the standards listed in this section.





Recital 60 RCD (2024)
Article 2(7) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 86. Applicants have access to sufficient and adequate food.

Indicator 1. Food safety standards are observed.



- **Additional remarks:** *in line with the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) ⁽⁶⁰⁾ for food safety approach developed by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the sanitation of the reception facility, in particular of kitchen areas, should follow a preventive, rather than a corrective, approach. In line with this standard, the cleanliness of kitchen areas should be ensured, as lacking cleanliness could become a hazard for the overall health in the reception facility.*

Food safety standards concerning infrastructure of sanitation and general standards of cleanliness of kitchen areas should be observed also when unaccompanied children cook for themselves.

Indicator 2. At least three meals are served per day for adults and five for minors, of which at least one is cooked and served warm.



- **Additional remarks:** *a meal is defined both as a cooked, cold or warm dish and as a smaller snack or fruits. For unaccompanied children, the meals are not necessarily distributed at five different times during the day.*

Indicator 3. The daily schedule of children should be taken into consideration when serving the meals.



- **Additional remarks:** *this could mean that unaccompanied children are provided the possibility to be serviced with separately cooked or reheated meals if, for example, they go to school, work and/or participate in leisure activities and therefore miss the regular meal times.*

Indicator 4. The meals ensure a balanced and varied diet.



- **Additional remarks:** *the composition of the meals varies, e.g. meals are based on cereals, bread and rice, fruits and vegetables, milk, dairy products, meat, eggs, fish.*

Indicator 5. Applicants are informed about the composition of the meal.



- **Additional remarks:** *information could be provided in a general manner (with labels, etc.) or on demand.*

⁽⁶⁰⁾ See UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, *Hazard Analysis And Critical Control Point (HACCP) System*, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y1579e/y1579e03.htm>.



Indicator 6. Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special dietary needs.



- **Additional remarks:** for example, the needs of pregnant and breastfeeding women and persons with certain illnesses and food allergies should be taken into account.

Indicator 7. The eating preferences and dietary restrictions of specific groups are taken into account.



- **Additional remarks:** specific groups' refers to applicants from a specific religious and/or cultural background as well as vegetarian/vegan applicants.

Member States who provide unaccompanied children with a financial allowance or vouchers to cover the costs of food need to ensure that unaccompanied children with eating preferences and dietary restrictions are provided with additional allowances or vouchers to cover their special needs.

Good practice

Allow applicants to cook for themselves where possible and adequate. This promotes their autonomy, increases the feeling of normality / being at home and can contribute to structuring the daily life of applicants.

Give applicants the possibility to be served separately cooked or reheated meals if they had good reasons to miss the regular meal times.

Consult applicants regarding the menu and the cooking of the food.

Standard 87. Applicants have access to potable water 24/7.

Indicator 1. Each applicant is provided with a minimum of 2.5 litres of water per day, taking into account personal physiology and climate.



- **Additional remarks:** more details about minimum daily drinking water quantity can be found in the standards developed as part of the Sphere Project ⁽⁶¹⁾.

Indicator 2(a). The infrastructure of the reception facility is adequate for potable water.



OR

Indicator 2(b). Potable water is distributed in absence of adequate infrastructure.



- **Additional remarks:** applicants should be informed about whether it is safe to drink tap water, where applicable.

⁽⁶¹⁾ World Health Organization, *How much water is needed in emergencies?*, 2013, https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/wash-documents/who-tn-09-how-much-water-is-needed.pdf?sfvrsn=1e876b2a_6.





Good practice

Provide warm beverages in addition to the potable water.

4.3. Clothing and non-food items

The standards included in this section are valid irrespective of whether applicants are provided with clothing in kind or in the form of financial allowances or vouchers. This means that if Member States choose to provide applicants with a financial allowance to cover the costs of clothing, this allowance should allow applicants to purchase clothing in accordance with the standards listed in this section. This is without prejudice to situations where applicants already possess sufficient clothing in line with the standards included in this section and thus do not need to receive additional clothing items. The term ‘clothing’ in this section refers to both clothes and shoes. In the context of this guide, the term ‘non-food items’ refers to essential household items other than food, including for example personal hygiene products, cleaning and laundry products, bed linen and towels. In the context of school age applicants, non-food items also include school utensils. The provision of non-food items should always take into consideration the family situation of the applicant. Specifically, the composition of the non-food items and the quantity provided should take into account the personal needs of the applicant(s) in question.



Recital 60 RCD (2024)
Article 2(7) and 26(3) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 88. The applicant has sufficient clothing.

Indicator 1. The applicant has sufficient underwear for a week without having to do laundry.



- **Additional remarks:** *the above means a minimum of eight sets of underwear.*

Indicator 2. The applicant has at least a minimum number of clothing items.



- **Additional remarks:** *the above means at least five inner-layer upper-body items (such as T-shirt, shirt, blouse), at least three lower-body items (trousers, skirt, shorts), at least three items like a hoodie, sweater or jacket and two sets of nightwear.*

Indicator 3. The applicant has at least two pairs of shoes.



- **Additional remarks:** *this could include one pair of shoes for domestic use and one pair for outdoor use.*





Indicator 4. Applicants are provided with clothing as soon as possible.



- **Additional remarks:** *within a few hours of being assigned to a reception facility, every applicant must be dressed in at least basic (provisional) clothing enabling them to move freely in all the accessible areas (both interior and exterior) designated for them.*

Indicator 5. If any of the clothes is no longer usable due to wear and tear, there is a standardised way to obtain another item in exchange.



Indicator 6. Applicants have sufficient clothes for babies and small children for 1 week without having to do laundry.



Good practice

Avoid creating a 'uniform appearance' for all applicants (if clothing is provided in kind) as this helps to avoid stigmatisation,

Establish a 'donation storage' and connection with humanitarian NGOs for the purpose of acquiring and distributing used clothes.

Enable unaccompanied children to buy clothes for themselves as part of learning about economics.

Standard 89. Applicants have adequate clothing.

Indicator 1. The clothing items fit the applicants reasonably in terms of size.



- **Additional remarks:** *this also means that there must be a standardised way for unaccompanied children to receive new clothes when older clothes are outgrown.*

Indicator 2. The clothing is in reasonably good conditions and appropriate to the prevailing standard of the host society and the applicants' background.



- **Additional remarks:** *clothing items (except for underwear) do not need to be new, but should be in a good state.*

Indicator 3. Adequate seasonal clothing is available.



- **Additional remarks:** *this means, for example, that the applicant should have a winter coat/jacket, gloves, a winter hat, a cap, a winter scarf and winter shoes, where necessary.*

Good practice

Offer female applicants at least one veil as part of the set of clothes provided to them, if requested.

Offer girls at least one extra veil as part of the set of clothes provided to them, if requested.



Standard 90. Applicants have access to other essential non-food items.

Indicator 1. Sufficient bed linen and towels are provided.



- **Additional remarks:** *If the applicant is responsible for washing their bed linen, at least two pairs are provided to allow for replacing one with the other.*

Indicator 2. Washing products is available if applicants are responsible for washing their own clothes.



Indicator 3. Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** *for example, family with infants have access to a functional stroller and families with toddlers have access to a potty. Every child can use toys adapted to their age and in good condition. A person with physical disabilities or recovering from an injury or medical treatment can be provided with crutches, a wheelchair or other medical equipment whenever these cannot be obtained elsewhere (from other agents such as the public health system). Unaccompanied children in need of vision correction should have access to glasses or contact lenses. Unaccompanied children with babies have access to a functional pram. Small children have access to toys in good condition and adapted to the age of the child.*

Good practice

Applicants have access to an ironing set and to a hair dryer where necessary.

Standard 91. Children enrolled in school or other education arrangements are provided with adequate clothing and school utensils enabling them to fully participate in all educational activities.

Indicator 1. Children who attend school or other education arrangements are provided with adequate clothing for school activities, including school trips and extracurricular school activities.



- **Additional remarks:** *this could include school uniform where mandatory, as well as sports clothing and shoes.*

Indicator 2. Children who attend school or other education arrangements receive a school bag (backpack or other) and all school utensils required by the school free of charge.



- **Additional remarks:** *in addition to textbooks and other items required within the ordinary curriculum, school utensils could also mean necessary items for vocational training.*

Indicator 3. School materials, school transportation and internet connection are provided to support access to education.





4.4. Personal hygiene products

Standard 92. Applicants have access to sufficient and adequate personal hygiene products.

Indicator 1. A list exists specifying the type and quantity of personal hygiene products applicants of certain age and gender are entitled to receive.



- **Additional remarks:** *the list is clearly communicated to the applicants.*

Indicator 2. Necessary personal hygiene products are at the applicant's disposal, either through regular distribution in kind on a per capita basis or through the daily expenses allowance.



- **Additional remarks:** *access to hygiene products aims to maintain personal cleanliness and hygiene and to prevent infectious diseases. These items are, for example: toothbrush, toothpaste, toilet paper, soap, shampoo, shaver/shaving foam, sanitary pads, diapers and other hygiene products necessary for caring for babies.*

4.5. Daily expenses allowance

The daily expenses allowance is based on the consideration that a dignified standard of living can only be achieved when applicants have a certain degree of financial autonomy. They should be able to use the allowance in line with their own personal needs and preferences. It covers other essential needs of applicants for international protection addressed by the RCD that go beyond housing, food, clothing and personal hygiene products (those being covered through financial allowance, whenever not provided in kind or in the form of vouchers). In this document, the concept of 'daily expenses allowance' should be understood as having three different purposes, namely:

- allow applicants to reach a minimum level of physical subsistence, beyond the basic necessities of housing, food, clothing, and personal hygiene products;
- ensure a minimum standard of participation of applicants in the socio-cultural life of the Member State they are residing in;
- enable applicants to enjoy a certain degree of autonomy in their daily life.
- Daily expenses allowance can be provided as a monetary amount, in vouchers, in kind, such as in products, or as a combination thereof provided that such an allowance includes a monetary amount.

In light of the varying standards and costs of living across Member States, this section does not attempt to define the exact level of daily expenses allowance that should be provided to applicants. Irrespective of the method used to calculate the daily expenses allowance, the three purposes listed above should always be fulfilled. As such, the daily expenses allowance should not be mistaken as an act of generosity. Instead, it is of the same importance as housing, food, clothing, and personal hygiene products and forms an essential part of the material reception conditions.





Recital 8 RCD (2024)
Article 2(7)(8) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 93. An adequate daily expenses allowance is provided.

Indicator 1. A clear definition of the scope of the daily expenses allowance exists.



Indicator 2. The method to calculate the daily expenses allowance is clearly determined.



- **Additional remarks:** ‘determined’ means that the elements taken into account when determining the amount of the daily expenses allowance and the factors taken into account when assessing the amount under each of the elements, are described. The actual amount should be determined in relation to the national context, taking into account complementary needs beyond the basic needs, such as products or services of individual choice (e.g. cultural activities, sweets, tobacco products, games, going out).

Indicator 3. The daily expenses allowance is provided at free disposal of the applicant (‘pocket money’) and allows them to have an adequate degree of autonomy.



- **Additional remarks:** The provision of money to unaccompanied children should be assessed in each case, taking into account the unaccompanied child’s need for supervision and help to spend or save pocket money (see Section [5.7.3 Day-to-day care of unaccompanied children](#)).

Indicator 4. The amount of the daily expenses allowance also reflects as a minimum the following expenses, unless ensured in kind: communication and information, school items, personal hygiene and body care, leisure activities and costs for transport when related to access to health care and obtaining medication, the asylum procedure and legal assistance, and education for children enrolled in school or other education arrangements.



Indicator 5. The daily expenses allowance is provided regularly, and no less than once a month.



- **Additional remarks:** the regularity of provision should be determined according to the purpose (if specified), the amount and the form chosen for the provision of the allowance. Transparency should always be ensured.

Good practice

Take into account the individual situation of the applicant (e.g. age/family composition) when calculating the amount of the daily expenses allowance provided.

Provide the daily expenses allowance in advance of the period to be covered.



Provide the allowance to each adult member of the family separately (and not to the ‘head’ of the family for the entire family).

Provide daily expenses allowance equal to the rate that is provided to children hosted in other facilities outside the reception system.

Provide daily expenses allowances on a payment card to avoid large amounts of cash.

4.6. Communication equipment

Communication plays an important role for applicants for international protection throughout the reception procedure. The term ‘communication’ includes both communication concerning the applicant’s procedural status, and private communication, for example with family members. Importantly, adequate access to communication can contribute to the mental health of applicants as it can help to prevent anxiety resulting from lack of contact with family members and friends in the country of origin or in transit, or from inadequate access to communication with representative, organisations providing legal aid or other relevant services.



Article 20(2)(b) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 94. Applicants have adequate access to a telephone to make calls concerning procedural, legal, medical or educational issues.

Indicator 1. Access to a telephone is possible at least for calls concerning procedural, legal, medical and educational issues and, for children, also for calls concerning family contact and contact with the representative.



Indicator 2. Applicants have daily access to at least one telephone per accommodation unit.



- **Additional remarks:** *the number of phones available in the premises will depend on the number of applicants residing in them.*

Indicator 3. Applicants can take calls in a private setting, i.e. other applicants cannot hear the conversation.



Standard 95. Applicants have adequate access to the internet.

Indicator 1. Applicants have access to the internet in the reception facility itself or in the nearby public space, at least four times a week.



- **Additional remarks:** access to the internet in the reception facility can be facilitated either through the availability of wireless network (Wi-Fi) for applicants with their own communication devices (e.g. smartphones) or through the availability of an adequate number of computers for a set number of persons. If access to the internet is provided outside the reception facility, this should be available within walking distance or by using public transport (see Section [1.7. Location](#)). Internet access does not have to be available free of charge (see Section [4.5. Daily expenses allowance](#)).

Indicator 2. Children have daily and free of charge access to the internet in the reception facility for reasons regarding schooling and family contact.



- **Additional remarks:** internet access and duration for children should be age-appropriate and regulated by the staff.

Access to the internet in the reception facility can be facilitated through the availability of a wireless network (Wi-Fi) for unaccompanied children with their own communicational devices (e.g. smartphones) and through the availability of an adequate number of computers for a set number of persons.

Indicator 3. Applicants can take calls in a private setting, i.e. other applicants cannot hear the conversation.



Standard 96. Applicants have the possibility to charge their communication devices.

Indicator 1. There is at least one plug available and accessible per bedroom to charge up electronic devices.



Indicator 2. In facilities for unaccompanied children, there is minimum one plug available and accessible per child to charge electronic devices.



- **Additional remarks:** to avoid conflicts at the plug station, each room should have multiple sockets.

Good practice

Provide applicants with the possibility to copy or print documents relevant for the asylum procedure or medical issues or school purposes free of charge.

Facilitate access to a television with channels in at least two languages among the most widely spoken by applicants in the reception facility.



5. Non-material reception conditions

5.1. Provision of information and counselling

‘Provision of information’ refers to information in the framework of the RCD (2024) only. Without prejudice to the information to be provided to applicants for international protection as per other relevant instruments, such as the APR and the AMMR, this guide does not include standards in relation to information regarding the asylum procedure. It is however noted that, in some Member States, the provision of such information may fall under the responsibility of the reception authorities. To avoid overburdening the applicant with extensive information at the reception intake, the provision of information should take place in a time- or phase-specific manner. Member States are encouraged to establish timelines at the national level outlining the type of information to be provided to applicants as soon as possible and no later than three days from the making of the application or within the timeframe for its registration in accordance with the APR. Member States must in particular provide applicants with standard information relating to reception conditions set out in the RCD (2024), using the brochures⁽⁶²⁾ developed by the EUAA, as complemented by the authorities with additional country-specific information.

Member States must also provide information on organisations or groups of persons that provide specific legal assistance and representation, including those that offer it free of charge and on organisations that offer support services.

Applicants in a vulnerable situation may experience barriers to effectively access this information (e.g. illiteracy, hearing impairments, vision impairments). They may need to receive relevant content adapted to and targeting their special needs to ensure that adequate support is provided (e.g. attestation of medical documentation, support to victims of GBV). Adapting information provision to applicants in a vulnerable situation might also have a preventive effect. It helps guarantee that vulnerabilities are identified and reduces the risk of exacerbating vulnerabilities due to a lack of information on available support options.



Article 5 RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 97. Member States provide standard phase-relevant information on rights and obligations relating to reception conditions.

Indicator 1. The information related to reception conditions is provided using the EUAA brochures developed by the EUAA, as complemented by the authorities with additional country-specific information.



⁽⁶²⁾ Refers to the template developed by the EUAA as required by Article 5(1), second paragraph, RCD (2024).



Indicator 2. Written information is provided in a language that the applicant understands or is reasonably supposed to understand.



- **Additional remarks:** *information should be provided in clear and non-technical language.*

Indicator 3. Where necessary and appropriate the information is provided also orally in a language the applicant understands.



- **Additional remarks:** *information should at least be provided orally when the person is illiterate/low literate or does not understand the written information provided.*

Indicator 4. Information covers all aspects of reception conditions, including the rights and obligations under the RCD (2024).



- **Additional remarks:** *the RCD (2024) clearly state the minimum subjects and areas to be covered ⁽⁶³⁾. Information includes emergency numbers in case of health emergencies and in case of danger/life threatening situations.*

Indicator 5. Information is provided as soon as possible and no later than three days from the making of the application or within the timeframe for its registration.



