



EASO

Guidance on reception conditions for unaccompanied children: operational standards and indicators

EASO Practical Guides Series

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List of abbreviations

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| CEAS | Common European Asylum System |
| COM | European Commission |
| CRC | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) |
| EASO | European Asylum Support Office |
| EU | European Union |
| EU+ States | European Union Member States plus Norway and Switzerland |
| EU Charter | Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union |
| FRA | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights |
| GBV | Gender-based violence |
| MS | Member State(s) of the European Union |
| NGO | Non-governmental organisation |
| RCD | Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast) |
| SOP | Standard Operating Procedure |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |

Introduction

Opening remarks

The recast **Reception Conditions Directive** (Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013, hereafter the RCD) lays down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection. It aims at ensuring a dignified standard of living and comparable living conditions in all Member States of the European Union (MS).

At the same time, the RCD leaves a considerable degree of discretion to define what constitutes a dignified standard of living and how it should be achieved. At the same time, national reception systems differ greatly in setup and modalities for the provision of reception conditions, and, consequently, standards for reception conditions continue to vary across MS plus Norway and Switzerland (EU+ States) ⁽¹⁾.

The European Agenda on Migration ⁽²⁾ has underlined the importance of a clear system for the reception of applicants for international protection as part of a strong common European asylum policy. Specifically, it refers to the need for further guidance to improve the standards on reception conditions across MS.

The arrival of vulnerable migrants to the EU, and in particular of children, including unaccompanied children, significantly challenges national systems and administrations, including child protection systems. These systems have increasingly found themselves under pressure when confronted with the need to provide, inter alia, qualified staff to address and provide for special needs, and adequate housing as well as additional resources for education and to prevent children from disappearing.

While the *EASO Guidance on reception conditions: operational standards and indicators* (2016) applies to all applicants for international protection, this guidance focuses on aspects regarding the specific reception conditions for unaccompanied children ⁽³⁾ as well as their special needs. Due to their **vulnerability**, children in migration, and especially unaccompanied children, require specific and appropriate protection. Therefore, the standards and indicators laid down in this guidance address the specific needs of unaccompanied children ⁽⁴⁾. Nonetheless, the standards and indicators spelled out in this guidance may also be applicable for accompanied children e.g. on the identification of special reception needs of children, on healthcare, on education as well as on leisure and group activities. To some extent, reception needs of accompanied children are also addressed by the aforementioned *EASO Guidance on reception conditions* (2016).

The **overall objective** of this guidance is to support EU+ States in the implementation of key provisions of the RCD while ensuring an adequate standard of living for unaccompanied children that takes into account their special reception needs.

This guidance has been designed to serve **multiple purposes**:

- *at policy level*, it serves as a tool to support reform or development and as a framework for setting/further development of reception standards;
- *at operational level*, it can be used by reception authorities/operators and specifically by those working with unaccompanied children to support the planning/running of reception facilities, to provide for adequate care according to specific needs and/or to support staff and their training.

Therefore, the target group for this guidance on reception conditions for unaccompanied children are those working with unaccompanied children as well as policy-makers. The guidance focuses on reception authorities and is written with reception staff in mind. However, there are elements that are applicable to a wide range of staff regardless of their position and profession. Therefore, **those working with unaccompanied children** include all persons who are in direct contact with unaccompanied children in a reception context, irrespective of their employer (the state or

⁽¹⁾ EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Current migration situation in the EU: Oversight of reception facilities with reference to oversight of reception facilities for children*, p. 4, available at http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2017-september-monthly-migration-report-focus-oversight_en.pdf.

⁽²⁾ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A European Agenda On Migration*, 13 May 2015, COM(2015) 240; for the protection of children in migration see European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament: The protection of children in migration*, 12 April 2017, COM(2017) 211final, Section 4, p. 8ff.

⁽³⁾ For a definition of 'unaccompanied children' see p. 10.

⁽⁴⁾ Based on discussions within the EASO Network of Reception Authorities and in line with the European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament: The protection of children in migration*, 12 April 2017, COM(2017) 211 final, the development of guidance on operational standards and indicators for the reception of unaccompanied children has been identified as a priority development in the framework of the Network in 2017.

municipalities, intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs, private contractors, etc.). These especially include social workers, education and healthcare staff, registration officers, interpreters, facility managers, administration/coordination staff, as well as representatives.

In addition, this guidance could serve as a **basis for the development of monitoring frameworks** to assess the quality of national reception systems.

The development process of this document follows the established Quality Matrix methodology set out by EASO. The document has been drafted by a working group composed of MS experts, taking into account the preliminary input and consultation of a reference group in the field of reception and fundamental rights, including the European Commission, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Before the final adoption of the guidance, the EASO Network of Reception Authorities composed by EU+ States has been consulted and it has been formally adopted by the EASO Management Board.

Vulnerability of unaccompanied children

Unaccompanied children in migration require specific and appropriate protection ⁽⁵⁾. They are in a state of particular vulnerability due to their age, distance from home, and separation from parents or carers. They are exposed to risks and have possibly witnessed extreme forms of violence, exploitation, trafficking in human beings, physical, psychological and sexual abuse before and/or after their arrival on EU territory. They may risk being marginalised and drawn into criminal activity or radicalisation. Unaccompanied children as a particularly vulnerable group are more easily influenced by their environment. Unaccompanied girls especially are at risk of forced and early marriages as families struggle in straitened circumstances or if their families wish to see their daughters married in order to protect them from further sexual violence. Unaccompanied girls could furthermore already have the responsibility of caring for children of their own. In addition, unaccompanied children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable; they are at a high risk of being victims of violence. Unaccompanied children may also be particularly vulnerable due to their sexual identity, sexual orientation or gender expression. Therefore, protecting children in migration, and especially unaccompanied children, and ensuring that their best interests are respected, regardless of status and at all stages of migration, is a priority for the EU ⁽⁶⁾.

Assessing vulnerabilities and addressing the needs of unaccompanied children respectively, does not mean that their strengths should not be taken into account. A necessary focus on vulnerability should not limit the development of appropriate policies, support and care practices adjusted to the needs and capacities of the unaccompanied children, all the while recognising their resilience ⁽⁷⁾.

The principle of the best interests of the child

Irrespective of their migration or refugee status, unaccompanied children are first and foremost entitled to all the rights enshrined in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Article 3 CRC states: ‘In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.’ The Committee on the Rights of the Child has issued General Comments in order to provide authoritative guidance to States regarding the interpretation and implementation of the CRC. Relevant General Comments of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in relation to unaccompanied children with regard to the principle of the best interests of the child are, inter alia:

- General Comment No. 12 (2009) on the Child’s Right to be Heard;
- General Comment No. 14 (2013) on the Best Interests of the Child;

⁽⁵⁾ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The protection of children in migration*, 12 April 2017, COM(2017) 211final.

⁽⁶⁾ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The protection of children in migration*, 12 April 2017, COM(2017) 211final.

⁽⁷⁾ Björklund, *Unaccompanied refugee minors in Finland – Challenges and good practices in a Nordic context*, 2015, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5a1293a24.html> (accessed 24 July 2018); Vervliet, *The trajectories of unaccompanied refugee minors: Aspirations, agency and psychosocial well-being*, 2013, available at <https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/4337248>.

- General Comment No. 22 (2017) on the general principles regarding the human rights of children in the context of international migration ⁽⁸⁾.

The principle of the best interests of the child also cuts across all legal instruments of the Common European Asylum System. According to Article 23 RCD, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration for MS when implementing those provisions of the RCD that involve children. Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (EU Charter) states that in ‘all actions relating to children, whether taken by public authorities or private institutions, the child’s best interests must be a primary consideration’. Therefore, in applying the RCD, MS should seek to ensure full compliance with the principle of the best interests of the child, in accordance with the CRC and the EU Charter respectively ⁽⁹⁾.

In assessing the best interests of the child, EU+ States shall in particular take due account of the following factors:

- family reunification possibilities;
- the child’s well-being and social development, taking into particular consideration the child’s background;
- safety and security considerations, in particular where there is a risk of the child becoming a victim of human trafficking;
- the views of the child in accordance with his/her age and maturity ⁽¹⁰⁾.

For further guidance, the EASO, *Practical guide on the best interests of the child in asylum procedures* (forthcoming) provides an overview of the best interests’ principle with the relevant terminology, preconditions and safeguards, vulnerability and risk indicators, and guidance on how to assess the best interests of the child ⁽¹¹⁾.

Applying the best interests principle is integral to the standards and indicators included in this guidance and should be observed in the provision of reception conditions in national systems. Putting the principle of the best interests of the child into practice requires a range of elements to be assessed, feeding into the overall process of conducting a **best interests assessment**. The chapters on participation, special needs and risks, as well as those on allocation, day-to-day care and healthcare elaborate in detail the range of necessary and suggested considerations that are part of the best interests assessment.

The assessments are carried out by those who are in direct contact with unaccompanied children in the reception context, while the multidisciplinary nature of best interests assessment has to be taken into account. The multidisciplinary nature of the best interests assessment means that the perspectives and opinions of different types of professionals whose opinions are relevant for the decision-making on a specific point are taken into consideration (e.g. representatives, caretakers, social assistants, psychologists, medical doctors, educators).

Assessments are carried out at different phases after arrival. According to Article 22 RCD, the assessment of special reception needs shall be initiated within a reasonable period of time after an application for international protection is made. In addition, MS shall ensure that those special reception needs are also addressed, in accordance with the provisions of the RCD, if they become apparent at a later stage in the asylum procedure. MS shall ensure that the support provided to those applicants for international protection with special reception needs in accordance with the RCD takes into account their special reception needs throughout the duration of the asylum procedure.

Therefore, an immediate preliminary assessment covering vulnerability, special needs and risks (cf. Chapter 2, Special needs and safety risks) has to be carried out in any case, and a best interests assessment is to be initiated at this stage. The above-mentioned assessments have to be carried out in a comprehensive and regular manner linked to a continuous best interests assessments for all actions and decisions where children are concerned.

⁽⁸⁾ UN Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW), Joint General Comment No. 3 (2017) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; General Comment No. 22 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the general principles regarding the human rights of children in the context of international migration, 16 November 2017, CMW/C/GC/3-CRC/C/GC/22, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5a1293a24.html>.

⁽⁹⁾ Recital 9 RCD.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Article 23 RCD.

⁽¹¹⁾ For further guidance on the principle of the best interests of the child see: UNHCR, *Safe and Sound*, 2014, available at <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5423da264.html> (accessed 25 April 2018); UNHCR/International Rescue Committee, *Field Handbook for the Implementation of UNHCR BID Guidelines*, 2011, available at <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4e4a57d02.pdf>; UNHCR, *Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child*, 2008, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/4566b16b2.pdf>.

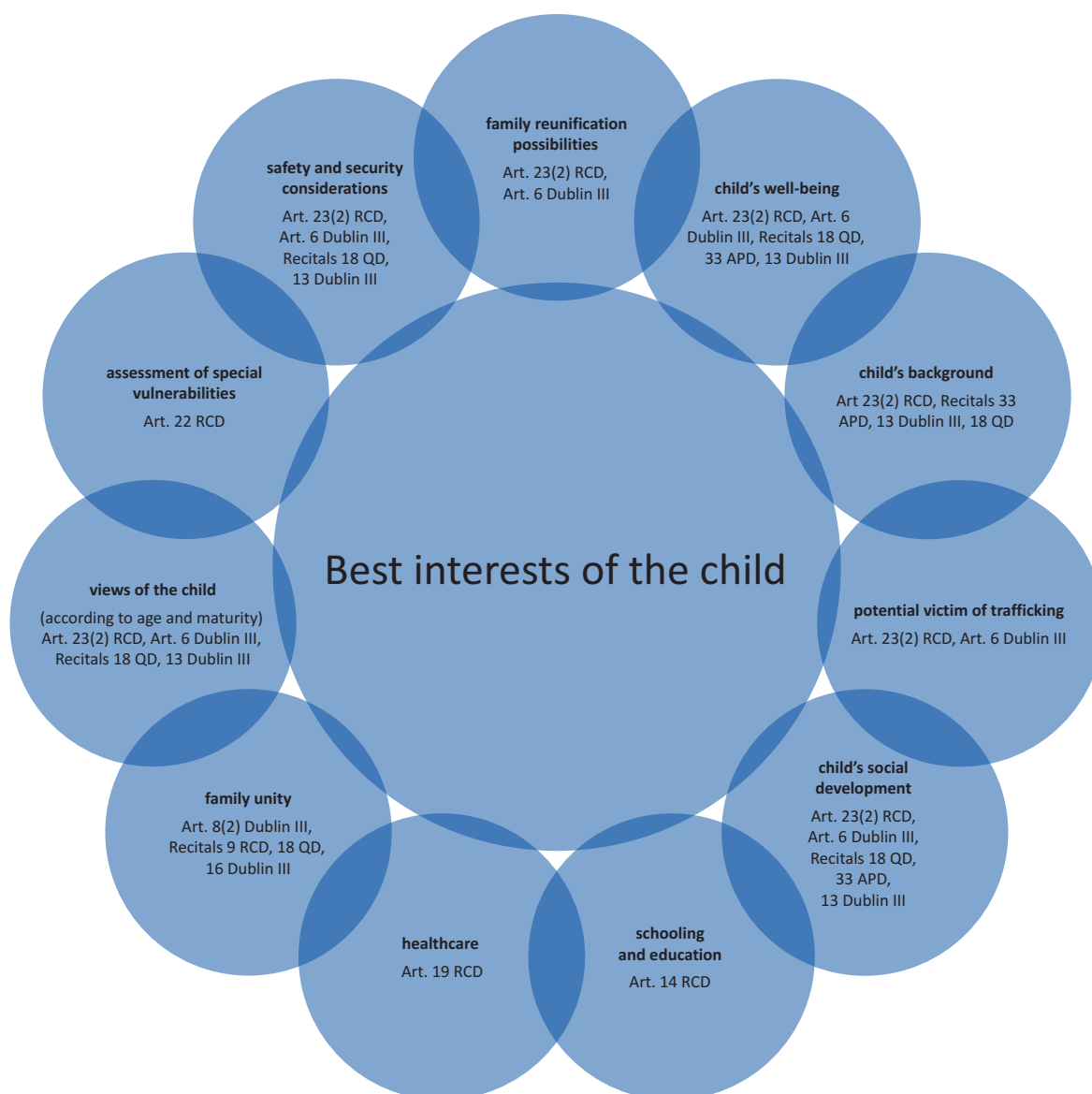


Figure 1. Best interests of the child. Adapted from EASO, *Practical guide on the best interests of the child in asylum procedures* (forthcoming).

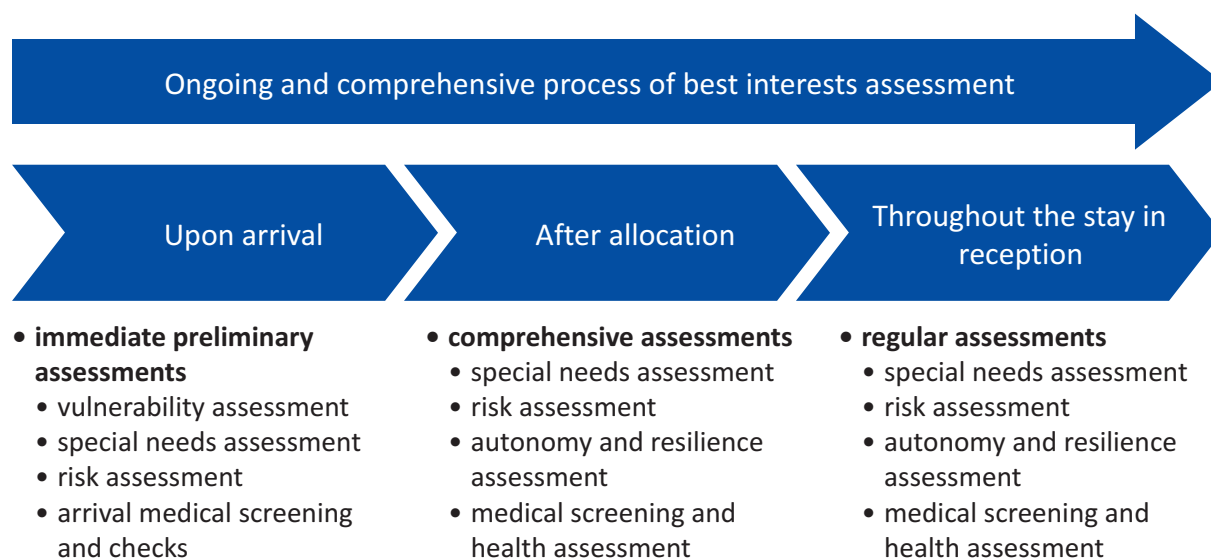


Figure 2. Stages of assessment.

Scope of the guidance

In line with the RCD, the scope of this document is to provide guidance for reception conditions for:

Unaccompanied children who are applying for international protection, and/or are staying in reception facilities.

Even though not covered by the RCD, this guidance should also be taken into account for the reception of unaccompanied children who are staying in reception but have not made an application for international protection, in order to give due consideration to the right to non-discrimination (Article 2 CRC).

The following sections focus on each of the three parts of the scope (i.e. unaccompanied children, application for international protection, location and facilities).

Unaccompanied children

For the purpose of this guidance and according to Article 2(e) RCD, an unaccompanied child is:

a minor who arrives on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him or her whether by law or by the practice of the Member State concerned, and for as long as he or she is not effectively taken into the care of such a person. It includes a minor who is left unaccompanied after he or she has entered the territory of the Member States ⁽¹²⁾.

For the purpose of this guidance the term 'separated children' falls under the definition of unaccompanied children ⁽¹³⁾.

The assumption of being an unaccompanied child according to the RCD does not change if children arrive on the territory of the MS together with:

- an underage or adult sibling;
- an underage or adult partner/spouse; and/or
- family members, relatives or unrelated adults who are not responsible for them whether by law or by the practice of the MS concerned.

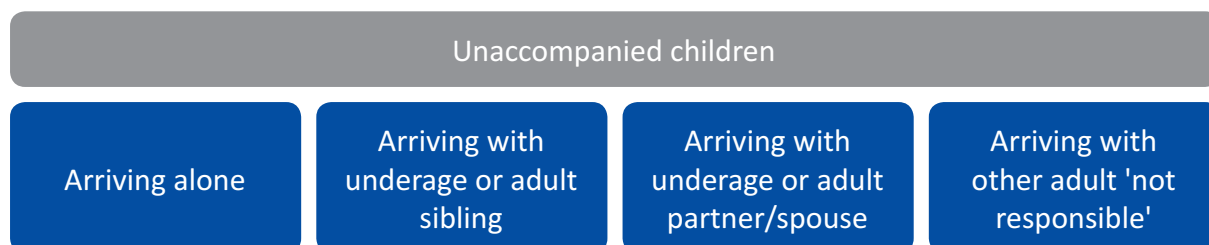


Figure 3. Unaccompanied children (scope).

Children arriving alone

Children arriving alone on the territory of the MS are unaccompanied by an adult responsible for them whether by law or by the practice of the MS concerned, and, therefore, fall under the scope of this guidance.

Children arriving with an underage or adult sibling

Two underage siblings are two related unaccompanied children. An adult sibling is not an adult responsible for another underage sibling. Children arriving with an adult sibling are, therefore, unaccompanied by an adult responsible for them whether by law or by the practice of the MS and fall under the scope of this guidance.

