



EASO guidance on reception conditions: operational standards and indicators

September 2016



EASO

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List of abbreviations

AMIF	EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
APD	Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast)
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
Dublin III Regulation	Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person (recast)
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
EU Charter	Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
MS	Member States
NGO	non-governmental organisation
QM	Quality Matrix
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)
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence
SOP	standard operating procedure
UAM	unaccompanied minor(s)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Introduction

Background

The recast 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 (hereafter RCD) specifies that:

‘standards for the reception of applicants [that] suffice to ensure [applicants for international protection] a dignified standard of living and comparable living conditions in all Member States should be laid down’ ⁽¹⁾.

The Directive 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. Consequently, standards for reception conditions continue to vary across EU Member States, causing differences in treatment of applicants for international protection.

More recently, the European Agenda on Migration ⁽²⁾ has further 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 the need for further guidance to improve the standards on reception conditions across EU Member States.

It is in this context that this guidance has been developed. The development process of this document follows the established Quality Matrix methodology set up by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). The document has been drafted by a working group composed of EU Member States’ experts, as well as representatives of other relevant stakeholders in the field of reception and fundamental rights, including the European Commission, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Moreover, members of the EASO Consultative Forum have been consulted prior to finalisation of the guidance. The EASO Network of Reception Authorities was consulted over the guidance and it was subsequently formally adopted by the EASO Management Board.

It should also be noted that the European Commission’s proposal for a recast of the RCD (COM(2016) 465 final) of 13 July 2016 specifically refers to these operational standards and indicators.

Purpose and scope of the guidance

The **overall objective** of this guidance is to support Member States in the implementation of key provisions of the RCD while ensuring an adequate standard of living for all applicants for international protection, including those with special reception needs.

The document has been designed to serve **multiple purposes**:

- at policy level, it serves as a tool to support reform or development and serve as a framework for setting/further development of reception standards;
- at operational level, it can be used by reception authorities/operators to support the planning/running of reception facilities or to support staff training.

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

The purpose of the guidance is not to prescribe a method for the provision of reception conditions. Therefore, unless stated otherwise, the standards and indicators in this document are applicable to the provision of material reception conditions irrespectively of whether these are provided in kind, as financial allowance or in the form of vouchers. This approach follows Article 2(g) RCD, which lists different modalities for the provision of material reception conditions. This means, for example, that Member States either need to ensure the in-kind provision of clothing in accordance with the standards included in this guidance or that the level of financial allowance provided should be adequate to cover the applicant’s expenses for clothing as per the standards included in the document.

⁽¹⁾ The recast 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 (hereafter: RCD), available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013L0033&from=EN> (recital 11).

⁽²⁾ 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’, COM(2015) 240, 13 May 2015.

Without prejudice to its focus on open reception facilities, as per recital 8 RCD, the scope of the guidance includes ‘all stages and types of procedures concerning applications for international protection, in all locations and facilities hosting applicants and for as long as they are allowed to remain in the territory of the Member State’ ⁽³⁾.

The thematic scope of the guidance includes certain key provisions of the RCD which form part of national reception systems for applicants of international protection as outlined in Figure 1 below. Specifically, the document focuses on the provision of reception conditions, the identification, assessment of and response to special reception needs and the provision of training to staff working 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.

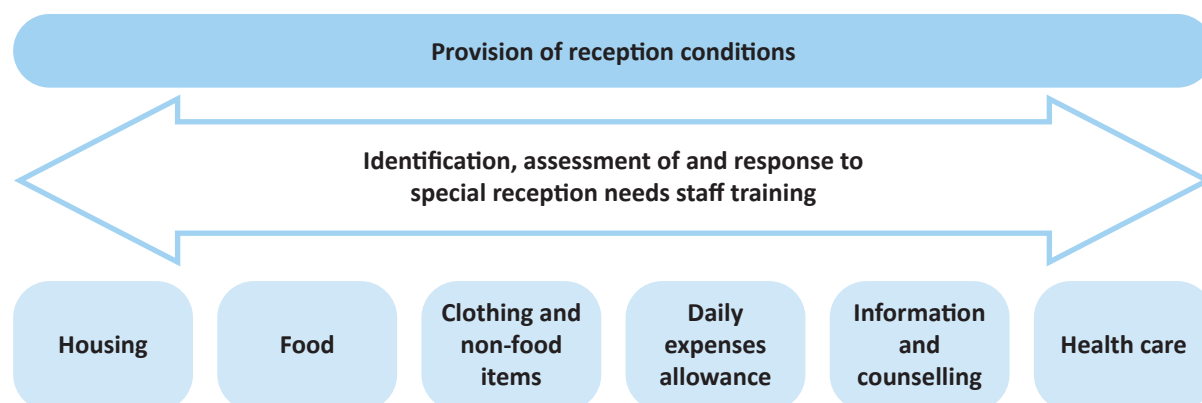


Figure 1. Representation of key aspects covered by this guidance.

Throughout the guidance, indicators have been integrated into the different sections to measure whether adequate arrangements have been made to cater for special needs within the national reception system. At the same time, this guidance does not go into the needs of applicants with special reception needs, such as unaccompanied children, in depth.

This guidance should be considered as a first step and effort to facilitate the application of certain provisions of the RCD. Not all aspects falling within the scope of the RCD have been addressed in this document, such as the reduction and withdrawal of material reception conditions, detention, access to schooling and education for children and employment and vocational training for adults, and appeal procedures. Moreover, aspects linked to the integration of beneficiaries of international protection or the preparation of the return of applicants whose application for international protection has been rejected have not been covered in this document.

Most importantly, the guidance has been developed for the regular functioning of the reception system. Situations falling under an emergency framework, such as the use of the provisions of Article 18(9) RCD on emergency housing, fall outside the scope of this guidance. These aspects could be the focus of additional guidance and/or tools to be developed in the future.

The ultimate responsibility for the application of these standards lies with the Member States’ authorities and most of the standards in this guidance would, in particular, be 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 and intergovernmental or non-governmental organisations.

The standards included in this document reflect already existing practice in EU Member States. As such, it 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 EU Member States.

Importantly, in line with the spirit of Article 4 RCD, Member States may introduce or retain more favourable provisions in the field of reception conditions for applicants 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.

⁽³⁾ Recital 8 RCD.

Structure and format of the guidance

The document opens with a short section entitled ‘How to read the guidance’, focusing on clarifying the concepts used.

Subsequently, the document is divided into eight sections, focusing on the following topics:

1. Housing
2. Food
3. Clothing and other non-food items
4. Daily expenses allowance
5. Health care
6. Provision of information and counselling
7. Identification, assessment and response to special needs
8. Staff training.

Each section includes specific common standards which are applicable to national reception systems across all EU Member States. Each standard is paired with relevant indicators which facilitate the assessment as to whether the standard is met. Where necessary, further clarification on an indicator can be found in the ‘additional remarks’.

In addition, the annex 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.

Legal framework

The main legal basis for this guidance is the RCD read in conjunction with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (hereafter: ‘the EU Charter’). Moreover, in applying this guidance, Member States should seek to ensure full compliance with the principles of the best interests of the child and of family unity, in accordance with the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms respectively ⁽⁴⁾.

In addition, 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 systems:

- **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. non-governmental organisations, private sector, etc.), the overall responsibility for achieving the highest levels of transparency and accountability lies with the respective reception authority.
- **Participation.** In line with Article 18(8) RCD, reception authorities are encouraged to facilitate the participation and engagement of all applicants, including children, in the management of material and non-material aspects of reception conditions. Participation can, for example, take the form of advisory boards or councils to contribute to specific aspects linked to the residence in housing facilities, such as the composition of meals, calendar of activities.
- **Non-discrimination.** Equal access to reception conditions shall be provided to all applicants for international protection without discrimination.
- **Consideration for special needs.** Special reception needs should be taken into account in this respect. The definition of ‘special needs’ shall not be limited to the categories of applicants included in the non-exclusive list in Article 21 RCD (‘such as minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilation’), but rather include any applicant showing any special reception needs. Gender, gender identity and sexual orientation are particular factors to be taken into account in this regard.

⁽⁴⁾ Recital 9 RCD.

How to read the guidance

Example: assessing the location of the housing		EXPLANATION
STANDARD	<i>Ensure effective geographic access to relevant services, such as public services, school, health care, social and legal assistance, a shop for daily needs, laundry and leisure activities.</i>	The standard represents commonly agreed practice and compliance should be 'ensured' throughout national reception systems.
Indicator	<i>The facility is located at a reasonable walking distance from relevant services and available infrastructure is safe for walking.</i>	<p>The indicator represents a tool to measure compliance with the standard, i.e. by assessing whether the distance between the housing and relevant public services can be considered 'reasonable' as a walking distance and whether the necessary infrastructure exists.</p> <p>Indicators listed under each standard should be understood as cumulative without an order of hierarchy among them.</p>
Alternative indicators	<p>Indicator 1.2(a): The relevant services are provided within the housing. OR</p> <p>Indicator 1.2(b): The facility is located at a reasonable walking distance from relevant services and the available infrastructure is safe for walking. OR</p> <p>Indicator 1.2(c): Relevant services are accessible by public transport and the duration of the journey is reasonable. OR</p> <p>Indicator 1.2(d): Relevant services are accessible through organised transport provided by the Member State.</p>	Alternative indicators are used in situations where different options can be applied to measure compliance with the standard.
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, a maximum 3 km to public services in general and 2 km to health care facilities and school.	The additional remark represents an indication as to what could constitute a 'reasonable walking distance'. In light of the different national contexts, the applicability of the 'additional remarks' might vary across EU Member States.
Good practice	<p>Good practice on defining the location of housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is considered good practice to limit the duration of the journey by public transport to a maximum of 1.5 hours or 1 hour for health care or shop for daily needs. 	Lastly, the document refers to existing 'good practice' with regards to the specific sections. The term 'good practice' does not result from a formal evaluation but is based on current practice of some Member States. While not representing a commonly agreed standard at this stage, Member States are nonetheless encouraged to consider adopting these good practices into their national systems.