- **Additional remarks:** *the registration of the application must take place no later than five days from when it is made. If the application is made to an authority which is not responsible for registering it, the registration can take up to three additional days to be registered. In case of a disproportionate number of applications, the registration must be done within maximum 15 days.*

Indicator 6. Information is provided free of charge.



Indicator 7. For unaccompanied children, information covers:



- as a minimum the right to reception, the form of provision of material reception conditions (housing, food, clothing and daily expenses allowances), access to healthcare, education, leisure activities, and specific arrangements for applicants for international protection with special needs, if relevant;
- the roles of staff working with unaccompanied children;
- the obligation of appointing a representative in order to assist unaccompanied children on procedural issues and in their everyday life;

⁽⁶³⁾ Those are: reception conditions to which applicants, including applicants with special reception needs, are entitled, employment rights and obligations, the circumstances under which the granting of material reception conditions may be restricted to a geographical area or limited to a specific place and the consequences of not complying with such restrictions or limitations and of absconding, as well as the situations in which it is possible to order detention, possibilities for appeal and review and possibilities for the provision of legal assistance and representation, reception conditions to which they are not entitled in a Member State other than the one in which they are required to be present, organisations or groups of persons that provide specific legal assistance and representation, including information on organisations or groups of persons that provide that legal assistance and representation free of charge, and organisations that might be able to help or inform them concerning the available reception conditions, including health care. See Article 5(1) and recital 12 RCD (2024).

- the main aspects of the procedure for international protection, including access to asylum procedure, available legal assistance and how to access it, possibilities for family tracing, family reunification, and to appeal procedures that are relevant to the unaccompanied child's case.
- **Additional remarks:** *information should be clearly communicated to unaccompanied children in a child-friendly manner and should also include the availability of additional psychosocial support, social norms in the Member State, advice on daily life, including conflict management.*

Unaccompanied children should be informed about the roles of the appointed representative, the staff members and in particular the social workers, who will give them full support during their stay in the reception facility.

Information is provided mainly by the representative and by the reception authorities. However, other actors are often involved in the provision of material and non-material reception conditions, including for example regional or local services, intergovernmental organisations or NGOs. Information provision may also include aspects related to GBV, risks of THB and smuggling, age assessment procedure, sexual orientation and gender identity issues, if they are relevant to the identified special needs.

Standard 98. The information provision is adapted to the particular circumstances and needs of applicants to ensure they understand the relevant information.

Indicator 1. A process to determine the information and communication needs is in place and it considers the needs of applicants in a vulnerable situation.



- **Additional remarks:** *this process aims to understand the information and communication preferences, habits and needs of different profiles of applicants. It facilitates building trusted sources of accurate, timely and consistent information. It is an instrument that helps in understanding the information that is most needed, the information gaps, the preferred methods of communication with the target group, and the best channels to transmit valid information.*

The process should be continuous and integrated in other regular activities to ensure an adequate response to changes in information needs. The process can be carried out in different ways including through surveys targeting applicants directly or staff in direct contact with them.



Indicator 2. Targeted information relevant to the particular circumstances of applicants is provided.



- **Additional remarks:** *the content of the information is adapted to the messages the applicant needs to receive. This takes into consideration their special needs and the specificity of the asylum and reception phases. Some examples of tailored information content include:*
 - *(un)accompanied children: guardianship, the AMMR procedure;*
 - *young women and persons with gender-related needs: access to sexual and reproductive health, access to services for victims of GBV;*
 - *dependent adults: social welfare and legal capacity, medical facilities;*
 - *potential victims of THB: the referral mechanism, the role of law enforcement and safety and security.*

Indicator 3. Information is provided using a variety of communication channels to ensure the applicant's understanding.



- **Additional remarks:** *information is more accessible when it is made available via several channels that can suit the personal circumstances of each applicant, including varying degrees of literacy, education, cognitive capacity and maturity.*

The combination of oral information, printed materials, digital and audiovisual communication enables access to information for applicants in a vulnerable situation. For example, printed information materials can illustrate core messages using visual aids to communicate limited content to applicants who are illiterate or have poor reading skills.

Indicator 4. The information is provided in an age-appropriate and culturally sensitive manner and, for children, in a child-friendly manner.



- **Additional remarks:** *child-friendly information is understood as including any method of communication that is adapted to the age and maturity of the child, in a language that they can understand and which is gender- and culture-sensitive.*

Child-friendly information may be communicated by those working with unaccompanied children (e.g. reception staff, social workers, representatives as well as other stakeholders) through a range of methods and formats, including oral communication, visual materials, multimedia electronic guide, etc.

The use of child-friendly materials or materials adjusted to the specific needs of unaccompanied children may be of assistance in helping unaccompanied children to understand the process and to handle communication difficulties such as illiteracy. However, in practice, the skills and empathic and supportive attitude of the person providing the information are of utmost importance for a successful outcome.

Indicator 5. In person and oral information is provided on a regular basis, taking into consideration the special needs of the applicant.





- **Additional remarks:** information can be provided either in individual or group sessions depending on needs. When groups sessions are organised, the composition of the group should take into consideration what is needed for an applicant to feel safe to raise questions. For example, women may not speak or ask questions that are personally relevant for them while in the presence of men. In addition, groups need to be homogeneous. This means that participants in the session should speak the same language to avoid having two interpreters interpreting into different languages at the same time, or they should share other common characteristics and backgrounds so that the transmission of information is effective.

Special attention should be paid to the gender of the person providing information and the interpreter, if possible. When working with an interpreter, the terminology used for the information provision is explained to the interpreter. A sign language interpreter is available, if needed and possible.

Timing of the provision of information (when and for how long) also needs to be adapted. The information is provided according to a phase approach to avoid overwhelming applicants, especially applicants with special needs.

It is important to ask feedback from applicants after providing information, to make sure the applicant has fully understood the information. The feedback from applicants on information sessions can be carried out, for example, by having a simple evaluation after each session.

Staff is responsible for ensuring that adequate information regularly reaches applicants in a vulnerable situation.

Indicator 6. Information provision sessions to applicants in a vulnerable situation ensure privacy and the confidentiality of the information shared during these sessions.



- **Additional remarks:** the space identified for carrying out the information session ensures confidentiality. Questions and concerns raised by the applicant may be particularly sensitive and personal, thus requiring confidentiality and spaces that can ensure it. During information provision in a group setting, applicants are informed explicitly that they can also ask questions privately and in a confidential manner.

Indicator 7. Information must be provided systematically during the process and evidence of this information provision should be documented (when it was provided, by whom, etc).



Indicator 8. For unaccompanied children, the information is provided in the presence of the representative or the person suitable to provisionally act as a representative (until the representative is appointed).



Indicator 9. Interpreters and/or cultural mediators are available in reception facilities to allow communication with unaccompanied children in their native language.



- **Additional remarks:** *trained interpreters are available for important conversations on asylum related topics or when there is a need expressed by unaccompanied children.*

Good practice

Provide for child-friendly and age-appropriate information materials in formats such as booklets, pocket-sized leaflets, colouring books and/or digital information tools.

Provide additional information through cultural mediators, under supervision.

Standard 99. The information provided covers organisations or groups of persons that provide specific legal assistance and organisations that might be able to help or inform applicants concerning the available reception conditions, including health care.

Indicator 1. Information on the available legal assistance and how to access it is provided to applicants.



Indicator 2. Information provided to applicants includes the contact details of organisations or groups of persons able to inform applicants concerning available reception conditions, including health care, and how to access them.



Indicator 3. Written information is provided in a language that the applicant understands or is reasonably supposed to understand.



- **Additional remarks:** *Information should be provided in clear and non-technical language.*

Indicator 4. Where necessary and appropriate the information is also provided orally in a language the applicant understands.



Indicator 5. Information is provided as soon as possible and no later than three days from the making of the application or within the timeframe for its registration.



- **Additional remarks:** *the registration of the application must take place no later than five days from when it is made. If the application is made to an authority which is not responsible for registering it, the registration can take up to 3 additional days to be registered. In case of a disproportionate number of applications the registration must be done within maximum 15 days.*

Indicator 6. Information is provided according to the special needs and personal circumstances of the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** *for instance, information targeting children is provided in a child-friendly manner (e.g. graphical, use of pictograms). Other information provided could include aspects related to GBV or THB.*



Standard 100. Adequate access is ensured to legal advisers or counsellors, persons representing the UNHCR, the Red Cross, international, intergovernmental and relevant NGOs recognised by the Member State concerned in order to assist the applicants.

Indicator 1. The access of the actors above is only limited on grounds relating to the security of the premises and of the applicants, provided that it is not thereby severely restricted or rendered impossible.



Indicator 2. The actors listed above are able to meet and speak with the applicants in conditions ensuring adequate privacy.



Standard 101. Applicants in a vulnerable situation are informed about organisations or other service providers that support or provide targeted information to applicants concerning their particular circumstances.

Indicator 1. Up-to-date information with the area of expertise and contact details of relevant organisations or other service providers is available.



- **Additional remarks:** up-to-date information of organisations or other service providers that support applicants in a vulnerable situation according to their specific circumstances should be as comprehensive as possible. This information caters for any possible needs or multiple vulnerabilities, for example organisations working with persons with disabilities, victims of violence, single parents with small children, unaccompanied children, drug abuse, THB victims, applicants with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics, etc.

Indicator 2. Applicants in a vulnerable situation are enabled to contact relevant organisations or other service providers.



- **Additional remarks:** this can involve, for example, facilitating the first contact between the organisation and the person in need, booking appointments, providing support with transportation, accompanying the applicant to their first meeting, etc.

Indicator 3. Information on relevant organisations or other service providers is provided as soon as vulnerabilities are identified or special needs assessed.



Good practice

Information sessions are periodically organised with the involvement of key local actors, such as healthcare service providers and relevant CSOs.





5.2. Medical screening

The term ‘medical screening’ refers to the initial medical examination that may be performed upon the applicant’s arrival in the reception facility. As such, the term does not encompass the medical checks that may be carried out upon arrival in the country (i.e. upon disembarkation or at the borders) where the involvement of reception authorities is generally marginal.

The use of the term ‘medical screening’ is in line with Article 15 RCD (2024) and is without detriment to the variety of terms that Member States may use in their national legislation to describe this type of medical examination.

Article 15 RCD (2024) envisages that Member States may require medical screening for applicants on public health grounds. Indeed, carrying out medical checks upon arrival in the facility has gradually become a common practice and has proved to be extremely important during the COVID-19 pandemic to minimise risks associated with the spread of contagion. In a broader perspective, conducting a medical examination upon entry in a reception facility may also contribute to give shape to Article 25 RCD (2024) according to which Member States must assess whether the applicant has special reception needs.

In this view, a medical screening may serve different purposes, namely:

- at an individual level, it ensures that the applicant receives appropriate care for any physical or mental health needs that require immediate medical attention;
- from a public health perspective, it can be used to identify any communicable diseases that may pose a risk to the general population;
- from a practical point of view, it helps identify vulnerabilities that may be relevant to activate procedural guarantees or recognise the applicant’s special reception needs, also in view of their allocation inside the facility.

Notwithstanding the optional nature of the medical screening, the standards and indicators contained in this section provide guidance to the Member States that conduct or intend to conduct a medical screening upon arrival in a reception facility.

Among other elements, the standard and indicators encompass principles that should be applicable to all medical examinations (such as non-discrimination, respect for the person’s dignity, information provision and confidentiality, professional codes of ethics). In all cases, the medical screening should not lead to re-traumatisation of the person.

Data protection considerations and compliance with GDPR are particularly relevant for the standard and indicators elaborated in this section. Data concerning health constitute a special category of personal data ⁽⁶⁴⁾ and merit specific protection.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ Article 9 GDPR ‘Processing of special categories of personal data’.





Articles 15, and 25(1) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 102. Without prejudice to applicable national legislation, the medical screening is conducted in an adequate, timely and justified manner and in full respect of the applicant's dignity.

Indicator 1. The medical screening is carried out as soon as possible upon arrival in the facility.



- **Additional remarks:** the medical screening can be mandatory or voluntary for the applicant, depending on Member State legislation. The medical screening can be carried out within the premises of the reception facility, when this is possible, or through medical services available on the territory. Member States should avoid unnecessary repetition of medical examinations. To this end, when a medical check was already conducted immediately prior to the arrival in the receiving facility (e.g. upon disembarkation/arrival in the country, at the borders or in another facility before a transfer), its results should be timely communicated to the applicant and to the competent medical staff of the receiving facility.

Indicator 2. The medical screening is proportionate to its purpose.



- **Additional remarks:** the medical screening can be carried out with different purposes, such as identify medical issues that require immediate attention and/or identify special reception needs of the applicant, also in view of their allocation inside the facility and/or to control and prevent the spread of contagious and infectious diseases. Depending on the purpose of the screening, the medical examinations can include: screening for acute and urgent issues related to physical and mental health in view of possible emergencies or hospitalisation (e.g. pregnancy, reduced mobility, need of medication such as insulin); screening for contagious diseases or pest contamination detection (e.g. scabies, bedbugs) in view of quarantine/isolation measures; additional screenings and vaccinations as required by national public health policies.

Indicator 3. Measures are taken to ensure that the applicant's dignity is respected.



- **Additional remarks:** measures can include carrying out the medical screening in an adequate setting that protects the privacy of the applicant (e.g. to dress and undress).

Indicator 4. Adequate information is provided to the applicant about the medical screening they are required to undergo.



- **Additional remarks:** information can include: explaining to the applicant that they have the right to refuse to undergo certain examinations and the consequences connected with such a refusal; explaining the reasons for conducting the medical screening, giving the applicant the opportunity to ask questions; explaining to the applicant what the examination entails so as to provide them with a clear idea of what to expect, including any pain or discomfort.



Indicator 5. Informed consent ⁽⁶⁵⁾ is obtained from or on behalf of the applicant prior to the examinations.



- **Additional remarks:** *if it is not possible to obtain the consent prior to the examinations (e.g. because of urgent medical treatments), this should be obtained as soon as possible afterwards, without any delay.*

Indicator 6. Adequate arrangements are in place to ensure that the applicant is able to communicate with the medical personnel.



- **Additional remarks:** *adequate arrangements can include free-of-charge provision of professional interpreting services (onsite or remotely, e.g. over the phone) where necessary, also taking into account the preference expressed by the applicant in terms of the interpreter's gender.*

Indicator 7. The medical screening is conducted by qualified medical personnel.



Indicator 8. An individual medical file is created immediately after the medical screening has taken place, at the latest.



- **Additional remarks:** *the medical file can be either a stand-alone document or be integrated within an electronic service environment.*

If medical information relevant to ensure adequate reception is included in the individual file together with social and administrative information, access rights to the different elements must be managed in compliance with national legislation on professional secrecy and the GDPR.

The applicant's consent ⁽⁶⁶⁾ is required to create the medical file, as well as to share information with other medical professionals, unless the sharing of the information is an obligation under national law.

In case of a transfer, the medical file should be accessible to the applicant and to the competent medical staff of the receiving facility. See also Section [3.3. Individual file](#).

Indicator 9. Necessary follow-up actions are taken after the medical screening.



- **Additional remarks:** *follow-up actions can include: prompt referral for immediate medical assistance; application of isolation/quarantine measures for applicants with contagious or infectious diseases; scheduling of appointments for in-depth examinations or vaccinations; dedicated consultations with the applicant upon detection of new diseases.*

⁽⁶⁵⁾ 'Informed consent' refers to the consent under health law, that can be defined as: the process in which a health care provider educates a patient about the risks, benefits, and alternatives of a given procedure or intervention. The patient must be competent to make a voluntary decision about whether to undergo the procedure or intervention. Source: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28613577/>.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ To be valid, consent must be freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous (Article 4(11) GDPR). In the context of processing of personal data concerning health, an additional requirement is to have explicit consent (Article 9(2)(a) GDPR).





Indicator 10. The applicant is provided with access to their medical records, without prejudice to national legislation.



Good practice

Update and document the applicant's vaccination status according to national recommendations, if this was not done upon arrival in the country. The applicant should have access to their vaccination records in the same way as Member State nationals (e.g. immunisation record, vaccination passport).

Train medical personnel on cultural diversity and migrant health.

Standard 103. Unaccompanied children have access to medical screening, health assessment and prevention of health-related issues at an early state of the reception process.

Indicator 1. Information about the right to health care, the purpose and meaning of medical screening, health assessment and vaccination programmes should be given to unaccompanied children immediately after arrival in the reception centre.



- **Additional remarks:** *the information should be provided in line with the standards presented in Section [5.7.2 Representation](#).*

Indicator 2. A medical screening and health assessment should be conducted, if consented by the unaccompanied child, as soon as possible after arrival in the reception centre.



- **Additional remarks:** *it is recommended that the medical screening and health assessment is conducted at least within seven days upon arrival.*

The health assessment includes both physical and psychological assessments.

Indicator 3. If vaccination programmes are not part of the general mandatory health programmes, necessary vaccinations should be provided to the unaccompanied children.



- **Additional remarks:** *necessary vaccinations should also be provided if the children's vaccination status is likely to have been interrupted or if it is non-compliant with the national standards.*

Indicator 4. Unaccompanied children are provided with age-appropriate and sufficient sexual and reproductive health information and services.