⁽¹²⁾ According to Article 2(d) of the original RCD a child means a third-country national or stateless person below the age of 18 years. The terms 'child' and 'minor' are considered as synonyms (covering any person below the age of 18 years) and both terms are used in this document. The preferred term, however, is 'child'. The term 'minor' is selected when it is explicitly used by a legal provision or specific article (for example the EU asylum *acquis* provisions).

⁽¹³⁾ The EU Asylum *acquis* does not provide for a definition for separated children. According to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment No. 6 (2005) on the Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children outside their Country of Origin*, para. 8, a separated child is a child who arrives on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him or her whether by law or by the practice of the Member State concerned (thus separated from an adult responsible), but who arrives not necessarily separated from other relatives.

Children arriving with an underage or adult partner/spouse

An adult partner/spouse of a child is not an adult responsible for the underage partner/spouse. Children arriving with an adult partner/spouse are, therefore, unaccompanied by an adult responsible for them whether by law or by the practice of the MS and fall under the scope of this guidance.

Children arriving with adults other than parents

Children arriving with adults other than their parents are, at the moment of arrival, unaccompanied by an adult responsible for them whether by law or by the practice of the MS and fall under the scope of this guidance.

Application for international protection

In line with the RCD, the guidance focuses on unaccompanied children during all stages and types of procedures concerning applications for international protection. This includes unaccompanied children as third-country nationals or stateless persons who have made an application for international protection in respect of which a final decision has not yet been taken. It also applies to those unaccompanied children whose application for international protection has received a negative decision as long as they are staying in reception.



Figure 4. Applicants of international protection (scope).

Non-applicants for international protection: as mentioned above, this guidance should also be taken into account for the reception of unaccompanied children who have not made an application for international protection, but who are staying in reception.

Reception facilities for unaccompanied children

To ensure equal treatment of applicants for international protection throughout the EU, the RCD should apply during all stages and types of procedures concerning applications for international protection, and should apply in all locations and facilities hosting applicants for international protection⁽¹⁴⁾. Therefore, the scope of the guidance includes all locations and facilities hosting unaccompanied children.

Foster care⁽¹⁵⁾ is an adequate and often preferable and cost-effective setting for accommodating unaccompanied children. It must be noted, however, that standards regarding the management of foster care are not within the scope of this guidance. This is due to the fact that the personal and structural setting of foster families differs from the aforementioned locations and facilities hosting unaccompanied children.

Most EU+ States accommodate unaccompanied children in separate reception facilities specifically for unaccompanied children, designated areas for unaccompanied children within mainstream reception facilities, mainstream care facilities or foster families. This guidance prescribes standards and indicators for unaccompanied children in reception and in care facilities including: accommodation centres, small-scale reception structures, mainstream childcare centres and (shared) individual housing. This guidance is applicable as long as reception according to the RCD is concerned.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Recital 8 RCD.

⁽¹⁵⁾ For reception and living in families see NIDOS, *Reception and Living in Families (RLF)*, Final report, 2015, available at <https://engi.eu/wp-content/plugins/download-attachments/includes/download.php?id=595>; for *Alternative Family Care (ALFACA)* projects and tools see European Network of Guardianship Institutions (ENGI), *Alternative Family Care (ALFACA)*, available at <https://engi.eu/projects/alfaca/>

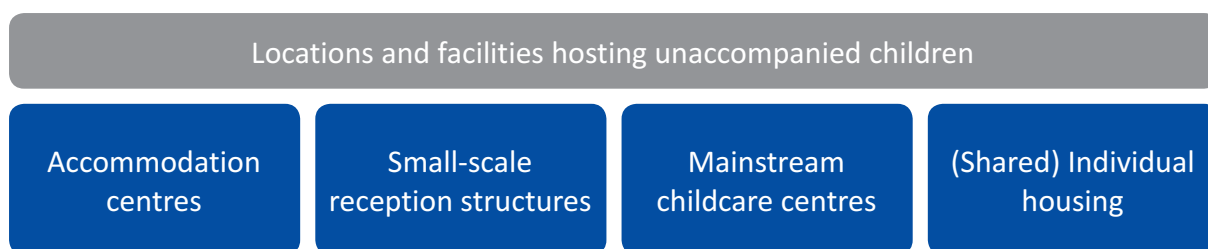


Figure 5. Locations and facilities (scope).

Without prejudice to the existence of national systems regulating the equal distribution of applicants for international protection across the territories of MS, questions on allocation should be read and implemented fully in line with the above-mentioned principle of the best interests of the child and the principle of family unity, as well as respect for the special reception needs unaccompanied children might have. When unaccompanied children are provided with accommodation in institutions, such facilities shall be adapted to the specific needs of the children, and be staffed with personnel qualified to take into account the needs of unaccompanied children. Detailed guidance on allocation is provided in Chapter VI.

As regards the provision of adequate reception conditions, the purpose of the guidance is not to prescribe a method for the provision of reception conditions. Unless stated otherwise, the standards and indicators in this document are applicable to the provision of reception conditions irrespective of whether these are provided in kind, as a financial allowance or in the form of vouchers. This approach follows Article 2(g) RCD, which lists different modalities for the provision of reception conditions.

Legal framework and general principles

The protection of unaccompanied children is covered by a range of rights at the international, regional and national level.

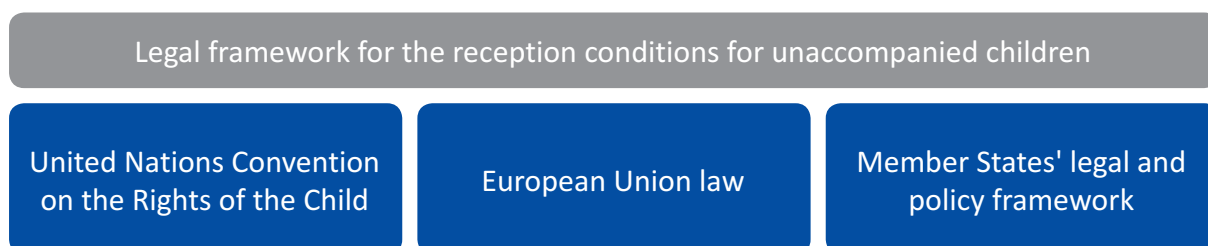


Figure 6. Legal framework.

Under international law, the main legal instrument on the protection of children is the CRC. Relevant General Comments of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in relation to unaccompanied children are, inter alia and beyond, those mentioned above with regard to the principle of the best interests of the child:

- General Comment No. 6 (2005) on the Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children outside their Country of Origin;
- General Comment No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence.

The Council of the European Union and the representatives of the governments of the MS adopted the Conclusions on the protection of children in migration ⁽¹⁶⁾ to reaffirm that children in migration have the right to be protected, in line with relevant provisions of EU law, including the EU Charter, and with international law on the rights of the child.

The Communication on the Protection of Children in Migration sets out a range of actions to be taken into account or better implemented by the EU and its MS in order to ensure effective protection of all migrant children and calls for the need to step up actions cutting across all stages of migration ⁽¹⁷⁾. MS are encouraged to, inter alia:

- ensure that individual gender- and age-sensitive vulnerability and needs assessments of children are carried out upon arrival and taken into account in all subsequent procedures;

⁽¹⁶⁾ Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child*, 3 April 2017, Doc. 7775/17; Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions of the European Union and the representatives of the governments of the Member States on the protection of children in migration*, 8 June 2017, Doc. 10085/17.

⁽¹⁷⁾ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The protection of children in migration*, 12 April 2017, COM(2017) 211final, Section 4, p. 8ff.

- ensure that all children have timely access to healthcare (including preventive care) and psychosocial support, as well as to inclusive formal education, regardless of status;
- ensure that a range of alternative care options for unaccompanied children, including foster/family-based care, are provided;
- integrate child protection policies in all reception facilities hosting children, including by appointing a person responsible for child protection;
- ensure that an appropriate and effective monitoring system is in place with regard to reception of children in migration.

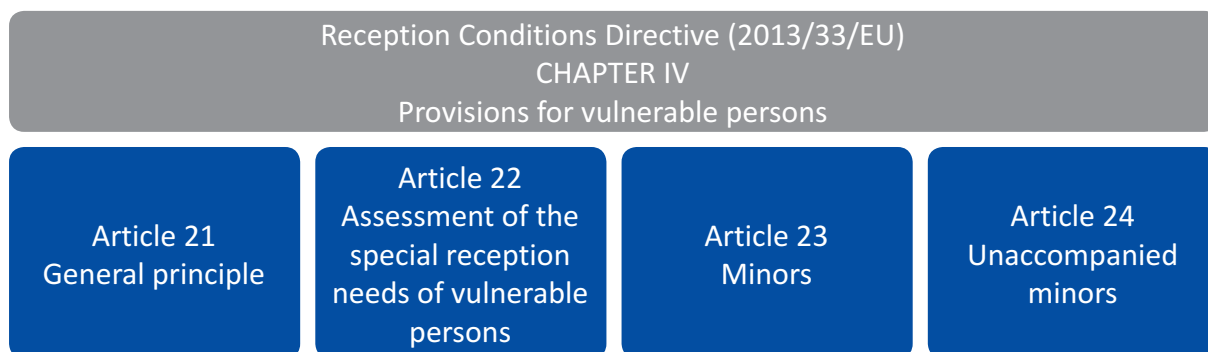


Figure 7. Legal framework under the RCD.

The RCD ensures that a standard level of reception conditions is guaranteed to all children. Article 21 RCD defines special categories of vulnerable applicants for international protection (including unaccompanied children) and obliges states to take into account the specific situation of these vulnerable persons. Article 22 RCD provides for the assessment of the special reception needs of vulnerable persons. Article 23 RCD seeks to ensure the child's best interests are taken as primary consideration. Article 24 RCD establishes rules for the reception and treatment of unaccompanied children.

Besides the principle of the best interests of the child, the following principles are integral to the standards and indicators included in this document and should be observed in the provision of reception conditions in national system:

- **Transparency and accountability:** the provision of reception conditions should be based on transparent and fair rules and decision-making procedures. Without prejudice to the relevance of involving additional actors for the implementation of specific tasks in national reception systems (e.g. NGOs, private sector, etc.), the overall responsibility to achieve the highest levels of transparency and accountability lies with the respective reception authority.
- **Confidentiality:** in applying the standard and indicators in this guidance, confidentiality rules provided for in national and international law are respected in relation to any information obtained by those working with unaccompanied children in the course of their work.
- **Participation:** in line with Article 18(8) RCD, and in order to respect children's participation rights under the EU Charter and the CRC, reception authorities are strongly encouraged to facilitate the participation and engagement of all unaccompanied children in the management of material and non-material aspects of reception conditions.
- **Non-discrimination:** equal access to reception conditions shall be provided to all unaccompanied children without discrimination.

Structure and format

This document focuses on the guidance, identification, assessment of and response to special reception needs, and the provision of reception conditions to unaccompanied children in national reception systems. It is considered that all standards across these sections are important to ensure the provision of reception conditions in line with the RCD.

Following this introductory part, the guidance opens with a short section on ‘How to read the guidance’, focusing on clarifying the concepts used. Subsequently, the guidance is divided into nine chapters, focusing on the following:

1. Information, participation and representation of unaccompanied children;
2. Special needs and risks;
3. Allocation;
4. Day-to-day care;
5. Staff;
6. Healthcare;
7. Education;
8. Food, clothing and other non-food items, and allowances;
9. Housing.

Each chapter includes specific common ‘standards’, which are applicable to national reception systems across all EU+ States. Each standard is paired with relevant ‘indicators’, which facilitate the assessment as to whether the standard is met. Throughout the guidance, indicators have been integrated into the different subchapters to measure whether adequate arrangements have been made to cater for special needs within the national reception system. Where necessary, further clarification on an indicator can be found in the ‘additional remarks’.

The ultimate responsibility for the application of the standards lies with the EU+ States’ authorities; most of the standards in this guidance would in particular fall within the competence of the national reception authorities. In practice, however, other actors are often involved in the provision of material and non-material reception conditions, including for example other state, regional or local services, intergovernmental organisations or NGOs.

Importantly, in line with the spirit of Article 4 RCD, EU+ States may introduce or retain **more favourable provisions** in the field of reception conditions for applicants for international protection than those included in this guidance. Under no circumstances should this document be understood as an invitation to lower existing standards, but rather as an encouragement to reach, as a minimum, the benchmarks developed herein.

How to read the guidance

All standards and indicators in the guidance should be read and implemented in consideration of the **principle of the best interests of the child** as outlined above (cf. p.7).

As such, the guidance does not endeavour to create a model for the perfect reception system; instead, it aims at compiling agreed standards, indicators and good practices, which are applicable and achievable across all MS.

The **standards** included in this document reflect already existing practices in MS, i.e. the standard represents commonly agreed practice and compliance should be 'ensured' throughout national reception systems.

The **indicators** represent a tool to measure compliance with the standard. **Alternative indicators** are used in situations where different options can be applied to measure compliance with the standard. Indicators listed under each standard should be understood as cumulative without hierarchy.

The **additional remarks** represent an indication as to what could satisfy an indicator. In light of the different national contexts, the applicability of the 'additional remarks' might vary across MS.

The term **good practice** does not result from a formal evaluation and assessments but is based on current practice of some MS. While not representing a commonly agreed standard at this stage, MS are nonetheless encouraged to consider adopting these good practices into their national systems. Examples of good practices in the guidance refer to higher existing standards within EU+ States with the aim of promoting these examples.

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| STANDARD (represents commonly agreed practice and compliance should be ensured throughout national reception systems) | STANDARD 16: Ensure the day-to-day care of the unaccompanied child in the accommodation centre (16.1) or in individual housing (16.2). |
| INDICATOR (represents a tool to measure compliance with the standard) | Indicator 16.1 a): Qualified staff is present in the accommodation centre 24/7. |
| ALTERNATIVE INDICATORS (used in situations where different options can be applied to measure compliance with the standard) | Indicator 16.1 a): Staff is present in the accommodation centre 24/7. OR Indicator 16.2 a): When the unaccompanied child lives in individual housing, qualified staff can be contacted 24/7. |
| ADDITIONAL REMARKS (indication as to what could constitute compliance; might vary across MS) | Additional remarks The unaccompanied child accommodated in individual housing is minimum 16 years old and has been assessed as mature and autonomous enough to live in this type of reception facility. |
| GOOD PRACTICE (higher existing standards within EU+ States with the aim of promoting these examples) | Good practice: A handbook is present in all reception facilities for unaccompanied children. The handbook covers all procedures and policies relevant to the reception of unaccompanied children and is developed in collaboration with the authorities representing unaccompanied children. The requirements on consulting with the unaccompanied child, filing and coordination with other bodies and organisations is clearly described in the handbook. |

Figure 8. Examples of standards, indicators, remarks, additional remarks and good practices.

Annex I includes a table, which summarises all standards and indicators listed in this document. This table should, however, be considered in conjunction with the main document which provides additional clarifications (additional remarks, good practices) that support the interpretation of the guidance.

EASO's mission is to support MS and associated countries in the implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) in the EU+ territory (EU+ States plus Iceland and Liechtenstein) through, inter alia, common training, common quality and common country of origin information. As with all **EASO support tools**, this guidance is based

on the common standards of the CEAS. The guidance should be seen as complementary to the other available tools, particularly the:

- *EASO Practical guide on the best interests of the child in asylum procedures;*
- *EASO Guidance on reception conditions: operational standards and indicators;*
- *EASO Practical guide on age assessment;*
- *EASO Practical guide on family tracing;*
- *EASO Training module on interviewing children;* and
- *EASO Tool for identification of persons with special needs (EASO IPSN Tool).*

This guidance has been developed for the functioning of the reception system. Situations falling under an **emergency framework** fall outside the scope of this guidance. Such situations are addressed by the *EASO Guidance on contingency planning in the context of reception*. Still, this guidance and the standards and indicators included should be taken into account as far as possible even in situations falling under an emergency framework. As set out in the *EASO Guidance on contingency planning in the context of reception*, every human being is valued and respected, regardless of the emergency situation. The application of this guidance should be carried out in accordance with the CRC and the EU Charter, all the while keeping the RCD in mind.

1. Information, participation and representation of unaccompanied children

Introductory remarks

The provision of information in this document refers to information in the framework of the RCD. In line with Article 5 RCD, MS shall inform unaccompanied children, within a reasonable time not exceeding 15 days after they have lodged their application for international protection, of at least any established benefits and of the obligations with which they must comply relating with reception conditions.

It is noted that in some MS the provision of such information may also fall under the responsibility of the reception authorities. Therefore, and in line with its thematic scope, this guidance focuses on standards for information provision in relation to reception conditions.

In order to avoid language barriers and communication problems, information shall be provided in a language that unaccompanied children understand. So as to avoid overburdening unaccompanied children with extensive information at the reception intake, the provision of information may take place in a time- or phase-specific manner, in line with the individual child's needs and according to their maturity. In response to the special reception needs identified, unaccompanied children should receive information on reception (e.g. house rules, who does what, key staff, complaint mechanisms) as well as on the available support measures. These measures include, inter alia, psycho-social counselling and different types of assistance ranging from orienting unaccompanied children on how to access public services to cultural mediation and orientation, conflict solving as well as guidance on how to deal with specific situations and the next steps to take. MS are encouraged to establish timelines outlining the type of information to be provided to unaccompanied children at the national level, while taking into account the overall maximum of 15 days prescribed in Article 5 RCD.

Article 12 CRC and Article 24 EU Charter require that children's views are considered and acted upon, according to their age and maturity. The CRC encourages adults to listen to the opinions of children and involve them in decision-making. The right to be heard applies to all the children capable of forming their own views regardless of their age, thus hearing the child's views would not be limited to a specific age since the understanding and capacity of the child to form and express their views is not always linked to their chronological age. The maturity of unaccompanied children needs to be assessed individually by a child psychologist or social workers experienced in working with children⁽¹⁸⁾. This assessment will be of help when adapting the language for the provision of information to unaccompanied children and for verifying their understanding. Additionally, in order to empower children to express their views, procedures need to be adapted.

Ensuring that the views of the child are given due weight in all decisions concerning them is not a guarantee that all decisions will always conform to the views expressed by the child. Where this is not the case, the reasons should be properly explained to the children.

Due to the vulnerability of unaccompanied children, the prompt appointment of a representative is one of the most important measures to be taken to protect unaccompanied children. Representatives play a crucial role in guaranteeing access to the rights and in safeguarding the interests of all unaccompanied children, including those not applying for asylum. They can help build trust with the unaccompanied children and ensure their wellbeing, including for integration, in cooperation with other actors.

So far, there is no uniform definition of the term 'representative' available across the MS. The role, the qualifications and the understanding of the competences of representatives vary from one MS to another⁽¹⁹⁾. In some MS, the term in use is 'guardian' and they may have a similar or different role; in others both figures may coexist with different roles. Article 2(j) RCD defines the representative as 'a person or an organisation appointed by the competent bodies in order to assist and represent an unaccompanied minor in procedures provided for in this Directive with a view to ensuring the best interests of the child and exercising legal capacity for the minor where necessary'.

⁽¹⁸⁾ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment No. 12 (2009) on the child's right to be heard*.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council of the European Economic and Social Committee of the Regions, The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012–2016, 19 June 2012, COM(2012) 286 final.

According to Article 24 RCD, MS 'shall as soon as possible take measures to ensure that a representative represents and assists the unaccompanied minor to enable him or her to benefit from the rights and comply with the obligations provided for' in the RCD. The representative shall perform their duties in accordance with the principle of the best interests of the child, as prescribed in Article 23(2) RCD, and shall have the necessary expertise to that end.