Terminology

Article 2(g) of the RCD introduces the concepts of ‘financial allowance’ and ‘daily expenses allowance’ as means to provide reception conditions. While the provision specifies the use of the former for the provision of food, housing and clothing (whenever not provided in kind or in the form of vouchers), the definition of the latter is less clear. For the purposes of this guidance, and as highlighted in the table below, the term ‘daily expenses allowance’ refers to any other allowance provided to applicants for international protection, including allowances for specific purposes other than housing, food and clothing or other non-food items when they are not provided in kind as well as monetary allowances for an unspecified purpose (at the free disposal of the applicant, also referred to as ‘pocket money’).

Type of reception needs	Reference in the RCD	Means for provision of reception conditions
Food, housing, clothing	Article 2(g)	Financial allowance
		In kind
		Vouchers
Other essential needs (e.g. hygiene products, school items, wheel chair, etc.)	Not explicitly mentioned by RCD	Daily expenses allowance
		In kind
		Vouchers
Items of personal choice	Article (2)(g)	Daily expenses allowance

1. Housing

Introductory remarks

This section is composed of various sub-sections covering the following aspects of housing:

- Location
- Allocation
- Infrastructure of housing facilities
- Security of housing facilities
- Common areas within
- Sanitation
- Maintenance
- Communication equipment and services.

Each of these sub-sections covers essential aspects of housing facilities, which complement each other.

Member States are free to choose from different types of housing provided to applicants as long as the special reception needs of the applicants are taken into consideration. The different arrangements range from accommodation centres to alternative arrangements, including private houses, flats, hotels or other premises adapted for housing applicants for international protection. Moreover, the RCD provides Member States with the possibility to choose whether to deliver housing in kind or through financial allowances ⁽⁵⁾. On the one hand, where housing is provided in kind, the housing should comply with the standards outlined in this section; on the other hand, where Member States choose to provide applicants with a financial allowance to cover the costs of housing, this allowance should allow applicants to avail of an housing which complies with the standards listed in this section.

At the same time, Member States' practice reflects the use of different types of housing, depending on the phase of the asylum procedure, including for example transit centres, first/initial reception centres, or special facilities for applicants in the Dublin procedure. Naturally, the functionality of premises might differ depending on the time period intended for applicants reside in it. Therefore, the applicability of certain standards and indicators included in this section may depend on the type of housing chosen and on its purpose (e.g. long-term vs short-term residence of applicants). Wherever a standard only applies to a specific type of housing, this will be mentioned.

Legal references — housing

- Article 2(c) RCD: definition of 'family members'
- Article 2(g) RCD: definition of material reception conditions
- Article 12 RCD: families
- Article 17 RCD: general rules on reception conditions and health care
- Article 18(1) RCD: modalities of material reception conditions
- Article 21 RCD: vulnerable persons (general provisions)
- Article 23(3) and (5) RCD: minors
- Article 24(2) RCD: unaccompanied minors

1.1. Location

Introductory remarks

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

⁽⁵⁾ Article 2(g) RCD.

At the same time, the definition of some of the indicators used within this section (e.g. 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 children need to access school, access needs to be possible on a daily basis and the duration should be short. At the same, the duration of travel to facilitate the applicant’s participation in the personal interview could be longer, in particular if transportation is provided by the responsible authority.

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

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 1: Ensure effective geographic access to relevant services, such as public services, school, health care, social and legal assistance, a shop for daily needs, laundry and leisure activities.

Indicator 1.1: Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special needs.

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

Alternative indicators on ensuring geographic accessibility:

Indicator 1.2(a): The relevant services are provided within the housing. **OR**

Indicator 1.2(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. — example, maximum 3 km to public services in general and 2 km to health care facilities and school.*

Indicator 1.2(c): Relevant services are accessible by public transport and the duration of the journey is reasonable. **OR**

- **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 with which this service needs to be accessed by the applicant (e.g. the time needed for a child to go to school via the public transport, the time needed for the applicant to travel to the personal interview). Additionally, the regularity of the public transport itself should be taken into account, allowing the applicant to effectively avail themselves of the service by taking a return journey. Accessibility by public transport should be understood as transport costs being reimbursed or transport being free of charge when needed as a minimum for the following: health care and obtaining medication, the asylum procedure and legal assistance and education for children enrolled in school.*

Indicator 1.2(d): Relevant services are accessible through organised transport provided by the Member State.

- **Additional remarks:** *The provision of transport should be clarified by specifying the regularity of transport provided by the Member State.*

Good practice on defining the location of housing

It is considered good practice:

- to define the location of housing with the purpose of accommodating applicants in the longer term with a view to enabling interaction between the applicants and the local population, in order to avoid isolation and facilitate integration in the longer term;
- to limit the duration of the journey by public transport to a maximum of 1.5 hours or 1 hour for health care or shopping for daily needs;
- to involve the local resident populations in the definition of the location of a housing facility.

1.2. Allocation

Introductory remarks

Without prejudice to the existence of national dispersal systems regulating the equal distribution of applicants across the territory of Member States, the standards and indicators included in this section should be read and implemented fully in line with the principle of family unity as well as respect for special needs that applicants for international protection might have.

Importantly, compliance with these principles is not only relevant upon entry into the reception system but also at the moment of reallocating or transferring applicants to different housing. Therefore, in line with Article 18(6) RCD, transfers of applicants to another facility should only take place when necessary.

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 2: Ensure that the principle of family unity is respected.

Indicator 2.1: Family members (in accordance with the definition of Article 2 RCD) are accommodated together.

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

Indicator 2.2: Families with children are accommodated together provided that this is in line with the best interests of the child.

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

Indicator 2.3: Where possible and appropriate, family unity should be respected with regard to members of the broader family.

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

Indicator 2.4: A maximum of one family is allocated per bedroom.

- **Additional remarks:** *In order to respect standards of privacy, Member States should accommodate a maximum of one family per bedroom. The scope of the family definition would depend on the practice of the Member State concerned.*

STANDARD 3: Ensure that special needs are taken into account when (re-)allocating particular housing to an applicant.

Indicator 3.1: The allocation of particular housing to applicants is based on an assessment of their special reception needs.

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

Indicator 3.2: There is a possibility to transfer an applicant as a result of identified special reception needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *In particular, safety considerations such as in the cases of victims of human trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence, torture or other serious forms of psychological and physical violence could necessitate the reallocation of different housing for the applicant. (cf. Standard 11 and Indicator 35.3: Special needs that become apparent at a later stage are adequately identified and assessed.)*

Good practice on (re-)allocating housing to an applicant

It is considered good practice to transfer families with school children while taking into consideration school holidays at the end of the school year.

STANDARD 4: Ensure that specific and objective reasons linked to the individual situation of the applicant are taken into account when allocating housing to an applicant

Indicator 4.1: A mechanism is in place to consider whether there are specific and objective reasons for the allocation of particular housing.

- **Additional remarks:** *The ‘individual situation of the applicant’ referred to in the standard above refers in particular to the cultural, linguistic and religious background of the person, the gender of the applicant (e.g. transgender persons) and individual considerations linked to, for example, employment, vocational training or existing family links.*

1.3. Infrastructure

Introductory remarks

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

- ‘(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.
- ‘Family members’ should be defined in accordance with Article 2(c) RCD.

Standards in this section in particular should be considered only minimum standards.

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 5: Ensure sufficient space in the bedroom in collective housing.

Indicator 5.1: A minimum space of 4 m² per person is provided for each applicant.

- **Additional remarks:** *This indicator can be further clarified depending on whether the room accommodates applicants who are not related or family members. Age could also be taken into account, such as housing of families with infants and small children. Reference could be made to national legislation which defines the minimum living space per person, if such is stipulated.*

Indicator 5.2: With regards to the minimum space of 4 m² per person, a minimum room height of 2.10 m is ensured.

Indicator 5.3: Sufficient space exists in the bedroom to place one bed and one cupboard for each applicant.

- **Additional remarks:** *Depending on the specific set-up, a table and a chair could be part of the essential furniture and should be taken into account unless provided for in common areas.*

STANDARD 6: Ensure respect for the privacy of the applicants in collective housing.

Indicator 6.1: A maximum of six single applicants are accommodated in one bedroom.

- **Additional remarks:** *The maximum number of persons to be allocated per bedroom could also be determined depending on the duration spent in such housing and the availability of additional space outside the bedroom*

(common space, other private rooms). If not practically feasible to meet this indicator, alternative ways should be found to ensure privacy.

Indicator 6.2: Separate bedrooms exist for single male and female applicants and no access is possible for applicants of the opposite sex.

- **Additional remarks:** *The restriction of access could be ensured via separate facilities and/or via a lock, without prejudice to security considerations of the reception facility. In particular, cupboards should be lockable if a facility hosts applicants with special needs, such as female applicants who might be at risk of gender-based violence.*

Indicator 6.3: A room creating a private setting (inside or outside the premises) for meetings with legal aid, a social worker or other relevant actors is foreseen and available to the applicants, when needed.

Indicator 6.4. Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *For example, unaccompanied minors should be provided with separate bedrooms and not be residing in the same room as adult applicants.*

Good practice with regards to privacy of applicants

It is considered good practice to provide a minimum passageway of at least 90 cm between the beds in order to allow for privacy.

STANDARD 7: Ensure that the housing is sufficiently furnished.