Indicator 5. Unaccompanied children are provided with contraceptives.



Good practice

Provide unaccompanied children with contraceptives free of charge.



5.3. Health care


The term ‘health care’ as referred to in this section encompasses both mental and physical health care which is provided to applicants for international protection. It also includes counselling of applicants suffering from serious illnesses and necessary measures to promote the rehabilitation of victims of violence and torture. In this sense, the medical screening carried out by several Member States at the beginning of the reception process can provide an important starting point as it facilitates a clearer idea of applicants’ medical needs that need to be addressed throughout the reception process. ‘Medical personnel’ for the purposes of this section refers to qualified medical professionals (e.g. doctors, dentists, nurses) as well as psychologists. The guidance should be read in line with the overarching principles of consent and confidentiality, which are applicable to all reception staff and medical personnel involved in the provision of health care, as well as to the interpreters. At no stage should information be shared without the prior consent of the patient. Without prejudice to national regulations governing the access to medical records, applicants should be entitled to access their medical records, when needed.




Article [15](#), [19](#) and [22](#) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators


Standard 104. Adults have access to necessary and adequate health care, at least for emergency care, essential treatment of illnesses and serious mental disorders, and sexual and reproductive health care, while children have access to necessary and adequate health care equal to that of children who are nationals of the Member State, including preventive, mental, physical and psychosocial care.

Indicator 1. The applicant has access to all types of necessary health care services. 

- **Additional remarks:** where possible, gender should be taken into consideration when providing health care (e.g. access to female medical personnel when requested and available).

Indicator 2. Health care services are provided by qualified medical personnel. 

- **Additional remark:** health care services can be provided by generalists or when needed by specialist practitioners.

Indicator 3. Health care is available inside the accommodation centre or outside the reception facility at a reasonable distance. 

- **Additional remark:** reasonable distance means distance that can be cover on foot or via public transport. If needed, unaccompanied children are accompanied by staff or the representative.



<p>Indicator 4. Necessary health care, including prescribed medication, is provided free of charge or economically compensated according to national law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional remarks: <i>this means that both transportation to access necessary health care and the provision of medication are free of charge (see also Section 1.7. Location and Section 4.5 Daily expenses allowance).</i> 	
<p>Indicator 5. Adequate arrangements are in place to ensure the applicant is able to communicate with the medical personnel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional remarks: <i>in particular, this means that a trained interpreter is provided (free of charge) where necessary. Provided the applicant consents, other adult individuals can translate.</i> 	
<p>Indicator 6. Arrangements are made to ensure access to first aid in emergencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional remarks: <i>a first aid kit should be made accessible.</i> 	
<p>Indicator 7. The applicant is provided with access to their medical records, without prejudice to national legislation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional remarks: <i>provided the applicant has expressed their consent, the medical record can be transferred from one medical professional to another.</i> 	
<p>Indicator 8. A specific list of specialised medical care providers is available.</p>	
<p>Indicator 9. Referral systems between reception facilities and specialised medical care providers are in place.</p>	
<p>Indicator 10. Arrangements for the safe storage and distribution of prescribed medication are in place within the reception facility, when needed.</p>	

Standard 105. Necessary medical and psychological treatment and care is provided to applicants with special needs.

<p>Indicator 1. Applicants with special needs have access to necessary medical assistance or other type of assistance based on their needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional remarks: <i>this includes rehabilitation and assistive medical devices, rehabilitation services, counselling.</i> 	
<p>Indicator 2. Applicants with special needs have access to specialised services, available either inside or outside the reception facilities at a reasonable distance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional remarks: <i>this includes, for example, access to a paediatrician, gynaecologist or to prenatal health care or ensuring that persons with disabilities are provided with necessary arrangements. It also includes counselling provided to victims of THB and GBV and victims of torture or other forms of psychological and physical violence.</i> 	





Indicator 3. Treatment is provided as soon as the person's needs have been identified.



Indicator 4. Health professionals working with applicants with special needs are properly trained on special needs and appropriate treatment.



Indicator 5. Confidentiality is respected in line with national law and ethics code.



Standard 106. Access to the necessary social care for applicants with special needs, including social counselling and day-to-day care is provided, if needed.

Indicator 1. Applicants with special needs have access to necessary social services, available either inside or outside the reception facilities at a reasonable distance.



- **Additional remarks:** included in social care are services such as parental counselling and family planning (for single parents or large families), specific household services (for applicants who require assistance to cook or clean), drug and addiction support and specific support groups (including for minority social groups, such as LGBTIQ⁽⁶⁷⁾ applicants).

Information about the available services should be given to applicants with special needs at an early stage of the reception process. See also Section [5.1. Provision of information and counselling](#).

For this indicator, see also Section [1.7. Location](#) and Section [4.5. Daily expenses allowance](#).

Indicator 2. Access to specialised care facilities is provided to applicants with special needs, if needed.



- **Additional remarks:** this refers to issues that require expert care that cannot be provided within the context of general reception facilities, including institutionalised care provided in safe shelters or elderly homes. Specific arrangements are in place to allow reception facilities to follow up on the medical situation of applicants that receive specialised social care.

Indicator 3. The necessary social care is provided free of charge or economically compensated according to national law.



Indicator 4. Specific arrangements ensure effective communication between persons with special needs and social care providers.



- **Additional remarks:** for example, a trained interpreter is provided (free of charge) where necessary. This may include remote connection. Translated documents should be available to applicants.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer.





Indicator 5. The social development of persons with special needs is continuously monitored and supported.



- **Additional remarks:** social development means the ability to communicate; going to school; self-care (washing, getting dressed); being responsible for taking own medication; ability to take care of children, etc. This is why it is important that the individual file includes information on social development, including skills related to autonomy.

Good practice

Reception authorities reserve a minimum capacity among specialised social care providers to avoid waiting lists.

Standard 107. Standard operating procedures on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support are in place to ensure access to mental health care, rehabilitation services and qualified counselling, to unaccompanied children who suffer from psychological difficulties and/or have been victims of any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation or torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, or who have suffered from armed conflicts.

Indicator 1. Unaccompanied children in need of mental health care, rehabilitation services and/or qualified counselling are provided with such services by the presence of a clinical psychologist in the reception facility or access to an equivalent professional outside the centre.



- **Additional remarks:** this includes services provided to victims of any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation or to children who have suffered from armed conflicts. It also includes services provided to victims of THB and (gender-based) violence as well as victims of torture or other forms of psychological and physical violence. Furthermore, services should be provided to children with psychological difficulties due to long waiting times and the uncertainty of the asylum process. The need could be a result of something that happened in the home country, while in transit or in the host country.

Indicator 2. Qualified medical personnel provide mental health care, rehabilitation services and/or qualified counselling.



- **Additional remarks:** the personnel should be trained in how to work with the special needs of unaccompanied children.

Good practice

Consider protective factors, such as social support, contact with family, small number of transfers between different accommodations, living in small-scale reception facility and leisure time activities to prevent mental illness.





5.4. Administrative support

The term ‘administrative support’ relates to practices and procedural safeguards aimed at enhancing the effective exercise of the rights and benefits laid down in the RCD (2024), such as access to healthcare, education, employment and vocational training. It additionally looks at access to a postal address and to a bank account.

In several Member States, banks or employment bodies may play a more prominent role than reception authorities in ensuring such rights. Whilst recognising this aspect, the standards and indicators elaborated in this section look at the support that reception authorities can provide in terms of facilitating access to services offered to the general population and regulated by national policies (e.g. healthcare or education systems). In this sense, it should be noted that the standards and indicators do not necessarily imply that administrative support should be provided to all applicants in an individual manner. Indeed, it can be provided with other means, e.g. through an information provision platform that guides applicants through the applicable procedures and system of the host country, complemented with individual support upon request.

Article 6(2) RCD (2024) requires Member States not to impose unnecessary or disproportionate documentation or other administrative requirements on the applicant before granting them the rights to which they are entitled under the same directive. In this sense, continuous administrative support is deemed essential, especially as regards access to social rights and benefits that fall under general policies implemented by the Member State.

The scope of administrative support relates to the phase of stay in the reception system. It does not include activities performed in the arrival phase nor procedures linked with the end of stay, e.g. the issuance of a residence permit.

The standards and indicators below are addressed to reception officers irrespective of their employer (the state, a civil society organisation, a private contractor, a municipality, etc.) but can also serve as guidelines for competent authorities at central level, especially concerning services that are provided outside accommodation facilities.



Article [6\(2\)](#), [16 \(1\)](#) and [\(2\)](#), [17](#), [18](#), [22](#) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 108. Administrative support is provided to facilitate the applicant’s access to a postal address and a bank account.

Indicator 1. Administrative support is provided to facilitate the applicant’s access to a postal address to receive written correspondence.



Indicator 2. Administrative support is provided to facilitate the applicant’s possible opening of a bank account or access to comparable financial services.



- **Additional remarks:** administrative support can take different forms, including physically accompanying the applicant to open a bank account, making appointments with the bank, facilitating the issuance of relevant documentation that may be required by the bank (e.g. certificate of residence), providing the applicant with relevant information. Nevertheless, the responsibility of reception authorities is limited to providing support and does not extend to securing the opening of a bank account or access to comparable financial services.

Standard 109. Administrative support is provided to facilitate the applicant's access to the rights laid down in the RCD (2024).

Indicator 1. Administrative support is provided to facilitate the applicant's access to healthcare.



- **Additional remarks:** administrative support can be provided in several ways, including by facilitating the issuance of relevant documents to access healthcare (e.g. social security number), facilitating contacts with health services for at least emergency care and essential treatment of illnesses and serious mental disorders, scheduling and physically accompanying the applicant to medical appointments with an interpreter when needed, providing information on the national health system and/or available healthcare services, etc.

Indicator 2. Administrative support is provided to facilitate the child applicant's access to schooling and education as soon as possible and within 2 months in line with the RCD (2024).



- **Additional remarks:** without prejudice to the parental role, administrative support can be provided in several ways, including by facilitating interaction between the school, the child applicant and their parent(s)/legal representative, providing interpretation when needed, facilitating the child's access to preparatory classes or facilitating the issuance of documents that may be required by the Member State for school enrolment (e.g. birth certificate, vaccination certificates, attestation of residence), communicating any special needs to the competent education authorities. To guarantee the child applicant's effective access to schooling and education within the timeframe provided by the RCD (2024), administrative support should be provided in advance so that all necessary formalities are completed by the time access must be guaranteed.

Administrative support to facilitate the access of child applicants to schooling is relevant when schooling and education is provided by the state education system and not in the reception facility. Such administrative support should also be provided in case of transfer to another facility.

Indicator 3. Administrative support is provided to facilitate the applicant's access to employment within 6 months in line with the RCD (2024).



- **Additional remarks:** *administrative support can be provided in several ways, including by directing and/or accompanying the applicant to the competent employment authorities/institutions, or facilitating the issuance of relevant documentation or employment formalities that may be required by the Member State (e.g. work permit, fiscal registration number). To guarantee the applicant's effective access to employment within the timeframe provided by the RCD (2024), administrative support should be provided in advance so that all necessary formalities are completed by the time access must be guaranteed.*

Indicator 4. Administrative support is provided to overcome any practical difficulties that the applicant may encounter in relation to recognition of documents issued abroad.



- **Additional remarks:** *administrative support can include providing the applicant with relevant information, coordination and communication with relevant institutions, facilitating the issuance of relevant documentation that may be required, e.g. concerning the authentication of foreign diplomas, certificates or other evidence of formal qualifications in the context of existing procedures for the recognition of foreign qualifications. Nevertheless, the responsibility of reception authorities is limited to facilitate the applicant's overcoming of practical difficulties, if needed. Reception authorities are not required to meet any cost or provide any evidence on documents issued abroad.*

Indicator 5. Administrative support is provided to facilitate the applicant's access to vocational training, in line with the RCD (2024) and applicable national legislation.



- **Additional remarks:** *administrative support could be provided in several ways, including by physically accompanying the person and provide interpretation when needed, providing information on available vocational training opportunities, directing the applicant to competent authorities and institutions, communicating any special needs to agencies providing vocational training. Depending on the national rules on access to vocational training initiatives outside the reception facility, administrative support can take the form of facilitation in the recognition of foreign qualifications or facilitation in the issuance of documents required by the Member State.*

Good practice

Automatically issue the social security number/fiscal registration number on the asylum card of the applicant, provided that the databases of the relevant public services are interoperable.

Appoint education focal points in reception facilities to liaise with public schools and education authorities.

Establish a coordination mechanism between reception authorities and employment/education/health authorities to ensure that the latter are familiar with the applicant's rights and with the documents issued to them.



5.5. The best interests assessment in reception

The Pact on Migration and Asylum emphasises that Member States should seek to ensure full respect for the principles of the best interests of the child and of family unity, in particular in accordance with the Charter, the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ⁽⁶⁸⁾ and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ⁽⁶⁹⁾.

Any decision and action in the reception system involving children must be based on the best interest assessment (BIA). The decision(s) made must prioritise the child's best interests, in accordance with international and EU Law, ensuring active involvement of the child and their representatives or parents where needed.

The assessment must be carried out by trained official(s) by collecting all relevant information and balancing all elements necessary to make a decision in a specific situation. This process requires the meaningful involvement of both the child and their representative or, when needed, their parents to ensure that the child's perspectives, needs and rights are fully considered. The best interests assessment must comprehensively evaluate all factors pertinent to the child's unique situation. This involves weighing potential benefits, such as addressing the child's immediate needs, against any risks or harms that the decision might pose to the child's safety, well-being, or emotional health over the long term, ensuring that the decision supports the child's overall development, protection, and future opportunities.

For more information- EUAA practical guide on the bests interest of the child in the framework of international protection (update of the existing one)



Recitals 35, 38 and 41 RCD (2024)
Article 26 and 27 RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 110. The best interests of the child are a primary consideration in any decision taken during the reception process

Indicator 1. The child's best interests are assessed upon arrival in the facility and any time a decision significantly affecting the child's life is taken



- **Additional remarks:** *in the context of reception, a 'decision significantly affecting child's life' may be the allocation to accommodation, transfers, placement with family, access to education etc.*

⁽⁶⁸⁾ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1989, see [footnote 26](#).

⁽⁶⁹⁾ Council of Europe, *European Convention on Human Rights*, 1950, see [footnote 17](#).





Indicator 2. A coordination mechanism is in place to assess the best interests of the child involving different authorities as relevant, such as child protection and reception authorities and other relevant experts (e.g. health experts).



- **Additional remarks:** Member States can develop and adopt standardised protocols that clearly define the roles, responsibilities, and communication workflows among various stakeholders in the BIA.

Indicator 3. The child is heard and their views are considered in accordance with their age and maturity, whenever an important decision concerning their needs to be taken.



Indicator 4. The staff conducting the best interests assessment have the necessary level of expertise and training



- **Additional remarks:** it is important to ensure that personnel is trained on age-appropriate communication techniques, to ensure the child engages in the assessment and the responsible actors effectively consider the child's views. The staff should be able to identify and balance competing elements in the child's situation.

Indicator 5. The child's representative, or parent when relevant, is involved as soon as possible and their views are taken into account during the BIA.



- **Additional remarks:** the views of the representative/parent should be considered during the assessment as the representative/parent is likely to have the most comprehensive knowledge and insight into the child's needs.

Where a conflict arises between the child's views and the parent's, safeguards must be in place to resolve it in line with the child's best interests. It is important to identify potential risks, including undue influence, coercion or conflicting interests, and ensure the child's rights are fully upheld throughout the process.

Indicator 6. The assessment covers at least family reunification possibilities; the child's well-being and social development, and safety and security considerations.



Indicator 7. The outcome of the best interests assessment is documented in the child's file and followed up by relevant actors to ensure decisions are implemented and reviewed as necessary.



Good practice

The adaptation and use in the national context of the EUAA best interests assessment template.

An official practical and shared tool for the reception of unaccompanied children that promotes standard operating procedures and supports all professionals and institutions involved in the care, protection and integration of unaccompanied minors is created jointly with relevant stakeholders.





5.6. Education

Accessing education as soon as possible represents a key element during the reception phase to help children resume their life in a new country. Access to education cannot be postponed for more than two months from the date on which the application for international protection was lodged. Efforts to ensure the continuity of education of a minor need to be in place throughout their stay in a Member State, until an expulsion measure against the minor or their parents is actually enforced. The education of minors must, as a rule, be integrated with that of Member States' own nationals and be of the same quality.

There may be exceptional situations where access and participation in the education system is temporarily not possible due to administrative, legal, or contextual barriers at the local or national causes. This temporary situation cannot exceed one month, during which other forms of education are provided. In addition, there may be situations where the special needs of children do not allow for their participation in the general education system (e.g. illiterate children) and specific arrangements have to be prepared for children with special educational needs.

Children applying for international protection are likely not to have attended school regularly before their arrival. They need time and qualified support to settle into a new environment.

Preparatory classes, including language classes, must be provided to facilitate access and participation in the education system generating possibilities for social interactions and routines that children need for their development. They should support children in familiarising with the educational system, culture and language of their host countries. Preparatory classes should be adapted to the level of knowledge, previous education and the specific needs of children. Preparatory classes can be provided by the reception centres or by the wider network of involved actors, including NGOs.