According to the EU asylum *acquis*, one of the main responsibilities of MS, in order to address this inherent vulnerability and to fulfil the right to family unity, is to adopt the necessary measures to trace the family members of unaccompanied children and reunify children with their family members when it is found to be in the best interests of the child.

Apart from the aforementioned representation, the best interests of unaccompanied children should also be protected by the appointment of appropriate staff (e.g. care/social workers, etc.) responsible for the reception and care of unaccompanied children. As recommended in the Communication on the protection of children in migration, all organisations (including reception facilities) that work with children should have in place internal child safeguarding policies (i.e. a set of internal rules on how to vet, recruit and train staff who will deal with children, how to monitor their interaction with children, and how to deal with complaints and implement disciplinary sanctions where needed).

Legal references – Information, participation and representation

- Article 2(j) RCD: Representative
- Article 5 RCD: Information
- Article 23 RCD: Minors
- Article 24(1) RCD: Unaccompanied minors
- Article 12 CRC: Respect for the views of the child

Standards and indicators

1.1 Information

STANDARD 1: Ensure unaccompanied children receive relevant information.

Indicator 1.1: Information has to be provided within a reasonable time not exceeding 15 days after the application for international protection has been lodged, of at least any established benefits and of the obligations with which they must comply relating to reception conditions.

- **Additional remarks:** Information is provided in an age-appropriate form as written text, leaflets, pictures, videos. Oral information should be the main form of providing information to unaccompanied children.

Indicator 1.2: Information should be provided free of charge.

Indicator 1.3: The information provided should address the questions of unaccompanied children or their representative.

Indicator 1.4: Information covers all aspects of reception conditions concerning unaccompanied children, and 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.

- **Additional remarks:** Information should be clearly communicated to the unaccompanied children in a child-friendly manner and should also include the availability of additional psychosocial support, social norms in the MS, advice on daily life, including conflict management.

Indicator 1.5: Information is provided according to the special needs and individual circumstances of unaccompanied children.

Indicator 1.6: Information covers the roles of staff working with unaccompanied children.

Indicator 1.7: Information should explain the obligation of appointing a representative in order to assist unaccompanied children on procedural issues and in their everyday life.

- **Additional remarks:** 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.

Indicator 1.8: Information covers 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, voluntary return and to appeal procedures that are relevant to their case.

- **Additional remarks:** 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 gender-based violence (GBV), risks of trafficking and smuggling, age assessment procedure, sexual orientation and gender identity issues, if they are relevant to the identified special needs.

STANDARD 2: Ensure that unaccompanied children understand the relevant information.

Indicator 2.1: The information is provided in a child-friendly, age-appropriate and culturally sensitive manner.

- **Additional remarks:** Child-friendly information is understood as including any method of communication that is adapted to the age and maturity of unaccompanied children, given 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 2.2: Information must be provided systematically during the process and evidence of this information provision should be documented (when it was provided, by whom, etc.).

- **Additional remarks:** Those providing information check that unaccompanied children have effectively understood the information given. Information related to asylum procedure, family tracing, family reunification, voluntary return and identified special needs is repeated at a later stage and on several occasions.

Indicator 2.3: Interpreters and/or language mediators need to be 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 on information provision

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ provide for child-friendly and age appropriate information materials in the form of information booklets, pocket-sized leaflets, colouring books and/or digital information tools to inform unaccompanied children on the asylum procedure, reception, integration and voluntary return;
- ✓ provide oral information and conduct dialogues with unaccompanied children to identify their needs for additional information through cultural mediators, under supervision;
- ✓ conduct group and one-to-one information sessions to provide social and legal assistance to applicants for international protection (e.g. on asylum procedure and their rights and obligations).

1.2 Participation

STANDARD 3: Ensure that children's views/opinions are considered and acted upon, according to their age and maturity.

Indicator 3.1: Unaccompanied children are given safe and inclusive opportunities to express their views/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. Child reception staff 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 3.2: 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 unaccompanied children and/or their representative. The outcome is communicated to the unaccompanied children and their representative.*

Indicator 3.3: 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.*

Good practice on participation/communication

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ hold regular meetings with unaccompanied children to listen to their opinions and requests and to provide them with feedback of the actions taken.

1.3 Representation

STANDARD 4: *Ensure the appointment of a representative as soon as possible but no later than 15 working days after the application for international protection was made and enable the representative to provide assistance to unaccompanied children with actions related to their legal obligations.*

Indicator 4.1: Ensure that the representative is able to verify if the accommodation and residential care arrangements are adequate for the children's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

Indicator 4.2: Enable the representative to report any issues to the reception staff providing housing to the unaccompanied children; involvement and consultation with cultural mediators should be provided, where appropriate.

Indicator 4.3: Enable the representative to provide the unaccompanied children with information on their rights and duties in relation to accommodation and material assistance and in this connection to assist the children to lodge a complaint where necessary.

Indicator 4.4: Enable the representative to verify if the unaccompanied children are informed about the role and responsibilities of the personnel and the caregivers in accommodation facilities.

Indicator 4.5: Enable the representative to verify that the unaccompanied children have effective access to the education system and that the children regularly attend classes.

Indicator 4.6: Enable the representative to promote the children's access to leisure activities, including play and recreational activities appropriate to their age, maturity and interests.

STANDARD 5: *Ensure that legal advisers or counsellors, persons representing international organisations and relevant NGOs recognised by the EU+ State concerned have adequate access to reception structures in order to assist unaccompanied children.*

Indicator 5.1: The access of the actors above is only limited on grounds relating to the security of the premises and of the unaccompanied children, provided that it is not thereby severely restricted or rendered impossible.

Indicator 5.2: The actors listed above are able to meet and speak with the unaccompanied children in conditions ensuring adequate privacy.

Standard 6: Ensure that a procedure is in place to start tracing ⁽²⁰⁾ the members of the unaccompanied children's family as soon as possible after arrival and identification, where necessary with the assistance of international or other relevant organisations, whilst protecting the children's best interests.

Indicator 6.1: Reception authorities and/or other responsible staff and the representative initiate or start the family tracing based on the information given by the unaccompanied children 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, MS shall take care of 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. Time for building a relationship of trust with the children is granted allowing the responsible officer to explain the obtain the minimum information needed to initiate the process as well as to assess children'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 children during the process, including the representative, should provide similar information to the children regarding the tracing process. It is crucial that the children perceive consistency in the information and understands that the primary aim of family tracing is to restore family links if it is in their best interests.*
- *The process should be undertaken on a confidential basis, and in particular no reference should be made as to the status of the children as an applicant for or a beneficiary of international protection during the family tracing process. Special consideration should be taken for unaccompanied children that are presumed or identified as victims of trafficking in human beings.*

⁽²⁰⁾ EASO, *Practical guide on family tracing*, 2016, available at <https://www.easo.europa.eu/practical-tools>

2. Special needs and safety risks

Introductory remarks

Unaccompanied children are one category of applicants with special needs in a state of particular vulnerability and therefore require specific and appropriate care, guidance and protection. Each unaccompanied child has the right to be protected against all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. The reception and guidance of unaccompanied children should be set up in such way that special needs such as intensive (24 hour) guidance, special child friendly medical and psychological assistance or specific reception facilities related to age, gender or threat are responded to and that safety risks are tackled and kept to a minimum (Article 19(1) CRC).

Based on the RCD, MS must, inter alia, conduct individual assessments carried out in different phases after arrival in order to identify and cover the special needs and safety risks of vulnerable persons.

Within the group of unaccompanied children, some children may require further special support that is based on specific special needs in order to enable them to benefit from their rights and benefits under the RCD on equal footing.

Unaccompanied children are particularly vulnerable when it comes to unsafe situations. In addition to the demand for special needs, attention should be paid to possible safety risks for this group. This means that professionals always need to ascertain whether the unaccompanied children are staying at a safe place. A place with physical safety does not automatically qualify as a safe place; it has to offer enough social and emotional safety that allows for the standard development of the child.

The RCD does not provide more details on what this safety should be. The Communication from the Commission on protection of children in migration ⁽²¹⁾ does call for the establishment of internal child safeguarding policies in all organisations and bodies interacting with children, including reception facilities. An internal safeguarding or child protection policy is a set of internal rules that make it clear what an organisation or group will do to keep children safe. Risk assessment aims at effectively preventing harm to the child by planning for and mitigating risk factors, and to ensure the care and protection of unaccompanied children in the context of reception.

The intention behind the assessment of safety risks is to ensure that unaccompanied children are provided with proper guidance and reception facilities. In this way, unaccompanied children are protected from dangers that threaten their well-being and development in the present and future.

Staff working with unaccompanied children, i.e. all persons who are in direct contact with unaccompanied children in a reception context, should be aware and able to identify special needs and risks. Indications of special needs and risks should be recorded as soon as possible upon detection and this information should be communicated to the relevant stakeholders in order to provide the necessary guarantees (special needs and safety measures) and support (cf. Chapter 5. Staff, Standard 25).

Furthermore, MS have an obligation to assess, indicate and address the special needs and risks of unaccompanied children within a reasonable period of time after lodging an application for international protection, and to ensure that identification is also possible at a later stage in case vulnerabilities are not apparent at an earlier stage. For this reason, qualified reception staff should be trained (cf. Chapter 5. Staff, Standard 24) in order to assess special needs and risks.

One important aspect is the need to ensure that referral mechanisms in MS are functioning properly in order to communicate special needs and risks in an efficient manner. Without prejudice to the principle of confidentiality, national authorities should take a multidisciplinary approach in identification of special needs and safety risks and share the relevant information. For example, where first-contact officials, such as border guards, have noted that the child has special needs, these should be communicated to the reception authorities in order for them to ensure the necessary guarantees as soon as possible. On the other hand, those working with unaccompanied children on a daily basis would often be in a position to observe the applicants for international protection over a longer period and to build trust. This would allow them to effectively identify special needs and risks, which may not be initially apparent. To the extent that this information also concerns potential special procedural needs, it is crucial that the reception authority would be able to communicate it to the determining authority.

⁽²¹⁾ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The protection of children in migration*, 12 April 2017, COM(2017) 211 final.

Some examples of special reception guarantees are indicated in the different chapters of this guidance. For a more comprehensive guidance and a practical tool in this regard, it can be referred to the EASO Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs (EASO IPSN Tool) ⁽²²⁾.

Legal references – Identification, assessment and response to special needs

- Article 18(4) RCD: Take appropriate measures to prevent assault/GBV
- Article 18 (9a) RCD: Assessment of specific needs
- Article 22 RCD: Assessment of special reception needs
- Article 25 RCD: Victims of torture and violence
- Article 3(3) CRC: Standards established by competent authorities
- Article 19 CRC: Protection from all forms of violence

Standards and Indicators

2.1 Special needs

STANDARD 7: Ensure an initial procedure is in place to identify and assess special needs for unaccompanied children.

Indicator 7.1: A standardised mechanism/procedure to systematically identify and assess special needs for unaccompanied children is in place.

- **Additional remarks:** *As stipulated in Article 22(2) RCD, this mechanism/procedure does not need to take the form of an administrative procedure but should refer to child protection and child safeguarding standards. The EASO IPSN Tool could be integrated in such a mechanism/procedure.*

Indicator 7.2: The mechanism clearly prescribes who is responsible for the identification and assessment of special needs.

Indicator 7.3: The mechanism clearly prescribes how the identification and the assessment of the needs are recorded and communicated to the unaccompanied children and to relevant actors.

- **Additional remarks:** *Recording and effectively communicating the information regarding special needs to unaccompanied children and to relevant actors is crucial in order to ensure that the necessary guarantees have been put in place. National confidentiality and data protection regulations would apply during the operation of the mechanism. In some cases, formal procedures would apply, such as in the case of national referral mechanisms for victims of human trafficking.*

Good practice on the initial identification of special needs

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ set up a mechanism for the initial identification of special needs as part of national operating procedures;
- ✓ use a template to identify special needs and potential risks to the child's well-being at an early stage, addressing:
 - data on the date and place of birth, the country of origin, the native language as well as marital status and children;
 - information on parents, siblings and/or information on other relatives within the current MS of reception, another EU+ state or a third country;
 - state of health of the child (general state of health, chronic diseases, disabilities, surgeries, medication, mental health);
 - living conditions in the country of origin;
 - education in the country of origin;
 - reasons for leaving the country of origin (including parental consent).

⁽²²⁾ EASO, *Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs*, available at <https://ipsn.easo.europa.eu/>.

STANDARD 8: Ensure that the mechanism/procedure for identification and assessment of special needs is effectively applied as soon as possible after arrival.

Indicator 8.1: Sufficient resources are allocated to systematically identify and assess the special needs of each unaccompanied child.

Indicator 8.2: The initial identification and assessment of obvious vulnerability in order to address special needs is conducted upon arrival during the reception intake on the first day, or at the latest within 24 hours.

Indicator 8.3: Special needs that become apparent at a later stage are adequately identified and assessed, addressed and documented.

Indicator 8.4: Where relevant, specialised actors are involved in the assessment of special needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *The representative and specialised actors such as social workers, psychologists or medical professionals may be involved in the assessment of special needs depending on the nature of these needs. Their expertise should be effectively accessible to the reception authorities where necessary. A qualified interpreter should be provided where appropriate.*

Indicator 8.5: Communication channels and cooperation between the reception authority and the determining authority are established and used within the limits of confidentiality.

- **Additional remarks:** *Identification and assessment of special needs are more effective when information is communicated between the authorities, without prejudice to national confidentiality and data protection regulations.*

Indicator 8.6: The identification and assessment of special needs takes place without prejudice to the examination of the unaccompanied children's application 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 unaccompanied children's application for international protection. While in some cases the unaccompanied children's situation of vulnerability would also have an impact on the outcome of the application for international protection, the purpose of the identification and assessment of needs as per this guidance is solely to guarantee effective access to the rights and benefits under the RCD during the asylum procedure.*

STANDARD 9: Ensure that identified special needs are addressed in a timely manner.

Indicator 9.1: Adequate action is taken to respond to the identified and assessed special needs. The urgency of the response will depend on the identified need.

- **Additional remarks:** *Sufficient resources should be allocated to the response to special needs. In addition, standard operating procedures and/or referral mechanisms should be used if appropriate such as in cases of trafficked children, married children, children with related adults, children with disabilities.*

Indicator 9.2: In cases where special needs have been identified there is a mechanism in place to ensure their regular monitoring.

- **Additional remarks:** *EU+ States should envisage regular follow up monitoring of identified special needs.*

Good practice on the identification, assessments and response to special needs

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ Set up a mechanism for the identification and assessment of special needs as part of national operating procedures. An identification tool could be integrated into these procedures.
- ✓ Organise multidisciplinary meetings on a regular basis with all relevant actors, including NGOs; gathering information in a pro-active way, using available resources prior to reception.
- ✓ Subject the identification of special needs to the day-to-day guidance of the unaccompanied child by:
 - making it a recurring conversation topic with the unaccompanied child; and
 - making it a discussion topic in the multidisciplinary consultations (cf. Chapter 4. Day-to-day care).

2.2 Safety risks

STANDARD 10: Ensure that staff working with unaccompanied children in a reception facility identify early safety risks and risks to children's welfare.

Indicator 10.1: 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 10.2: Safety risks of unaccompanied children are assessed in the first week upon arrival and this is repeated regularly at least every six 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 10.3: 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 10.4: The outcome of the risk assessment is discussed in a multidisciplinary context.

- **Additional remarks:** *The representative or other specialised actors shall be involved in the risk assessment or its outcome.*

STANDARD 11: Safety risks are reduced to an absolute minimum.

Indicator 11.1: 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 11.2: 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.*

Good practice with regards to reducing risks and the risk of absconding

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ 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 human trafficking, forced marriage, etc. This may entail protective measures like the movement of the unaccompanied child to a rural location, supervised shelter and intensive guidance.

Indicator 11.3: 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 on alert instruments

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ 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 12: *Ensure knowledge is provided to unaccompanied children on the subject of radicalisation and that staff share signals related to the (potential) radicalisation of unaccompanied children with responsible authorities.*

Indicator 12.1: The subject of radicalisation is discussed with unaccompanied children where necessary by staff working with unaccompanied children.

Indicator 12.2: Reception facilities have an alert instrument in order to report signals of radicalisation to the responsible persons and authorities.

Good practice on the subject of radicalisation

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ 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. Allocation

Introductory remarks

Without prejudice to the existence of national dispersal systems regulating the equal distribution of unaccompanied children across the territory of MS, the standards and indicators included in this chapter should be read and implemented fully in line with the principle of the best interests of the child and family unity as well as respect for the special reception needs unaccompanied children might have.

Compliance with these principles is not only relevant upon entry into the reception system but also at the moment of reallocating or transferring unaccompanied children to different housing. Therefore, in line with Article 24(3) RCD, transferring unaccompanied children should be limited to a minimum and should only occur when in the child's best interests.

In addition to collective, small-scale and mainstream housing, foster care and individual housing should also be an option when allocating accommodation for unaccompanied children, if considered to be in line with the best interests of the child and individual special needs.

Initial and comprehensive assessments (at any time of housing) should be made in the best interests of the child (e.g. accommodation with spouse or family member). An initial assessment should take place on arrival in order to find the best possible housing for unaccompanied children. Comprehensive assessments are ongoing, multidisciplinary and should be regularly attended.

Allocation and re-allocation of unaccompanied children

Initial assessment on arrival

Regular, comprehensive and multidisciplinary assessment at all times of reception

Legal references – Allocation

- Article 18 RCD: Modalities for material reception conditions
- Article 24 RCD: Unaccompanied minors

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 13: *Specific and objective reasons (e.g. age, maturity and special needs) linked to the individual situation of unaccompanied children, the specific care offered by the reception facility and the type of facility and possibilities of non-institutionalised forms of care are taken into account when allocating unaccompanied children.*

Indicator 13.1: A mechanism is in place to consider whether there are specific and objective reasons for the allocation of a particular housing.

- **Additional remarks:** *The individual situation of children in the standard above refers in particular to the age, maturity and the gender (e.g. transgender persons) as well as cultural, linguistic and religious background of unaccompanied children. In addition, individual considerations e.g. existing family links should be taken into account.*
- *In particular, provisions for the protection of unaccompanied children from sexual and GBV should be taken into account in all allocation arrangements.*
- *If unaccompanied children are exceptionally placed in adult reception centre (e.g. together with adult sibling(s)), unaccompanied children have the same rights as other unaccompanied children (e.g. protection from all forms of violence) and procedural safeguards apply (e.g. appointment of a representative).*

Good practice on allocation

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ consider foster care or any other form of alternative (non-institutionalised) care as an option for allocation;
- ✓ allocate unaccompanied children to an appropriate reception facility after intensive observation and assessment 24/7 during a limited period of time (e.g. two weeks) in the first reception facility;
- ✓ prepare unaccompanied children to live an independent life after the assessment of the child's maturity and autonomy, by allocating them to individual housing from the age of 16.

STANDARD 14: Ensure that family unity is respected, in line with the principle of the best interests of the child.

Indicator 14.1: Unaccompanied children who are siblings (in accordance with the definition of Article 24(2) RCD) 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 unaccompanied children are with adult sibling/siblings, they can be accommodated together in adult reception facilities taking into account the best interests of the child, age, gender and the 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 future separation, if unaccompanied children are transferred, their siblings should be transferred as well.*

Indicator 14.2: Unaccompanied children, their spouses and their children can be accommodated together if this is in line with the best interests of the unaccompanied children and in accordance with relevant national law.