Indicator 7.1: The furniture for each bedroom includes, as a minimum:

7.1.1: one individual bed per person; **AND**

7.1.2: one cupboard per person or family, big enough to hold personal belongings (such as clothes, medication or documents).

Indicator 7.2: In bedrooms shared by applicants who are not family members, the cupboard is lockable, without prejudice to security considerations of the reception facility.

- **Additional remarks:** *In particular, cupboards should be lockable if a facility hosts applicants with special needs, such as female applicants who might be at risk of gender-based violence.*

Indicator 7.3: The furniture in the common/living area includes a sufficient number of tables and chairs.

Indicator 7.4: In facilities where applicants are asked to cook for themselves, all of the following is provided and accessible in the kitchen:

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

- **Additional remarks:** *The sufficient refrigerator space could be further clarified by specifying the number of litres or shelves available per person/family.*

7.4.2: sufficient shelf space per person/family; **AND**

7.4.3: a minimum access to a stove per person/family; **AND**

7.4.4: a minimum number of dishes, cups, cooking utensils and cutlery per person.

Indicator 7.5: Specific arrangements are available for applicants with special needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *For example, infants should be provided with a baby bed, changing table and appropriate chair; persons with limited mobility should be provided with adapted furniture; and families with school-age children should be provided with a small table and a chair to allow children to engage in homework.*

STANDARD 8: Ensure sufficient, adequate, and functioning sanitary infrastructure in the housing.

Indicator 8.1: All applicants should have access to a shower/bath, a sink with hot and cold water and a functional toilet.

Indicator 8.2: At least one functioning and lockable toilet per 10 applicants is accessible 24/7.

Indicator 8.3: At least one functioning shower or bath with hot and cold water exists per 12 applicants and is accessible for a minimum of 8 hours/day.

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

Indicator 8.4: At least one functioning sink with hot and cold water per 10 applicants is accessible 24/7.

Indicator 8.5: If more than one shower is located in the bathroom, visual separation is ensured.

Indicator 8.6: Separate toilets, sinks and shower facilities exist according to sex (visibly and understandably marked) except for small housing facilities.

- **Additional remarks:** *Apartments, studios and other housing for less than 12 persons could constitute exceptions.*

Indicator 8.7: With regards to shared housing for applicants who are not family members, arrangements are in place to ensure that applicants may access the facilities safely and that the intimacy of the applicants is at all times respected.

Indicator 8.8: Arrangements are in place to ensure that clothes and towels can stay dry while applicants are taking a shower.

Indicator 8.9: Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *For example, daily access to a baby bath is possible for children under 2 years.*

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;
- to ensure that the shower facilities are individually lockable and that access is not restricted in time;
- to pay attention to gender issues and women's safety, such as locating the sanitary installations in the vicinity or at a safe distance with well-lit access.

STANDARD 9: Ensure compliance of the housing with relevant national and local regulations.

Indicator 9.1: The housing is built in compliance with applicable local and national regulations.

Indicator 9.2: 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 achieved towards the standard in 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; and fire extinguishers are accessible.*

Indicator 9.3: 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 9.4: 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.*

Indicator 9.5: 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 10: Ensure that the inside and outside infrastructure of housing designated to accommodate applicants with reduced mobility is adapted to their needs.

Indicator 10.1: The housing is located:

10.1(a): on the ground floor; **OR**

10.1(b): an elevator adapted for use by persons with reduced mobility exists; **OR**

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

Indicator 10.2: The external approaches such as paths or drives have a firm, level surface.

Indicator 10.3: The entrance is designed to allow for the access of applicants with reduced mobility.

Indicator 10.4: Doorways and passageways inside the housing are wide enough for wheelchair users.

Indicator 10.5: Grab rails exist for support in rooms and places that are used by applicants with reduced mobility.

Indicator 10.6: Adapted sanitary infrastructure exists, including, for example, walk-in showers, grab rails, sinks and toilets at an appropriate height for wheelchair users, as well as a surface of bathroom and toilet rooms suitable for wheelchairs.

1.4. Security

Introductory remarks

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

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 11: Ensure sufficient security measures.

Indicator 11.1: A risk assessment 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 are: security issues expressed by the applicants, 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, gender and family status of applicants, applicants with special needs accommodated there and incidents in the past.*

Indicator 11.2: 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 the 24/7 presence of a staff member, ensuring sufficient light in the outside areas of the housing premises and a video monitoring system, restricting public access where needed for the safety of the applicants and the inclusion of security-related aspects in the 'house rules'.*

Indicator 11.3: It is possible to report security issues (e.g. theft, violence, threats, hostility from external community) to the personnel responsible in a safe manner.

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

Indicator 11.4: The numbers for emergency calls are displayed in a visible place and a phone is available.

Indicator 11.5: Security measures also focus on the detection and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.

Indicator 11.6: Specific arrangements have been made for applicants with special needs.

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

Good practice with regards to security measures

It is considered good practice in accommodation centres:

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

1.5. Common areas

Introductory remarks

In the framework of this guidance, the term 'common areas' refers to a space where applicants eat and spend their leisure time. The size and set-up of the common area, as well as its functionality, depend on the type of housing in which the applicants are located. As such, 'common areas' might refer to one or more rooms which can be used by the applicants.

With regards to bigger housing facilities, 'common areas' might 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. language classes, information provision). At the same time, smaller facilities might have one multi-purpose room which can be turned into a dining/living room or a room for carrying out leisure activities, depending on the need and time of the day. Provided that sufficient privacy can be ensured, the common area of smaller facilities, or parts of it, could equally serve for applicants to meet with social workers or legal advisers.

Importantly, the term 'leisure activities' refers to activities involving not only children but also adults. This is based on the important link existing between the applicants' possibility to engage in leisure activities and their mental health. The existence of space for leisure activities or the possibility for applicants to engage in collective actions (e.g. language classes, group information sessions or sport activities) serves an important purpose as it helps to bring

more structure to their day and thus can help to decrease tensions arising from spending too much time without anything to do. This is particularly relevant during the initial phases of the asylum procedure when applicants might not (yet) be able to access the labour market or engage in formal training.

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 12: Ensure that applicants have sufficient space to eat.

Indicator 12.1: All applicants have the possibility to eat in a designated space.

- **Additional remarks:** *It is possible for all applicants to eat in a canteen (in a bigger facility) or in a room where there is a table and a sufficient number of chairs. The place for eating could have other functions as well, as long as it is available for eating at certain times.*

STANDARD 13: Ensure that applicants have sufficient space for leisure and group activities.

Indicator 13.1: An area which is suitable for leisure activities exists inside the housing or nearby within public space.

- **Additional remarks:** *Gender, age and the cultural and religious needs of the applicants should be taken into account when setting up rooms for leisure activities in collective housing. If possible, this could involve separate rooms or hours during which rooms designated for leisure activities can be used.*

Indicator 13.2: Where group activities are organised by the Member State, sufficient and adequate space, for example 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 13.3: If the facility hosts children, a safe room/area exists for them to play and to engage in open air activities in the housing itself or within public space nearby.

Good practice with regards to common areas

It is considered good practice to provide for the supervised presence of children in child-friendly spaces during the time the parents are taking part in group activities.

1.6. 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 section apply to the entire housing, including private areas as well as common areas located inside the housing or those 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 differ between different types of common areas, such as the kitchen, sanitary areas and other rooms, including offices or activity rooms. In contrast, in smaller facilities the kitchen, bathroom and 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 Member States, applicants may also be involved. In practice, the latter tend to be responsible for the cleaning of the private areas. In addition, depending on national legislation/regulations, other areas could be cleaned by

the applicants on a voluntary basis. 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 14: Ensure that private and common areas are kept clean.

Indicator 14.1: The housing facility observes a cleaning schedule.

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

Indicator 14.2: The cleanliness of private and common areas of the housing is checked on a regular basis.

- **Additional remark:** *Checks take into consideration applicants' needs for privacy.*

Indicator 14.3: The cleanliness is checked when people move to another room or to a different housing facility.

Indicator 14.4: Where applicants are responsible for cleaning, they have access to necessary cleaning products and items as well as protection equipment such as gloves and masks.

Good practice with regards to ensuring the cleanliness of private and common areas

It is considered good practice in accommodation centres to introduce a cleaning schedule which is written down in a clearly visible manner and verifiable by applicants.

STANDARD 15: Ensure that the kitchen and sanitary areas are kept clean.

Indicator 15.1: The cleanliness of the areas is in line with local and national regulations and standards.

- **Additional remarks:** *These regulations could for example refer to regular operations to deal with rodents and vermin.*

Indicator 15.2: The areas are cleaned at least daily (in accommodation centres), or as often as necessary.

Indicator 15.3: In-depth cleaning of the areas takes place regularly.

- **Additional remarks:** *In accommodation centres, such in-depth cleaning could take place at least four times a year. Standards for the cleanliness of kitchens used by the applicants or for professional cooking differ.*

STANDARD 16: Ensure that the applicants are able to do their laundry or have it done on a regular basis.

Indicator 16.1: When the bed linen and towels are provided in kind and washed by the housing facility, they should be washed on a regular basis.

- **Additional remarks:** *As a minimum, this should be once every 2 weeks for bed linen and once per week for towels.*

Alternative indicators:

Indicator 16.2(a): Applicants should be able to do the laundry at least once a week. **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 16.2(b): There is a service available so that the laundry can be done for the applicants.

- **Additional remarks:** *The laundry service should be sufficiently accessible, for example during at least 5 days per week (including the weekend).*

1.7. Maintenance

Introductory remarks

In this section, 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 for as long as possible.