Vocational training can offer the appropriate environment for children to develop their skills to join the labour market. Vocational training empowers children to take responsibility for their lives. Vocational training should be adapted to the level of knowledge and specific needs of unaccompanied children and together with national children in order to facilitate the integration process. The main obstacles relate to the general requirements for access to vocational training (e.g. documents attesting education and/or professional qualification in the country of origin) and knowledge of the local language.



Recital 48 RCD (2024)

Article 16 RCD (2024)





Standards and indicators

Standard 111. Children have effective access to the general education system under similar conditions as nationals, as soon as possible and no later than two months from the date on which their application for international protection was lodged.

Indicator 1. All children access to the general education system under similar condition to nationals.



- **Additional remarks:** *this is valid until an expulsion measure against a minor or their parents is actually enforced. Special educational needs are taken into account.*

Indicator 2. Preparatory classes, including language classes, are provided to ensure effective access to and participation in the general education system.



- **Additional remarks:** *internal or external arrangements, including infrastructure, curriculum and trained staff, are in place to ensure effective preparatory classes in line with the needs of the children.*

Indicator 3. Applicants who have reached the age of majority while in the reception system are guaranteed continued access to secondary education.



Indicator 4. Children who attend school or other education arrangements are enabled to participate in compulsory national school trips and extracurricular school activities.



Indicator 5. A monitoring mechanism is in place to track children's enrolment in school within the timeframe.



- **Additional remarks:** *The enrolment timeframe reflects actual school entry and not only administrative registration, and it takes into account school holidays. Where delays occur, they should be documented and justified.*

Drop-out rates or irregular attendance should trigger follow-up in accordance with national law and established practices to ensure the best interest of the child.

Indicator 6. Education is available outside the reception facility at a reasonable distance or inside and, if needed, the child is accompanied by reception staff or the representative.



- **Additional remarks:** *when education is provided outside the reception facility, organised transport should be provided or covered by the daily expenses allowance.*

Good practices

Prepare schools, including curricula and teachers, to receive children applicants for international protection and unaccompanied children.





Provide special guidelines and training for teachers and education personnel on the identification of unaccompanied children with trauma.

Distribute children applicants for international protection across local schools to avoid segregation.

Involve civil society, including CSOs, as providers of informal education, to facilitate interactions with local communities and understanding of local culture and customs.

Provide counselling and psychological support for children with trauma within the school system by specialised staff.

Catch-up classes are provided.

Standard 112. Where access to the general education system is not possible due to the specific circumstances in the Member State or to the specific situation of the child, Member States ensure effective access to other education arrangements.

Indicator 1. Sufficient and adequate infrastructure, educational curriculum and trained staff are provided when education is provided outside the general system.



Indicator 2. Specific support is in place for children with special needs.



Indicator 3. When other educational arrangements are temporarily provided due to the specific circumstances in the Member State, effective access to the general education is ensured not later than one month.



Indicator 4. Where access to the general education system is not possible due to the specific situation of the minor, other education arrangements in accordance with national law and practice are offered.



- **Additional remarks:** while Member States must ensure access to the general education system and address possible barriers, depending on the specific situation of the child and taking into consideration their best interests, other education arrangements such as temporarily access to online classes, a learning support assistant, etc. can be provided.

Good practice

Have a transition plan for each child placed in temporary education arrangements, specifying when and how they will access the general education system, ensuring timely and inclusive integration.



Standard 113. Access to vocational training for children, particularly those nearing the age of majority, is ensured when it corresponds to their best interests, skills and future goals.

Indicator 1. Children are assessed for eligibility and interest in vocational training.



- **Additional remarks:** access to vocational training is irrespective to the recognition of their previous education. Assessment can include skills, language level, age, maturity and long-term aspirations.

Indicator 2. Specific arrangements are in place for children with special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** support should be provided to address barriers (language, transport, placement conditions).

5.7. Additional safeguards for unaccompanied children

As indicated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ⁽⁷⁰⁾, children need special safeguards and care, due to their physical and mental development, and the family is the natural environment for their growth and well-being. However, children may find themselves in the situation of fleeing their country on their own and reach Europe without their parents.

The RCD (2024) defines ‘unaccompanied minor’ as

a minor who arrives on the territory of a Member State unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him or her, whether by the law or practice of the Member State concerned, and for as long as that minor is not effectively taken into the care of such an adult, including a minor who is left unaccompanied after he or she has entered the territory of the Member States.

In the reception context, unaccompanied children are in need of additional safeguards and care compared to children with their families, due to their specific condition that may place them in more vulnerable situations. The RCD (2024) specifically mandates Member States to provide for the special reception needs of unaccompanied children.

All standards and indicators in this guide are valid for unaccompanied children as well. Those included in this section are additional elements focusing on this specific target group.

⁽⁷⁰⁾ See UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1989, see [footnote 26](#).



5.7.1. Family tracing

Family tracing serves several crucial purposes for all applicants, including unaccompanied minors, who are a particularly vulnerable group. Firstly, it helps locate family members with whom the applicant wants to or should be reunited, whether within the EU+ or, if applicable, in third countries or countries of origin. Secondly, it aims to restore and maintain contact between separated family members, provided all agree to it and it does not pose a danger to any of them, following a best interests determination when children are involved. Thirdly, it facilitates family reunification when it is in the best interests of the individuals involved, again ensuring safety and mutual consent.

Unaccompanied children, due to their heightened vulnerability, are given special consideration under EU asylum policies, as outlined in the RCD (2024). This directive requires Member States to take all necessary steps to trace the family members, while prioritising the best interests of the child.

In the case of children, the best interests principle must guide all decisions, and the child's right to be heard must be respected, giving appropriate weight to their views based on maturity. If a child or family member shows reluctance to restore links, the reasons should be carefully explored. Counselling – provided separately or jointly via telephone, video-link or other methods – can sometimes support restoring family links. However, should the child or family ultimately express a desire not to restore these links, their wishes should be respected.



Article 27(10) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 114. A procedure is in place to start tracing the family members of the unaccompanied child as soon as possible after arrival and identification protecting the child's best interests.

Indicator 1. Reception authorities and/or the responsible staff, including the representative, start family tracing based on the information given by the child, resorting to the assistance of relevant organisations when needed and according to the best interests of the unaccompanied child.



- **Additional remarks:** *in cases where there may be a threat to the life or integrity of the unaccompanied child or their close relatives, particularly if they have remained in the country of origin, the Member State must take the necessary safeguards to ensure that the collection, processing and circulation of information concerning those persons is undertaken on a confidential basis, so as to avoid jeopardising their safety. When meeting with the child to gather information on family members, the responsible officer is granted sufficient time to build a relationship of trust with the child explain the next steps to them, obtain the minimum information needed to initiate the process as well as to assess the child's best interests.*



A broader definition of family members is applied for tracing purposes taking into account the background of the children, the particular circumstances of dependency and their best interests.

All the actors in contact with the child during the process, including the representative, should provide similar information to the child regarding the tracing process. It is crucial that the children perceive consistency in the information and understand that the primary aim of family tracing is to restore family links if it is in their best interests.

The process should be confidential. In particular, no reference during the family tracing process should be made to the status of the child as an applicant for or beneficiary of international protection. Special consideration should be taken for unaccompanied children that are presumed or identified as victims of THB.

5.7.2. Representation

Children deprived of their family environment are entitled to special protection and assistance ⁽⁷¹⁾. The Common European Asylum System, as reformed in 2024, reinforces the protection of unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children through stronger rules on guardianship.

The RCD (2024) defines ‘representative’ as

a natural person or an organisation, including a public authority, appointed by the competent authorities, with the necessary skills and expertise, including with regard to the treatment and specific needs of minors, to represent, assist and act on behalf of an unaccompanied minor, as applicable, in order to safeguard the best interests and general well-being of that unaccompanied minor and so that the unaccompanied minor can benefit from the rights and comply with the obligations provided for in this Directive.

The appointment of a representative is one of the key safeguards enabling unaccompanied children to exercise their rights. The vital role of representative in safeguarding the rights of unaccompanied minors is laid out in all the legal instruments of the CEAS. They are responsible for standing by the child throughout the asylum procedure, from its very early stages, ensuring that the child’s procedural and reception rights and general well-being are respected. Their duties include supporting the child in understanding their rights and obligations, assisting in the steps of the asylum procedure and in reception, and supporting access to essential services such as housing, health care and legal assistance. They are also responsible for ensuring that the most vulnerable children, such as victims of THB, torture and violence, receive the necessary care and support.

⁽⁷¹⁾ See Article 20 UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1989, see [footnote 26](#).



To ensure stability for the child, the representative or provisional representative can only be changed if deemed necessary, even after international protection is granted.

Recitals 43, 45 RCD (2024)
Articles 2(5) and (13), 25 (1), 26(6), 27,32(1), RCD (2024)
Recital 16 QR
Articles 3(11) and (18), 4, and 33(1) QR

Standards and indicators

Standard 115. A representative is appointed as soon as possible for each child and is assigned a proportionate number of children.

<p>Indicator 1. A system is in place to ensure the appointment of the representatives as soon as possible and no later than 15 days after the application has been made.</p>	
<p>Indicator 2. If a representative cannot be immediately appointed, a provisional representative with the necessary skills and expertise is designated to immediately assist a child who made an application for international protection, until a representative is appointed.</p>	
<p>Indicator 3. The representative is in charge of a proportionate number of unaccompanied children, and not more than 30.</p>	
<p>Indicator 4. When the measures of the activated contingency plan are insufficient, the appointment of representatives can be delayed by 10 working days and the number of children per representative can be increased to 50.</p>	
<p>• Additional remarks: see Section 1.10 Contingency planning and preparedness.</p>	
<p>Indicator 5. As far as possible, the same representative remains responsible for the unaccompanied minor throughout the asylum procedure and after international protection has been granted.</p>	

Good practice

To ensure individualised and high-quality support, a considerably lower number of children is assigned to the same representative where the individual cases are considered complex and depending on tasks and responsibilities under the national legal framework.





Standard 116. The representative or provisional representative provides appropriate representation and child-sensitive assistance to the unaccompanied child, enabling them to navigate procedures in accordance with their best interests and fully exercise their rights and comply with their obligations.

Indicator 1. The representative or provisional representative has no criminal record, in particular as regards any child-related crimes or offences.



Indicator 2. The representative or provisional representative has the necessary qualifications and expertise for the performance of their tasks and receive regular training.



Indicator 3. The child is informed in an age-appropriate manner of the appointment of the representative and provisional representative, of the identity, role and functions of the representative and how to file possible complaints against the representative



• **Additional remarks:** see Section [5.1. Provision of information and counselling](#).

Indicator 4. The representative or provisional representative is immediately and fully informed of relevant details of the child.



Indicator 5. The representative or provisional representative meets the child as soon as possible after the appointment and maintain regular contact.



Indicator 6. The representative or provisional representative is involved in key decisions affecting the child's reception conditions, including the minor's placement in reception, any special needs of the child and other relevant matters that concern the child during the reception period (e.g. education arrangements, health care).



Indicator 7. The representative or provisional representative reports any concerns related to the child's well-being or reception conditions to the reception authorities or staff in the accommodation facility, or to other relevant authorities for timely action.



Indicator 8. The representative or provisional representative is bound by confidentiality rules as established in national law in relation to any information they obtain in the course of their work.



Indicator 9. The representative or provisional representative provides information to the unaccompanied child about the role and responsibilities of the personnel and the caregivers in accommodation facilities, on their rights and duties in the reception system, and how to lodge a complaint where necessary.



Indicator 10. The representative or provisional representative verifies that the unaccompanied child has effective access to the education system and that the children regularly attend classes.





Indicator 11. The representative or provisional representative promotes the children's access to leisure activities, including play and recreational activities appropriate to their age, maturity and interests.



Good practice

A system of volunteers properly trained to be nominated as representatives is in place.

Standard 117. A system is in place to supervise on a regular basis the proper performance of tasks of the representative or provisional representative.

Indicator 1. An administrative or judicial authority or other entity is appointed to supervise the tasks of the representatives and provisional representatives.



Indicator 2. A system is in place to ensure the regular review of the performance of tasks of the representatives and provisional representatives.



Indicator 3. A system is in place to ensure the regular review of the representatives and provisional representatives to identify potential incompatibilities with their role.



- **Additional remarks:** the review includes also criminal records and conflict of interests.

Indicator 4. A mechanism is in place to ensure that the representative is replaced when the authorities consider they have not performed their tasks adequately.



- **Additional remarks:** the mechanism takes into account the complaints submitted by the unaccompanied child against their representative.

Standard 118. A complaint mechanism is available and accessible to unaccompanied children to allow them to lodge complaints against the representative and provisional representative.

Indicator 1. The mechanism ensures confidentiality, indicates the modalities for lodging a complaint and timing for receiving a response, and prescribes who is responsible for the management and follow-up of complaints.



Indicator 2. A complaint can be lodged at any time in a confidential and child-friendly manner, in writing, orally and/or by digital means.



Indicator 3. The child is informed about the mechanism in a child-friendly manner and in a language that they can understand.



Indicator 4. Complaints are reviewed and addressed timely.



Indicator 5. All complaints are recorded and data is collected for statistical analysis and to support the improvement of representatives' performance.





Good practice

The supervisory authority analyses trends in the complaints to implement adequate measures, for example increased training for representatives.

5.7.3. Day-to-day care of unaccompanied children

Day-to-day care and special activities should be accessible to unaccompanied children living in the reception system without family members in order to ensure a standard of living adequate for their physical, mental and social development. Those activities should be part of an individualised care plan developed taking into account the child's view, age, maturity, special needs, skills and plans, and should also focus on fostering autonomy and strengthening resilience.

Day-to-day care may differ between unaccompanied children living in accommodation centres and those staying in individual housing (semi-independent living solutions), given the differences in age, autonomy and self-sufficiency.



Article 27 RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 119. Day-to-day care of the unaccompanied child is ensured both if accommodated in accommodation centres (a) or in individual housing (b)

Indicator 1(a). In the accommodation facilities, reception staff working with children is present 24/7.



- **Additional remarks:** reception staff working with children is specifically present based on children's schedules and needs (e.g. when children are present in the accommodation centre, meaning before and after school hours, during weekends and school holidays).

OR

Indicator 1(b). When the unaccompanied child lives in individual housing (semi-independent living solutions), reception staff working with children are reachable 24/7.



- **Additional remarks:** unaccompanied children accommodated in individual housing are as a minimum 16 years old and have been assessed as mature and autonomous enough to live in this type of reception facility. Clear and child-friendly procedures for emergency contact are in place and known to the child.



Indicator 2(a). The presence of the unaccompanied child in the accommodation centre is monitored at least once a day to be sure the child has not absconded.



OR

Indicator 2(b). Child protection staff visits the unaccompanied child accommodated in individual housing (semi-independent living solutions) based on needs and schedule of the children, at least twice a week to ensure their well-being.



- **Additional remarks:** *the visits may be performed by social workers or other child protection staff. These visits serve also as a verification exercise of the presence of the child.*

Indicator 3. The unaccompanied child is supported in its everyday life and activities.



- **Additional remarks:** *Support in everyday life includes a large range of activities, such as promoting and following up school attendance and engagement, providing information and support on personal and domestic hygiene, supporting their understanding of living in a community, respecting house rules, and managing and preventing conflicts. At a first stage, reception staff may guide unaccompanied children to school and to other destinations (e.g. appointments). Information is provided in a child-friendly way and adapted to children's age and maturity (e.g. Google maps, public transport applications, etc.).*

Indicator 4. The unaccompanied child receives homework support and tutoring tailored to their educational level, language proficiency and learning needs.



- **Additional remarks:** *help with homework and tutoring can be provided by the reception facility or by external organisations, inside or outside the reception facility.*

Standard 120. The day-to-day care is organised according to specific guidelines for the care of unaccompanied children

Indicator 1. The guidelines for the day-to-day care of unaccompanied children in reception facilities are known and applied by all responsible reception staff working with children.



Indicator 2. The guidelines contain at least a description of how to provide day-to-day care and how to interact with the child, taking into consideration their views, safety, future perspectives, skills and special needs.



Good practice

The guidelines are developed in collaboration with the authorities representing unaccompanied children, it should clearly describe the requirements to consult the unaccompanied child's file and the procedures to coordinate with other bodies and organisations.

Have a printed copy of the guidelines in all reception facilities for unaccompanied children, explaining all procedures and policies relevant to the reception of unaccompanied children.

Standard 121. The unaccompanied child is prepared to become autonomous and to live an independent life

Indicator 1. Skills related to autonomy are assessed on a regular basis.



- **Additional remarks:** *the assessment takes place through the support and observation of the unaccompanied child in everyday life and makes sure to involve the unaccompanied child. It is done at different stages to evaluate the development of the skills. A checklist to assess the level of autonomy may be used, including skills for cleaning, home budget management, energy consumption, laundry, cooking, shopping, sharing life-space with others, etc.*

This assessment should inform the child's care plan and be linked to the preparation for adulthood or transition to semi-independent living where applicable.

Indicator 2. The unaccompanied child is provided with support and training on home budget management and the responsible consumption of energy.



- **Additional remarks:** *younger unaccompanied children need help and supervision on how to spend or save pocket money. Older unaccompanied children might have the same needs but might also be able to handle money independently as a component of home budget training.*

Indicator 3. The unaccompanied child is provided with support and training on cleaning and how to do laundry.