- **Additional remarks:** *Married unaccompanied children who are above the nationally legislated legal age of consent can be accommodated together with their adult spouses and with any children they might have in reception facilities for families taking the best interests of the child as the primary consideration.*
- *The best interests of the child must be continually assessed and monitored by social workers, other reception officers and the representative in order to identify possible sexual exploitation, forced marriage or human trafficking. Unaccompanied children below the national age of consent must be accommodated separately from their spouse.*
- *There is a need for a multidisciplinary team to assess the best interests of the child in cases of child marriage immediately after arrival. The assessment should involve a team composing at least a social worker, a medical professional and a representative. If the assessment is not done upon arrival, measures should be put in place so as to protect unaccompanied children.*
- *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 representative. Safety considerations should be taken into account to allow for possible exceptions.*

Good practice on unaccompanied children who are single parents

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ provide special reception facilities with day care/nursery in order to allow the parents to attend school.

Indicator 14.3: Where possible and appropriate, family unity should be respected with regard to members of the broader family.

- **Additional remarks:** *A broader definition of family members is applied taking into account the background of the unaccompanied children, the particular circumstances of dependency and their best interests.*

- Depending on the national arrangements and on the agreement of unaccompanied children and representatives, members of the children's broader family (including relatives outside the definition of Article 2(c) RCD) and unaccompanied children can be accommodated together.
- Unaccompanied children and adult members of the broader family can be accommodated together in an adult reception facility if it is in the children's best interests. This should be taken into consideration especially with unaccompanied children, who are accompanied by relatives, who are not responsible for them whether by law or by the practice of the MS concerned. The best interests of the child must be continually assessed and monitored by social workers, other reception officers and the representative. Safety considerations should be taken into account to allow for possible exceptions.

STANDARD 15: Ensure that special needs are taken into account when (re-)allocating a particular housing to unaccompanied children.

Indicator 15.1: The allocation of particular housing to unaccompanied children is based on an assessment of their special reception needs.

- **Additional remarks:** In particular, the allocation of housing to unaccompanied children is based on the assessment of the best interests of the child.

Indicator 15.2: There is a possibility to transfer unaccompanied children as a result of identified special reception needs.

Indicator 15.3: Transferring unaccompanied children should be limited to a minimum and only occur when they service the best interests of the child, for example better access to family members or educational services.

- **Additional remarks:** In particular, safety considerations such as in the cases of victims of human trafficking, sexual and GBV, torture or other serious forms of psychological and physical violence, could necessitate the (re-)allocation of different housing for unaccompanied children if special needs become apparent at a later stage to be adequately identified and assessed (cf. Chapter 2. Special needs and safety risks, Standard 8 and Indicator 8.3).

Indicator 15.4: Unaccompanied children who have reached the age of majority should be allowed to stay in the same place/area if possible. Special measures should take place when transferring unaccompanied children reaching the age of majority to an adult reception facility. The transfer should be carefully organised together with both reception facilities and the unaccompanied children.

Good practice on (re-)allocating housing to an unaccompanied child

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ hear the child and the representative when new housing for unaccompanied children is planned;
- ✓ take continuity of education and personal curriculum as well as school semester into account when transferring unaccompanied children (e.g. in downsizing situations).

4. Day-to-day care

Introductory remarks

As indicated in the CRC, children need special safeguards and care, due to their physical and mental immaturity, and the family is the natural environment for their growth and wellbeing. As a result, day-to-day care and special activities should be accessible to unaccompanied children living in reception facilities without family members present and this should be an essential part of reception, in order to ensure a standard of living adequate for physical, mental and social development. Day-to-day care, as referred to in this guidance, includes the everyday support of the unaccompanied child, the organisation of awareness raising and training activities for the child, as well as leisure and recreational activities. Some standards and indicators are related to those present in the sections on information provision, assessment and response to special needs and safety risks, healthcare, schooling and housing. They have been included in this chapter assuming that additional information and support are needed for unaccompanied children.

Subsequently this chapter addresses the importance of preparing unaccompanied children to be autonomous, to strengthen resilience and to develop a method of special care in reception facilities focusing on the future perspectives and skills of unaccompanied children. Age, maturity and special needs should be taken into account. Day-to-day care may differ between unaccompanied children living in accommodation centres and those staying in individual housing, given the differences in age, autonomy and self-sufficiency. Furthermore, a distinction is made between the presence of reception staff with general training and child reception staff, who had sufficient additional training on unaccompanied children (cf. Chapter 5. Staff). The presence of child reception staff is specifically necessary as a minimum when unaccompanied children is present in the accommodation centre and not at school, but not necessarily during the night.

Legal references – Day-to-day care

- Article 23(1) RCD: Minor’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development; minor’s wellbeing and social development taking account minor’s background
- Article 23(3) RCD: Leisure activities
- Article 24(1) RCD: Unaccompanied minors

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 16: Ensure the day-to-day care of unaccompanied children in the accommodation centre (16.1) or in individual housing (16.2).

Alternative indicators on ensuring day-to-day care:

Indicator 16.1 a): Qualified staff is present in the accommodation centre 24/7.

Indicator 16.1 b): Qualified staff is specifically present when unaccompanied children are in the accommodation centre meaning before and after school hours, during weekends and school holidays.

Indicator 16.1 c): If members of staff present at night are not qualified staff, they must as a minimum, be trained in child protection and the rights of the child and have the necessary information on the specific situation of the unaccompanied children in the accommodation centre.

Indicator 16.1 d): The presence of unaccompanied children in the accommodation centre is monitored at least once a day to be sure the child has not absconded.

OR

Indicator 16.2 a): When unaccompanied children live in individual housing, qualified staff are contactable 24/7.

Indicator 16.2 b): Child reception staff visits unaccompanied children accommodated in individual housing at least twice a week.

- **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.*
- *The visit is performed by the social worker, for example.*

Indicator 16.2 c): The presence of unaccompanied children in individual housing is monitored during the home visits to be sure the children have not absconded.

Indicator 16.3: Unaccompanied children are supported in their everyday life and activities.

- **Additional remarks:** *Support in everyday life includes a large range of activities, such as waking unaccompanied children, promoting and following up school attendance and engagement, providing information and support on personal and domestic hygiene, supporting unaccompanied children in living in a community and respecting house rules, and managing and preventing conflicts.*
- *At a first stage, reception staff may guide unaccompanied children to school and to other destinations. Information is provided in a child-friendly way and adapted to unaccompanied children's age and maturity (e.g. Google maps, public transport applications, etc.).*

Indicator 16.4: Unaccompanied children are provided with help with homework and tutoring.

- **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 17: The day-to-day care is organised according to a specific method for the care of unaccompanied children.

Indicator 17.1: The method for the care of unaccompanied children is outlined in a handbook, known and applied by all staff responsible for the day-to-day care in the reception facility.

Indicator 17.2: The handbook contains at least a description of the objectives of the day-to-day care and of a conversation cycle in which these objectives and the outcome for unaccompanied children are discussed with the child, as well as for their safety, future perspectives, skills and special needs.

Indicator 17.3: The staff discusses the objectives of the day-to-day care and the outcome on a regular basis with the representative and unaccompanied children.

Good practice on the organisation of day-to-day care

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ Have a handbook present in all reception facilities for unaccompanied children. The handbook covers all procedures and policies relevant to the reception of unaccompanied children and is developed in collaboration with the authorities representing unaccompanied children. The requirements on consulting with unaccompanied children, filing and coordination with other bodies and organisations is clearly described in the handbook.

STANDARD 18: Unaccompanied children are prepared to become autonomous and to live an independent life later on.

Indicator 18.1: Skills related to autonomy are assessed on a regular basis.

- **Additional remarks:** *The assessment is done through the support and observation of unaccompanied children in everyday life and makes sure to involve the unaccompanied children. It takes place at different stages in order 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.*

Indicator 18.2: Unaccompanied children are 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 18.3: Unaccompanied children are 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 housing 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 guided and supervised by the staff.*

Indicator 18.4: Unaccompanied children are 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.*

STANDARD 19: Safeguard and promote unaccompanied children's health and wellbeing, and strengthen resilience.

Indicator 19.1: Unaccompanied children's psychological wellbeing and mental health is taken into account and safeguarded during day-to-day care.

- **Additional remarks:** *Special attention is given to unaccompanied children's psychological wellbeing and mental health, e.g. attention to signs of anxiety, stress, loneliness, mourning, depression, trauma and sleeping problems. When necessary, psychological support is provided through listening, acknowledging unaccompanied children's feelings, giving advice or through referral to more specialist professionals like psychologists or therapists.*

Indicator 19.2: Unaccompanied children have access to awareness raising activities on the risks of drugs and alcohol use, according to 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 19.3: Unaccompanied children have access to awareness raising activities on sexual and reproductive health, in respect of different sexual orientations and gender identities and according to the child's age and maturity.

Indicator 19.4: Unaccompanied children are provided with a minimum of information and training aiming at strengthening against all forms of mental, sexual or other forms of physical abuse and neglect.

- **Additional remarks:** *The focus of the training is the prevention of situations of risk and learning how to act if they occur.*

Good practice on day-to-day care with regard to wellbeing

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ Give access to psychoeducational activities for unaccompanied children, which include a wide range of activities such as 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 (school non-attendance, troubles fitting into the group, hostility, bullying, etc.). In order to have time to reflect upon its situation, unaccompanied children are temporarily hosted in appropriate facilities where special psychoeducational and leisure activities are provided. Specific places for small groups of unaccompanied children (2 up to 10) and additional educational support are available. The length of the stay varies according to the child needs (from 5 up to 15 days, 1 month in case of exceptional circumstances);
- ✓ Provide for staff to dine together with unaccompanied children in accommodation centres in order to supervise their eating habits, to create a feeling of togetherness during meals and to prevent potential conflicts.

STANDARD 20: Support and follow up the mental and social development of unaccompanied children through a standardised care plan.

Indicator 20.1: The background, needs, skills and future prospects of unaccompanied children are assessed by the child reception staff as standard elements of unaccompanied children's care plan, with their participation.

- **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 unaccompanied children 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 unaccompanied children.*

Indicator 20.2: The mental and social development of unaccompanied children are supervised and discussed by relevant caretakers from different disciplines (multidisciplinary approach).

- **Additional remarks:** *Regular exchanges and/or meetings amongst reception staff working with unaccompanied children (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 20.3: Information on the mental and social development of unaccompanied children are exchanged with the representative on a regular basis.

Indicator 20.4: When unaccompanied children are transferred to a new reception facility, the care plan is transmitted before or no later than the day of the transfer, in respect of the principle of confidentiality.

Good practice on day-to-day care

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ conduct a monthly review of the care plan by the social worker, the representative and unaccompanied child; transmit the care plan two or more days before the transfer so that the new reception facility can prepare the arrival and care of unaccompanied children.

STANDARD 21: Ensure effective access to leisure activities, including play and recreational activities appropriate to unaccompanied children's age.

Indicator 21.1: 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 in- or outdoors, access to 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 21.2: Leisure activities are organised and supervised by child reception staff and/or other responsible adults involved in childcare.

Indicator 21.3 a): Unaccompanied children 0-12 can play daily in a safe space adapted to their age and under supervision; **AND**

Indicator 21.3 b): A minimum range of sport activities appropriate to the unaccompanied children's age is regularly provided (cf. Chapter 9. Housing).

Indicator 21.4: Internet access and its duration is age appropriate and is regulated and supervised by the staff.

Good practice on day-to-day care

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ organise common activities for unaccompanied children and local youth, both within and outside the reception facility e.g. cricket tournaments.

5. Staff

Introductory remarks

The main tasks of staff working with unaccompanied children are supervising, counselling and providing social support to unaccompanied children. They are responsible for identifying and addressing the needs of unaccompanied children as described above (Chapter 2. Special needs and safety risks, and Chapter 4. Day-to-day care).

There is a range of professionals responsible for and involved in working with unaccompanied children within the reception context. It includes all persons who are in direct contact with unaccompanied children, irrespective of their employer. This field of work is covered, in particular by social workers, education and healthcare staff, registration officers, interpreters, facility managers, administration/coordination staff, as well as representatives.

In this framework, the guidance included in this chapter should be understood as applying to all staff (including middle and top management) working with unaccompanied children in the reception context. The chapter does not cover directly representatives, although some of the standards and indicators in this chapter are also for them to monitor/implement. Where specific demands to staff (e.g. specialised qualification) have to be met, this is addressed explicitly within the guidance.

In order to perform the above-mentioned tasks, those working with unaccompanied children have to be appropriately available, qualified, trained, supported and monitored.

Legal references – staff

- Article 24(4) RCD: Unaccompanied minors
- Article 29(1) RCD: Staff and resources

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 22: Ensure sufficiently qualified staff is provided for the day-to-day care of unaccompanied children.

Indicator 22.1: The reception facility has to provide for sufficiently qualified staff to carry out the day-to-day care of unaccompanied children.

- **Additional remarks:** *To ensure the day-to-day care of unaccompanied children is carried out in an adequate way and special needs are addressed, sufficiently qualified staff responsible for the reception and care of unaccompanied children should be provided to address and act upon the special reception needs spelled out above.*

Good practice on the provision of staff

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ provide qualified staff for the reception facility not only during the day but also at night.

STANDARD 23: Ensure that staff is sufficiently qualified.

Indicator 23.1: Staff working with unaccompanied children in the reception context has clear terms of reference (job description).

- **Additional remarks:** *Job descriptions should address the qualifications required to ensure the day-to-day care of unaccompanied children is carried out in an adequate way and special needs are addressed sufficiently.*

Indicator 23.2: Staff working with unaccompanied children in the reception context is qualified in accordance with national law and regulations concerning their particular terms of reference (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 the special reception needs spelled out above 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 skills regarding child protection, child development, child rights, and communicating with children.

Indicator 23.3: Staff working with unaccompanied 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.

STANDARD 24: Ensure staff is provided with the necessary and appropriate training.

Indicator 24.1: 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.

Indicator 24.2: Staff working with unaccompanied children in the reception context has a thorough and timely introduction into the role.

- **Additional remarks:** *Induction training should take place no later than immediately after staff has been employed. Depending on the role assigned to the staff, the induction should include the standards of the applicable reception law and/or regulations, available national and relevant EASO tools ⁽²³⁾.*

Indicator 24.3: A clear training curriculum including the training requirements for each functional group exists for assessing, determining, documenting and addressing special reception needs as soon as possible and throughout the reception period.

- **Additional remarks:** *Core training for staff working in the reception context can be provided through the EASO Training curriculum module on reception ⁽²⁴⁾.*

Indicator 24.4: Training is provided in a regular manner and depending on the needs of staff.

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

Indicator 24.5: Training provided includes gender and age-specific concerns, cultural training, conflict management, initial and specialised training on the identification of persons with special needs, awareness of mental health issues, recognising signs of radicalisation, and identification of victims of human trafficking as well as first aid and fire safety.

- **Additional remarks:** *Depending on the division of tasks regarding the work with unaccompanied children, training is provided according to profession/function. Staff covering/working night shifts should also receive minimal training on the topics mentioned above as well as a training regarding specific challenges that might occur during this period.*
- *Modules included in the national curriculum can range from computer skills and foreign languages to a course on infectious diseases or the identification of victims of human trafficking, radicalisation but also on skills as to how to communicate with children.*

Good practice on staff training

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ identify training opportunities for all staff working with unaccompanied children in a reception context, e.g. specific training on trauma-informed practice, on working with children suffering from anxiety, or who have been trafficked, or who are bereaved, on fostering resilience, on independent living, on access to education/training/labour market; and/or;
- ✓ organise training through agreements with relevant actors (universities, lawyers, psychologists, NGOs, IOs, etc.);
- ✓ identify training methods that enables and encourages staff to perform work duties in a uniformed and coherent form;
- ✓ provide social workers and more broadly all staff members of the reception centres a training about prevention and detection of radicalisation.

⁽²³⁾ For a detailed list of EASO support tools cf. 'How to read the guidance', p. 15.

⁽²⁴⁾ EASO, *Training curriculum module on reception*, available at <https://training.easo.europa.eu/lms/>.

STANDARD 25: Ensure and promote effective cooperation, information sharing and awareness.

Indicator 25.1: Special needs recorded should be communicated to the relevant stakeholders in order to provide the necessary guarantees and support.

Indicator 25.2: Regular cooperation, information sharing and awareness raising sessions and/or alternative arrangements are in place among those who are in contact with unaccompanied children due to their profession and/or function, including social workers, education and healthcare 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 focus on migration related aspects in general and cultural aspects in particular as well as related to unaccompanied children (special needs). These could be organised, for example, by education personnel, external health services, security personnel in the facilities or cleaning personnel.

Indicator 25.3: Representatives are informed by and inform other relevant actors working with unaccompanied children on the mental and social development of unaccompanied children on a regular basis.

Indicator 25.4: Confidentiality rules provided for in national and international law, in relation to any information those working with unaccompanied children obtain in the course of their work are respected.

Good practice on cooperation, information sharing and awareness rising

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ provide training for interpreters on translating or communicating with children respecting the special needs of unaccompanied children.

STANDARD 26: Provide support for staff working with unaccompanied children in the reception context.

Indicator 26.1: Different measures are available to help deal with difficult situations encountered during the reception work.

- **Additional remarks:** Staff support measures can take the form of intervision (exchange with peers), stress management, psychological support, crisis teams or external supervision.

Good practice on staff support

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ provide for daily staff meetings for effective information transfer;
- ✓ arrange two or three staff development days for all staff members;
- ✓ organise defusing or de-briefings sessions, when necessary;
- ✓ promote peer-to-peer exchanges between child reception officers of different facilities.

STANDARD 27: Ensure management, supervision and accountability via regular – at least yearly – monitoring and adequate support to staff is taken into account.

Indicator 27.1: The reception facility has to provide for a regular monitoring mechanism of staff performance to ensure day-to-day care of unaccompanied children.

- **Additional remarks:** To ensure the day-to-day care of unaccompanied children is carried out in an adequate way and special needs are addressed sufficiently staff performance is regularly monitored and adequate support is taken into account.

Good practice on monitoring

It is considered good practice to:

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

6. Healthcare

Introductory remarks

Article 24 CRC emphasises that children have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. State parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of their right of access to such healthcare services. Furthermore, unaccompanied children should have the same access to healthcare services as national children. Special attention should also be paid to the particular vulnerabilities of unaccompanied children and the impact of these vulnerabilities on a child's health ⁽²⁵⁾.

Accordingly, unaccompanied children should be given access to the same healthcare services as national children and for some children, due to particular vulnerabilities, additional health services should be provided. For unaccompanied children, special attention also must be paid to the fact that they have no parents to explain the medical history of the child. Unaccompanied children therefore need special support to gain access to the health services needed.

The term 'healthcare' as referred to in this chapter encompasses both mental and physical healthcare, which is provided to unaccompanied children. It also includes counselling of unaccompanied children suffering from serious illnesses as well as necessary measures to promote rehabilitation of victims of violence and torture. In this sense, a medical screening carried out at the beginning of the reception process can provide an important starting point as it allows to get a clearer idea of children's medical needs that need to be addressed throughout the reception process. 'Medical personnel' for the purposes of this chapter 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 healthcare, as well as to the interpreters. At no stage should information be shared without the previous consent of the patient. Without prejudice to national regulations governing the access to medical records, unaccompanied children should be entitled to access their medical records, when needed. In each case, it also needs to be assessed whether or not the qualified staff or the representative should accompany the unaccompanied children when seeing a medical professional.

When planning healthcare services and certain preventive programmes for unaccompanied children, education programmes and other education arrangements have to be considered so that the services are made available for the children. This is particularly important when health services are provided inside the housing.