While the maintenance of the reception facility falls under the overall responsibility of the relevant authorities in the Member States, applicants may also be involved on a voluntary basis, if allowed by national legislation/regulations. In some cases, this would also be remunerated as part of the 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 17: Ensure the safety and proper functioning of the housing facilities through regular maintenance.

Indicator 17.1: 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 when carrying out the assessment.*

Indicator 17.2: Applicants have the possibility to report the need for maintenance and repairs.

Indicator 17.3: Repairs and replacements needed within the housing are carried out promptly and to an adequate standard.

- **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 applicants as part of small jobs — provided that these are remunerated and assigned on a voluntary basis. The overall supervision should lie in any event with the responsible body.*

1.8. Communication equipment and services

Introductory remarks

Communication plays an important role for applicants for international protection throughout the reception procedure. The term ‘communication’ includes both communication concerning the applicants’ procedural status and private communication, for example with family members. Importantly, adequate access to communication can contribute to the mental health of applicants as it can help to prevent anxiety resulting from lack of contact with family members and friends left in the country of origin or in transit or inadequate access to communication with organisations providing legal aid or other relevant services. In any case, applicants should be able to be given notice of the decision via post where appropriate.

Legal references — communication equipment and services

- Article 18(2)(b) RCD: modalities of material reception conditions

Standards and indicators**STANDARD 18: Ensure that applicants have adequate access to a telephone to make calls concerning procedural, legal, medical and educational issues.**

Indicator 18.1: Access to a telephone is possible at least for calls concerning procedural, legal, medical or educational issues.

Indicator 18.2: Applicants have daily access to at least one telephone per housing unit.

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

Indicator 18.3: Applicants can take calls in a private setting, i.e. other applicants cannot hear the conversation.

STANDARD 19: Ensure that applicants have adequate access to the internet.

Indicator 19.1: Applicants have access to the internet in the housing itself or in the nearby public space at least four times a week.

- **Additional remarks:** *Access to the internet in the housing can be facilitated either through the availability of wireless network (wi-fi) for applicants with their own communication devices (e.g. smart phones) and through the availability of an adequate number of computers for a set number of persons. If access to the internet is provided outside the housing, this should be available within walking distance or by using public transport (cf. Standard 1: Location). Internet access does not have to be available free of charge (cf. Indicator 28.4: Daily expenses allowance).*

STANDARD 20: Ensure applicants have the possibility to charge their communication devices.

Indicator 20.1: There is at least one plug available and accessible per bedroom to charge up electronic devices.

Good practice with regards to facilitating access to communication equipment and services

It is considered good practice:

- to provide applicants with the possibility to copy or print documents relevant for the asylum procedure or medical issues free of charge;
- to facilitate access to a television with channels in at least two languages most widely spread among applicants in the particular housing (cf. Indicator 13.1: Common areas).

2. Food

Introductory remarks

The term ‘food’ as referred to in this section includes food as well as non-alcoholic beverages. Following the same approach as for the section on housing, standards included in this section should be considered irrespective of whether applicants are provided with food in kind or in the form of financial allowances or vouchers. This means that Member States choosing to provide applicants with a financial allowance or vouchers to cover the costs of food need to ensure that they are sufficient to allow applicants to purchase food which complies with the standards listed in this section.

Legal references — food

- Article 2(g) RCD: definition of material reception conditions

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 21: Ensure that applicants have access to sufficient and adequate food.

Indicator 21.1: Food safety standards are observed.

- **Additional remarks:** *In line with the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) ⁽⁶⁾ for food safety approach developed by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the sanitation of housing, in particular of kitchen areas, should follow a preventive, rather than a corrective, approach. In line with this standard, the cleanliness of kitchen areas should be ensured, as lacking cleanliness could turn out to be a hazard for the overall health in the housing.*

Indicator 21.2: At least three meals are served per day for adults and five for minors, of which at least one is cooked and served warm.

Indicator 21.3: The meals ensure a balanced and varied diet, including milk for minors and infants when needed.

- **Additional remarks:** *The composition of the meals varies, for example meals are based on cereals, bread and rice, fruit and vegetables, milk, dairy products, meat, eggs or fish.*

Indicator 21.4: Applicants are informed about the composition of the meal.

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

Indicator 21.5: Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special dietary needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *For example, pregnant and breastfeeding women and persons with certain illnesses and food allergies should be taken into account.*

Indicator 21.6: The eating preferences and dietary restrictions of specific groups are taken into account.

- **Additional remarks:** *‘Specific groups’ refers to applicants from a specific religious and/or cultural background as well as vegetarian/vegan applicants.*

⁽⁶⁾ See UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, *Hazard Analysis And Critical Control Point (HACCP) System*, (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y1579e/y1579e03.htm>).

Good practice with regards to the provision of food

It is considered good practice:

- to allow applicants to cook for themselves where possible and adequate given that this promotes their autonomy, increases the feeling of normality/feeling at home and can contribute to structuring the everyday life of applicants; and
- to give applicants the possibility to be served separately cooked or reheated meals if they had good reasons to miss the regular meal times; and
- to consult applicants regarding the menu and the cooking of the food.

STANDARD 22: Ensure that applicants have access to potable water 24/7.

Indicator 22.1: Each applicant 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 (7).*

Alternative indicators:

Indicator 22.2(a): The infrastructure of the housing is adequate for potable water. **OR**

Indicator 22.2(b): Potable water is distributed in the absence of adequate infrastructure.

- **Additional remarks:** *Applicants should be informed about whether it is safe to drink tap water, where applicable.*

Good practice with regards to the provision of beverages

It is considered good practice to provide tea and coffee.

(7) The Sphere Project, *How much water is needed in emergencies?*, Accessible online at: http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/2011/WHO_TN_09_How_much_water_is_needed.pdf?ua=1

3. Clothing and other non-food items

Introductory remarks

In line with the sections on housing and food, standards included in this section should be considered irrespective of whether applicants are provided with clothing in kind or in the form of financial allowances or vouchers. This means that if Member States choose to provide applicants with a financial allowance to cover the costs of clothing, this allowance should allow applicants to purchase clothing in accordance with the standards listed in this section. This is without prejudice to situations where applicants already possess sufficient clothing in line with the standards included in this section and thus do not need to receive additional clothing items. The term clothing as referred to in this section refers to both clothes and shoes.

In the context of this guidance, the term ‘non-food items’ refers to essential household items other than food, including for example personal hygiene products, cleaning and laundry products, bed linen and towels. In the context of school age applicants, non-food items also include school utensils.

The provision of non-food items should always take place while taking into consideration the family situation of the applicant. Specifically, the composition of the non-food items and the quantity provided should take into account the personal needs of the applicant in question.

Legal references — clothing and other non-food items

- Article 2(g) RCD: definition of material reception conditions

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 23: Ensure that the applicant possesses sufficient clothing.

Indicator 23.1: The applicant possesses sufficient underwear for a week without having to do laundry.

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

Indicator 23.2: The applicant possesses at least a minimum number of clothing items.

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

Indicator 23.3: The applicant has at least two different pairs of shoes.

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

Indicator 23.4: Applicants are provided with clothing as soon as possible.

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

Indicator 23.5: If any of the clothes is no longer usable as a result of wear and tear, there is a standardised way to obtain another item in exchange.

Indicator 23.6: Applicants possess sufficient clothes for babies and small children for 1 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 applicants (if clothing is provided in kind) as this helps to avoid stigmatisation;
- to establish a 'donation storage' and connection with humanitarian NGOs for the purpose of acquiring and distributing used clothes.

STANDARD 24: Ensure that the applicants possess adequate clothing.

Indicator 24.1: The clothing fits the applicants reasonably in terms of size.

Indicator 24.2: The clothing is reasonably decent-looking and appropriate to the prevailing standard of the host society and the applicants' background.

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

Indicator 24.3: Adequate seasonal clothing is available.

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

Good practice with regards to the provision of adequate clothing

It is considered good practice to offer female applicants at least one veil as part of the set of clothes provided them, if requested by them.

STANDARD 25: Ensure that applicants have access to sufficient and adequate personal hygiene products.

Indicator 25.1: A list exists specifying which type and quantity of personal hygiene products applicants of a certain age and gender are entitled to receive.

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

Indicator 25.2: Necessary personal hygiene products are at the applicants' 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 applicants' disposal. Those should include, for example: toothbrush, toothpaste, toilet paper, soap, shampoo, shaver/shaving foam, sanitary pads, diapers and other hygiene products necessary for caring for babies.*

STANDARD 26: Ensure that applicants have access to other essential non-food items

Indicator 26.1: Sufficient bed linen and towels are provided.

- **Additional remarks:** *If the applicant is responsible for washing his/her bed linen, at least two pairs are provided to allow for replacing one with the other.*

Indicator 26.2: Washing powder is available if applicants are responsible for washing their own clothes.

Indicator 26.3: Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *For example, this would mean that a family with an infant has access to a functional stroller and a toddler to a potty. Every child can use toys adapted to his or her age and in good condition. A person with physical disabilities or recovering from an injury or medical treatment can be provided with crutches, a wheelchair or other medical equipment whenever these cannot be obtained elsewhere (from other agents such as the public health system).*

Good practice with regards to the provision of access to other essential non-food items

It is considered good practice to provide applicants with access to an ironing set and a hair dryer where necessary.

STANDARD 27: Ensure that children enrolled in school are provided with adequate clothing and school accessories enabling them to fully participate in all educational school activities.

Indicator 27.1: Children who attend compulsory school education 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 27.2: Children who attend school receive a school bag (backpack or other) and all items (textbooks etc.) required by the school free of charge.

4. Daily expenses allowance

Introductory remarks

Whereas the aspects of food, housing and clothing are clearly defined in the RCD, the instrument does not directly address the details and purpose of the daily expenses allowance. Nevertheless, the concept is essential to respond to applicants' needs.