- **Additional remarks:** *without prejudice to the fact that the overall responsibility for maintenance of the reception facility lies with the reception authority, certain maintenance tasks could be carried out by unaccompanied children voluntarily and on an educational basis, taking into account the age of a child, and always under the guide and supervision of the staff.*

Indicator 4. The unaccompanied child is provided with support and training on cooking skills.



- **Additional remarks:** *the training includes security issues and the age and maturity of unaccompanied children are taken into account.*

Good practice

Member States provide children with training on digital literacy (safe use of internet, online communication and online banking as age-appropriate), which is key for independence.



Standard 122. The mental and social development of the unaccompanied child is supported and monitored through a standardised individual care plan.

Indicator 1. The background, needs, skills and future prospects of the unaccompanied child are assessed by the child protection staff as standard elements of the unaccompanied child's care plan, with their participation taking into consideration the view of the child.



- **Additional remarks:** *the plan includes the following elements on the child: administrative procedural situation, education, skills, degree of autonomy and psychological wellbeing.*

The assessment is based on interviews with the unaccompanied child by qualified staff. The first consultation takes place within one week after arrival in the reception facility.

The representative is involved in the development of the care plan and can consult the plan with prior consent of the unaccompanied child

The plan is updated regularly and adjusted in accordance with the evolving needs and aspirations of the child.

Indicator 2. The mental and social development of the unaccompanied child is discussed among relevant caretakers from different disciplines (multidisciplinary approach).



- **Additional remarks:** *regular exchanges and/or meetings amongst reception staff working with the unaccompanied child (social workers, educators and, if applicable, medical staff, psychologists, school teachers, etc.) are organised in order to discuss unaccompanied children's situation and to update the care plan.*

Indicator 3. Information on the mental and social development of the unaccompanied child is exchanged with the representative on a regular basis.



Indicator 4. When the unaccompanied child is transferred to a new reception facility, the transfer of the care plan is done confidentially and at the latest on the day of transfer.



- **Additional remarks:** *the child is informed that information regarding their care plan is being shared, and their representative is also notified.*

A timely transfer of the care plan and handover ensure continuity of support.

Good practice

The social worker, the representative and the unaccompanied child conduct monthly reviews of the care plan. Whenever possible, the care plan is shared at least two days before the transfer of the child in a new reception facility to allow the receiving facility to prepare an appropriate environment for the child.



Standard 123. Coordinated and informed care for unaccompanied children through structured cooperation, regular information sharing, and awareness among all relevant actors is ensured and promoted

Indicator 1. A mechanism is in place to ensure regular cooperation and information sharing among all professionals working with unaccompanied children, including social workers, education and health-care staff, registration officers, interpreters, facility managers, administration/coordination staff as well as representatives.



- **Additional remarks:** *regular cooperation, information sharing and awareness raising sessions and/or alternative arrangements could be supported by internal reporting procedures. •Cooperation, information sharing and awareness raising sessions could cover migration-related aspects in general and cultural aspects, with a focus on the special needs of unaccompanied children. These could be organised, for example, by education personnel, external health service providers, security personnel in the facilities or cleaning personnel.*

Indicator 2. The representative actively participates in coordinating the case of the unaccompanied child and maintains regular communication with relevant actors to support their best interests.



Standard 124. Effective access to leisure activities, including play and recreational activities appropriate to unaccompanied children's age is ensured

Indicator 1. There is a daily access to a variety of leisure activities, both indoor and outdoor, according to age and after consultation with the unaccompanied children.



- **Additional remarks:** *leisure activities include a large range of sport and other activities (general relaxation indoors and outdoors, board games, cinema, community events, sports tournaments, etc.). Activities can be organised by the facility or by external organisations. Special attention is given to the organisation of group activities. Additional activities are available during school holidays and weekends, and when unaccompanied children do not yet have access to school.*

Indicator 2. Leisure activities are organised and supervised by child protection staff and/ or other responsible adults involved in childcare



- **Additional remarks:** *this may include recreational staff, volunteers, or professionals from partner organisations, ensuring safety and appropriateness.*

Indicator 3. Unaccompanied children aged 0-12 can play daily in a safe space adapted to their age and under supervision.



Indicator 4. Internet access and its duration is age appropriate and is regulated and supervised by the staff.





Good practice

Organise common activities for unaccompanied children and local youth, both within and outside the reception facility e.g. cricket tournaments.

Sports and group games should be adapted and take into account gender and cultural sensitivities.

Digital literacy support may be recommended to prevent harmful content exposure or online exploitation.

5.7.4. Transition into adulthood

Children reaching the age of majority whilst in reception might experience a change in reception conditions, for example in relation to access to housing, health care, education and counselling. Furthermore, reaching the age of majority entails for unaccompanied children that the representative will no longer support them and act on their behalf.

These changes can have an impact on the life of young applicants and may expose them to risks.

In order to guarantee stability and continuity in care of minors, the RCD (2024) specifies that secondary education and necessary health care treatments must not be discontinued immediately when the age of majority (18 years) is reached.

In addition, reception facilities should pay particular attention to the situation of these applicants to ensure a smooth transition into adulthood. In case of change of accommodation, a handover should take place where the staff of the new facility receive the relevant information from the representatives and the staff of the child's accommodation facility.

Staff working with youngsters should receive trainings on the needs of this particular group. When staff members are sensitised to the needs of young adults, they may better understand them and be better able to tailor their support. Appropriate guidance to young adults contributes to their self-reliance, stimulates their development and reduces their vulnerability.



Articles [16\(1\)](#), [22\(2\)](#), [26\(2\)](#), [27 RCD \(2024\)](#)

Standards and indicators

Standard 125. A process is in place to adequately prepare unaccompanied children approaching the age of majority in reception for the transition into adulthood, ensuring continuity of care and tailored support also after they turn 18.

Indicator 1. Preparation and guidance of unaccompanied children soon to reach the age of majority starts at least six months prior to their 18th birthday.



Indicator 2. Development goals relating to the transition into adulthood are included in the care plan of the unaccompanied child.



- **Additional remarks:** *Development goals may include honouring appointments, participating in daytime activities, future planning in relation to education or work, independently using public transport, independently managing finances etc.*

Applicants who have reached the age of majority while in the reception system receive relevant and tailored support in order to promote their self-reliance.

Where appropriate, similar transition planning may be extended to accompanied children whose family situation does not ensure adequate support into adulthood.

Indicator 3. The child's representative is actively involved in preparing them for the transition to adulthood and in related care plan activities.



Indicator 4. In case of a change in accommodation when applicants turn 18, a handover should take place where the staff of the new facility receive the relevant information from the representatives and the staff of the children's accommodation.



Indicator 5. Staff working with applicants who have reached the age of majority while in the reception system are trained on the special needs of this target group and how to guide/support them towards adulthood.



Indicator 6. Applicants who have reached the age of majority while in the reception system are guaranteed continued access to ongoing specific health treatment and secondary education, in line with national laws and regulations.



- **Additional remarks:** *this is valid for unaccompanied, accompanied and separated children.*

In some circumstances a child reaching the age of maturity may continue residing in a facility for children to ensure continuity of care (e.g. access to education and ongoing health treatments).

Good practice

Give unaccompanied children soon to reach the age of majority the opportunity to visit their new reception facility with their representative and/or a reception staff member to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings, new case manager / contact person, and the expectations of life in the adult facility.

Introduce role models as positive examples for young adults and/or introduce a buddy system in which young adults are teamed up at the reception facility with an adult from the same country of origin, who can act as an informal mentor.

Address the issue of mental health in the guidance/mentoring of young applicants and introduce activities on preventative topics such as healthy lifestyles, social media, prevention of radicalisation, drug addiction, (domestic c/ honour-related) violence, communicable diseases.



Take steps so that young adults' views/ideas are considered and acted upon when identifying suitable daytime activities and encourage them to participate in life outside the reception facility.

Tailored daytime activities are offered to applicants who have reached the age of majority while in the reception system, either at each reception facility or in cooperation with local partner organisations. Potential daytime activities can include language courses, voluntary or paid work, sports or cultural activities.

5.8. Employment

Effective access to the labour market needs to be ensured by Member States no later than 6 months from registration, provided that the decision has not been taken and that the delay is not attributable to the applicant.

In order to increase integration prospects and the self-sufficiency of applicants, Member States have the flexibility to ensure access to the labour market prior to the six months, where the application is likely to be well-founded. Early labour market access can also contribute to reducing illegal employment.

Access to the labour market should not be granted or, if already granted, should be withdrawn, where the accelerated procedure is applied. The purpose of the accelerated procedure is to swiftly examine applications that are likely to be unfounded or where there are serious national security or public order concerns. Therefore, considering this context, it is important to limit access to the labour market for these applicants. This approach also aims to discourage potential secondary movements.



RCD Article [17 RCD \(2024\)](#)
Recital [50, 51, 52, 53, 54 RCD \(2024\)](#)

Standards and indicators

Standard 126. Effective access to labour market is ensured

Indicator 1. Access to labour market is granted within 6 months after the application is registered.



- **Additional remarks:** *access to the labour market is ensured until a negative decision on the appeal has been notified.*

In the cases covered by Article 42(1), (a) to (f), APR, labour market access is not granted or is withdrawn if the applicant is in the accelerated procedure.



Indicator 2. Clear rules on how to access the labour market are provided to the applicants.



- **Additional remarks:** *These rules must not hinder an applicant from seeking employment, not unduly restrict access to specific sectors or working time, and not set unreasonable administrative formalities.*

Indicator 3. If labour market tests are applied under national law, they do not unfairly restrict or delay applicants' access to employment.



- **Additional remarks:** *the reception authorities are not responsible of the fairness of the labour market tests. However, in case of unfair or discriminatory tests that have an impact on the effective access to employment, reception authorities should flag the issue through appropriate fora and channels.*

Indicator 4. Applicants who are allowed to reside only in a specific place are able to seek employment within a reasonable distance (e.g. transportation time or distance from the place).



Indicator 5. If foreseen by national law, applicants can leave their residence territory to carry out specific work tasks in another Member State where required by their employment contract



- **Additional remarks:** *any temporary travel abroad should only be allowed under clearly defined and duly authorised circumstances. If foreseen by Member States, the requirements from an applicant's employment contract can be considered as an imperative reason to travel abroad.*

Indicator 6. Labour market services that increase the ability to be employed are available and accessible to applicants.



- **Additional remarks:** *support to applicants in drafting a CV, in searching and applying to job opportunities, counselling, could be provided in coordination where relevant with public employment services.*

Good practice

Information on employment rate and entry into vocational training of the applicants are made available to reception authorities.

Standard 127. Applicants for international protection are treated equally with nationals once access to the labour market has been granted

Indicator 1. Once labour market access is granted, equal treatment with nationals is ensured regarding:



- employment terms and labour rights
- freedom of association and affiliation



- education and vocational training
- recognition of diplomas, certificates and qualifications
- access to validation of prior learning and experience
- unless the national law poses restrictions as per Article 17(4) RCD (2024).

Indicator 2. If a Member State allows applicants to be self-employed, equal treatment concerning their labour rights in accordance with the RCD (2024) is granted.



Indicator 3. Applicants who are employed or entitled to social security benefits derived from previous employment receive equal treatment with nationals concerning social security benefits,



- **Additional remarks:** Member States can decide to exclude social security benefits which are not dependent on periods of employment or on contributions.

Good practice

Support the applicant on how to start their own business and on bureaucracies.

Standard 128. Employability services include applicants with special needs.

Indicator 1. Services that increase employability are available and accessible to applicants with special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** these services can include language courses, seminars and vocational training courses.

Indicator 2. Special adaptations or initiatives for applicants with special needs are in place to support them in accessing the labour market.



- **Additional remarks:** in several Member States, employment bodies may play a more prominent role than reception authorities in ensuring access to employment. This indicator looks at the support that reception authorities can provide in line with the RCD (2024) and applicable national legislation, for example, awareness raising meetings related to special legal working rights for applicants in a vulnerable situation (e.g. children and women); empowering workshops or career orientation sessions for young women; support in drafting a CV, interview preparation and searching for employment on the internet.

Good practice

Guidelines using images and infographics help people that are illiterate and have limited skills to find their own way to sites for jobseekers.

Collect job advertisements related to remote jobs for applicants that have difficulty working physically demanding jobs.



5.9. Preparing the end of reception: measures oriented towards the applicant's integration or towards voluntary return

The applicant's stay in the reception system is in principle temporary. One of the objectives of social work in accommodation facilities is to prepare the applicant to exit reception as an independent and self-determined person, while ensuring respect for their dignity and human rights. The end of reception can lead to integration in the society or to return measures.

The RCD (2024) recognises the importance of early integration measures in helping enhance applicants' ability to act autonomously, interact with competent authorities and find employment. In particular, language skills are important to ensure that applicants have an adequate standard of living and they can also contribute to prevent secondary movements. The RCD (2024) outlines that early integration measures must include at least access to language courses, civic education courses and vocational training courses.

Applicants must have access to early-integration courses, regardless of whether they have access to the labour market. However, where applicants have sufficient means, Member States may require them to cover or to contribute to the cost of the courses.

Member States can opt to make some early integration measures mandatory. In this case, if an applicant fails to participate in those compulsory activities, material reception conditions may be reduced, unless this failure is caused by circumstances beyond the applicant's control.

The applicant should not be entitled to language courses or vocational training from the moment they have been notified of a decision to transfer because they are present in a Member State other than the one in which they are required to be present (see also [2.3 Reduction or withdrawal of reception conditions](#)).

In addition, the RCD (2024) provides that Member States may allow applicants to perform voluntary work outside the accommodation centre subject to conditions of national law. Extensive research shows that performing voluntary work has a positive (lasting) effect on the language level of applicants for international protection. In addition, being actively engaged in the society during the reception phase has a positive effect on the participation (and employability) of refugees. It also provides applicants with the opportunity to experience the reality of everyday life in the host country, facilitating a deeper understanding of its culture, customs and institutions, as well as defining rights and obligations.

Pre-return measures do not strictly fall under the competences of reception authorities, as other actors are generally involved in their execution. However, in different Member States, information on available return options is delivered to all applicants accommodated in reception facilities, especially those who are considered to have lower prospects for recognition (e.g. after a first negative decision on their application for international protection). In this sense, the standards and indicators elaborated in this section give mainly shape to the information provision requirement. Furthermore, in all cases, voluntary return is only possible with the free and informed consent of the applicant.





Recitals 9, 58 RCD (2024)

Articles 5,16(2), 18, 20(9), 21, 23(2)(f) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 129. Early integration activities, including language courses, civic education and vocational training, are available and accessible to all applicants.

Indicator 1. A system is in place to provide or facilitate access to early integration courses such as language courses, civic education or vocational training as soon as possible after an application is made, taking into account the schedule and enrolling timeline of such courses.



Indicator 2. Information on available early integration courses, including the compulsory ones, is provided on a regular basis to the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** see [Section 5.1. Provision of information and counselling.](#)

Indicator 3. The applicant is informed of potential consequences when failing to attend compulsory early integration activities.



- **Additional remarks:** in the cases envisaged by Article 23(2)(f) RCD (2024). See [Section 2.3. Reduction or withdrawal of reception conditions.](#)

Indicator 4. Adequate arrangements are in place to ensure that all applicants have access to the available early integration activities taking into account personal circumstances and needs.



- **Additional remarks:** for example, offering childcare services to facilitate parents' participation, providing for online self-paced modules or delivering courses outside working hours.

Indicator 5. The attendance of each applicant to early integration activities is registered by the responsible provider.



- **Additional remarks:** this is particularly important for mandatory activities.

Good practice

In consultation with the applicant, create an individual plan of early integration measures, taking into account their identified needs as well as personal skills, education and work experience.

Establish a feedback mechanism on the quality of the early integration measures provided to applicants.

Set targets for the active participation of applicants in early integration activities, for example: '% of applicants participating in early integration activities' or '% of applicants reaching



a certain level of language proficiency (A2/ B1)' or '% of registered applicants successfully completing a course'.

Set up a rewarding system for the applicants who attend early integration courses to increase the participation.

Civic education sessions should take into account the specific communication needs of applicants, including their real-life situations and sociocultural context, as well as field visits to historical places. Those sessions should aim at enabling applicants to apply the knowledge they gained in a practical manner.

Sign agreements with local CSOs or other stakeholders that may offer early integration activities.

Establish a cooperation network between reception authorities and actors who provide early integration activities. The network can help map the available services, identify possible gaps and facilitate the applicant's access to measures oriented to integration, such as job placements and internships.

Ensure coordination among relevant stakeholders (national, regional, local authorities, migrant organisations and CSOs) regarding the content of the early integration measures and the integration measures provided once an applicant is recognised as a beneficiary of international protection.

Establish cooperation with relevant stakeholders (such as housing authorities, social services, local councils) to improve the outflow of recognised applicants from reception facilities.

Promote engagement with the local community to foster social cohesion and improve integration prospects.

Have certified teachers delivering language classes.

Standard 130. Applicants are enabled to participate in voluntary work, if permitted by the Member State.

Indicator 1. A system that allows applicants to access voluntary work opportunities outside the accommodation centre is in place without discrimination.