Legal references – Healthcare

- Article 13 RCD: Medical screening
- Article 17 RCD: General rules on material reception conditions and healthcare
- Article 19 RCD: Healthcare
- Article 24 CRC: Health and health services

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 28: *Ensure access to medical screening and health assessment and the prevention of health related issues at an early state of the reception process.*

Indicator 28.1: Information about the right to healthcare service, 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 Chapter 1. Information, participation and representation of unaccompanied children (cf. Standard 2).*

Indicator 28.2: A medical screening and health assessment should be conducted, if consented by unaccompanied children, as soon as possible after arrival in the reception centre.

⁽²⁵⁾ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment No. 6 (2005) on the Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children outside their Country of Origin*, para. 46-49.

- **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 assessment.*

Indicator 28.3: 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 28.4: Unaccompanied children are provided with age-appropriate and sufficient sexual and reproductive health information and services.

Indicator 28.5: Unaccompanied children are provided with contraceptives.

Good practice with regards to the prevention of health related issues at an early state of the reception process

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ provide unaccompanied children with contraceptives free of charge.

STANDARD 29: Ensure access to necessary healthcare, equal to that of nationals including preventive, mental, physical and psychosocial care.

Indicator 29.1: Unaccompanied children have access to all types of necessary healthcare services.

- **Additional remarks:** *Where possible, gender should be taken into consideration when providing healthcare, (e.g. access to female medical personnel when requested and available).*

Indicator 29.2: Qualified medical personnel provide healthcare services.

- **Additional remarks:** *This includes healthcare services provided within reception facilities.*

Indicator 29.3: Healthcare is available within reception facilities or within a reasonable distance on foot or via public transport and if needed unaccompanied children are accompanied by staff or the representative.

- **Additional remarks:** *For more clarification on 'reasonable distance', (cf. Chapter 9. Housing, subchapter 9.1. Location).*
- *To assess if a child needs to be accompanied, the child and its representative should be consulted. If children within national legislation have the right to decide to undergo certain procedures without the consent of the representative, this also has to be considered.*

Indicator 29.4: Necessary healthcare, including prescribed medication, is provided free of charge or economically compensated for through the daily expenses allowance.

- **Additional remarks:** *This means that both transport to access necessary healthcare as well as the provision with medication are free of charge (cf. Chapter 9. Housing, subchapter 9.1. Location, and Chapter 8. Food, clothing and other non-food items, and allowances, subchapter 8.3. Daily expenses allowance).*

Indicator 29.5: Arrangements for safe storage and distribution of prescribed medication are in place within the reception facility.

Indicator 29.6: Adequate arrangements are in place to ensure that unaccompanied children are able to communicate effectively with the medical personnel.

- **Additional remarks:** *In particular, this means that a trained interpreter is provided (free of charge) where necessary and in the preferred gender of the child when possible.*

Indicator 29.7: Arrangements are made to ensure access to first aid in emergencies.

- **Additional remarks:** *A first aid kit should be made accessible at all time.*

Indicator 29.8: Unaccompanied children are provided with access to their medical records, without prejudice to national legislation.

- **Additional remarks:** *Provided the unaccompanied children have expressed their consent, the medical record can be transferred from one medical professional to another. This also includes situations when children move to another facility or undergo a Dublin transfer.*

Indicator 29.9: Specific arrangements are in place for unaccompanied children with special medical needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *This would include, for example, access to a paediatrician, gynaecologist, or prenatal healthcare or ensuring that unaccompanied children with disabilities are provided with necessary arrangements.*

Good practice with regards to healthcare

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ train all staff in first aid.

STANDARD 30: *Ensure access to mental healthcare, rehabilitation services and qualified counselling for unaccompanied children who suffer from psychological difficulties and/or have been victims of any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation, torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, or who have suffered from armed conflicts, by developing and implementing SOPs on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).*

Indicator 30.1: Unaccompanied children in need of mental healthcare, rehabilitation services and/or qualified counselling are provided with such services by the presence of a clinical psychologist in the reception facility or the access to one outside the centre.

- **Additional remarks:** *This includes services provided to victims of any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation or children who have suffered from armed conflicts. It also includes services provided to victims of trafficking 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 having happened in the home country, in transit or in the host country.*

Indicator 30.2: Qualified medical personnel provide mental healthcare, 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 with regard to mental healthcare, rehabilitation and counselling services

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ consider protective factors, such as social support, contact with family, small number of transfers between different accommodations, living in small-scale housing and leisure time activities to prevent mental illness.

7. Education - Preparatory classes and vocational training

Introductory remarks

Accessing education as soon as possible represents the key element during the reception phase to help unaccompanied children resume their life in a new country. Preparatory classes and vocational training generate possibilities for social interactions and routines that children need for their development.

The main challenges concerning access to education include long waiting periods, segregated education, language barriers, lack of adjusted curriculum and trained staff, cultural differences, accessibility issues in terms of distance, lack of information provided on such opportunities, lack of support for traumatised children, and lack of opportunities for accessing vocational training for teenagers.

There may be exceptional situations where access and participation in the education system is temporarily not possible due to specific local or national causes. Volunteers and other stakeholders (teachers, NGOs, professional staff) within the accommodation facilities sometimes provide the only education available. In addition, there may be situations where the special needs of unaccompanied children do not allow their participation in normal schools (e.g. illiterate children) and specific arrangements have to be prepared for children with special educational needs.

Unaccompanied children are likely not to have attended school regularly before their arrival. They need time and qualified support to settle into a new environment. They may be older than the compulsory school age or because of their schooling gaps they tend to be placed in lower grades than their age group. Unaccompanied children could also be traumatised after experiences of forced exile. Preparatory classes are designed to facilitate access to and participation in the education system by familiarising children 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.

There are difficulties with regard to education of unaccompanied children who are above the compulsory school age, particularly where they have not achieved yet the skill level required by secondary school. Such difficulties include a lack of sufficient language skills, forcing unaccompanied children to attend classes for younger age groups, and the absence of programmes providing access to vocational training.

Vocational training and apprenticeships can offer the appropriate environment for unaccompanied children to develop their skills to join the labour market. Vocational training allows familiarity with the language and culture of the host society, and empowers unaccompanied 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.

This chapter is composed of various subchapters covering the following aspects of schooling, education of unaccompanied children, and vocational training:

- access to the education system and other education arrangements;
- preparatory classes;
- access to vocational training.

Each of these subchapters covers essential aspects of the topic, which complement each other.

Legal references – Education

- Article 14 RCD: Schooling and education of minors
- Article 16 RCD: Vocational training

7.1 Access to the education system and other education arrangements

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 31: *Ensure effective access to the education system under similar conditions as nationals and no later than three months after the application for international protection was lodged.*

Indicator 31.1: All unaccompanied children should have access to the education system under similar condition to nationals.

- **Additional remarks:** *The RCD provides that MS shall grant applicants of international protection who are children access to the education system under similar conditions to their own nationals for as long as an expulsion measure against them is not actually enforced. Once enrolled in school, unaccompanied children should benefit from the same services as national children taking into account their special needs.*

Indicator 31.2: All unaccompanied children who have reached the age of majority should be able to continue the secondary education.

- **Additional remarks:** *According to Article 14(1) RCD 'Member State shall not withdraw secondary education for the sole reason that the minor has reached the age of majority'. Therefore, unaccompanied children who have reached the age of majority should be given the opportunity to continue their education beyond the compulsory period provisioned in the national legislation of the MS.*

Indicator 31.3: Education is available outside the reception facility at a reasonable distance or inside the facility and if needed unaccompanied children are accompanied by staff or the representative.

- **Additional remarks:** *The transport costs should be covered by the daily expenses allowance or organised transport should be provided.*

Indicator 31.4: Unaccompanied children who attend school or other education arrangements are enabled to participate in compulsory national school trips.

- **Additional remarks:** *This could mean enabling unaccompanied children to participate in activities without curfews preventing them to do so.*

STANDARD 32: *Ensure access to other education arrangements where access to the education system is temporarily not possible due to the specific circumstances in the EU+ States or the specific situation of unaccompanied children.*

Indicator 32.1: Specific arrangements are in place where the education services are provided within the accommodation facilities or other suitable locations.

- **Additional remarks:** *Sufficient and adequate infrastructure, curriculum and trained staff for education activities are provided.*

Indicator 32.2: Specific arrangements are in place for unaccompanied children with special needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *Unaccompanied children with substantially reduced mobility should not be expected to access public schools by walking. Alternative education arrangements (e.g. home schooling, transportation, and accompaniment) or access to specialised educational structures should be provided in such cases.*

Good practice on access to the education system and other education arrangements

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ Prepare schools, including curricula and teachers, to receive unaccompanied children. Equal treatment with nationals can sometimes lead to a situation in which the specific needs of unaccompanied children are not considered.
- ✓ Develop mechanisms for monitoring the access to education, data collection and ensuring mainstreaming in policy and practice at national level.
- ✓ Distribute unaccompanied children across local schools in order to avoid segregation.
- ✓ Involve civil society, including NGOs as providers of informal education, to facilitate interactions with local communities and understanding of local culture and customs.
- ✓ Raise the awareness of the relevant authorities of the obligation to provide access to education.
- ✓ Adjust of the system for children with special needs to the situation and specific needs of unaccompanied children.
- ✓ Provide special guidelines and training for teachers and education personal on identification of unaccompanied children with trauma.
- ✓ Provide support that takes account of combinations of vulnerabilities of the individual child.
- ✓ Develop the possibility for education activities in their own language.
- ✓ Enable the participation of the unaccompanied children who attend school or other education arrangements in extracurricular school activities.
- ✓ Provide counselling and psychological support for traumatised unaccompanied children within the school system by specialised staff.

7.2 Preparatory classes

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 33: Ensure access to and participation in the education system.

Indicator 33.1: All unaccompanied children should have access to internal or external preparatory classes, including language classes, when necessary, in order to facilitate their access to and participation in the education system.

- **Additional remarks:** *Unaccompanied children need support, sometimes permanently, to become familiar with the education system and to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to actively participate in mainstream classes.*

Indicator 33.2: 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.

- **Additional remarks:** *Special attention should be paid to resources needed for an effective implementation of preparatory classes.*

Good practice on preparatory classes

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ provide for intensive language classes in line with the needs, levels of maturity and cultural background of unaccompanied children;
- ✓ provide for guidelines and criteria to assess skills and previous education of unaccompanied children for enrolment in school;
- ✓ raise awareness of teachers and educators, internally and externally, about specific needs and background of unaccompanied children.

7.3 Access to vocational training

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 34: Ensure access to vocational training when mainstream classes are not considered in the best interests of the child.

Indicator 34.1: Unaccompanied children should have access to vocational training irrespective of the recognition of their previous education.

- **Additional remarks:** *The RCD provides that 'Member State may allow applicants access to vocational training irrespective of whether they have access to the labour market'. This possibility should be taken into account if, after discussion with the unaccompanied children and the representative, the children have other interests, different than the education they followed before.*

Indicator 34.2: Specific arrangements are in place for unaccompanied children with special needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *As an example, unaccompanied children with substantially reduced mobility should not be expected to access vocational training by walking. Alternative vocational training arrangements should be provided in such cases.*

Good practice with regards to vocational training

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ provide for flexible vocational training that includes language classes and cultural orientation, adapted to the specific needs of unaccompanied children;
- ✓ provide for mentoring programmes with students/employees from various fields, which help unaccompanied children to acquire specific skills;
- ✓ provide for apprenticeship stages in various fields that help unaccompanied children decide what they want to become;
- ✓ involve specialised NGOs.

8. Food, clothing and other non-food items, and allowances

Introductory remarks

Food, clothing and other non-food items as well as daily expenses allowances form an essential part of the material reception conditions.

Standards included in this chapter should be considered irrespective of whether unaccompanied children are provided with food, clothing and other non-food items in kind or in form of financial allowances or vouchers. This means that where EU+ States choose to provide unaccompanied children with a financial allowance to cover the costs of food, clothing and other non-food items, this allowance should allow unaccompanied children to purchase food, clothing and other non-food items in accordance with the standards listed in this chapter. This is without prejudice to situations where unaccompanied children already possess sufficient clothing or other non-food items in line with the standards included in this chapter and thus do not need to receive additional items.

The term ‘food’ as referred to in this chapter includes food as well as non-alcoholic beverages. The term clothing as referred to in this chapter refers to both clothes and shoes. 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, as well as towels. Non-food items also include school utensils.

The provision of non-food items should always take place while taking into consideration the personal situation of unaccompanied children. Specifically, the composition of the non-food items as well as the quantity provided should take into account the personal needs of the child in question.

The RCD does not directly address the details and purpose of the daily expenses allowance. Nevertheless, the concept is essential to respond to unaccompanied children’s needs. The daily expenses allowance covers other essential needs of unaccompanied children addressed by the RCD that go beyond food and clothing (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:

- to allow unaccompanied children to reach a minimum level of physical subsistence, beyond the basic necessities of housing, food or clothing;
- to ensure a minimum standard of participation of unaccompanied children in the socio-cultural life of the EU+ State they are residing in; and
- to enable unaccompanied children to enjoy a certain degree of autonomy.

This guidance refers to ‘daily expenses allowance’ as a minimum as the monetary allowance provided to unaccompanied children for no specific purpose and at their free disposal (pocket money). Additionally, where specific non-food items or other complementary needs are not provided in kind or in the form of vouchers, their costs could also be taken into account when calculating the amount of daily expenses allowance provided to unaccompanied children.

Provision of allowances (‘pocket money’) is based on the consideration that a dignified standard of living can only be achieved when unaccompanied children have a certain degree of financial autonomy. In other words, at least part of the allowance provided to them should not be earmarked but rather be at the free disposal to use in line with their own personal needs and preferences. The age and maturity of the unaccompanied child may, however, determine how much supervision and help the child needs in managing the allowances (cf. Chapter 4. Day-to-day care).

In light of the varying standards and costs of living across EU+ States, the standards on daily expenses allowances does not attempt to define the exact level of allowance that should be provided to unaccompanied children. Irrespective of the method used for calculation of the daily expenses allowance, the three purposes listed above should always be fulfilled.

Legal references – food, clothing and other non-food items, and allowances

- Article 2(g) RCD: Definition of material reception conditions
- Article 18 RCD: Modalities for material reception conditions

Standards and indicators

8.1 Food

STANDARD 35: Ensure that unaccompanied children have access to sufficient and adequate food.

Indicator 35.1: Food safety standards are observed.

- **Additional remarks:** *In line with the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) ⁽²⁶⁾ for food safety, developed by the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the sanitation of housing, and 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 a lack of cleanliness could turn out to be a hazard for the overall health in the housing.*
- *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 35.2: A minimum five meals are served per day 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. The meals are not necessarily distributed at five different times during the day.*

Indicator 35.3: The daily schedule of unaccompanied 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, children go to school, work and/or participate in leisure activities and therefore miss the regular meal times.*

Indicator 35.4: 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 35.5: Unaccompanied children are informed about the composition of the meal.

- **Additional remarks:** *Information could be provided in a general manner (with labels, etc.) or on demand.*

Indicator 35.6: Specific arrangements are in place for unaccompanied children with special dietary needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *For example, specific arrangements for unaccompanied children with certain illnesses and food allergies should be taken into account.*

Indicator 35.7: The eating preferences and dietary restrictions of specific groups are taken into account.

- **Additional remarks:** *'Specific groups' refers to unaccompanied children from a specific religious and/or cultural background as well as vegetarian/vegan children.*
- *EU+ States choosing to 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 the special need of the child.*

Good practice with regards to the provision of food

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ Allow unaccompanied children to cook for themselves where possible and appropriate, given that the children are old enough, have the knowledge to cook for themselves and that this promotes their autonomy and increases the feeling of normality/feeling at home;
- ✓ Consult unaccompanied children regarding the menu and the cooking of the food.

⁽²⁶⁾ Food and Agricultural Organisation, *Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System*, 1997, available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y1579e/y1579e03.htm>

STANDARD 36: Ensure that unaccompanied children have access to potable water 24/7.

Indicator 36.1: Each child is provided with a minimum of 2.5 litres of water per day while personal physiology and climate are taken into account.

- **Additional remarks:** More details about minimum daily drinking water quantity can be found in the standards developed as part of the Sphere Project ⁽²⁷⁾.

Alternative indicators on access to potable water:

Indicator 36.2 a): the infrastructure of the housing is adequate for potable water; **OR**

Indicator 36.2 b): Potable water is distributed in absence of adequate infrastructure.

- **Additional remarks:** Unaccompanied children should be informed regarding the safety of tap water as drinkable water, where applicable.

Good practice with regards to the provision of beverages

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ provide warm beverages in addition to the potable water.

8.2 Clothing and other non-food items**STANDARD 37: Ensure that unaccompanied children possess sufficient clothing.**

Indicator 37.1: Unaccompanied children are provided with clothing as soon as possible.

- **Additional remarks:** Within a few hours after having been assigned to a housing facility, unaccompanied children must be dressed in at least basic (provisional) clothing enabling them to move freely in all the accessible areas (both interior and exterior) designed for them.

Indicator 37.2: Unaccompanied children possess sufficient underwear for a week without having to do laundry.

- **Additional remarks:** The above should be considered as a minimum of eight sets of underwear.

Indicator 37.3: Unaccompanied children possess at least a minimum number of clothing items.

- **Additional remarks:** The above should be considered as a minimum as five second layer upper-body items (such as T-shirt, shirt, blouse), at least three lower-body items (trousers, skirt, shorts), at least three items like hoodie, sweater, and jacket, and two sets of nightwear.

Indicator 37.4: Unaccompanied children have at least two different pairs of shoes.

- **Additional remarks:** This could include one pair of shoes for domestic use as well as one pair for outdoor use.

Indicator 37.5: If any of the clothes are no longer usable because of wear and tear, there is a standardised way to obtain another one in exchange.

Indicator 37.6: Unaccompanied children with babies or small children possess sufficient clothes for their children for one week without having to do laundry.

Good practice with regards to the provision of sufficient clothing

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ avoid creating a 'uniform appearance' for all unaccompanied children (if clothing is provided in kind) as this helps to avoid stigmatisation;
- ✓ establish a 'donation storage' and connection with (humanitarian) NGOs with the purpose of acquiring and distributing of second-hand clothes;
- ✓ enable unaccompanied children to buy clothes for themselves as part of learning about economics.

⁽²⁷⁾ World Health Organization, *How much water is needed in emergencies?*, 2013, available at http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/2011/WHO_TN_09_How_much_water_is_needed.pdf?ua=1.

STANDARD 38: Ensure that unaccompanied children possess adequate clothing.

Indicator 38.1: The clothing is reasonably fitting the unaccompanied children 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 38.2: The clothing is in reasonably good condition and appropriate to the prevailing standard of the host society and the children's background.

- **Additional remarks:** *Clothing items (except for underwear) do not need to be new, but should be in a good state.*

Indicator 38.3: Adequate seasonal clothing is available.

- **Additional remarks:** *This means, for example, that unaccompanied children should possess a winter coat/jacket, gloves, a winter hat, a cap, a winter scarf, winter shoes, where necessary.*

Indicator 38.4: Sufficient clothing required for participation in school trips and extracurricular school activities are provided.

Good practice with regards to the provision of adequate clothing

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ offer girls at least one extra veil as part of the set of clothes provided to them, based on request.

STANDARD 39: Ensure that unaccompanied children have access to sufficient and adequate personal hygiene products.

Indicator 39.1: A list exists specifying which type and quantity of personal hygiene products children of certain age and gender are entitled to receive.

- **Additional remarks:** *This list is clearly communicated to the unaccompanied children.*

Indicator 39.2: Necessary personal hygiene products are at the children's disposal, either through regular distribution in-kind on a per capita basis or through the daily expenses allowance.