The daily expenses allowance covers other essential needs of applicants for international protection addressed by the RCD that go beyond housing, 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 applicants 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 applicants in the socio-cultural life of the Member State they are residing in;
- to enable applicants to enjoy a certain degree of autonomy.

This guidance refers to 'daily expenses allowance' as a minimum as the monetary allowance provided to the applicant for no specific purpose and at his or her 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 the daily expenses allowance provided to the applicants.

As seen in the previous sections, the standards with regards to housing, food and clothing, as well as certain other non-food items, can be achieved irrespective of whether applicants receive the relevant items in a financial allowance, in kind or in the form of vouchers. At the same time, the last element ('pocket money') is based on the consideration that a dignified standard of living can only be achieved when applicants have a certain degree of financial autonomy. In other words, at least part of the allowance provided to them should not be allocated for a specific purpose but rather be at the free disposal of the applicants to allow them to use it in line with their own personal needs and preferences.

In light of the varying standards and costs of living across Member States, this section does not attempt to define the exact level of daily expenses allowance that should be provided to applicants. Irrespective of the method used for calculation the daily expenses allowance, the three purposes listed above should always be fulfilled. As such, the daily expenses allowance should not be mistaken as an act of generosity; instead it is of the same importance as housing, food and clothing and forms an essential part of the material reception conditions.

Legal references — daily expenses allowance

- Article 2(g) RCD: definition of material reception conditions

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 28: Ensure that an adequate daily expenses allowance is provided.

Indicator 28.1: A clear definition of the scope of daily expenses allowance exists.

Indicator 28.2: The method for the calculation of the daily expenses allowance is clearly determined.

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

Indicator 28.3: The daily expenses allowance is provided at free disposal ('pocket money') and allows applicants to obtain an adequate degree of autonomy.

- **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, sweets, tobacco products, games, going out).*

Indicator 28.4: The amount of the daily expenses allowance also reflects as a minimum the following expenses, unless ensured in kind: communication and information, school items, personal hygiene and body care, leisure activities and costs for transport when related to access to health care and obtaining medication, the asylum procedure and legal assistance, and education for children enrolled in school.

- **Additional remarks:** *With regards to the in-kind provision of school items and personal hygiene and body care, see Standards 25 and 26: Access to hygiene products and other non-food items and Standard 29: Access to necessary health care.*

Indicator 28.5: The daily expenses allowance is provided regularly, and no less than once a month with regards to the 'pocket money'.

- **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 the applicant (e.g. age/family composition) when calculating the amount of the daily expenses allowance provided;
- to provide the daily expenses allowance in advance of the period to be provided;
- to provide the allowance to each adult member of the family separately (and not to the 'head' of the family for the entire family).

5. Health care

Introductory remarks

The term ‘health care’ as referred to in this section encompasses both mental and physical health care which is provided to applicants for international protection. It also includes counselling of applicants suffering from serious illnesses and necessary measures to promote the rehabilitation of victims of violence and torture. In this sense, the medical screening carried out by several Member States at the beginning of the reception process can provide an important starting point as it facilitates a clearer idea of applicants’ medical needs that need to be addressed throughout the reception process. ‘Medical personnel’ for the purposes of this section refers to qualified medical professionals (e.g. doctors, dentists, nurses), as well as psychologists.

The guidance should be read in line with the overarching principles of consent and confidentiality, which are applicable to all reception staff and medical personnel involved in the provision of health care, as well as to the interpreters. At no stage should information be shared without the prior consent of the patient. Without prejudice to national regulations governing the access to medical records, applicants should be entitled to access their medical records, when needed.

Legal references — Health care

- Article 13 RCD: medical screening
- Article 17 RCD: general rules on material reception conditions and health care
- Article 19 RCD: health care

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 29: Ensure access to necessary health care, at least level of emergency care and essential treatment of illnesses and serious mental disorders.

Indicator 29.1: The applicant has access to all types of necessary health care services.

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

Indicator 29.2: Health care services are provided by qualified medical personnel.

Indicator 29.3: Health care is available inside the housing or outside at a reasonable distance.

- **Additional remarks:** *For more clarification on ‘reasonable distance’ see Standard 1: Location.*

Indicator 29.4: Necessary health care, 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 health care and the provision of medication are free of charge (cf. Standard 1: Location, Standard 28: Provision of a daily expenses allowance)*

Indicator 29.5: Adequate arrangements are in place to ensure the applicant is able to communicate with the medical personnel.

- **Additional remarks:** *In particular, this means that a trained interpreter is provided (free of charge) where necessary. Provided the applicant consents, other individuals except for children can translate.*

Indicator 29.6: Arrangements are made to ensure access to first aid in emergencies.

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

Indicator 29.7: The applicant is provided with access to his/her medical records, without prejudice to national legislation.

- **Additional remarks:** *Provided the applicant has expressed his/her consent, the medical record can be transferred from one medical professional to another.*

Indicator 29.8: Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special medical needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *This would include, for example, access to a paediatrician, gynaecologist or prenatal health care or ensuring that persons with disabilities are provided with necessary arrangements. It would also include counselling provided to victims of trafficking and (gender-based) violence as well as victims of torture or other forms of psychological and physical violence.*

Good practice with regards to health care

It is considered good practice:

- to equip collective housing facilities with at least one member of staff who is trained to provide first aid; and
- where preventive health care and/or vaccination are not part of the general mandatory health programmes, to provide preventive health care, including a medical screening at reception intake and/or vaccinations; and
- to provide condoms as well as certain medication free of charge, including when not prescribed.

6. Provision of information and counselling

Introductory remarks

‘Provision of information’, as referred to in this document, refers to information in the framework of the RCD only. Without prejudice to the information to be provided to applicants for international protection as per other relevant instruments, such as the recast Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (hereafter: APD) and Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person (hereafter: Dublin III Regulation), this guidance does not include standards in relation to information regarding the asylum procedure. It is however noted that in some Member States the provision of such information may also fall under the responsibility of the reception authorities.

In order to avoid overburdening the applicant with extensive information at the reception intake, the provision of information should take place in a time- or phase-specific manner. Member States are encouraged to establish timelines outlining the type of information to be provided to applicants at the national level, while taking into account the overall maximum of 15 days prescribed in Article 5 RCD.

With regards to the duty of the Member State to guarantee the applicants’ subsistence and to protect not only the physical but also the mental health as established in Article 17(2), adequate support measures, such as social counselling, should be available to applicants. This could entail many different types of assistance, starting from orienting applicants on how to access public services, cultural mediation and orientation and conflict solving as well as guidance on how to deal with specific situations and the next steps in life. Moreover, counselling could also facilitate the identification of applicants with special needs (cf. Section 7: Identification, assessment and response to special needs).

Legal references — provision of information and counselling

- Article 5 RCD: information
- Article 17(1) and (2): general rules on material reception conditions and health care

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 30: Ensure the applicant receives and understands phase-relevant information on benefits and obligations relating to reception conditions.

Indicator 30.1: Written information is provided in a language that the applicant understands or is reasonably supposed to understand.

- **Additional remarks:** Information should be provided in clear and non-technical language.

Indicator 30.2: Where necessary and appropriate the information is also provided orally in a language the applicant understands.

- **Additional remarks:** Information should at least be provided orally in the case of illiteracy or in cases where the person does not understand the written information provided.

Indicator 30.3: Information covers all aspects of reception conditions, including the benefits and obligations under the RCD.

- **Additional remarks:** Information should include, as a minimum, the right to reception depending on legal status, the form of provision of material reception conditions (housing, food, clothing and daily expenses allowances), access to health care and specific arrangements for applicants with special needs, if relevant. The house rules should be clearly communicated to the applicant. Information could also include the availability

of additional psychosocial support, information on social norms within the Member State, advice on daily life, including conflict management, etc.

Indicator 30.4: Information is provided in a timely manner (maximum 15 days) after lodging an application for international protection.

Indicator 30.5: Information is provided according to the special needs and individual circumstances of applicants.

- **Additional remarks:** *For children, information is provided in a child-friendly manner (e.g. through use of pictograms, use of child-friendly wording, etc.). For persons with visual impairments or intellectual disabilities, information is provided in an adapted manner. Information provision includes aspects related to gender-based violence or trafficking in human beings.*

Good practice with regards to the provision of information

It is considered good practice:

- to provide information to the applicant both in writing and orally, for example with the help of interpreters or cultural mediators;
- to ensure visualisation of the information through the use of videos or pictograms;
- to verify that the applicant has understood the information provided;
- to provide the information in a time and phase-specific manner:
 - ✓ day of arrival: provision of basic information about the functionalities of the housing and the right to reception and related benefits, including the availability of the social worker (or other staff relevant for the intake procedure);
 - ✓ ideally within 3 days, no longer than 15 days: provision of additional information about the functioning of the housing, daily life, activities, school and courses. Provision of house rules in writing, including the obligations of the applicant vis-à-vis other applicants (such as women's rights, respect for sexual diversity and LGBTBI rights) and those relating to reception conditions with which the applicants must comply;
 - ✓ during reception: provision of additional information on the right of reception and depending on its relevance: the right of residence, voluntary return, the right to work, necessary administration-related aspects, physical and psychological well-being, rights and duties when living in the Member State society, available courses and activities, awareness raising on aspects like personal hygiene, sexually transmitted diseases and contraception, conflict management, waste sorting, cleaning, energy consumption, etc.;
 - ✓ at the end of the stay: the necessary information for beneficiaries of international protection and those whose applications for international protection have been rejected (housing, access to medical care, etc.).

STANDARD 31: Ensure provision of information on organisations or groups of persons that provide specific legal assistance and organisations that might be able to help or inform applicants concerning the available reception conditions, including health care.