Indicator 2. Information on available voluntary work opportunities is accessible to the applicant.



Good practice

Host a voluntary work service desk at the reception facility to allow for applicants' easy access to information about existing voluntary work opportunities at or around the facility.

Establish collaborations between the reception facilities and local organisations offering voluntary work opportunities to guide applicants towards an active participation in the society and make use of their skills, knowledge and experience.





Standard 131. Applicants have access to available voluntary return options, in line with national legislation.

Indicator 1. When it falls under the responsibility of reception authorities, information on available voluntary return options is provided on a regular basis to the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** *when the responsibility to provide information on voluntary return falls under the competence of different authorities or institutions, reception authorities should facilitate contacts and promptly refer the applicant to the relevant actor, especially when they show an interest to avail themselves of such options.*

Information should be provided to the applicant during the different phases of reception, starting from the initial days after their arrival. It should be provided through different means, including with the support of material available in different languages and with the support of other institutions, such as Frontex and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Information on whether the applicant has shown interest in voluntary return and actions taken (e.g. referral to competent authorities) can also be recorded in the individual file. On this point, see also Section [3.3. Individual file](#).

Indicator 2. Measures are taken to ensure that the applicant is encouraged to actively consider available voluntary return options.



- **Additional remarks:** *measures can take different forms, including the organisation of dedicated individual meetings and counselling sessions to discuss return prospects, especially after a first negative decision on the application for international protection has been issued (when needed, with the support of competent authorities and institutions).*

Good practice

Offer a structured training to applicants about their options for the future after a negative decision on their asylum application. The session should include information on irregular stay, reality check and future expectations as well as support provided by different organisations, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Frontex in the field of assisted voluntary return.





6. Identification, assessment and response to special needs

6.1. Prevention

The term ‘prevention’ refers to activities aiming to stop the emergence of new situations of vulnerability, the deterioration of existing ones and reducing the exposure to risks. These activities can be carried out throughout the entire asylum and reception pathways with the aim of improving safety and security and promoting the resilience of applicants. The term security, as referred to in this section, relates to the protection from deliberate threats or acts of violence. The term safety relates to accidental hazards such as road accidents, fire, diseases and natural disasters. Prevention is transversal. It inherently strengthens the different processes of the identification, assessment and response that are at the core of this guide.

This approach has been further developed when applied to preventing GBV in the context of humanitarian intervention where a distinction is made between prevention and mitigation. Prevention generally refers to action to stop GBV from first occurring (e.g. scaling up activities that promote gender equality or working with communities to address practices that contribute to GBV). Mitigation refers to reducing the risk of exposure to GBV (e.g. ensuring that sufficient lighting and security patrols are in place from the onset of establishing displacement camps) ⁽⁷²⁾. Article 20(4) RCD (2024) also directly refers to the need of taking ‘appropriate measures to ensure, as far as possible, the prevention of assault and violence, including violence committed with a sexual, gender, racist or religious motive’. This means that, in addition to preventing GBV, Member States must also address the risks of other forms of targeted or opportunistic violence such as hate crimes, xenophobic attacks or violence motivated by religion or belief, through specific prevention and mitigation measures.

In this section, the standards and indicators take into consideration the situation of all applicants. The implementation of prevention measures would avoid that applicants who were not in a situation of vulnerability when they arrived in the host country develop special needs due to factors and risks related to the stay in the host country.

⁽⁷²⁾ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action*, 2015, <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/working-group/iasc-guidelines-integrating-gender-based-violence-interventions-humanitarian-action-2015>; see ‘Gender-based Violence’ in UNHCR, *GBV Toolkit*, https://www.unhcr.org/gbv-toolkit/_test/; UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on the Prevention of, Risk Mitigation and Response to Gender-based Violence*, UNHCR/HCP/2020/01, 2020, <https://www.unhcr.org/media/unhcr-policy-prevention-risk-mitigation-and-response-gender-based-violence-2020>; European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, *Thematic Policy No 8. Humanitarian Protection: Improving protection outcomes to reduce the risks for people in humanitarian crises*, May 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/policy_guidelines_humanitarian_protection_en.pdf.





The implementation of prevention measures throughout the reception pathway can:

- facilitate the identification and self-identification of applicants in a situation of vulnerability avoiding that they remain unnoticed;
- limit the extent to which applicants develop new or additional special needs that would require a targeted response;
- avoid that the applicant's vulnerable situation deteriorates.



Article 20(4) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 132. The general well-being of all applicants, in particular those in a vulnerable situation, is supported.

Indicator 1. Resilience-building, leisure and group activities are regularly offered and promoted to all applicants, particularly for those in a vulnerable situation.



- **Additional remarks:** *the availability of tailored spaces and activities is a crosscutting feature to facilitate the support of all applicants and particularly those with special needs. These spaces and activities can be used to raise awareness on different topics related to well-being, empowerment, strengthen resilience, give structure to everyday life and provide educational opportunities. Importantly, they can also be an opportunity for the early identification of special needs.*

Indicator 2. Community engagement activities take place, facilitated by specialised or trained personnel.



Good practice

When activities are led by CSOs and charity organisations, a reporting system is available. This strengthens the communication with reception staff and allows for proper actions when vulnerabilities are detected during these activities. All CSOs and charity organisations working with applicants for international protection are aware of referral pathways. They are able to appropriately and systematically refer applicants in a vulnerable situation to ensure their access to appropriate services.

There are many different activities to enhance resilience according to gender, age and special needs. For example, community engagement personnel can run workshops with men on topics such as GBV; female staff can organise workshops to raise awareness on GBV for female applicants. The presence of a female facilitator and interpreter might also be needed for the facilitation of other targeted sessions (e.g. group activities for women such as yoga and other relaxation techniques).






Other examples of hands-on activities include:

Creating symbolic 'self-portraits'. Every applicant is asked to present themselves. They can include aspects such as their hobbies, dreams, personal motto, things that make them feel proud of themselves, personal achievements or aspects they would like to improve.


A personal 'security map'. Every applicant is asked to create a map with places where they feel safe. This could include places in the facility or otherwise people that they can ask for help or reach out to if they feel unsafe.

Standard 133. Measures to prevent and mitigate the emergence and/or aggravation of vulnerabilities are implemented.

Indicator 1. Health prevention measures are implemented to prevent the emergence of vulnerability or the deterioration of the situation of vulnerability. 

- **Additional remarks:** health prevention measures can include the provision of relevant and adapted information to ensure health literacy of applicants. This information can cover topics such as personal hygiene, vaccines, family planning, healthcare services, contagious diseases, sexual and reproductive health, etc.


In addition, the reception facility should follow relevant national or regional medical guidelines and health protocols related to prevention and response in the event of an outbreak of a contagious disease.

Indicator 2. Measures to prevent the emergence and/or the aggravation of mental health-related issues are implemented. 

- **Additional remarks:** psycho-educational workshops or activities are organised on a regular basis by experienced personnel for all applicants according to their age, gender or any other significant condition (e.g. awareness of different feelings and how to cope with them, stress management techniques, etc).

In some circumstances, these activities might not be sufficient. The applicant may need professional support and to be referred to specialised services. Staff should pursue dedicated efforts to reach applicants experiencing mental health issues and ensure their inclusion in the abovementioned activities.

Standard 134. Applicants of international protection have access to social counselling.

Indicator 1. Social counselling is available to applicants inside or outside the reception facility. 



Indicator 2. Applicants can access social counselling on a regular basis and as per their personal needs.



- **Additional remarks:** access to social counselling can take the form of an in-person interview or through the phone.

Standard 135. Safeguard and promote the unaccompanied child's health and well-being, and strengthen resilience.

Indicator 1. The unaccompanied child's psychological well-being and mental health are taken into account and safeguarded during day-to-day care.



- **Additional remarks:** special attention is given to signs of anxiety, stress, loneliness, mourning, depression, trauma and sleeping problems. When necessary, psychological support is provided through listening, acknowledging the unaccompanied child's feelings, giving advice or referring the child to specialised professionals such as psychologists or therapists.

Indicator 2. The unaccompanied child has access to awareness-raising activities on the risks of drugs and alcohol use, according to their age and maturity.



- **Additional remarks:** these activities can be organised by the reception facility or by external organisations, inside or outside the facility. When relevant, medical staff is involved.

Indicator 3. The unaccompanied child has access to awareness-raising activities on sexual and reproductive health, in respect of different sexual orientations and gender identities, and according to their age and maturity.



- **Additional remarks:** the activities should focus on the prevention of situations of risk and learning how to act if they occur.

Good practice

Unaccompanied children have access to psychoeducational activities, including relaxation and breathing exercises, discussion groups, kinesiology, information sessions on psychosomatic problems, etc. These activities are organised by the reception facility or by external organisations, inside or outside the facility. Special actors such as psychologists or therapists are involved.

Organise a 'timeout period' outside the reception facility if unaccompanied children experience behavioural and/or psychological problems (skipping school, troubles fitting into the group, hostility, bullying, etc.). The 'timeout period' implies that the unaccompanied children are temporarily hosted in specific facilities where special psychoeducational and leisure activities are provided and where they can take the time to reflect on their situation. Specific facilities are available to host small groups (between 2 and 10 unaccompanied children) and offer additional educational support. The length of the stay varies according to the child needs (from 5 to 15 days, 1 month in case of exceptional circumstances).

Staff dine together with the unaccompanied children in accommodation centres to supervise their eating habits, create a feeling of togetherness during meals and prevent potential conflicts.

6.2. Identification

The first step to provide applicants with adequate support for their special needs is the identification of those in a vulnerable situation. The identification of vulnerabilities is a continuous process that should begin as soon as possible and continue throughout all the stages of the asylum procedure and reception pathway.

The identification process detects indicators and factors that can indicate a situation of vulnerability. Vulnerability indicators (e.g. age, medical or mental health difficulties, changes in behaviour, signs related to domestic violence, social isolation) can be detected in multiple ways in compliance with confidentiality and data protection requirements. For example, through direct interaction with persons and observation of these external signs; their own declaration (self-identification) or declarations from their relatives or other persons and residents of the centre. They can also be detected through information provided by other professionals (medical diagnosis, psychosocial report, knowledge of an ongoing investigation, etc.). Other means can be the documentation available in the file or in the possession of the person, or in other available databases as well as through activities that may lead to the identification such as individual interviews, group talks, briefings, etc.

In some circumstances, the identification mechanism includes a pre-identification exercise (e.g. in contingency situations where there can be a lack of capacity, time and adequate response and referral mechanisms). This step usually detects persons with urgent needs or priority cases, for instance people with severe and urgent medical issues or people in an unsafe situation. The pre-identification can be done through the immediate detection of key indicators, through the self-identification by the person, or through the documents or evidence certifying the vulnerability or its indicators. The pre-identification cannot be considered as a sufficient nor standalone step to identify situations of vulnerability.

There are specific authorities or actors with exclusive competence for the identification of certain vulnerable situations (GBV, THB, unaccompanied minors with a disputed age, etc.). In these cases, the formal identification of these situations will fall exclusively on those authorities or actors (police, GBV focal points, child protection officers, public prosecutor, etc.). Therefore, the action of the reception or asylum staff is limited to the detection or pre-identification and communication of those indicators to the competent authorities. This can be done through the focal points or referent persons, in compliance with confidentiality and personal data protection requirements.



Self-identification and disclosure

Self-identification and disclosure focus on an individual's personal motivation, capability and opportunity to reveal specific conditions, experiences or needs. It is not the sole responsibility of the applicant to declare that they have special needs. Applicants in a vulnerable situation often do not feel comfortable in disclosing their needs. Their needs might be linked to traumatic experiences, or they might feel unable or refuse to recognise themselves as victims. In other cases, they might fear repercussions against their family. The decision not to self-identify should also be respected, as it is critical for many applicants with special needs to feel in control of their situation and to choose if, when and how to seek assistance.

To enable self-identification and disclosure, it is important to build trust, provide information, create safe spaces and organise awareness activities on different vulnerabilities for applicants. It is also important to organise activities and specific training for staff on topics such as cultural backgrounds and how to engage with victims of GBV or THB, for example.

A package of information materials (a poster and a brochure) is available in the EUAA's Let's Speak Asylum Portal, which can support the self-identification of vulnerabilities and special needs:

- *Poster on self-identification of vulnerabilities and special needs* ⁽⁷³⁾ accompanied by a guide on how to use the poster ⁽⁷⁴⁾.
- *Brochure to support self-identification of vulnerabilities and special needs Are you or do you know someone in one or more of these situations?* ⁽⁷⁵⁾ accompanied by a guide on how to use the brochure ⁽⁷⁶⁾.

While the poster can be hung in common areas, it is strongly advised to use the brochure only in the context of an information session as explained in the relevant 'how to use' guides.

Another important process linked to the identification is the medical screening. The grounds for medical screening on public health grounds is laid down in Article 15 RCD (2024). Member States can set up a medical screening, for instance for people with contagious diseases. The results of a medical screening should feed into the identification process of applicants in a vulnerable situation in respect of confidentiality and personal data protection requirements. Medical screening usually takes place upon entry to the country or upon entry to the reception facility. It might take place under medical isolation precautions or in quarantine.

⁽⁷³⁾ <https://lsa.euaa.europa.eu/templates/poster-self-identification-vulnerabilities-and-special-needs>

⁽⁷⁴⁾ https://lsa.euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-06/How_to_use_poster_vulnerabilities.pdf

⁽⁷⁵⁾ <https://lsa.euaa.europa.eu/templates/brochure-self-identification-vulnerabilities-and-special-needs>

⁽⁷⁶⁾ https://lsa.euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2023-07/2023_How_to_use_Brochure_Vulnerabilities_Special_Needs_EN.pdf

It is essential that, when an identification mechanism is defined and applied, the appropriate response and follow-up of the identified cases are envisaged. Therefore, specific responsibilities and realistic response timelines should be assigned based on the resources allocated. This is crucial as it generally creates an expectation on the part of the person concerned once they are identified as a person in a vulnerable situation. Lack of response to that expectation, which may be in the form of receiving appropriate treatment, will most likely be liable to worsen the person's mental state. Moreover, it may also lead to the staff involved in the identification feeling a sense of powerlessness.

Every person working in direct contact with applicants plays a valuable role in detecting and/or identifying vulnerability indicators and in communicating them to relevant staff. They need to be communicated to vulnerability focal points and/or to specialised staff (psychologists, social workers, doctors, lawyers, etc.) for further assessment or follow-up.

The standards and indicators presented in this section provide guide on how to set up and implement an effective identification mechanism in the context of the asylum procedure and reception. In particular, they first focus on the definition of the mechanism, including the elements that constitute the identification mechanism. They follow covering the implementation aspect and the main characteristics of the identification (timely and continuous).



Articles [15](#), [24](#), [25](#) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 136. The mechanism to identify applicants in a vulnerable situation is defined.

Indicator 1. The identification mechanism outlines a non-exhaustive list of physical, psychosocial and environmental indicators to identify applicants in a vulnerable situation.



- **Additional remarks:** *the list of indicators should be comprehensive but not exhaustive. As a benchmark, the indicators listed in the [EUAA's Tool for the Identification of Persons with Special Needs](#) should be considered.*

Personal factors are linked to age, gender and family status.

Physical indicators refer to visible measurements, manifestations and observations. These include, among others, physical appearance (e.g. physical signs, injuries, poor hygiene and personal care, etc.), health conditions (e.g. diagnosed illness, treatment and medications, etc.), disabilities, sexual and reproductive health and pregnancy.

Psychosocial indicators include signs and symptoms linked to behaviour, mood, attitude, self-perception and relations with others. These include, among others, diagnosed disorders, impulsive or erratic behaviour, substance use, self-harm or



thoughts of death and suicide, illogical or broken reasoning and thoughts, feeling of guilt, shame or distrust of others.

Environmental indicators refer to situations linked to the surroundings and external conditions and their effects on the applicant. These include, among others, specific circumstances linked to the country of origin (e.g. the applicant originating from a country where torture, violence and/or GBV is known to occur), to the country of transit (e.g. exposure to situations of conflict, torture, violence and THB) and to the host country (e.g. long asylum procedures, debt of the person and/or their family to finance the journey).

Taking into consideration these vulnerability indicators, certain categories are more likely to have special needs, for example those included in the non-exhaustive list of Article 24 RCD (2024): '(a) minors; (b) unaccompanied minors; (c) persons with disabilities; (d) elderly persons; (e) pregnant women; (f) lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex persons; (g) single parents with minor children; (h) victims of trafficking in human beings; (i) persons with serious illnesses; (j) persons with mental disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder; (k) persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, for example victims of GBV, of female genital mutilation, of child or forced marriage, or violence committed with a sexual, gender, racist or religious motive.'

Indicator 2. The identification mechanism outlines a specific list of indicators and the definition of cases that require an immediate assessment and response.



- **Additional remarks:** *if national law indicates categories that need to be prioritised, the mechanism needs to take those categories into account. Examples of priority categories includes applicants with serious health concerns (including serious mental health problems), pregnant/nursing women, victims of THB at immediate risk and unaccompanied and separated children.*

Applicants identified as priority cases based on these indicators may require special attention and need to be referred for immediate follow-up in the scenarios such as those listed below.

Immediate safety concerns. Contact law enforcement authorities immediately if you have acute concerns that the applicant may harm themselves or be a danger to people around them, including to their family members.