- **Additional remarks:** *In order to maintain personal cleanliness, hygiene and prevention of infectious diseases, basic hygiene products should be at the children's disposal. Those should include, for example: toothbrush, toothpaste, toilet paper, soap, shampoo, shaver/shaving foam and sanitary pads. For children with babies, nappies and other hygiene products necessary for caring for babies should be included.*

STANDARD 40: Ensure that unaccompanied children have access to other essential non-food items

Indicator 40.1: Sufficient bed linen and towels are provided.

- **Additional remarks:** *If unaccompanied children are responsible for washing their bed linen, at least two sets are provided.*

Indicator 40.2: Washing powder is available if unaccompanied children are responsible for washing their own clothes.

Indicator 40.3: Specific arrangements are in place for unaccompanied children with special reception needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *For example, unaccompanied children 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 with regards to the provision of access to other essential non-food items

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ provide older children with access to an ironing set and a hair dryer where necessary.

STANDARD 41: Ensure that unaccompanied 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 41.1: Unaccompanied children who attend school or other education arrangements are provided with adequate clothing for school activities.

- **Additional remarks:** *This could include school uniform where mandatory, as well as sports clothing and shoes.*

Indicator 41.2: Unaccompanied 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 41.3: Sufficient clothing required for participation in school trips and extracurricular school activities are provided.

8.3 Daily expenses allowance

STANDARD 42: Ensure that an adequate daily expenses allowance is provided.

Indicator 42.1: A clear definition of the scope of daily expenses allowance exists.

Indicator 42.2: The method for the calculation of the daily expenses allowance is clearly determined.

- **Additional remarks:** *'Determined' means that the elements taken into account when defining the amount of the daily expenses allowance and the factors taken into account when assessing the amount under each of them are described.*

Indicator 42.3: The daily expenses allowance is provided at free disposal ('pocket money').

- **Additional remarks:** *Daily expenses allowance 'at free disposal' can never be provided in kind. The actual amount should be determined in relation to the national context. This should take into account complementary needs beyond the basic needs, such as products or services of individual choice (e.g. cultural activities, treats, games, going out).*
- *How the money is provided to the unaccompanied children should be assessed in each case, taking into account the unaccompanied children's need for supervision and help to spend or save pocket money (cf. Chapter 4. Day-to-day care).*

Indicator 42.4: The amount of 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 travelling costs as a result of healthcare visits and obtaining medication, the asylum procedure and legal assistance, and education for children enrolled in school or other education arrangements.

- **Additional remarks:** *Concerning the in-kind provision of school utensils and personal hygiene and body care (cf. Standards 39 and 41 as well as Chapter 6. Healthcare, Standard 29).*

Indicator 42.5: 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 on the provision of the daily expenses allowance

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ take into account the individual situation of unaccompanied children (e.g. age/family composition) when calculating the amount of daily expenses allowance provided;
- ✓ provide the daily expenses allowance in advance of the period it is to cover;
- ✓ provide daily expenses allowance equal to the rate that is provided to children in mainstream services;
- ✓ provide daily expenses allowances on a card to avoid large amounts of cash money.

9. Housing

Introductory remarks

This chapter is composed of various subchapters covering the following aspects of housing:

- location;
- infrastructure of housing facilities;
- security of housing facilities;
- common areas;
- sanitation;
- maintenance;
- communication equipment and services.

Each of these subchapters covers essential aspects of housing facilities, which complement each other.

EU+ States are free to choose from different types of housing provided to unaccompanied children as long as the special reception needs of unaccompanied children are taken into consideration. The different arrangements range from accommodation centres to alternative arrangements, including foster care, private houses, flats or other premises adapted for housing children ⁽²⁸⁾.

At the same time, the practices of EU+ States reflect 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 for international protection in the Dublin procedure. Consequently, the functionality of premises might differ depending on the time period intended for applicants for international protection to reside there. Therefore, the applicability of certain standards and indicators included in this chapter may depend on the type of housing chosen and on its purpose (e.g. long-term vs. short-term residence for unaccompanied children). Wherever a standard only applies to a specific type of housing, this will be mentioned.

Legal references – housing

- Article 17 RCD: General rules on reception conditions and healthcare
- Article 18(1) RCD: Modalities of material reception conditions

9.1 Location

Introductory remarks

The standards and indicators included in this subchapter refer to the location of the premises in relation to the environment. The location of the housing has a strong influence on other aspects of the reception system, including the accessibility of relevant services (e.g. education services, health services, legal aid, or services related to the different instances of the asylum procedure), and has even more influence on the integration opportunities and prospects. Therefore, the standards and indicators included in this subchapter are closely linked to those of the following subchapters. This means that the choice of where to set up the housing should be made with full consideration given to other aspects of reception conditions addressed in the different chapters of this document.

At the same time, the definition of some of the indicators used within this subchapter (e.g. based on evaluation on the level of maturity: what constitutes a ‘reasonable walking distance’, an ‘adequate duration of a journey’ or ‘regularity of organised transportation’) would depend on the type of service to be accessed and the frequency of the need to access this service. For example, where unaccompanied children need to access school, access needs to be possible on a daily basis and the duration should be short. At the same time, the duration of travel to facilitate the participation of the applicant for international protection in the personal interview could be longer, in particular if transportation is provided by the responsible authority.

It is generally understood that housing facilities should be located in areas that are designated for residential use.

⁽²⁸⁾ European Network of Guardianship Institutions (ENGI), *Alternative Family Care (ALFACA)*, available at <https://engi.eu/projects/alfaca/>.

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 43: Ensure effective geographic access to relevant services, such as public services, school, healthcare, social and legal assistance, a shop for daily needs, laundry, and leisure activities.

Indicator 43.1: Specific arrangements are in place for unaccompanied children with special needs.

- **Additional remarks:** For example, unaccompanied children with substantially reduced mobility should not be expected to access relevant services by walking. The unaccompanied children's age and maturity should also be taken into consideration. Alternative arrangements should be made in such cases.

Alternative indicators on ensuring geographic accessibility:

Indicator 43.1 a): The relevant services are provided within the housing; **OR**

Indicator 43.1 b): The facility is located at a reasonable walking distance from relevant services and the available infrastructure is safe for walking; **OR**

- **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 healthcare facilities and school.

Indicator 43.1 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 would be made in relation to the type of service to be accessed and the regularity in which this service needs to be accessed by unaccompanied children (e.g. the time needed for unaccompanied children to go to school via the public transport, the time needed to travel to the personal interview). Additionally, the regularity of the public transport itself should be taken into account, allowing unaccompanied children to effectively avail themselves of the service by taking a safe 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: healthcare and obtaining medication, the asylum procedure and legal assistance and education for unaccompanied children enrolled in school and in vocational training.

OR

Indicator 43.1 d): Relevant services are accessible through organised transport provided by the EU+ States.

- **Additional remarks:** The provision of transport should be clarified by specifying the regularity of transport provided by the EU+ States.

Good practice on defining the location of housing

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ define the location of housing with the purpose of accommodating unaccompanied children in the longer term with a view to enable interaction between them and the local population, in order to avoid isolation and facilitate integration in the longer term;
- ✓ limit the duration of the journey (one way) by public transport to a maximum of 45 minutes for school or vocational training;
- ✓ involve the local resident populations in the definition of the location of a housing facility.

9.2 Infrastructure

Introductory remarks

The following definitions apply with regards to the standards and indicators listed in this subchapter:

- '(Bed-)room': a separate room defined by four walls with a door which can be closed, a window that can be opened and a ceiling. In accommodation centres or other shared housing, 'bedrooms' should always be understood as lockable rooms to which the staff have access.
- 'Family members' should be defined in accordance with Article 2(c) RCD.

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 44: Ensure sufficient space in the bedroom in collective housing.

Indicator 44.1: A minimum space of 4 m² per person is provided for each unaccompanied child.

- **Additional remarks:** *This indicator can be further clarified depending on whether the room accommodates unaccompanied children who are not related or family members. Age could also be taken into account, e.g. housing an underage mother with her small children. Reference could be made to national legislation that defines the minimum of living space per person, if such is stipulated.*

Indicator 44.2: About the minimum space of 4 m² per person, a minimum height of the room of 2.10 m is ensured.

Indicator 44.3: Sufficient space exists in the bedroom to place one bed and one cupboard.

STANDARD 45: Ensure respect for the privacy and safety of the children in collective housing.

Indicator 45.1: A maximum of four children are accommodated in one bedroom.

Indicator 45.2: Separate bedrooms for single male and female unaccompanied children exist and no access is possible for children of the opposite sex.

Indicator 45.3: The restriction of access should be ensured via separate facilities from adults.

- **Additional remarks:** *Adults may visit units accommodating unaccompanied children within the visiting hours when the visit is first agreed with the staff and the unaccompanied children concerned.*

Indicator 45.4: A room creating a private setting (inside or outside the premises) for meetings with representative, legal aid, social worker, or other relevant actors is foreseen and available to unaccompanied children, when needed.

Good practice with regards to privacy of unaccompanied children

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ 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 46: Ensure that the housing is sufficiently furnished.

Indicator 46.1: The furniture for each bedroom includes, as a minimum:

46.1.1: one individual bed; **AND**

46.1.2: study table and one chair per person either in the bedroom or the common areas; **AND**

46.1.3: one lockable cupboard per child, big enough to keep personal belongings (such as clothes, money or documents).

Indicator 46.2: In shared bedrooms, the cupboard is lockable.

Indicator 46.3: The common/living areas should be furnished in a homely and child-friendly manner including a sufficient number of tables, chairs, sofas and armchairs. There should be a common living room.

Indicator 46.4: In facilities where unaccompanied children cook for themselves, all of the following is provided and accessible in the kitchen:

46.4.1: sufficient refrigerator volume per person; **AND**

46.4.2: sufficient shelf space per person; **AND**

46.4.3: a minimum access to a stove per person; **AND**

46.4.4: 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.*

Indicator 46.5: In facilities where catering services are provided, supervised food preparation training has to be accessible for unaccompanied children and the following items are provided and accessible in the kitchen:

46.5.1: sufficient refrigeration, oven/stove, and shelf capacity is provided and accessible; **AND**

46.5.2: sufficient number of dishes, cups, cooking utensils, and cutlery provided and accessible.

STANDARD 47: Ensure sufficient, adequate, and functioning sanitary infrastructure in the housing.

Indicator 47.1: All children should have safe and effective access to a shower/bath, sink with hot and cold water and a lockable, functional toilet which can be opened from the outside by staff.

Indicator 47.2: At least one functioning and lockable toilet per eight children is accessible 24/7.

Indicator 47.3: At least one functioning shower or bath with hot and cold water exists per eight children.

- **Additional remarks:** *The ratio shower/child can be adapted if accessibility is ensured for longer periods during the day.*

Indicator 47.4: At least one functioning sink with hot and cold water per ten children is accessible 24/7.

Indicator 47.5: If more than one shower is located in the bathroom visual separation is ensured.

Indicator 47.6: Separate toilets, sinks and shower facilities exist according to gender (visibly and understandably marked) except for small housing facilities.

- **Additional remarks:** *Apartments, studios and other housing for less than eight persons could constitute exceptions.*

Indicator 47.7: Arrangements are in place to ensure that children may access the facilities safely and that the intimacy of unaccompanied children is at all times respected.

Indicator 47.8: Arrangements are in place to ensure that clothes and towels can stay dry while unaccompanied children are taking a shower.

Indicator 47.9: Specific arrangements are in place for unaccompanied children with special needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *Unlimited access to sanitary facilities should be available to unaccompanied children being parents for taking care of babies and small children.*

Good practice with regards to sanitary infrastructure

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ 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 child safety by placing the sanitary installations in the vicinity or at a safe distance with well-lit access.

STANDARD 48: Ensure compliance of the housing with relevant national and local regulations.

Indicator 48.1: The housing is built in compliance with applicable local and national regulations.

Indicator 48.2: The housing is maintained and operated in compliance with relevant local and national regulations, taking into account all potential hazards.

- **Additional remarks:** *The following are examples to assess progress towards the appropriate standards for an accommodation centre: an evacuation plan for the accommodation centre is present and visible at all times, the routes for evacuation are free from obstacles, fire extinguishers are accessible.*

Indicator 48.3: Sufficient natural light and fresh air enters the bedrooms and common/living areas of the housing while curtains and/or shutters are available to shut out the light when needed.

Indicator 48.4: An adequate temperature regulation system exists for all areas of the housing.

- **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. The minimum indoor temperature in winter must be 18 degrees and in summer, the maximum indoor temperature must be 28 degrees.*

Indicator 48.5: 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 49: Ensure that the inside and outside infrastructure of a housing designated to house unaccompanied children with reduced mobility is adapted to their needs.

Alternative indicators on ensuring inside and outside infrastructure adapted to special needs:

Indicator 49.1: The housing is located:

49.1 a): on the ground floor; **OR**

49.1 b): a lift adapted for use by persons with reduced mobility exists; **OR**

49.1 c): stairs are not more than a maximum number, according to the degree of reduced mobility.

Indicator 49.2: The external approaches such as paths or drives have a firm, level surface.

Indicator 49.3: The entrance is designed to allow access for unaccompanied children with reduced mobility.

Indicator 49.4: Doorways and passageways inside of the housing are wide enough for wheelchair users.

Indicator 49.5: Grab rails exist for support in rooms and places that are used by unaccompanied children with reduced mobility.

Indicator 49.6: Adapted sanitary infrastructure exists, including, for example, walk-in showers, grab rails, sinks, and toilets at appropriate height for wheelchair users, as well as a surface of bathroom and toilet rooms sufficient for wheelchairs.

9.3 Security

Introductory remarks

Adequate security of the housing and facilities: furniture and equipment should be ensured in line with applicable national legislation and regulations and with the overall goal to ensure a safe living environment for the unaccompanied children as well as the personnel working in the housing facilities.

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 50: Ensure sufficient security measures.

Indicator 50.1: A risk assessment of the housing and facilities is carried out on a regular basis, taking into account external and internal factors.

- **Additional remarks:** *Factors to take into account for the risk assessment include security issues expressed by the unaccompanied children, the condition and location of the housing, attitudes of the local resident community, number of people to be accommodated, composition of nationalities among residents of the housing, age and gender, family status of children, children with special needs accommodated in the housing, and past incidents.*

Indicator 50.2: 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 housing, ensuring sufficient lighting in the outside areas of the housing premises,*

restricting public access where needed for the safety of the children, and the inclusion of security-related aspects in the 'house rules'.

- *Unaccompanied children should be taught how to use fire blankets and extinguishers in a case of fire.*

Indicator 50.3: Access to the premises is monitored.

- **Additional remarks:** *When the premises are monitored via a video monitoring system, it should only safeguard incoming and common areas. In addition, unaccompanied children should be informed about its existence and its purpose.*

Indicator 50.4: 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.*

Indicator 50.5: 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:** *Unaccompanied children should be informed on the reporting line in case of security incidents.*

Indicator 50.6: The numbers for emergency calls are displayed in a visible place and a phone is available.

- **Additional remarks:** *The phone number of the facility (available 24/7) is displayed in a visible place so that unaccompanied children can save it in their own phones or mark it down so that they are always able to contact someone if needed.*

Indicator 50.7: Security measures also focus on the detection and prevention of sexual and GBV.

- **Additional remarks:** *Examples of such measures include appropriate lighting for areas, restricting the need for unaccompanied children to walk alone through or to isolated areas, restricting access to adults, doors should have locks, etc.*

Indicator 50.8: Specific arrangements have been made for unaccompanied children with special needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *Specific measures should be put in place to ensure the security of all children, in particular those with special needs related to their age, family status, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation, physical and mental health problems. Specific security arrangements should also be in place for victims of human trafficking, sexual and GBV, torture or other forms of psychological and physical violence (cf. Chapter 3. Allocation, Standard 15 (Re-)allocation of children because of their special needs).*

Indicator 50.9: The provision of a protected space which is free of hazards for unaccompanied children to play.

Good practice with regards to security measures

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ make spaces available where specific groups can express security concerns in private, in order to encourage the reporting of violence;
- ✓ make use of a system for the recording or filing of security incidents.

9.4 Common areas

Introductory remarks

In the framework of this guidance, the term 'common areas' refers to a space where unaccompanied children eat and spend their leisure time. The size and set-up of the common area, as well as its functionality, depend on the type of housing where the unaccompanied children are located. Common areas for unaccompanied children should be furnished in a child-friendly manner. This should include the provision of comfortable seating (sofas and armchairs). They should also be fire resistant. In addition, general decoration for example providing rugs, cushions, pot plants and curtains. As such, common areas might refer to one or more rooms which can be used by unaccompanied children.

With regards to bigger housing facilities, common areas could likely refer to a number of different rooms which each fulfil multiple purposes, i.e. to eat, to carry out leisure activities, or to take part in other collective activities (e.g. completion of school homework, language classes, information provision, etc.). At the same time, smaller facilities might have one multipurpose room which can be turned into a dining/living room or a room for studying

or carrying out leisure activities, depending on the need and time of the day. This is based on the important link existing between the unaccompanied children's possibility to engage in leisure activities and their mental health. The existence of space for leisure activities or the possibility for unaccompanied children to engage in collective actions (e.g. play indoor games, do chores, attend 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.

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 51: Ensure that unaccompanied children have sufficient space to eat.

Indicator 51.1: All children have the possibility to eat in a designated space.

- **Additional remarks:** *It is possible for all unaccompanied children to eat in a canteen (in a bigger facility) or in a room where there is a table and 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 52: Ensure that unaccompanied children have sufficient space for leisure and group activities.

Indicator 52.1: An area that is suitable for leisure activities exists inside the housing or nearby within public space.

- **Additional remarks:** *Gender, age as well as the cultural of the unaccompanied children should be taken into account when setting up rooms for leisure activities in collective housing (e.g. for changing rooms). If possible, this could involve separate rooms or hours during which rooms designated for leisure activities can be used.*

Indicator 52.2: Where group activities are organised by an EU+ State, sufficient and suitable space, e.g. in the form of a separate room, is available.

- **Additional remarks:** *The term 'group activity' refers for example to language classes, group information sessions, sport activities, etc.*

Indicator 52.3: A safe room/area exists for unaccompanied children to play and to engage in open-air activities in the housing itself.

Indicator 52.4 a): A minimum of leisure activities are located at a reasonable walking distance and the distance is safe for walking; **AND**

Indicator 52.4 b): In collective facilities, a minimum of leisure activities appropriate to children's age are available inside the housing; **AND**

Indicator 52.4 c): Additional activities may be accessible by public transportation or through organised transports provided by the EU+ State.

Indicator 52.5 a): Unaccompanied children 0-12 have *daily* access to playgrounds and playrooms appropriate to their age; **AND**

Indicator 52.5 b): Unaccompanied children 13-17 have *weekly* access to indoor and outdoor sport facilities.

Good practice with regards to common areas

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ arrange a separate study room or specific hours in a multipurpose room where school homework can be done in peace.

9.5 Sanitation

Introductory remarks

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 subchapter apply to the entire housing, including private as well as common areas located inside the housing or outside (if applicable). 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).

In bigger facilities, ‘private areas’ refer to the bedroom only, whereas all remaining rooms would fall under the category of common areas. Nonetheless, sanitary standards between different types of common areas differ, e.g. between the kitchen, sanitary areas and other rooms, such as offices or activity rooms. In contrast, in smaller facilities the kitchen, bathroom, as well as other rooms should be regarded as private areas, too.