Indicator 31.1: Information on the available legal assistance and how to access it is provided to applicants.

Indicator 31.2: Information provided to applicants includes the contact details of organisations or groups of persons able to inform applicants concerning available reception conditions, including health care, and how to access them.

Indicator 31.3: Written information is provided in a language that the applicant understands or is reasonably supposed to understand.

- **Additional remarks:** *Information should be provided in clear and non-technical language.*

Indicator 31.4: Where necessary and appropriate the information is also provided orally in a language the applicant understands.

- **Additional remark:** *Information should at least be provided orally in the case of illiteracy or in cases where the person does not understand the written information provided.*

Indicator 31.5: Information should be provided in a timely manner (maximum 15 days) after lodging an application for international protection.

Indicator 31.6: Information is provided according to the special needs and personal circumstances of applicants.

- **Additional remarks:** *For instance, information targeting children is provided in a child-friendly manner (e.g. graphical, use of pictograms). Other information provided could include aspects related to gender-based violence or trafficking in human beings.*

STANDARD 32: Ensure adequate access of legal advisers or counsellors, persons representing the UNHCR, Red Cross, intergovernmental and relevant non-governmental organisations recognised by the Member State concerned in order to assist the applicants.

Indicator 32.1: The access of the actors above is only limited on grounds relating to the security of the premises and of the applicants, provided that it is not thereby severely restricted or rendered impossible.

Indicator 32.2: The actors listed above are able to meet and speak with the applicants in conditions ensuring adequate privacy.

STANDARD 33: Ensure access to social counselling for applicants of international protection.

Indicator 33.1: Social counselling is available to applicants inside or outside the housing facility.

Indicator 33.2: Applicants can access social counselling on a regular basis and as per their personal needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *Access to social counselling can take the form of a personal interview or through the phone.*

7. Identification, assessment and response to special needs

Introductory remarks

Applicants for international protection are in general in a vulnerable situation, given the uncertainty of their status in a foreign country and often their experiences in the country of origin and/or during the journey. Therefore, as indicated in Figure 1 in the introduction to this document, special needs are transversal to the provision of reception conditions as some applicants will require further special support linked to one of the sections included in this guidance in order to enable them to benefit on an equal footing from the rights and benefits under the RCD.

The reception officers in contact with applicants for international protection and everyone involved throughout the process should be aware of and able to identify special needs. Indicators and special needs should be recorded as soon as possible after they are detected and this information should be communicated to the relevant stakeholders in order to provide the necessary guarantees and support.

Chapter IV of the RCD stipulates the guarantees for applicants with special needs. A non-exhaustive list of persons who may have special reception needs includes: minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with serious illnesses, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilation.

Furthermore, Member States have an obligation to assess, indicate and address the special needs of those applicants in a timely manner and to ensure that identification is also possible at a later stage if vulnerabilities are not apparent earlier.

One important aspect is the need to ensure that referral mechanisms in Member States are functioning properly in order to communicate special needs in an efficient manner. Without prejudice to the principle of confidentiality, national authorities should be able and instructed to share the relevant information on identified special needs. For example, where first-contact officials, such as border guards, have noted that the person has special needs, those should be communicated to the reception authorities in order for them to ensure the necessary guarantees as soon as possible. On the other hand, reception officers would often be in a position to observe the applicants over a longer period of time and to build trust. This would allow them to effectively identify special needs, 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 communicate it to the determining authority.

This section of the guidance addresses the obligation of Member States to identify, assess and record and/or communicate special reception needs and to respond to them in a timely manner. Some examples of special reception guarantees are indicated in the different sections of this document. For more comprehensive guidance and a practical tool in this regard, refer to the EASO Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN) ⁽⁸⁾.

Legal references — identification, assessment and response to special needs

- Article 21 RCD: general principle
- Article 22 RCD: assessment of special reception needs
- Article 23: minors
- Article 24: unaccompanied minors
- Article 25: victims of torture and violence

⁽⁸⁾ <https://ipsn.easo.europa.eu/>

Standards and indicators

STANDARD 34: Ensure a mechanism is in place to identify and assess special reception needs.

Indicator 34.1: A standardised mechanism to identify and assess special reception needs of any applicant is in place.

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

Indicator 34.2: The mechanism clearly prescribes who is responsible for the identification and assessment of special reception needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *Depending on the national system, different actors may be involved in the identification and assessment of special needs. The roles of the different actors should be clearly indicated in the mechanism.*

Indicator 34.3: The mechanism clearly prescribes how identification and assessment are recorded and communicated to the applicant and to relevant actors.

- **Additional remarks:** *Recording and effectively communicating the information regarding special needs to the relevant actors is crucial in order to ensure 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 trafficking.*

STANDARD 35: Ensure the mechanism for identification and assessment of special reception needs is effectively applied.

Indicator 35.1: Sufficient resources are allocated to identify, assess and monitor special needs.

Indicator 35.2: The initial identification and assessment of special needs is conducted as soon as possible.

- **Additional remarks:** *Identification and assessment of special reception needs may take place at different stages. It is recommended that initial identification and assessment take place during the reception intake (1 to 3 days). Additional ongoing identification and/or assessment should take place depending on the respective special needs.*

Indicator 35.3: Special needs that become apparent at a later stage are adequately identified and assessed.

- **Additional remarks:** *Some special reception needs may only become apparent at a later stage. Therefore, it is important that identification and assessment are ongoing.*

Indicator 35.4: Where relevant, specialised actors are involved in the assessment of special needs.

- **Additional remarks:** *Specialised actors, such as 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.*

Indicator 35.5: Communication channels and cooperation between the reception authority and the determining authority are established and used.

- **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 35.6: The identification and assessment of special reception needs takes place without prejudice to the examination of the applicants' need for international protection.

- **Additional remarks:** *It is important to clearly separate the issues of identification and assessment of special reception (and procedural) needs and the examination of the application for international protection. While in some cases the applicants' situation of vulnerability would also have an impact on the outcome of the application, the purpose of the identification and assessment as per this guidance is solely to guarantee effective access to the rights and benefits under the RCD during the asylum procedure.*

STANDARD 36: Ensure that identified special reception needs are addressed in a timely manner.

Indicator 36.1: Adequate and prompt action is taken to respond to the identified and assessed special needs.

- **Additional remark:** *Sufficient resources should be allocated to the response to special needs. In addition, standard operating procedures and/or referral mechanisms should be used as appropriate.*

Indicator 36.2: If special needs have been identified, there is a mechanism in place to ensure their regular monitoring.

- **Additional remarks:** *Member States should also envisage the regular follow-up monitoring of identified special needs.*

Good practice on identification, assessment and response to special needs

It is considered good practice:

- to set up a mechanism for the identification and assessment of special reception needs as part of national operating procedures. The EASO IPSN Tool could be integrated into these procedures, notably by applying the guidance on 'Reception support';
- to consider as applicants with special needs also categories other than those listed non-exhaustively in Chapter IV of the RCD, for example LGBTI, people with other gender-related special needs and illiterate applicants.

EASO Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN)

In order to support Member States in the identification and assessment of special needs in terms of procedural and reception guarantees, EASO has developed a web-based interactive tool, publicly accessible in a number of EU languages.

The IPSN Tool is an intuitive practical instrument intended to support the timely and ongoing identification of individual special needs without the requirement of specialised knowledge. It relies on an outline of indicators, linked to different categories of persons with potential special needs. The list includes all categories mentioned by the RCD, as well as LGBTI persons and persons with gender-related special needs. Selecting a category provides further information in order to assess whether the applicant has the respective special needs and generates a checklist and brief guidance on relevant support measures. Reception support is one of the aspects developed within the IPSN Tool.

Once the user has generated the relevant information, he or she can choose to print or save a report, including a selection of different elements. The report can be further individualised for the particular case at hand before it is saved and/or printed.

The integration of the IPSN Tool in a national mechanism, which is in accordance with the standards in this section, is recommended as good practice.

The tool is available at <https://ipsn.easo.europa.eu>

8. Staff training

Introductory remarks

In light of the diversity of national reception system, the tasks, qualifications and training needs of staff working with applicants in the reception context differ among EU Member States. With regards to the guidance included in this section, reference will be made to the term ‘reception officer’, which can be defined as practitioners who are in direct contact with applicants for international protection in a reception context, irrespective of their employer (the state, a non-governmental organisation, a private contractor, a municipality, etc.). These practitioners may include social workers, education and health care staff, registration officers, interpreters, facility managers, administration/coordination staff, etc. The RCD recognises the importance of adequate and ongoing training, as well as the relevance of a mechanism to monitor the quality of the work carried out by reception officers. Specifically, Member States are requested to ‘take appropriate measures to ensure that authorities and other organisations implementing this Directive have received the necessary basic training’.

In this framework, the guidance included in this section should be understood as applying to all levels of staff (i.e. including middle and top management) falling within the definition of the term ‘reception officer’. Moreover, without prejudice to the need to provide specific training to reception officers working with applicants with special reception needs, all training should be aligned to the broader framework of a code of conduct specifying the key concepts and principles underlying the work in the reception context.

Legal references — staff training

- Article 18(7) RCD: modalities for reception conditions
- Article 24(4) RCD: unaccompanied minors
- Article 25(2) RCD: victims of torture and violence
- Article 29(1) RCD: staff and resources

Standards and Indicators

STANDARD 37: Ensure that reception officers are sufficiently qualified.

Indicator 37.1: Each reception officer has clear terms of reference (job description).

Indicator 37.2: Each reception officer is qualified in accordance with national law and regulations concerning his/her particular terms of reference (job description).