Acute medical needs. Call an ambulance immediately if there are acute needs related to the physical or mental health of the applicant.

Response to these situations can also take the form of a referral to a specialised officer to avoid that less experienced staff might take the wrong actions. This will depend on the urgency and characteristics of the needs.

For this indicator, see also Section [6.4. Response](#).





Indicator 3. The identification mechanism provides a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of staff when indicators of vulnerability are detected.



- **Additional remarks:** *this includes the responsibility of the staff members and designated services to record indicators of vulnerability and identified vulnerabilities. For example, every staff member that comes into contact with an applicant and discovers or receives information that may be relevant in the identification are encouraged to note this information in the applicant's file (consideration should be given to confidentiality issues and personal data protection). This information will then be crucial to the staff member in charge of identification, assessment and referral (i.e. social workers or vulnerability experts).*

See Section [6.5. Confidentiality](#).

Indicator 4. The identification mechanism prescribes how applicants can inform authorities on their vulnerabilities and if necessary, how to provide medical documentation/attestation.



Indicator 5. The identification mechanism prescribes procedures and communication pathways on how representatives, lawyers and other actors can inform the authorities on vulnerabilities that an applicant may have.



Indicator 6. When a medical screening is provided by national law, the identification mechanism establishes how the outcome is taken into consideration in the identification, assessment and response to the special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** *for this indicator, see Section [5.2. Medical screening](#).*

Indicator 7. The identification mechanism describes the conditions for the pre-identification of vulnerability.



Additional remarks: *the description of the conditions for a vulnerability pre-identification should include at least a description of the circumstances in which a pre-identification can be carried out (e.g. situations of high influx), guide on the timeframes for the pre-identification and for a timely response, a non-exhaustive list of urgent cases that need immediate response and the training necessary for staff carrying out the vulnerability pre-identification.*

Standard 137. The mechanism to identify applicants in a vulnerable situation is implemented effectively by relevant staff.

Indicator 1. Sufficient resources are allocated to identify special needs.



Indicator 2. Guidelines and tools to identify applicants in a vulnerable situation are disseminated among staff.



- **Additional remarks:** tools include checklists, report templates, questionnaires and a system for flagging cases according to severity. Tools are also used to report systematically on the outcome of the identification process.

Indicator 3. Criteria to identify priority cases are applied.



- **Additional remarks:** priority cases are given immediate access to the services needed.

Indicator 4. A confidential and private environment is created to allow the disclosure and identification of applicants in a vulnerable situation, including self-identification.



- **Additional remarks:** a private environment can be a separate office or room where other people cannot listen in or see who is inside or where special settings are in place. In addition, information regarding vulnerabilities and special needs is available and targets applicants in a vulnerable situation, for example in the form of posters or audio/written messages.

Indicator 5. Applicants are informed about the aim of the identification mechanism.



- **Additional remarks:** the aim is to identify vulnerabilities in order to provide further support and to implement special reception conditions and procedural guarantees.

For this indicator, see also Section [6.5. Confidentiality](#).

Indicator 6. Capacity building, training and professional development sessions on how to identify applicants in a vulnerable situation are regularly provided to staff.



- **Additional remarks:** the identification mechanism should not only define a training curriculum, but to be effective, training sessions need to be provided and attended by the targeted staff.

All staff coming into contact with applicants in a potentially vulnerable situation receive relevant training on the identification of applicants in a situation of vulnerability. These might include staff working in external health services, other service providers, security or cleaning personnel in the reception facilities.

To measure this indicator, it is not enough to assess how many sessions are organised, but to review the level of attendance of participants targeted by the session. The purpose of professional development sessions is not to become specialised, but to gain more experience on a certain topic.

For this indicator, see Sub-section [1.9.1 Training](#), under Staff.





Indicator 7. Applicants and staff have access to interpreters to support in the identification process, including self-identification, if necessary.



Indicator 8. When a medical screening is provided by national law, a screening report is produced and taken into account in the identification mechanism.



- **Additional remarks:** For this indicator, see Section [6.5. Confidentiality](#).

Indicator 9. The identification and assessment of special reception needs takes place without prejudice to the examination of the applicant's need for international protection.



- **Additional remarks:** *it is important to clearly separate the issues of identification and assessment of special reception (and procedural) needs and the examination of the application for international protection. While in some cases the applicants' situation of vulnerability would also have an impact on the outcome of the application, the purpose of the identification and assessment as per this guide is solely to guarantee effective access to the rights and benefits under the RCD during the asylum procedure.*

Good practice

The elaboration and use of questionnaires and checklists are established by mental health professionals together with asylum professionals. They aim to detect trauma and/or mental health problems at the earliest possible stage.

The gender of the staff involved in the identification process is appropriate to the circumstances of the applicant.

Standard 138. The identification of applicants in a vulnerable situation takes place in a continuous and timely manner.

Indicator 1. The identification mechanism is applied as early as possible from the first moment of contact between the applicant and the authorities and other entities working in the asylum procedure and reception.



- **Additional remarks:** *each applicant has a first personal meeting/session with designated staff as soon as possible. This meeting, among other purposes, should aim to identify potential indicators of vulnerabilities with staff that is adequately qualified and trained to perform this task.*

In the asylum context, for example, first-contact officials are adequately trained on the identification of situations of vulnerability. They are aware of the identification mechanism and they know how to implement it.

In the reception context, the first meeting takes place within a maximum of three days after arrival in a reception facility. It can take place during the intake interview, for



instance. The relevant staff are those responsible for conducting the intake interview or those responsible for welcoming applicants according to Member State practice.

It is crucial to underline that identification is a daily duty by all staff and requires care, observation and the proper sharing of information according to the relevant procedure.

Indicator 2. The initial identification and assessment of obvious vulnerability to address special needs is conducted during the reception intake on the first day upon arrival, at the latest within 24 hours.



Indicator 3. The identification mechanism applies continuously and, in addition, regular intervals are defined for its verification.



- **Additional remarks:** *several elements can lead to the continuous implementation of the identification mechanism. These elements include, for example, adequate settings for meeting the applicants, adequate time devoted to observation of indicators, qualified and multi-disciplinary staff, periodic multi-disciplinary internal meetings, etc.*

In the asylum context, identification can happen throughout the whole asylum procedure: making, registering, lodging and the personal interview until the decision is issued.

The same considerations are relevant for the reception context, where identification of vulnerable situations can happen at any point of the reception process which includes arrival in the reception system, stay and end of reception. In particular and when necessary, each applicant should have the possibility to have a personal meeting/session with a qualified staff member.

Indicator 4. Special needs that become apparent at a later stage are adequately identified and assessed.



- **Additional remarks:** *some special reception needs may only become apparent at a later stage. Therefore, it is important that identification and assessment are ongoing.*

Standard 139. There is an effective system to record when vulnerability indicators are detected and applicants are identified as being in a vulnerable situation.

Indicator 1. A document is produced when vulnerability indicators are detected and when an applicant is identified as being in a vulnerable situation.



- **Additional remarks:** *the format of the document recording the identification can include a non-exhaustive list of categories of persons considered more likely to be in a vulnerable situation. This non-exhaustive list can include the categories listed in Article 24 RCD (2024) as well as any additional profile considered more likely to have special needs.*

For this indicator, see also Section [6.5. Confidentiality](#).



Indicator 2. The document where this information is recorded is available to the applicant.



Indicator 3. Where national law allows, information on the identification of applicants in a vulnerable situation is gathered and analysed.



- **Additional remarks:** *this indicator does not cover any personal data. It covers the collection and analysis of data for statistical purposes in order to improve allocation of resources and the response.*

6.3. Assessment

In this guide, ‘assessment’ is intended as the evaluation of the situation of the applicants. The purpose of this evaluation is to identify any need for special reception conditions and/or procedural guarantees and to refer the applicant for the provision of adequate support. This is done in accordance with Article 25 RCD (2024).

The assessment should be considered as a follow-up to the identification of vulnerabilities. It evaluates characteristics or circumstances that make individuals more susceptible to harm or difficulties (e.g. age, gender, health conditions) as well as circumstances or conditions that can cause physical, psychological or emotional harm, such as violence, discrimination and threats to the applicant’s well-being (harm and risks factors). It also evaluates factors that contribute to creating a supportive environment such as family set-up, the education of the person and their value system (protective factors) as well as the strategies and processes that the individual employs to manage stress, adversity or challenges (coping mechanisms).

It is important that the assessment is conducted on an individual level, within 30 days of the making of the application and in a continuous manner. The assessment should be comprehensive to ensure an adequate response to meet the needs of each applicant. However, it should be taken into account that the initial assessment cannot be exhaustive. It is therefore important to run further assessments (follow-ups) at later stages in the procedure.

The way in which the assessment is carried out can vary depending on the context. In reception, the assessment usually takes the form of in-person meetings that are regularly scheduled with trained staff according to the needs. When there are signs that an applicant’s physical or mental health could have an impact on their reception needs, and when the applicant consents, a referral should be made to relevant professionals for further assessment of their condition. This may include medical doctors, psychologists or other professionals, in line with national procedures.

In this section, the standards and indicators provide guide on the assessment of special needs and illustrate how and in which circumstances the assessment should be conducted. The assessment serves to identify the areas of support the applicant needs in light of their situation. A coherent approach between assessment and response capacities should be put in place.



Articles [22](#), [25](#), [28](#) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 140. The assessment of the situation of the applicant is carried out to determine the need of special reception conditions and procedural guarantees and the area for individual response.

Indicator 1. Sufficient resources are allocated to assess special needs.



Indicator 2. A standardised assessment is carried out.



- **Additional remarks:** the assessment is a follow-up to the identification of applicants in a vulnerable situation. A standardised assessment ensures harmonisation in the response to the identified and assessed needs.

A standardised assessment can include the use of common tools (e.g. the EUAA's SNVA tool).

The assessment can take place in the form of a semi-structured interview, which includes predetermined questions and topics while allowing a certain degree of flexibility through open questions and follow-up questions that can and/or should be adapted according to the responses to the previous questions.

Indicator 3. The roles and responsibilities of staff conducting the assessment are clearly defined.



- **Additional remarks:** several actors can be involved in the assessment depending on the vulnerabilities that have been identified. These actors can include medical staff, psychologists and social workers.

Indicator 4. Staff carrying out the assessment have received specific training and have specific expertise on how to assess special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** staff involved in vulnerability assessments have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out the assessment with due regard for all the applicable rules and principles of their profession. The training courses provided include the relevant parts of the European Asylum Curriculum.

For this indicator, see also Sub-section [1.9.1 Training](#) under Staff.

Indicator 5. The assessment evaluates the following areas as a minimum: vulnerabilities, risks, harm factors as well as protective factors and coping mechanisms.





- **Additional remarks:** during the assessment, needs related to physical and mental health are assessed. This includes needs emerging from the applicant's family situation and cultural background. The assessment of special needs should not solely be aimed at identifying vulnerabilities and assessing needs. It should also concentrate on the applicant's resources, objectives and protective factors. These resources, objectives and protective factors should be taken into account and further strengthened during the response.

Indicator 6. The applicant receives written and oral information about the assessment.



- **Additional remarks:** information includes the purpose, scope and use of the information recorded during the assessment as well as rights and responsibilities. It is important for applicants to have written information on the assessment to be able to understand how data of the assessment can be used further. The applicant should have the possibility to opt out or request the postponement of the assessment.

For this indicator, see Section [5.1. Provision of information and counselling](#) and Section [6.5. Confidentiality](#).

Indicator 7. Applicants and staff have access to interpreters to support in the assessment of special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** the assessment is always conducted in a language that the applicant understands or is reasonably supposed to understand.

Indicator 8. The applicant is informed about and given the possibility to request a specific gender of the assessor and interpreter.



Indicator 9. The applicant is informed about and given the possibility to request to be accompanied by a support person and/or legal representative.



- **Additional remarks:** careful consideration is paid to the appropriateness of the accompanying support person when a risk of domestic violence or female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) has been identified.

Indicator 10. The assessment is conducted in a safe and confidential environment.



- **Additional remarks:** the assessment is conducted in a private space where confidentiality is assured. A private space can be a separate office or room where other people cannot listen in or see who is inside, or where special settings are in place. The applicant and the other participants, such as the interpreter and other support persons, are thoroughly informed about the principle of confidentiality.



Standard 141. The assessment is conducted in a timely manner and periodic follow-up of the case is established.

Indicator 1. Sufficient resources are allocated to monitor special needs.



Indicator 2. The assessment takes place as soon as vulnerabilities are identified and no later than 30 days from the making of the application.



- **Additional remarks:** *the first assessment report should be provided within a maximum of 30 days from the making of the application. If there are safety and severe health issues, the assessment and follow-up need to be carried out immediately*

Indicator 3. Follow-ups are regularly scheduled according to the needs of the applicant.



- **Additional remarks:** *a case manager ensures follow-up depending on the severity and urgency of the case and keeps the record of the action taken in the applicant's file.*

Standard 142. There is an effective system to record the assessment of the special needs of applicants in a vulnerable situation.

Indicator 1. The conclusions of the assessment are recorded in the applicant's file.



- **Additional remarks:** *recording the information in the applicant's file ensures the follow-up of the case and monitoring of the evolving needs. It includes observations regarding the situation of the applicant and their special needs as well as the measures that have been identified to respond to them and the authorities responsible for such a response. The applicant can request access to the file and therefore it needs to be formulated in a clear and appropriate manner.*

Indicator 2. The document where this information is recorded is available to the applicant.



Indicator 3. Where national law allows, information on the assessment of the needs of applicants in a vulnerable situation is gathered and analysed.



- **Additional remarks:** *this information does not include any personal data. It can include information about the support needed, the urgency of the referral, the type of special reception conditions and procedural safeguards implemented, etc. This indicator covers the collection and analysis of data for statistical purposes to improve the allocation of resources and response.*

6.4. Response

To ensure adequate response and follow-up to the needs of an applicant in a vulnerable situation, a referral to other authorities, organisations or support professionals must be activated where such needs are identified. This is done after the applicant is informed and has given their consent or, in the case of children, taking into account the principle of the best interests of the child.

Referral to adequate support and/or further assessment can imply the need to involve other actors and services beyond the scope of the asylum and reception authorities, for example medical support, psychological support and other legal pathways.

Coordination is essential to ensure that applicants receive the assistance that they need. Therefore, mechanisms should be set up together with standard procedures to address the needs of applicants and to ensure follow-up. Specific mechanisms can be developed to support the needs of different groups who might find themselves in vulnerable situations (e.g. victims of THB, GBV).

For an effective implementation of the referral and coordination mechanisms, clear lines of communication between the different stakeholders involved in the case management of vulnerable cases should be drafted and communicated to all staff. It is important that staff is aware of all the people involved in the management of vulnerable cases to proceed with the provision of adequate support in an efficient manner.

In this section, the standards and indicators provide guide on an efficient set up of referral procedures to adequately support for applicants in a vulnerable situation.



Articles [2\(13\)](#), [24](#), [25](#), [26](#), [27](#), [28](#) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 143. Applicants in a vulnerable situation and with special needs are referred for further assessment and/or adequate support.

Indicator 1. If necessary and with the consent of the applicant, the applicant is referred to the relevant authorities and/or available assistance.



- **Additional remarks:** *if information about the applicant is communicated to relevant actors to ensure adequate support for the applicant, the shared information is limited in scope.*

The scope is limited to the information necessary for these parties to carry out their functions related to the special needs of the applicant. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis and with the consent of the applicant, following confidentiality rules. There are cases where sharing information might not be relevant for the purpose of providing support but it is required by law.

Indicator 2. If necessary and with the consent of the applicant in accordance with national law, the applicant is referred to the appropriate medical practitioner or psychologist for further assessment of their psychological and physical state.



Indicator 3. If applicable, the applicant is referred to the national referral mechanisms and procedure according to their needs.



- **Additional remarks:** for example in cases of potential victims of THB, the applicant is referred to the national referral mechanism for victims of THB by strictly observing the national guidelines.

Indicator 4. A workflow is in place that guarantees the appointment of a representative for applicants without legal capacity in a timely manner when national law requires it.



- **Additional remarks:** indications regarding the applicant's capability to act and their ability to hold and exercise their rights, which lead to serious doubts concerning the legal capacity, require immediate clarification as to whether the process to assess their legal capacity has been initiated or whether it should be initiated through a referral to the relevant authorities. This should be done according to the national procedure. This can arise, for example, in the case of intellectual disabilities or other health-related conditions, such as serious mental illness. Measures should be taken as soon as possible to ensure that a representative is appointed by a competent body.

The appointment of a representative to assist and represent an unaccompanied child should happen as soon as possible but no later than 15 working days after the application for international protection was made. The representative ensures the best interests of the child and exercises legal capacity for the child, when necessary.

Indicator 5. Immediate follow-up and special attention are provided to urgent cases.



- **Additional remarks:** for example, in cases of immediate safety concerns, including for victims of THB and GBV, acute medical needs and acute child protection needs.

Indicator 6. Logistical support is provided to the applicant in a vulnerable situation to facilitate the immediate next steps of the procedure.



- **Additional remarks:** this includes arranging a secure space for them to wait for the relevant authorities to arrive, a private space to receive urgent medical support, transportation as well as support with administrative procedures.