While the maintenance of adequate sanitary standards falls under the overall responsibility of the relevant authorities in the MS, unaccompanied children may also be involved depending upon their age and development levels. In practice, the latter tend to be responsible for the cleaning of the private areas. In addition, depending on national legislation/regulation, other areas could be cleaned by the children on an educational basis, taking into account the age of the unaccompanied children. Cleaning should be advised and supervised by the staff. In some cases, this would also be remunerated as part of small jobs given out within the collective housing. 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 housing should be written down in the house rules.

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 53: Ensure that cleanliness in private and common areas is maintained.

Indicator 53.1: The housing facility observes a cleaning schedule.

- **Additional remarks:** *For each area, it is mentioned how often and to what standard it must be cleaned.*

Indicator 53.2: The cleanliness of private and common areas of the housing is checked on a regular basis.

- **Additional remarks:** *Checks take into consideration unaccompanied children’s needs for privacy.*

Indicator 53.3: The cleanliness is checked when people move to another room or to a different housing facility.

Indicator 53.4: If unaccompanied children take part in cleaning duties (on an educational basis) it is important for staff members to consider their age and development levels and provides the level of support necessary. It is also necessary that they have access to cleaning products and items, as well as protection equipment such as gloves and masks.

STANDARD 54: Ensure that the kitchen and sanitary areas are well maintained.

Indicator 54.1: The cleanliness of the areas is in line with local and national regulations and standards.

- **Additional remarks:** *These regulations could for example refer to the regularity of cleaning up so as to avoid inviting rodents and vermin.*

Indicator 54.2: The areas are cleaned at least daily (in accommodation centres), or more than once if necessary.

Indicator 54.3: In-depth cleaning of the areas takes place regularly.

- **Additional remarks:** *In accommodation centres, such in-depth cleaning should take place at least four times a year. The standards of cleanliness of kitchens used by unaccompanied children differs from those expected for professional cooking.*

Good practice with regards to ensuring the cleanliness of the facilities

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ introduce a cleaning schedule which is written down in a clearly visible manner and verifiable by children;
- ✓ actively check by staff members that cleaning duties have been completed

STANDARD 55: Ensure unaccompanied children are able to do their laundry or have it done on a regular basis.

Indicator 55.1: When the bed linen is provided in kind and washed by the housing facility it should be washed at least once every two weeks.

Alternative indicators:

Indicator 55.1 a): Unaccompanied children should be able to do laundry (including towels) at least once a week, which can be done independently or with the necessary supervision; **OR**

- **Additional remarks:** *This indicator could be clarified in the national context by specifying the number of washing machines and an adequate possibility to dry the laundry per set number of persons.*

Indicator 55.1 b): If a laundry service is available it should be sufficiently accessible at least five days per week (including the weekend).

9.6 Maintenance

Introductory remarks

In this subchapter, the term ‘maintenance’ should be understood as ‘a set of activities which are required and undertaken to conserve the original condition of the housing as much as possible and as long as possible’.

While the maintenance of the reception facility falls under the overall responsibility of the relevant authorities in the EU+ States, unaccompanied children may also be involved on a voluntary basis, if allowed by national legislation/regulation. When unaccompanied children are involved, it has to be on an educational basis, taking into account the age of the unaccompanied child and they should be advised and supervised by staff. In some cases, this would also be remunerated as part of small jobs given out within the collective housing. In those cases, the process should be supervised by the responsible body or by a special company responsible for maintenance works.

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 56: Ensure the safety and proper functioning of the housing facilities through regular maintenance.

Indicator 56.1: The good functioning of the housing 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 to carry out the assessment.*

Indicator 56.2: Unaccompanied children have the possibility to report the necessity of maintenance and repairs.

Indicator 56.3: Repairs and replacements needed within the housing are carried out promptly and with adequate quality.

- **Additional remarks:** *Without prejudice to the fact that the overall responsibility for maintenance of the housing lies with the reception authority, certain maintenance tasks could be carried out by the unaccompanied children voluntarily and on an educational basis, taking into account the age of a child and it always should be advised and supervised by staff. The overall supervision in any event should lie with the responsible body.*

9.7 Communication equipment and services

Introductory remarks

Communication plays an important role for unaccompanied children throughout the reception procedure. The term ‘communication’ includes both communication concerning the unaccompanied children’s procedural status as well as private communication e.g. with family members. Importantly, adequate access to communication can contribute to the mental health of children as it can help to prevent anxiety resulting from lacking contact with family members and friends left in the country of origin or transit or insufficient access to communication with representative, organisations providing legal aid or other relevant services.

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 57: *Ensure that unaccompanied children have adequate access to a telephone to maintain contact with family, carry out calls concerning procedural, legal, medical and educational issues.*

Indicator 57.1: Access to a telephone is possible at least for calls concerning family contact, contact with the representative and procedural, legal, medical or educational issues.

Indicator 57.2: Unaccompanied children have daily access to at least one telephone per facility.

- **Additional remarks:** *The number of phones to be installed in the premises will depend on the number of children residing in them.*

Indicator 57.3: Unaccompanied children can take calls in a private setting, i.e. other unaccompanied children cannot hear the conversation.

STANDARD 58: *Ensure that unaccompanied children have adequate access to the internet.*

Indicator 58.1: Unaccompanied children have daily and free of charge access to the internet in the housing itself for reasons regarding schooling and family contact.

- **Additional remarks:** *Internet access and duration should be age appropriate and regulated by the staff. Access to the internet in the housing can be facilitated through the availability of a wireless network (Wi-Fi) for unaccompanied children with own communicational devices (e.g. smart phones) and through the availability of an adequate number of computers for a set number of persons.*

STANDARD 59: *Ensure unaccompanied children have the possibility to charge their devices for communication.*

Indicator 59.1: 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 with regards to facilitating access to communication equipment and services

It is considered good practice to:

- ✓ provide unaccompanied children with the possibility to copy or print documents relevant for school purposes, asylum procedure or medical issues free of charge;
- ✓ facilitate access to a television with channels in at least two languages most widely spoken by unaccompanied children in the housing.

Annex I – Summary table

| Operational standards and indicators on the reception conditions of unaccompanied minors | | | |
|--|-----------------|--|--|
| Chapter | Subchapter | Standard | Indicators |
| 1. Information, participation and representation of unaccompanied children | 1.1 Information | 1. Ensure unaccompanied children receive relevant information. | <p>1.1 Information has to be provided within a reasonable time not exceeding 15 days after the application for international protection has been lodged, of at least any established benefits and of the obligations with which they must comply relating to reception conditions.</p> <p>1.2 Information should be provided free of charge.</p> <p>1.3 The information provided should address the questions of the unaccompanied child or the representative.</p> <p>1.4 Information covers all aspects of reception conditions concerning unaccompanied children, and 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.</p> <p>1.5 Information is provided according to the special needs and individual circumstances of the unaccompanied children.</p> <p>1.6 Information covers the roles of staff working with unaccompanied children.</p> <p>1.7 Information should explain the obligation of appointing a representative in order to assist unaccompanied children on procedural issues and in their everyday life.</p> <p>1.8 Information covers the main aspects of the procedure for international protection, incl. access to asylum procedure, available legal assistance and how to access it, possibilities for family tracing, family reunification, voluntary return and to appeal procedures that are relevant to his/her case.</p> |
| | | 2. Ensure that unaccompanied children understand the relevant information. | <p>2.1 The information is provided in a child-friendly, age-appropriate and culturally sensitive manner.</p> <p>2.2 Information must be provided systematically during the process and evidence of this information provision should be documented (when it was provided, by whom, etc.).</p> <p>2.3 Interpreters and/or language mediators need to be available in reception facilities to allow communication with unaccompanied children in their native language.</p> |

| Operational standards and indicators on the reception conditions of unaccompanied minors | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|--|
| Chapter | Subchapter | Standard | Indicators |
| 1. Information, participation and representation of unaccompanied children (continued) | 1.2 Participation | 3. Ensure that children's views / opinions are considered and acted upon, according to their age and maturity. | <p>3.1 Unaccompanied children are given safe and inclusive opportunities to express their views/opinions and for their views to be considered in line with age and maturity.</p> <p>3.2 A well-publicised, confidential and accessible procedure for internal complaints is established for unaccompanied children within the reception facility.</p> <p>3.3 Unaccompanied children are provided with feedback explaining how their input was considered and influenced actions at least once a month.</p> |
| | 1.3 Representation | 4. Ensure the appointment of a representative as soon as possible but no later than within 15 working days from when the application for international protection was made and enable him or her to provide assistance to the unaccompanied child with actions related to his/her legal obligations. | <p>4.1 Ensure that the representative is able to verify if the accommodation and residential care arrangements are adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.</p> <p>4.2 Enable the representative to report any issues to the reception staff providing housing to the child; involvement and consultation with cultural mediators should be provided, where appropriate.</p> <p>4.3 Enable the representative to provide the child with information on his/her rights and duties in relation to accommodation and material assistance and in this connection to assist the child to lodge a complaint where necessary.</p> <p>4.4 Enable the representative to verify if the child is informed about the role and responsibilities of the personnel and the caregivers in accommodation facilities.</p> <p>4.5 Enable the representative to verify that the child has effective access to the education system and that the child regularly attends classes.</p> <p>4.6 Enable the representative to promote the child's access to leisure activities, including play and recreational activities appropriate to his/her age, maturity and interests.</p> |
| | | 5. Ensure that legal advisers or counsellors, persons representing international and the relevant NGOs recognised by the EU+ State concerned have adequate access to reception structures in order to assist unaccompanied children. | <p>5.1 The access of the actors above is only limited on grounds relating to the security of the premises and of the unaccompanied children, provided that it is not thereby severely restricted or rendered impossible.</p> <p>5.2 The actors listed above are able to meet and speak with the unaccompanied children in conditions ensuring adequate privacy.</p> |

| Operational standards and indicators on the reception conditions of unaccompanied minors | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Chapter | Subchapter | Standard | Indicators |
| 1. Information, participation and representation of unaccompanied children <i>(continued)</i> | 1.3 Representation <i>(continued)</i> | 6. Ensure that a procedure is in place to start tracing the members of the unaccompanied child's family as soon as possible after arrival and identification, where necessary with the assistance of international or other relevant organisations, whilst protecting the child's best interests. | 6.1 Reception authorities and/or other responsible staff including the representative initiate or start the family tracing based on the information given by the child and according to the best interests of the unaccompanied child. |
| 2. Assessments and response to special needs and risks. | 2.1 Special needs | 7. Ensure an initial procedure is in place to identify and assess special needs for unaccompanied children. | 7.1 A standardised mechanism/procedure to systematically identify and assess special needs for unaccompanied children is in place. 7.2 The mechanism clearly prescribes who is responsible for the identification and assessment of special needs. 7.3 The mechanism clearly prescribes how the identification and the assessment of the needs are recorded and communicated to the unaccompanied child and to relevant actors. |
| | | 8. Ensure that the mechanism/procedure for identification and assessment of special needs is effectively applied as soon as possible after arrival. | 8.1 Sufficient resources are allocated to systematically identify and assess the special needs of each unaccompanied child. 8.2 The initial identification and assessment of obvious vulnerability to allocate special needs is conducted during the reception intake on the first day upon arrival, at the latest within 24 hrs. 8.3 Special needs that become apparent at a later stage are adequately identified and assessed, addressed and documented. 8.4 Where relevant, specialised actors are involved in the assessment of special needs. 8.5 Communication channels and cooperation between the reception authority and the determining authority are established and used within the limits of confidentiality. 8.6 The identification and assessment of special needs takes place without prejudice to the examination of the unaccompanied child's need for international protection. |
| | | 9. Ensure that identified special needs are addressed in a timely manner. | 9.1 Adequate action is taken to respond to the identified and assessed special needs. The urgency of the response will depend on the identified need. 9.2 In case special needs have been identified, there is a mechanism in place to ensure their regular monitoring. |

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| 2. Assessments and response to special needs and risks. <i>(continued)</i> | 2.2 Risk assessment | 10. Ensure that staff working with unaccompanied children in a reception facility identify early safety and wellbeing risks for children. | <p>10.1 A standard risk assessment to identify the safety risks around unaccompanied children is in place.</p> <p>10.2 Safety risks of unaccompanied children are assessed in the first week upon arrival and this is repeated regularly at least every 6 months.</p> <p>10.3 Safety risks are systematically assessed.</p> <p>10.4 The outcome of the risk assessment is discussed in a multidisciplinary context.</p> |
| | | 11. Child reception staff ensures the reduction of safety risks to an absolute minimum. | <p>11.1 The necessary care and appropriate reception facility based on the risk assessment is provided within a week after arrival.</p> <p>11.2 Immediate action in acutely unsafe situations is taken by the reception authorities in order to eliminate the unsafe situation.</p> <p>11.3 Reception facilities have an alert instrument and ensure the systematic reporting and immediate response of missing unaccompanied children.</p> |
| | | 12. Ensure knowledge is provided to unaccompanied children on the subject of (de) radicalisation and that staff share signals related to the (potential) radicalisation of unaccompanied children with responsible authorities. | <p>12.1 The subject of radicalisation is discussed with unaccompanied children where necessary by staff working with unaccompanied children.</p> <p>12.2 Reception facilities have an alert instrument in order to report signals of radicalisation to the responsible persons and authorities.</p> |
| 3. Allocation | | 13. Specific and objective reasons (e. g. age, maturity and special needs) linked to the individual situation of the unaccompanied child, the specific care offered by the reception facility and the type of facility and possibilities of non-institutionalised forms of care are taken into account when allocating the unaccompanied child. | <p>13.1 A mechanism is in place to consider whether there are specific and objective reasons for the allocation of a particular housing.</p> |

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| 3. Allocation (<i>continued</i>) | | 14. Ensure that family unity is respected, in line with the principle of the best interests of the child. | <p>14.1 Unaccompanied children who are siblings (in accordance with the definition of Article 24 (2) RCD) are accommodated together with their agreement.</p> <p>14.2 Unaccompanied children, their spouses and their children can be accommodated together if this is in line with the best interests of the unaccompanied child and in accordance with relevant national law.</p> <p>14.3 Where possible and appropriate, family unity should be respected with regard to members of the broader family.</p> |
| | | 15. Ensure that special needs are taken into account when (re-)allocating a particular housing to an unaccompanied child. | <p>15.1 The allocation of particular housing to unaccompanied children is based on an assessment of their special reception needs.</p> <p>15.2 There is a possibility to transfer an unaccompanied child as a result of identified special reception needs.</p> <p>15.3 Transferring unaccompanied children should be limited to a minimum and only occur when they service the best interests of the child, for example better access to family members or educational services.</p> <p>15.4 Unaccompanied children turning 18 should be allowed to stay in the same place /area if possible. Special measures should take place when transferring an unaccompanied child turning 18 to an adult reception facility. The transfer should be carefully organised together with both reception facilities and the unaccompanied child.</p> |
| 4. Day-to-day care | | 16. Ensure the day-to-day care of the unaccompanied child in the accommodation centre (a) or in individual housing (b). | <p>16.1 a) (Child) reception staff is present in the accommodation centre 24/7.</p> <p>16.1 b) Child reception staff is specifically present when the unaccompanied child is in the accommodation centre meaning before and after school hours, during weekends and school holidays.</p> <p>16.1 c) If members of staff present at night are not child reception staff, they must as a minimum, be trained in child protection and the rights of the child and have the necessary information on the specific situation of the unaccompanied children in the accommodation centre.</p> <p>16.1 d) 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.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>16.2 a) When the unaccompanied child lives in individual housing, child reception staff are contactable 24/7.</p> <p>16.2 b) Child reception staff visits the unaccompanied child accommodated in individual housing at least twice a week.</p> <p>16.2 c) The presence of the unaccompanied child in individual housing is monitored during the home visits to be sure the child has not absconded.</p> <p>16.3 The unaccompanied child is supported in its everyday life and activities.</p> <p>16.4 The unaccompanied child is provided with help with homework and tutoring.</p> |

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| 4. Day-to-day care (<i>continued</i>) | | 17. The day-to-day care is organised according to a specific method for the care of unaccompanied children. | <p>17.1 The method for the care of unaccompanied children is outlined in a handbook, known and applied by all child reception staff responsible for the day-to-day care in the reception facility.</p> <p>17.2 The handbook contains at least a description of the objectives of the day-to-day care and of a conversation cycle in which these objectives and the outcome for the unaccompanied child are discussed with the child, as well as for his/her safety, future perspectives, skills and special needs.</p> <p>17.3 The child reception staff discusses the objectives of the day-to-day care and the outcome on a regular basis with the representative and the unaccompanied child.</p> |
| | | 18. The unaccompanied child is prepared to become autonomous and to live an independent life later on. | <p>18.1 Skills related to autonomy are assessed on a regular basis.</p> <p>18.2 The unaccompanied child is provided with support and training on home budget management and the responsible consumption of energy.</p> <p>18.3 The unaccompanied child is provided with support and training on cleaning and how to do laundry.</p> <p>18.4 The unaccompanied child is provided with support and training on cooking skills.</p> |
| | | 19. Safeguard and promote the unaccompanied child's health and wellbeing, and strengthen resilience. | <p>19.1 The unaccompanied child's psychological wellbeing and mental health is taken into account and safeguarded during day-to-day care.</p> <p>19.2 The unaccompanied child has access to awareness raising activities on the risks of drugs and alcohol use, according to its age and maturity.</p> <p>19.3 The unaccompanied child has access to awareness raising activities on sexual and reproductive health, and on gender roles, according to its age and maturity.</p> <p>19.4 The unaccompanied child is provided with a minimum of information and training aiming at strengthening it against all forms of mental and sexual or other forms of physical abuse and neglect.</p> |
| | | 20. Support and follow up the mental and social development of the unaccompanied child through a standardised care plan. | <p>20.1 The background, needs, skills and future prospects of the unaccompanied child are assessed by the child reception staff as standard elements of the unaccompanied child's care plan, with its participation.</p> <p>20.2 The mental and social development of the unaccompanied child is discussed among relevant caretakers from different disciplines (multidisciplinary approach).</p> <p>20.3 Information on the mental and social development of the unaccompanied child is exchanged with the representative on a regular basis.</p> <p>20.4 When the unaccompanied child is transferred to a new reception facility, the care plan is transmitted before or no later than the day of transfer, with respect of the principle of confidentiality.</p> |

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| 4. Day-to-day care (<i>continued</i>) | | 21. Ensure effective access to leisure activities, including play and recreational activities appropriate to unaccompanied children's age. | <p>21.1 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.</p> <p>21.2 Leisure activities are organised and supervised by child reception staff and/or other responsible adults involved in childcare.</p> <p>21.3 a) Unaccompanied children 0-12 can play daily in a safe space adapted to their age and under supervision AND</p> <p>21.3 b) A minimum range of sport activities appropriated to the unaccompanied child's age are regularly provided.</p> <p>21.4 Internet access and its duration is age appropriate and is regulated and supervised by the staff.</p> |
| 5. Staff | | 22. Ensure sufficient qualified staff is provided for the day-to-day care of unaccompanied children. | 22.1 The reception facility has to provide for sufficient qualified staff to carry out the day-to-day care of unaccompanied children. |
| | | 23. Ensure that staff is sufficiently qualified. | <p>23.1 Staff working with unaccompanied children in the reception context has clear terms of reference (job description).</p> <p>23.2 Staff working with unaccompanied children in the reception context is qualified in accordance with national law and regulations concerning his or her particular terms of reference (job description).</p> <p>23.3 Staff working with unaccompanied 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.</p> |
| | | 24. Ensure staff is provided with the necessary and appropriate training. | <p>24.1 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.</p> <p>24.2 Staff working with unaccompanied children in the reception context has a thorough and timely introduction into his or her role.</p> <p>24.3 A clear training curriculum including the training requirements for each functional group exists for assessing, determining, documenting and addressing special reception needs as soon as possible and throughout the reception period.</p> <p>24.4 Training is provided in a regular manner and depending on the needs of staff.</p> <p>24.5 Training provided includes gender and age-specific concerns, cultural training, conflict management, initial and specialised training on the identification of persons with special needs, awareness of mental health issues, recognising signs of radicalisation, and identification of victims of human trafficking as well as first aid and fire safety.</p> |