- **Additional remark:** *The process of assessing the qualifications of the reception officer should involve a verification of the criminal records with regard to child-related crimes or offenses in cases where this reception officer will be working in direct contact with children.*

STANDARD 38: Ensure reception officers are provided with the necessary and appropriate training.

Indicator 38.1: Each reception officer has a thorough and timely introduction to his/her role, including on the applicable code of conduct.

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

Indicator 38.2: A clear training syllabus including the training requirements for each functional group exists.

- **Additional remarks:** Core training for reception officers can be provided through the EASO training curriculum module on reception. Additionally, the 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.

Indicator 38.3: Training is provided in a regular manner and depending on the need.

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

Indicator 38.4: A minimum of training provided includes gender and age-specific concerns and the situation of applicants with special needs, in particular with regard to child protection and safeguarding standards for children, including unaccompanied children and the identification of victims of torture and violence.

Good practice with regards to staff training

It is considered good practice for reception managers:

- to identify training opportunities for reception officers; and/or
- to organise training through agreements with relevant actors (universities, lawyers, psychologists, etc.).

STANDARD 39: Promote the awareness of other stakeholders who are in regular contact with applicants.

Indicator 39.1: Regular awareness- raising sessions and/or alternative arrangements are in place for persons who are not considered 'reception officers', but are nevertheless in contact with applicants due to their profession/function.

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

STANDARD 40: Promote process-oriented support for reception officers.

Indicator 40.1: Different measures are available to help deal with difficult situations encountered during the reception work.

- **Additional remark:** these measures can take the form of intervision (exchange with peers), crisis teams or external supervision.

Annex — Summary table

Operational standards and indicators on reception conditions			
Section	Sub-section	Standard	Indicator(s)
1. Housing	1.1. Location	1. Ensure effective geographic access to relevant services, such as public services, school, health care, social and legal assistance, a shop for daily needs, laundry and leisure activities.	1.1. Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special needs.
			1.2. (a) The relevant services are provided within the housing. OR
			1.2. (b) The facility is located at a reasonable walking distance from relevant services and the available infrastructure is safe for walking. OR
			1.2. (c) Relevant services are accessible by public transport and the duration of the journey is reasonable. OR
	1.2. Allocation	2. Ensure that the principle of family unity is respected.	1.2. (d) Relevant services are accessible through organised transport provided by the Member State.
			2.1. Family members (in accordance with the definition of Article 2 RCD) are accommodated together with their agreement.
			2.2. Families with children are accommodated together, provided that this is in line with the best interests of the child.
			2.3. Where possible and appropriate, family unity should be respected with regard to members of the broader family.
			2.4. A maximum of one family is allocated per bedroom.
			3.1. The allocation of particular housing to applicants is based on an assessment of their special reception needs.
3. Ensure that special needs are taken into account when (re-) allocating particular housing to an applicant.	3.2. There is a possibility to transfer an applicant as a result of identified special reception needs.		
		3.2. There is a possibility to transfer an applicant as a result of identified special reception needs.	
4. Ensure that specific and objective reasons linked to the individual situation of the applicant are taken into account when allocating housing to an applicant	4.1. A mechanism is in place to consider whether there are specific and objective reasons for the allocation of particular housing.		
		4.1. A mechanism is in place to consider whether there are specific and objective reasons for the allocation of particular housing.	

Operational standards and indicators on reception conditions				
Section	Sub-section	Standard	Indicator(s)	
1. Housing (continued)	1.3. Infrastructure	5. Ensure sufficient space in the bedroom in collective housing.	5.1. A minimum space of 4 m ² per person is provided for each applicant.	
			5.2. With regards to the minimum space of 4 m ² per person, a minimum room height of 2.10 m is ensured.	
			5.3. Sufficient space exists in the bedroom to place one bed and one cupboard for each applicant.	
		6. Ensure respect for the privacy of the applicants in collective housing.	6.1. A maximum of six single applicants are accommodated in one bedroom.	
			6.2. Separate bedrooms exist for single male and female applicants exist and no access is possible for applicants of the opposite sex.	
			6.3. A room creating a private setting (inside or outside the premises) for meetings with legal aid, a social worker or other relevant actors is foreseen and available to the applicants, when needed.	
			6.4. Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special needs.	
		7. Ensure that the housing is sufficiently furnished.	7.1. The furniture for each bedroom includes, as a minimum:	7.1.1. one individual bed per person; AND
				7.1.2. one cupboard per person or family, big enough to hold personal belongings (such as clothes, medication or documents).
			7.2. In bedrooms shared by applicants who are not family members, the cupboard is lockable, without prejudice to security considerations of the reception facility.	
			7.3. The furniture in the common/living area includes a sufficient number of tables and chairs.	
			7.4. In facilities where applicants are asked to cook for themselves, all of the following is provided and accessible:	7.4.1. sufficient refrigerator volume per person; AND
				7.4.2. sufficient shelf space per person/family; AND
				7.4.3. minimum access to a stove per person/family; AND
				7.4.4. a minimum number of dishes, cooking utensils, and cutlery per person.
7.5. Specific arrangements are available for applicants with special needs.				

Operational standards and indicators on reception conditions			
Section	Sub-section	Standard	Indicator(s)
1. Housing (continued)	1.3. Infrastructure (continued)	8. Ensure sufficient, adequate, and functioning sanitary infrastructure in the housing.	8.1. All applicants should have access to a shower/bath, sink with hot and cold water and a functional toilet.
			8.2. At least one functioning and lockable toilet per 10 applicants is accessible 24/7.
			8.3. At least one functioning shower or bath with hot and cold water exists per 12 applicants and is accessible for a minimum of 8 hours/day.
			8.4. At least one functioning sink with hot and cold water per 10 applicants is accessible 24/7.
			8.5. If more than one shower is located in the bathroom, visual separation is ensured.
			8.6. Separate toilets, sinks and shower facilities exist according to sex (visibly and understandable marked) except for small housing facilities.
			8.7. With regards to shared housing for applicants who are not family members, arrangements are in place to ensure that applicants may access the facilities safely and that the intimacy of the applicants is at all times respected.
			8.8. Arrangements are in place to ensure that clothes and towels can stay dry while applicants are taking a shower.
			8.9. Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special needs.
		9. Ensure compliance of the housing with relevant national and local regulations.	9.1. The housing is built in compliance with applicable local and national regulations.
			9.2. The housing is maintained and operated in compliance with relevant local and national regulations, taking into account all potential hazards.
			9.3. Sufficient natural light and fresh air enters the bedrooms and common/living areas of the housing.
			9.4. An adequate temperature regulation system exists for all areas of the housing.
			9.5. The bedrooms and common areas are protected from excessive environmental noise.

Operational standards and indicators on reception conditions			
Section	Sub-section	Standard	Indicator(s)
1. Housing (continued)	1.3. Infrastructure (continued)	10. Ensure that the inside and outside infrastructure of housing designated to house applicants with reduced mobility is adapted to their needs.	10.1. The housing is located: (a) on the ground floor; OR (b) an elevator adapted for use by persons with reduced mobility exists; OR (c) stairs are not more than a maximum number, according to the degree of reduced mobility.
			10.2. The external approaches such as paths or drives have a firm, level surface.
			10.3. The entrance is designed to allow for the access of applicants with reduced mobility.
			10.4. Doorways and passageways inside the housing are wide enough for wheelchair users.
			10.5. Grab rails exist for support in rooms and places that are used by applicants with reduced mobility.
			10.6. Adapted sanitary infrastructure exists, including, for example, walk-in showers, grab rails, sinks and toilets at appropriate height for wheelchair users and a surface of bathroom and toilet rooms sufficient for wheelchairs.
	1.4. Security	11. Ensure sufficient security measures.	11.1. A risk assessment is carried out on a regular basis, taking into account external and internal factors.
			11.2. Adequate security measures are introduced based on the outcome of the risk assessment.
			11.3. It is possible to report security issues (e.g. theft, violence, threats, hostility from external community) to the responsible personnel in a safe manner.
			11.4. The numbers for emergency calls are displayed in a visible place and a phone is available.
			11.5. Security measures focus on the detection and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.
			11.6. Specific arrangements have been made for applicants with special needs.

Operational standards and indicators on reception conditions			
Section	Sub-section	Standard	Indicator(s)
1. Housing (continued)	1.5. Common areas	12. Ensure that applicants have sufficient space to eat.	12.1. All applicants have the possibility to eat in a designated space.
		13. Ensure that applicants have sufficient space for leisure and group activities.	12.1. An area which is suitable for leisure activities exists inside the housing or within public space nearby.
			12.2. Where group activities are organised by the Member State, sufficient space is available.
	1.6. Sanitation	14. Ensure that private and common areas are kept clean.	14.1. The housing facility observes a cleaning schedule
			14.2. The cleanliness of private and common areas of the housing is checked on a regular basis.
			14.3. The cleanliness is checked when people move to another room or to a different housing facility.
			14.4. Where applicants are responsible for cleaning, they have access to necessary cleaning products and items as well as protection equipment such as gloves and masks.
		15. Ensure that the kitchen and sanitary areas are kept clean.	15.1. The cleanliness of the areas is in line with local and national regulations and standards.
			15.2. The areas are cleaned at least daily (in accommodation centres), or as often as necessary.
			15.3. In-depth cleaning of the areas takes place regularly.
		16. Ensure the applicants are able to do their laundry or have it done on a regular basis.	16.1. When the bed linen and towels are provided in kind and washed by the housing facility, they should be washed on a regular basis.
			16.2. (a): Applicants should be able to do the laundry at least once a week; OR 16.2. (b): There is a service available so that the laundry can be done for the applicants.