Indicator 7. Up-to-date information on the authorities or available services to which an applicant can be referred for further assessment and/or adequate support is available and staff are informed.



- **Additional remarks:** the awareness of the availability of services in the territory depends on the competence of the authority. This is also relevant to effectively set up coordination mechanisms and communication channels with authorities and



service providers. Therefore, referral pathways should also be available and staff are informed.

For this indicator, see Section [5.1. Provision of information and counselling](#) and Section [1.8. Sharing of information among authorities](#).

Good practice

Reporting documents are available in both the determining authority and the reception centres. These documents can be filled in and shared on a need-to-know basis and with the consent of the applicant when vulnerabilities are detected so as to inform the other authority/entity.

For potential victims of THB, the reception officer contacts a specialised counselling centre following the identification of indicators and/or the vulnerability assessment, with the applicant's consent. These specialised counselling centres provide psychological care and support for victims of THB and can arrange placement in a safe shelter, if necessary.

Standard 144. A mechanism defines how to exchange information on individual cases between the responsible authorities or entities involved in the asylum procedure and in reception.

Indicator 1. There are guidelines on how information is exchanged between the different authorities and other entities involved in the asylum procedure and in reception



- **Additional remarks:** the guidelines include how information is shared and how to identify the appropriate legal basis for the processing of the personal data.

Good practice

The drafting of a document by an inter-ministerial working group including several actors, such as Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Health, European agencies, international organisations and CSOs. The document aims to provide standardised guidelines for each actor involved in the asylum system at national level, tackling how to identify, refer and respond to specific needs. The document, which aims to strengthen the governance system, provides stakeholders with guide on uniform procedures to be adopted at all stages of reception and operational instructions to facilitate communication among the actors involved.

Standard 145. A mechanism defines coordination and cooperation between authorities and service providers.

Indicator 1. There are guidelines on how information on individual cases is exchanged between the different authorities and service providers.



Additional remarks: information is shared on a need-to-know basis and with the consent of the applicant. Service providers include those tasked to provide adequate support to the applicant in order to address their needs.



Indicator 2. Collaboration agreements are established between the competent authority and the service providers to allow referral to specialised support if needed.



- **Additional remarks:** *in line with the national system, Member States can either appoint their own staff to provide specialised support or establish collaboration agreements with external organisations to allow referrals, or both. The agreements can be bilateral or multi-lateral and they can coexist, depending on the need to address. Service providers can include CSOs and international organisations.*

Indicator 3. Multidisciplinary meetings are organised on a regular basis with relevant service providers to keep up to date on needs.



Standard 146. An effective mechanism to respond to special needs in a timely manner is in place.

Indicator 1. Written guidelines on how to respond to the most common special needs are provided to all staff and regularly updated.



- **Additional remarks:** *guidelines include, at a minimum, the responsibilities of staff to take adequate and prompt action; the timeline to respond to special needs after the assessment, in accordance with the urgency of the needs; and the list of available service providers (e.g. for GBV and THB cases).*

Indicator 2. A system estimates and anticipates the resources needed to respond to special needs.



- **Additional remarks:** *in line with the national system, Member States designate specific budget and funding to respond to special needs. Monitoring of budgetary expenses ensures reliable future estimations.*

For this indicator, see Sub-section [1.9.2 Capacity](#), under Staff.

Indicator 3. The mechanism to respond to special needs is regularly evaluated and updated accordingly.



- **Additional remarks:** *an overview of the responses to persons with special needs (such as the number of transfers or referrals to expert organisations) is available.*

The evaluation can be done regarding the collaboration with specific service providers. The evaluation could be done by rolling out a survey with applicants or holding meetings with all service providers involved in the response.

The evaluation can be done internally through an internal audit.

Good practice

A vulnerability plan that provides a comprehensive overview of the general approach to respond to special needs is developed, including budgetary estimations and financial commitments.

Standard 147. Special reception needs are responded to in a holistic manner.

Indicator 1. A case manager is appointed to ensure follow-up and that a consistent approach is used in the response.



- **Additional remarks:** *the number of cases allocated to each case manager needs to take into account the complexity of the cases as well as the circumstances of the applicant, including age.*

Indicator 2. Staff members with specialised expertise are available for consultation by the case manager when needed to ensure that the response covers all the relevant areas.



- **Additional remarks:** *relevant areas can include housing, health, education, security, medical, legal and social. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis and with the consent of the applicant who should be aware with whom the information is shared and why.*

When needed, the experts should meet regularly to ensure follow-up of specific cases. Where relevant, specialised actors are invited to join multidisciplinary meetings and are involved in the management of special needs.

For this indicator, see also Section [6.5. Confidentiality](#).

Indicator 3. A document covering all the relevant areas of response is produced.



- **Additional remarks:** *the document could be an individual file, a personal care plan, etc. An updated document covering all response areas ensures monitoring and follow-up of the applicant's situation.*

Good practice

Multidisciplinary meetings on individual cases are held at least every month.

6.5. Confidentiality

The principle of confidentiality underlies the whole asylum procedure. Information provided by the applicant is not disclosed to any party beyond the competent authorities without the permission of the applicant ⁽⁷⁷⁾. In practice it means that data provided by the applicant is not shared with anyone who does not have the right to access it, that the case management system is ruled by appropriate data protection rules and that the facilities where the applicant is heard ensure adequate privacy.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ Article 7 APR and Articles 20(8), 26(6), 27(10) and 28(2) RCD (2024).



It is important to clarify that confidentiality can be limited when security issues are identified and there is a need to contact other service providers for assistance (e.g. healthcare workers) or due to a legal requirement to report crimes.

The processing of the applicant's data must be lawful. This requires that every processing operation involving personal data has a legal basis. There are six legal grounds listed in Article 6(1) GDPR for making the processing of personal data lawful. These grounds include the consent of the data subject to the processing for one or more specific purposes as well as processing that is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of public authority, or when it protects the vital interests of the data subject ⁽⁷⁸⁾.

For consent to be valid it must be freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous (Article 4(11) GDPR). In the context of processing of personal data concerning health, an additional requirement is to have explicit consent (Article 9(2), point (a) GDPR)).

In this section, the standards and indicators provide guidance on the essential aspects related to meeting the confidentiality and data protection requirements when handling information related to applicants in a vulnerable situation and in need of special procedural guarantees and reception conditions. They are applicable to identification, assessment and response mechanisms.



Chapter II – Principles GDPR

Article 20(8) RCD (2024)

Standards and indicators

Standard 148. Confidentiality and data protection requirements of all recorded, processed, stored and communicated data related to the applicant are respected.

Indicator 1. Information regarding applicant's special needs is recorded, processed, stored and communicated with the consent of the applicant, unless national law provides for cases in which reporting is compulsory.



Indicator 2. The applicant receives written and oral information on:

- the objective of recording, processing, storing and communicating personal data and data concerning health;
- potential recipients of personal data and data concerning health;
- how long the data will be kept;
- how to access data and rectify it;
- how to delete data;
- how to withdraw consent at any time.



Indicator 3. Appropriate safeguards are put in place and applied regarding the confidential handling of information about special needs.



⁽⁷⁸⁾ In the context of the present guidance, the term 'data subject' is meant to be understood as referring to an applicant.





Annex 1. EUAA resources

Resource	Description	Standards
Site Assessment Tool (SAT)	<p>The tool aims to support national reception authorities, relevant stakeholders and technical practitioners (e.g. engineers, architects, reception experts, etc.) in assessing whether identified empty sites or existing buildings are suitable to be used as (or transformed into) accommodation centres to host applicants for international protection, based on predefined criteria.</p> <p>Developed by the EUAA in close collaboration with experts from national reception authorities of EU+ countries, the tool has several functionalities: it can generate an assessment report as well as statistics and graphs related to areas that have been assessed.</p>	<p>1.6. Preparation and planning for the establishment of a new accommodation centre</p>
Modular Approach to Reception: Container site designs	<p>The guide intends to primarily support reception authorities by offering operational and practical solutions for the design and management of modular accommodation centres, in accordance with the EUAA standards and principles.</p> <p>The guide promotes a model to design accommodation centres built from containers based on nine key principles (organic design, functions and locations of services, target groups, uniform layout, community-centre approach, modular units based on EUAA standards, safety and security, perspective of the resident, internal and external communication and coordination).</p>	<p>1.6. Preparation and planning for the establishment of a new accommodation centre</p> <p>3.1. Security and safety</p> <p>4.1. Housing</p>





Resource	Description	Standards
Practical Guide on the Management of a Reception Centre	<p>The guide addresses national and local authorities as well as civil society organisations involved in the set-up and management of arrival centres and accommodation centres. It defines necessary processes and workflows in the main areas of the reception pathway: first entry, registration, medical screening, reception process and organisation of services, accommodation, and ongoing healthcare.</p>	<p>1.9. Staff</p> <p>3. Facility administration</p> <p>5. Non-material reception conditions</p> <p>6. Identification, assessment and response to special needs</p>
Guidance on Contingency Planning in the Context of Reception	<p>Published in 2018 with an update planned for 2027, the guidance is addressed to reception officers, policy makers and managers of national reception authorities. It aims to assist reception authorities in their preparedness and ability to cope with situations of mass influx or unexpected events, by providing detailed guidance on contingency planning on reception to facilitate early action, manage future uncertainty and help anticipate and solve problems related to potential high-influx situations.</p>	<p>1.10. Contingency planning and preparedness</p>
Assessment of Reception Conditions (ARC) Tool	<p>The Assessment of Reception Conditions tool aims to support national authorities and operators working within reception facilities to assess that reception conditions are in line with the standards and indicators elaborated by EUAA.</p> <p>It is an offline tool that does not require an internet connection once loaded, available on mobile and in a desktop version. The tool has several functionalities: it can generate a report as well as statistics and graphs of all the sections that have been assessed, summarising how the centre performs against the standards.</p>	<p>2.4. Assessment of reception conditions</p>





Resource	Description	Standards
Practical Guide on the Welfare of Asylum and Reception Staff	<p>The guide addresses managers, team leaders and coordinators as well as first-line staff working in asylum and reception. It provides methods, tools and a roadmap to support staff well-being and ensure a safe and healthy working environment for asylum and reception professionals working with applicants of international protection. The guide comprises three stand-alone parts:</p> <p>Part I: ‘Standards and policy’ focuses on how authorities could develop a staff welfare strategy, based on suggested standards and indicators.</p> <p>Part II: ‘Staff welfare toolbox’ details all the practical tools identified as good practices implemented in some EU+ countries.</p> <p>Part III: ‘Monitoring and evaluation’ supports authorities with designing mechanisms and tools to assess progress made.</p>	1.9.3. Staff well-being
Critical Incident Management in the field of Asylum and Reception	<p>This report presents the results of a survey on the topic of incident management conducted in 2021 across EU+ countries. The survey was designed for first-line officers working in reception facilities and those conducting personal interviews. It focuses on the types of critical incidents observed in reception and the personal interview situation; understanding how incidents are currently documented, reported and responded to; and where and what the main gaps are. The findings will facilitate the design of tailored EUAA support to Member States.</p>	1.9.3. Staff well-being 3.1. Security and safety
Video Animation: Early identification of signs of stress	<p>This animation highlights the importance of integrating staff welfare measures within asylum and reception authorities. The animation aims at addressing stress in first-line officers as soon as possible by encouraging staff to actively participate in services offered by their employer.</p>	1.9.3. Staff well-being





Resource	Description	Standards
Let's Speak Asylum (LSA)	<p>The LSA platform is the portal of reference for information providers and professionals designing communication and information provision activities in the field of asylum and reception. It aims to support the harmonised implementation of the CEAS in EU+ countries.</p> <p>The section on reception includes a set of materials, in multiple languages, to provide information to applicants in all the phases of the reception process, and it also provides a set of relevant icons and illustrations.</p>	5.1. Provision of information and counselling
Practical Guide on the Best Interests of the Child in the Framework of International Protection	<p>This practical guide provides step-by-step guidance on integrating the best interests of the child into decision-making across asylum and reception pathways, by outlining the applicable legal framework, procedural safeguards, and operational considerations. The guide should be used alongside the Best Interests Assessment Form.</p>	5.5. The best interests assessment in reception 5.7. Additional safeguards for unaccompanied children
Practical guide on family tracing and templates	<p>The Practical Guide of Family tracing consists of two parts:</p> <p>Part I – Principles and practices across the EU+ and third countries – This guide supports EU+ countries in fulfilling their obligations to trace family members of unaccompanied children, in line with their best interests. This part provides comprehensive guidance on tracing family members — both within the EU+ and in third countries — for adult and child asylum seekers, without covering the decision-making process itself.</p> <p>Part II – Tracing and identifying family members under the Asylum and Migration management regulation – This part includes the family tracing template. A specific template is available for unaccompanied children to be filled in by the representative of the child.</p>	5.7.1. Family tracing





Resource	Description	Standards
Tool4Guardians	<p>EUAA, in cooperation with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), published a series of Practical Tools for Guardians of Unaccompanied Children with International Protection Needs, designed to support guardians in their daily tasks throughout protection procedures. The series currently comprises four complementary booklets:</p> <p>Introduction to International Protection: Practical Tool for Guardians, which presents international protection concepts, forms of protection and children’s rights in the context of asylum procedures.</p> <p>The Asylum Procedure: Practical Tool for Guardians, covering the regular asylum procedure, procedural phases, guardian roles, guarantees for children and related scenarios (such as age disputes).</p> <p>Transnational Procedures in the Framework of International Protection: Practical Tool for Guardians, addressing cross-border aspects, including Dublin mechanisms and other transnational aspects of international protection.</p> <p>Practical Tool for Guardians of Unaccompanied Children Fleeing Ukraine under Temporary Protection, published separately, which supports guardians under the Temporary Protection regime</p>	<p>5.7.2. Representation</p>
Applicants with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics - Reception	<p>The guide provides guidance and practical recommendations on the design and management of reception systems and the provision of reception conditions taking into account the specific needs of LGBTIQ applicants.</p> <p>It is part of the Practical Guide on applicants with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics, which consists of three standalone but complementary and interlinked Parts.</p>	<p>1.2. (Re)allocation mechanism to a suitable accommodation facility</p> <p>6. Identification, assessment and response to special needs</p>





Resource	Description	Standards
<p>Guidance on Mental Health and Well-being of Applicants for International Protection</p>	<p>This publication is a three-fold guidance to support senior management and those working in the first line to integrate considerations linked to mental health and psychosocial support into shaping a mental health informed asylum system and to ensure maintaining of mental health and well-being and the relevant managing of conditions once they emerge.</p> <p>Part I – for senior management sets the framework on how to shape a MHW informed asylum system.</p> <p>Part II – for those working in the first line and provides a compilation of promising practices from EU+ countries with a specific focus on: Psychological first Aid, Identification, Care and Case Management, Psychoeducation, Community engagement.</p> <p>Part III – toolbox for use in conjunction with parts I and II targets those working in the first line and team leaders and providers practical tools such as checklists, questionnaires and additional information to support the work of officers working in the first line.</p>	<p>6. Identification, assessment and response to special needs</p>
<p>A set of self-help tools for parents, children and peer support</p>	<p>This set of tools is composed of three pocketbooks and is complemented by instructions to be used by first-line officers directly when working with applicants. The instructions support first line officers in rolling out the psychoeducational material created with a focus on how to manage psychological distress with applicants who might be illiterate or otherwise benefit from a guided discussion, such as with youth and children.</p>	<p>6.1. Prevention</p>





Resource	Description	Standards
Psychological First Aid: A brief guide for those working in the first line	This animation explains the concept of Psychological First Aid (PFA) to first line officers by emphasising 5 basic principles: promoting safety, calm, self- and collected efficacy, connectedness and hope. Observing these principles, applicants can be helped to re-establish a sense of safety and calm and to stabilise. Approaching applicants with empathy is crucial for their wellbeing. The animation is complemented by instructions on how to use the animation to create awareness on PFA in first line officers interested in the topic, new recruits and volunteers.	6.1. Prevention
Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN)	The IPSN is an interactive online tool developed to support personnel working directly with applicants for international protection (including non-specialised personnel) to timely identify persons with potential special procedural and/or reception needs. It may be used at any stage of the asylum and reception procedure.	6.2. Identification
Special Needs and Vulnerability Assessment (SNVA)	The SNVA is an offline application, designed to support Member States authorities in assessing the needs of persons in a vulnerable situation and facilitating the access to adequate support in view of the particular circumstances of each case.	6.3. Assessment
Referral Tool	<p>The toolkit addresses authorities and personnel working directly with applicants for international protection to facilitate the referral of applicants with special needs to adequate support.</p> <p>The tool is composed of three main parts: a) a standardised referral form aimed at facilitating the communication between actors involved in the referral of the applicant, b) a searching tool helping users in finding the services providing the needed support, c) a guidance to orientate users on how to adequately conduct a referral.</p>	6.4. Response





Resource	Description	Standards
Case Law Database	The EUAA Case Law Database is an online public platform developed to manage, store and share case-law concerning the implementation of the CEAS at national and European level, as well as information on new asylum jurisprudence issued by national and international courts (covering both the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights).	
EUAA training modules	The EUAA provides a wide range of training modules for the asylum and reception context. The European Asylum Curriculum Training Catalogue offers a detailed description of all available training modules.	





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