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| 5. Staff (<i>continued</i>) | | 25. Ensure and promote effective cooperation, information sharing and awareness | <p>25.1 Special needs recorded should be communicated to the relevant stakeholders in order to provide the necessary guarantees (special needs) and support.</p> <p>25.2 Regular cooperation, information sharing and awareness raising sessions and/or alternative arrangements are in place among those who are in contact with unaccompanied children due to their profession and/or function, including social workers, education and health-care staff, registration officers, interpreters, facility managers, administration/coordination staff as well as representatives.</p> <p>25.3 Representatives are informed by and inform other relevant actors working with unaccompanied children on the mental and social development of the unaccompanied child on a regular basis.</p> <p>25.4 Confidentiality rules provided for in national and international law, in relation to any information those working with unaccompanied children obtain in the course of their work are respected.</p> |
| | | 26. Provide support for staff working with unaccompanied children in the reception context. | <p>26.1 Different measures are available to help deal with difficult situations encountered during the reception work.</p> |
| | | 27. Ensure management, supervision and accountability via regular – at least yearly – monitoring and adequate support to staff is taken into account. | <p>27.1 The reception facility has to provide for a regular monitoring mechanism of staff performance to ensure day-to-day care of unaccompanied children.</p> |
| 6. Healthcare | | 28. Ensure access to medical screening and health assessment and the prevention of health related issues at an early state of the reception process. | <p>28.1 Information about the right to healthcare service, the purpose and meaning of medical screening, health assessment and vaccination programs should be given to unaccompanied children immediately after arrival in the reception centre.</p> <p>28.2 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.</p> <p>28.3 If vaccination programmes are not part of the general mandatory health programmes, necessary vaccinations should be provided to the unaccompanied children.</p> <p>28.4 Unaccompanied children are provided with age-appropriate and sufficient sexual and reproductive health information and services.</p> <p>28.5 Unaccompanied children are provided with contraceptive measures.</p> |

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| 6. Healthcare <i>(continued)</i> | | 29. Ensure access to necessary healthcare, equal to that of nationals including preventive, mental, physical and psychosocial care. | <p>29.1 Unaccompanied children have access to all types of necessary healthcare services.</p> <p>29.2 Qualified medical personnel provide health care services.</p> <p>29.3 Healthcare is available <i>within reception facilities</i> or within a reasonable distance on foot or via public transport and if needed unaccompanied children are accompanied by staff or the representative.</p> <p>29.4 Necessary healthcare, including prescribed medication, is provided free of charge or economically compensated for through the daily expenses allowance.</p> <p>29.5 Arrangements for safe storage and distribution of prescribed medication are in place within the reception facility.</p> <p>29.6 Adequate arrangements are in place to ensure that unaccompanied children are able to communicate effectively with the medical personnel.</p> <p>29.7 Arrangements are made to ensure access to first aid in emergencies.</p> <p>29.8 Unaccompanied children are provided with access to their medical records, without prejudice to national legislation.</p> <p>29.9 Specific arrangements are in place for unaccompanied children with special medical needs.</p> |
| | | 30. Ensure access to mental healthcare, rehabilitation services and qualified counselling for unaccompanied children who suffer from psychological difficulties and/or have been victims of any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation, torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, or who have suffered from armed conflicts, by developing and implementing SOPs on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS). | <p>30.1 Unaccompanied children in need of mental healthcare, rehabilitation services and/or qualified counselling are provided with such services by the presence of a clinical psychologist in the reception facility or the access to one outside the centre.</p> <p>30.2 Qualified medical personnel provide mental healthcare, rehabilitation services and/or qualified counselling.</p> |
| 7. Education - Preparatory classes and vocational training | 7.1 Access to the education system and other education arrangements | 31. Ensure effective access to the education system under similar conditions as nationals and no later than three months from the date on which the application for international protection was lodged. | <p>31.1 All unaccompanied children should have access to the education system under similar condition to nationals.</p> <p>31.2 All unaccompanied children who have reached the age of majority should be able to continue the secondary education.</p> <p>31.3 Education is available outside at a reasonable distance or inside the housing and if needed the child is accompanied by child reception staff or the legal representative.</p> <p>31.4 Unaccompanied children who attend school or other education arrangements are enabled to participate in compulsory national school trips.</p> |

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| 7. Education - preparatory classes and vocational training <i>(continued)</i> | 7.1 Access to the education system and other education arrangements <i>(continued)</i> | 32. Ensure access to other education arrangements where access to the education system is temporarily not possible due to the specific circumstances in the MS or the specific situation of the child. | <p>32.1 Specific arrangements are in place where the education services are provided within the accommodation facilities or other suitable locations.</p> <p>32.2 Specific arrangements are in place for applicants for international protection with special needs.</p> |
| | 7.2 Preparatory classes | 33. Ensure access to and participation in the education system. | <p>33.1 All unaccompanied children should have access to internal or external preparatory classes, including language classes, when necessary, in order to facilitate their access to and participation in the education system.</p> <p>33.2 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.</p> |
| | 7.3 Access to vocational training | 34. Ensure access to vocational training when mainstream classes are not considered in the best interests of the child. | <p>34.1 Unaccompanied children should have access to vocational training irrespective of the recognition of their previous education.</p> <p>34.2 Specific arrangements are in place for unaccompanied children with special needs.</p> |
| 8. Food, clothing and other non-food items, and allowances | 8.1 Food | 35. Ensure that unaccompanied children have access to sufficient and adequate food. | <p>35.1 Food safety standards are observed.</p> <p>35.2 Minimum five meals are served per day of which at least one is cooked and served warm.</p> <p>35.3 The daily schedule of unaccompanied children should be taken into consideration when serving the meals.</p> <p>35.4 The meals ensure a balanced and varied diet.</p> <p>35.5 Unaccompanied children are informed about the composition of the meal.</p> <p>35.6 Specific arrangements are in place for unaccompanied children with special dietary needs.</p> <p>35.7 The eating preferences and dietary restrictions of specific groups are taken into account.</p> |
| | | 36. Ensure that unaccompanied children have access to potable water 24/7. | <p>36.1 Each child is provided with a minimum of 2.5 litres of water per day while personal physiology and climate are taken into account.</p> <p>36.2 a) the infrastructure of the housing is adequate for potable water. OR</p> <p>36.2 b) Potable water is distributed in absence of adequate infrastructure.</p> |

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| 8. Food, clothing and other non-food items, and allowances <i>(continued)</i> | 8.2 Clothing and other non-food items | 37. Ensure that unaccompanied children possess sufficient clothing. | <p>37.1 Unaccompanied children are provided with clothing as soon as possible.</p> <p>37.2 Unaccompanied children possess sufficient underwear for a week without having to do laundry.</p> <p>37.3 Unaccompanied children possess at least a minimum number of clothing items.</p> <p>37.4 Unaccompanied children have at least two different pairs of shoes.</p> <p>37.5 If any of the clothes are no longer usable because of wear and tear, there is a standardised way to obtain another one in exchange.</p> <p>37.6 Unaccompanied children with babies or small children possess sufficient clothes for their children for one week without having to do laundry.</p> |
| | | 38. Ensure that unaccompanied children possess adequate clothing. | <p>38.1 The clothing is reasonably fitting the unaccompanied children in terms of size.</p> <p>38.2 The clothing is in reasonably good condition and appropriate to the prevailing standard of the host society and the children's background.</p> <p>38.3 Adequate seasonal clothing is available.</p> <p>38.4 Sufficient clothing required for participation in school trips and extracurricular school activities are provided.</p> |
| | | 39. Ensure that unaccompanied children have access to sufficient and adequate personal hygiene products. | <p>39.1 A list exists specifying which type and quantity of personal hygiene products children of certain age and gender are entitled to receive.</p> <p>39.2 Necessary personal hygiene products are at the child's disposal, either through regular distribution in-kind on a per capita basis or through the daily expenses allowance.</p> |
| | | 40. Ensure that unaccompanied children have access to other essential non-food items | <p>40.1 Sufficient bed linen and towels are provided.</p> <p>40.2 Washing powder is available if unaccompanied children are responsible for washing their own clothes.</p> <p>40.3 Specific arrangements are in place for unaccompanied children with special reception needs.</p> |
| | | 41. Ensure that unaccompanied 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. | <p>41.1 Unaccompanied children who attend school or other education arrangements are provided with adequate clothing for school activities.</p> <p>41.2 Unaccompanied 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.</p> <p>41.3 Sufficient clothing required for participation in school trips and extracurricular school activities are provided.</p> |

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| 8. Food, clothing and other non-food items, and allowances <i>(continued)</i> | 8.3 Daily expenses allowance | 42. Ensure that an adequate daily expenses allowance is provided. | <p>42.1 A clear definition of the scope of daily expenses allowance exists.</p> <p>42.2 The method for the calculation of the daily expenses allowance is clearly determined.</p> <p>42.3 The daily expenses allowance is provided at free disposal (“pocket money”).</p> <p>42.4 The amount of 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 travelling costs as a result of healthcare visits and obtaining medication, the asylum procedure and legal assistance, and education for children enrolled in school or other education arrangements.</p> <p>42.5 The daily expenses allowance is provided regularly and no less than once a month.</p> |
| 9. Housing | 9.1 Location | 43. Ensure effective geographic access to relevant services, such as public services, school, healthcare, social and legal assistance, a shop for daily needs, laundry, and leisure activities. | <p>43.1 Specific arrangements are in place for children with special needs.</p> <p>43.2 a) The relevant services are provided within the housing; OR</p> <p>43.2 b) The facility is located at a reasonable walking distance from relevant services and the available infrastructure is safe for walking; OR</p> <p>43.2 c) Relevant services are accessible by public transport and the duration of the journey is reasonable; OR</p> <p>43.2 d) Relevant services are accessible through organised transport provided by the MS.</p> |
| | 9.2 Infrastructure | 44. Ensure sufficient space in the bedroom in collective housing. | <p>44.1 A minimum space of 4 m² per person is provided for each unaccompanied child.</p> <p>44.2 About the minimum space of 4 m² per person, a minimum height of the room of 2.10 m is ensured.</p> <p>44.3 Sufficient space exists in the bedroom to place one bed and one cupboard.</p> |
| | | 45. Ensure respect for the privacy and safety of the children in collective housing. | <p>45.1 A maximum of 4 children are accommodated in 1 bedroom.</p> <p>45.2 Separate bedrooms for single male and female children exist and no access is possible for children of the opposite sex.</p> <p>45.3 The restriction of access should be ensured via separate facilities from adults.</p> <p>45.4 A room creating a private setting (inside or outside the premises) for meetings with representative, legal aid, social worker, or other relevant actors is foreseen and available to the children, when needed.</p> |

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| 9. Housing (continued) | 9.2 Infrastructure (continued) | 46. Ensure that the housing is sufficiently furnished. | <p>46.1 The furniture for each bedroom includes, as a minimum:</p> <p>46.1.1 one individual bed; AND</p> <p>46.1.2 study table and a chair per person either in the bedroom or the common areas; AND</p> <p>46.1.3 one lockable cupboard per child, big enough to keep personal belongings (such as clothes, money or documents).</p> <p>46.2 In shared bedrooms, the cupboard is lockable.</p> <p>46.3 The common/living areas should be furnished in a homely and child-friendly manner including a sufficient number of tables, chairs, sofas and armchairs. There should be a common living room.</p> <p>46.4 In facilities where unaccompanied children cook for themselves, all of the following is provided and accessible in the kitchen:</p> <p>46.4.1 sufficient refrigerator volume per person; AND</p> <p>46.4.2 sufficient shelf space per person; AND</p> <p>46.4.3 a minimum access to a stove per person; AND</p> <p>46.4.4 a minimum number of dishes, cups, cooking utensils, and cutlery per person.</p> <p>46.5 In facilities where catering services are provided, supervised food preparation training kitchen has to be accessible for children and the following items are provided and accessible in the kitchen:</p> <p>46.5.1 sufficient refrigeration, oven/stove, and shelf capacity is provided and accessible</p> <p>46.5.2 sufficient number of dishes, cups, cooking utensils, and cutlery provided and accessible</p> |
| | | 47. Ensure sufficient, adequate, and functioning sanitary infrastructure in the housing. | <p>47.1 All children should have safe and effective access to a shower/bath, sink with hot and cold water and a lockable, functional toilet which can be opened from the outside by staff.</p> <p>47.2 At least one functioning and lockable toilet per eight children is accessible 24/7.</p> <p>47.3 At least one functioning shower or bath with hot and cold water exists per eight children.</p> <p>47.4 At least one functioning sink with hot and cold water per ten children is accessible 24/7.</p> <p>47.5 If more than one shower is located in the bathroom visual separation is ensured.</p> <p>47.6 Separate toilets, sinks and shower facilities exist according to gender (visibly and understandably marked) except for small housing facilities.</p> <p>47.7 Arrangements are in place to ensure that children may access the facilities safely and that the intimacy of children is at all times respected.</p> <p>47.8 Arrangements are in place to ensure that clothes and towels can stay dry while children are taking a shower.</p> <p>47.9 Specific arrangements are in place for children with special needs.</p> |

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| 9. Housing (continued) | 9.2 Infrastructure (continued) | 48. Ensure compliance of the housing with relevant national and local regulations. | <p>48.1 The housing is built in compliance with applicable local and national regulations.</p> <p>48.2 The housing is maintained and operated in compliance with relevant local and national regulations, taking into account all potential hazards.</p> <p>48.3 Sufficient natural light and fresh air enters the bedrooms and common/living areas of the housing while curtains and/or shutters are available to shut out the light when needed.</p> <p>48.4 An adequate temperature regulation system exists for all areas of the housing.</p> <p>48.5 The bedrooms and common areas are protected from excessive environmental noise.</p> |
| | | 49. Ensure that the inside and outside infrastructure of a housing designated to house applicants for international protection with reduced mobility is adapted to their needs. | <p>49.1 The housing is located:49.1 a) on the ground floor; OR</p> <p>49.1 b) a lift adapted for use by persons with reduced mobility exists; OR</p> <p>49.1 c) stairs are not more than a maximum number, according to the degree of reduced mobility.</p> <p>49.2 The external approaches such as paths or drives have a firm, level surface.</p> <p>49.3 The entrance is designed to allow for the access unaccompanied children with reduced mobility.</p> <p>49.4 Doorways and passageways inside of the housing are wide enough for wheelchair users.</p> <p>49.5 Grab rails exist for support in rooms and places that are used by children with reduced mobility.</p> <p>49.6 Adapted sanitary infrastructure exists, including, for example, walk-in showers, grab rails, sinks, and toilets at appropriate height for wheelchair users, as well as a surface of bathroom and toilet rooms sufficient for wheelchairs.</p> |
| | 9.3 Security | 50. Ensure sufficient security measures. | <p>50.1 A risk assessment of the housing and facilities is carried out on a regular basis, taking into account external and internal factors.</p> <p>50.2 Adequate security measures are introduced based on the outcome of the risk assessment.</p> <p>50.3 Access to the premises is monitored.</p> <p>50.4 Fire safety of the facilities is taken care of according to national legislation.</p> <p>50.5 It is possible to report security issues (e.g. theft, violence, threats, hostility from external community) to the responsible personnel in a safe manner.</p> <p>50.6 The numbers for emergency calls are displayed in a visible place and a phone is available.</p> <p>50.7 Security measures also focus on the detection and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.</p> <p>50.8 Specific arrangements have been made for children with special needs.</p> <p>50.9 A protected space for children to play which is free of hazards is provided.</p> |

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| 9. Housing (continued) | 9.4 Common areas | 51. Ensure that applicants have sufficient space to eat. | 51.1 All children have the possibility to eat in a designated space. |
| | | 52. Ensure that children have sufficient space for leisure and group activities. | 52.1 An area that is suitable for leisure activities exists inside the housing or nearby within public space. 52.2 Where group activities are organised by the Member State, sufficient and suitable space, e.g. in the form of a separate room, is available. 52.3 A safe room/area exists for children to play and to engage in open-air activities in the housing itself. 52.4 a) A minimum of leisure activities are located at a reasonable walking distance and the distance is safe for walking AND 52.4 b) In collective facilities, a minimum of leisure activities appropriate to children's age are available inside the housing AND 52.4 c) Additional activities may be accessible by public transportation or through organised transports provided by the Member State. 52.5 a) Children 0-12 have daily access to playgrounds and playrooms appropriate to their age AND 52.5 b) Children 13-17 have weekly access to indoor and outdoor sport facilities. |
| | 9.5 Sanitation | 53. Ensure that cleanliness in private and common areas is maintained. | 53.1 The housing facility observes a cleaning schedule. 53.2 The cleanliness of private and common areas of the housing is being checked on a regular basis. 53.3 The cleanliness is being checked when people move to another room or to a different housing facility. 53.4 If children take part in cleaning duties, (on educational basis) it is important for staff members to consider their age and development levels and provides the level of support that is necessary. It is also necessary that they have access to cleaning products and items, as well as protection equipment such as gloves and masks. |
| | | 54. Ensure that the kitchen and sanitary areas are well maintained. | 54.1 The cleanliness of the areas is in line with local and national regulations and standards. 54.2 The areas are cleaned at least daily (in accommodation centres), or as often as necessary. 54.3 In-depth cleaning of the areas takes place regularly. |
| | | 55. Ensure children are able to do their laundry or have it done on a regular basis. | 55.1 When the bed linen are provided in kind and washed by the housing facility, they should be washed at least every two weeks. 55.2 a) Children should be able to do laundry (including towels) at least once a week; this can be done independently or with the necessary supervision. 55.2 b) If a laundry service is available it should be sufficiently accessible at least five days per week (including the weekend). |

| Operational standards and indicators on the reception conditions of unaccompanied minors | | | |
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| Chapter | Subchapter | Standard | Indicators |
| 9. Housing (continued) | 9.6 Maintenance | 56. Ensure the safety and proper functioning of the housing facilities through regular maintenance. | <p>56.1 The good functioning of the housing and its furniture and equipment is assessed on a regular basis.</p> <p>56.2 Applicants for international protection have the possibility to report the necessity of maintenance and repairs.</p> <p>56.3 Repairs and replacements needed within the housing are carried out promptly and with adequate quality.</p> |
| | 9.7 Communication equipment and services | 57. Ensure that children have adequate access to a telephone to maintain contact with family, carry out calls concerning procedural, legal, medical and educational issues. | <p>57.1 Access to a telephone is possible at least for calls concerning family contact, contact with the representative and procedural, legal, medical or educational issues.</p> <p>57.2 Children have daily access to at least one telephone per facility.</p> <p>57.3 Children can take calls in a private setting, i.e. other children cannot hear the conversation.</p> |
| | | 58. Ensure that children have adequate access to the internet. | 58.1 Children have daily and free of charge access to the internet in the housing itself for reasons regarding schooling and family contact. |
| | | 59. Ensure children have the possibility to charge their devices for communication. | 59.1 There is minimum one plug available and accessible per child to charge electronic devices. |

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