Operational standards and indicators on reception conditions			
Section	Sub-section	Standard	Indicator(s)
1. Housing (continued)	1.7. Maintenance	17. Ensure the safety and proper functioning of the housing facilities through regular maintenance.	17.1. The good functioning of the housing and its furniture and equipment is assessed on a regular basis.
			17.2. Applicants have the possibility to report the need for maintenance and repairs.
			17.3. Repairs and replacements needed within the housing are carried out promptly and to an adequate standard.
	1.8. Communication equipment and services	18. Ensure that applicants have adequate access to a telephone to make calls concerning procedural, legal, medical or educational issues.	18.1. Access to a telephone is possible at least for calls concerning procedural, legal, medical and educational issues.
			18.2. Applicants have daily access to at least one telephone per housing unit.
			18.3. Applicants can take calls in a private setting, i.e. other applicants cannot hear the conversation.
		19. Ensure that applicants have adequate access to the internet.	19.1. Applicants have access to the internet in the housing itself or in the nearby public space at least four times a week.
		20. Ensure that applicants have the possibility to charge their devices for communication.	20.1. There at least one plug available and accessible per bedroom to charge up electronic devices.
2. Food	21. Ensure that applicants have access to sufficient and adequate food.		21.1. Food safety standards are observed.
			21.2. At least three meals are served per day for adults and five for minors, of which at least one is cooked and served warm.
			21.3. The meals ensure a balanced and varied diet.
			21.4. Applicants are informed about the composition of the meal.
			21.5. Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special dietary needs.
			21.6. The eating preferences and dietary restrictions of specific groups are taken into account.
	22. Ensure that applicants have access to potable water 24/7.		22.1. Each applicant is provided with a minimum of 2.5 litres of water per day while personal physiology and climate are taken into account.
			22.2. (a): The infrastructure of the housing is adequate for potable water. OR 22.2. (b): Potable water is distributed in absence of adequate infrastructure.

Operational standards and indicators on reception conditions			
Section	Sub-section	Standard	Indicator(s)
3. Clothing and other non-food items		23. Ensure that the applicant possesses sufficient clothing.	23.1. The applicant possesses sufficient underwear for a week without having to do laundry.
			23.2. The applicant possesses at least a minimum number of clothing items.
			23.3. The applicant has at least two different pairs of shoes.
			23.4. Applicants are provided with clothing as soon as possible.
			23.5. If any of the clothes is no longer usable as a result of wear and tear, there is a standardised way to obtain another item in exchange.
			23.6. Applicants possess sufficient clothes for babies and small children for 1 week without having to do laundry.
		24. Ensure that the applicants possess adequate clothing.	24.1. The clothing fits the applicants reasonably in terms of size.
			24.2. The clothing is reasonably decent-looking and appropriate to the prevailing standard of the host society and the applicants' background.
			24.3. Adequate seasonal clothing is available.
		25. Ensure that applicants have access to sufficient and adequate personal hygiene products.	25.1. A list exists specifying which type and quantity of personal hygiene products applicants of certain age and gender are entitled to receive.
			25.2. Necessary personal hygiene products are at the applicant's disposal, either through regular distribution in kind on a per capita basis or through the daily expenses allowance.
		26. Ensure that applicants have access to other essential non-food items	26.1. Sufficient bed linen and towels are provided.
			26.2. Washing powder is available if applicants are responsible for washing their own clothes.
			26.3. Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special needs.
		27. Ensure that children enrolled in school are provided with adequate clothing and school accessories enabling them to fully participate in all educational school activities.	27.1. Children who attend compulsory school education are provided with adequate clothing for school activities.
			27.2. Children who attend school receive a school bag (backpack or other) and all items (textbooks etc.) required by the school free of charge.

Operational standards and indicators on reception conditions			
Section	Sub-section	Standard	Indicator(s)
4. Daily expenses allowance		28. Ensure that an adequate daily expenses allowance is provided.	28.1. A clear definition of the scope of daily expenses allowance exists.
			28.2. The method for the calculation of the daily expenses allowance is clearly determined.
			28.3. The daily expenses allowance is provided at free disposal ('pocket money') and allows applicants to obtain an adequate degree of autonomy.
			28.4. The amount of the daily expenses allowance also reflects as a minimum the following expenses, unless ensured in kind: communication and information, school items, personal hygiene and body care, leisure activities and costs for transport when related to access to health care and obtaining medication, the asylum procedure and legal assistance, and education for children enrolled in school.
			28.5. The daily expenses allowance is provided regularly, and no less than once a month with regards to the 'pocket money'.
5. Health care		29. Ensure access to necessary health care, at least level of emergency care and essential treatment of illnesses and serious mental disorders.	29.1. The applicant has access to all types of necessary health care services.
			29.2. Health care services are provided by qualified medical personnel.
			29.3. Health care is available inside the housing or outside at a reasonable distance.
			29.4. Necessary health care, including prescribed medication, is provided free of charge or economically compensated through the daily expenses allowance.
			29.5. Adequate arrangements are in place to ensure the applicant is able to communicate with the medical personnel.
			29.6. Arrangements are made to ensure access to first aid in emergencies.
			29.7. The applicant is provided with access to his/her medical records, without prejudice to national legislation.
			29.8. Specific arrangements are in place for applicants with special medical needs.

Operational standards and indicators on reception conditions			
Section	Sub-section	Standard	Indicator(s)
6. Provision of information and counselling		30. Ensure the applicant receives and understands phase-relevant information on benefits and obligations relating to reception conditions.	30.1. Written information is provided in a language that the applicant understands or is reasonably supposed to understand.
			30.2. Where necessary and appropriate the information is provided also orally in a language the applicant understands.
			30.3. Information covers all aspects of reception conditions, including the benefits and obligations under the RCD.
			30.4. Information is provided in a timely manner (maximum 15 days) after lodging an application for international protection application.
			30.5. Information is provided according to the special needs and individual circumstances of applicants.
		31. Ensure provision of information on organisations or groups of persons that provide specific legal assistance and organisations that might be able to help or inform applicants concerning the available reception conditions, including health care.	31.1. Information on the available legal assistance and how to access it is provided to applicants.
			31.2. Information provided to applicants includes the contact details of organisations or groups of persons able to inform applicants concerning health reception conditions, including health care, and how to access them.
			31.3. Written information is provided in a language that the applicant understands or is reasonably supposed to understand.
			31.4. Where necessary and appropriate the information is also provided orally in a language the applicant understands.
			31.5. Information should be provided in a timely manner (maximum 15 days) after lodging an application for international protection.
			31.6. Information is provided according to the special needs and personal circumstances of applicants.

Operational standards and indicators on reception conditions			
Section	Sub-section	Standard	Indicator(s)
6. Provision of information and counselling (continued)		32. Ensure adequate access of legal advisers or counsellors, persons representing the UNHCR, Red Cross, intergovernmental and relevant non-governmental organisations recognised by the Member State concerned in order to assist the applicants.	32.1. The access of the actors above is only limited on grounds relating to the security of the premises and of the applicants, provided that it is not thereby severely restricted or rendered impossible.
			32.2. The actors listed above are able to meet and speak with the applicants in conditions ensuring adequate privacy.
		33. Ensure access to social counselling for applicants of international protection.	33.1. Social counselling is available to applicants inside or outside the housing facility.
			33.2. Applicants can access social counselling on a regular basis and as per their personal needs.
7. Identification, assessment and response to special needs	34. Ensure a mechanism is in place to identify and assess special reception needs.	34.1. A standardised mechanism to identify and assess special reception needs of any applicant is in place.	
		34.2. The mechanism clearly prescribes who is responsible for identification and assessment of special reception needs.	
		34.3. The mechanism clearly prescribes how identification and assessment are recorded and communicated to the applicant and to relevant actors.	
	35. Ensure the mechanism for identification and assessment of special reception needs is effectively applied.	35.1. Sufficient resources are allocated to identify, assess and monitor special needs.	
		35.2. The initial identification and assessment of special needs is conducted as soon as possible.	
		35.3. Special needs that become apparent at a later stage are adequately identified and assessed.	
		35.4. Where relevant, specialised actors are involved in the assessment of special needs.	
		35.5. Communication channels and cooperation between the reception authority and the determining authority are established and used.	
		35.6. The identification and assessment of special reception needs takes place without prejudice to the examination of the applicants' need for international protection.	

Operational standards and indicators on reception conditions			
Section	Sub-section	Standard	Indicator(s)
7. Identification, assessment and response to special needs (continued)		36. Ensure that identified special reception needs are addressed in a timely manner.	36.1. Adequate and prompt action is taken to respond to the identified and assessed special needs.
			36.2. In case special needs have been identified, there is a mechanism in place to ensure their regular monitoring.
8. Staff training		37. Ensure that reception officers are sufficiently qualified.	37.1. Each reception officer has clear terms of reference (job description).
			37.2. Each reception officer is qualified in accordance with national law and regulations concerning his/her particular terms of reference (job description).
	38. Ensure reception officers are provided with the necessary and appropriate training.	38.1. Each reception officer has a thorough and timely introduction into his/her role, including on the applicable code of conduct.	
		38.2. A clear training syllabus including the training requirements for each functional group exists.	
		38.3. Training is provided in a regular manner and depending on the need.	
		38.4. A minimum of training provided includes gender and age-specific concerns and the situation of applicants with special needs, in particular with regard to child protection and safeguarding standards for children, including unaccompanied children, as well as the identification of victims of torture and violence.	
	39. Promote the awareness of other stakeholders who are in regular contact with applicants.	39.1. Regular awareness-raising sessions and/or alternative arrangements are in place for persons who are not considered 'reception officers', but are nevertheless in contact with applicants due to their profession/function.	
	40. Promote process-oriented support for reception officers.	40.1. Different measures are available to help deal with difficult situations encountered during the reception work.	

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