Reception - Malta

Reception System

Overview

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Relevant EU legislation

Malta is bound by the Reception Conditions Directive and has transposed its provisions through the International Protection Act, Chapter 420 of the Laws of Malta, the Reception of Asylum Seekers Regulations, S.L. 420.06 and the Procedural Standards for Granting and Withdrawing International Protection Regulations, S.L. 420.07.

National legislation

Malta transposes the recast Reception Conditions Directive through the following legislative instruments:

- the International Protection Act, Chapter 420 of the Laws of Malta, as amended by Act No. XXXV of 2023
- the Reception of Asylum Seekers Regulations, S.L. 420.06 as amended by Legal Notice 87 of 2024
- the Procedural Standards for Granting and Withdrawing International Protection Regulations, S.L. 420.07, as amended by Legal Notice 104 of 2024.

Competent authority and stakeholders

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Authority responsible for reception	The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS) under the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security and Employment. In the performance of its function, the Agency: • Oversees the daily management of accommodation facilities either directly or through subcontracting agreements; • Provides particular services to persons identified as vulnerable according to current policies; and • Provides information programmes in the areas of employment, housing, education and welfare services offered under national schemes.

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Other actors involved	• Immigration Section of the Malta Police Force and Detention Service Agency: the Immigration Section controls the island's points of entry, which include checks aimed at suppressing illegal immigration, preventing illegal entry of foreigners and detection of false documents. They are often the first-contact officials for applicants for protection. The immigration section is also responsible to make repatriation arrangements and escort arrangements where necessary (return). A designated Detention Service Agency is tasked with managing detention facilities. • The Directorate for Migration, under the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security and Employment, is the Ministry's focal point in the area of asylum and immigration. Tasks cover issues of international protection, return, illegal /irregular migration, resettlement and statistical issues. • Ministry for Social Justice and Solidarity, the Family and Children's Rights, involved in issues related to unaccompanied minors. • the Malta Emigrants' Commission runs one reception centre (Balzan Open Centre) and provides a number of houses/flats in the community to applicants for international protection. • Ministry of Health / Health authorities are involved in initial health screening and in providing health services upon need. Also, in the context of age assessment they may conduct assessment of skeletal age through hand-wrist radiograph. • Ministry for Education and Employment, for issues surrounding access to education and employment of applicants (e.g. Migrant Learner's Unit; Jobsplus). **Non-governmental actors:** A number of other actors, including international organisations and civil society organisations are involved in the provision of services to applicants in reception. Examples include:

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Organisational aspects

Reception is managed at a central level. Malta operates a collective reception system. Most reception structures are state-owned or leased by the Government. A few reception centres are owned and managed by on-government entities, such as the Catholic Church and are also run by elements of the Catholic Church in agreement with the Government. Centres and facilities not run by AWAS, still fall within its overall reception system.

Allocation of applicants to geographical areas within the territory

In Malta there is no allocation of applicants to geographical areas within the territory. AWAS is the entity responsible for determining where specific applicants are accommodated. Such decisions are normally based on the profile of the applicant, e.g. whether a minor, single woman/mother, etc.

Staff and training

AWAS employs around 80 persons between accommodation centre staff, social workers, welfare officers and other professionals.

Reception phases

In terms of Malta's Strategy for the Reception of Asylum Seekers And Irregular Migrants which describes the policy and sets out practical steps in relation to reception, all persons entering Malta irregularly are pre-screened immediately upon arrival by the Police and Health authorities, in accordance with applicable procedures.

Initial reception processes

After a search and rescue operation at sea, the Armed Forces of Malta hand over all irregular migrants, who they may have apprehended or rescued, to the Police Immigration Section, which is responsible for the initial registration and screening of the migrants.

The Police screening process follows the following sequence:

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1. Health Authorities are informed immediately of the incident and informed of the site where the boat or AFM rescue craft will be berthing in due time. In the event of an unannounced arrival, the authorities convene at the site of disembarkation. A small medical team (especially when there is information of persons needing assistance) is sent on the site of the berthing for first aid purposes;
2. Health professionals are summoned to call at the Police Immigrants Examination Area (hereafter called examination area), where the first medical tests are carried out;
3. Concurrently the Police Forensic Section is called and requested to proceed at the same area in order to take fingerprints and photographs of the persons concerned for records purposes, including for the EURODAC2 system;
4. The Police Mechanical Section is called and transport is ordered on the site of berthing depending on the amount of persons arriving;
5. The Police Mess is called in order to prepare water and snacks for the persons who will be arriving;
6. If the arrival is outside normal working hours, Immigration personnel are called to proceed to the examination area. They would be detailed to accompany the immigrants from the place the boat berths to the Police Headquarters Migrants' Reception Area. Some remain at the reception area to prepare the examination and interviewing rooms.

The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS), as the entity responsible for Initial Reception, is contacted by the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) Control Room at the earliest possible in order to be able to identify appropriate accommodation for the migrants in question.

Actions taken at the disembarkation area

The following actions are taken once the migrants arrive at the Examination Area:

- Immigrants are immediately given a police number for identification purposes. This is in the form of a tag worn around the wrist as a form of identification until the person becomes familiar with his or her police number. This information is communicated to the Health Authorities at the earliest possible.
- Alleged unaccompanied minors, family groups with children and other manifestly vulnerable persons are the first to be processed upon arrival at

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the Examination Area. If they declare to be under age and are unaccompanied, immediate action is taken to inform AWAS.

- Immigrants are also searched for possible illicit objects which they may be carrying, identity documents or other documents which could be of assistance in verifying their nationality or other information. Those having a substantial amount of cash are informed, in a language that they may be reasonably supposed to understand, that the funds would be taken for safekeeping by the Police until release from the Initial Reception Centre or Detention. A receipt is handed over to the migrant concerned indicating any goods, including documents, and cash taken over for safekeeping by the Police. Detailed records shall also be kept at the Police end. Any item so taken over shall be returned to the migrant concerned immediately upon release. Moreover, any documentation so withheld by the Police shall be made accessible to a person in detention or his or her lawyer, particularly where this is required in relation to the review of detention or the determination of his or her asylum application.
- All migrants are spoken to individually by Immigration Police in a preliminary interview.

During the interview the Police:

- In the absence of travel documents, shall take the full particulars of the individual; and,
- Try to establish the modus operandi of the smuggling operation.

Moreover, the Police:

- Hands over a booklet to the migrants, which booklet sets out the migrants' rights and obligations. The booklet is available in English, French and Arabic; and,
- Refers the migrants to the office where fingerprints and photographs are taken.

When the above process is completed the migrants are examined by the medical team. The migrants are then given a light snack and embarked on the bus which will eventually take them at the centre identified to host them. Information on the arriving migrants is immediately provided to AWAS and the International Protection Agency, as well as other relevant authorities and organisations.

Health Procedures

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Migrants would be initially screened by Port Health doctors to ascertain whether they can proceed to Police General Headquarters, or whether they are in need of urgent referral to hospital or a health centre as required, in which case an ambulance is immediately called for.

Once migrants are transferred to Police General Headquarters, Port Health and the Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit (IDCU) doctors conduct a detailed clinical review of the patients concerned to attend to their immediate clinical needs. During this review, minor ailments like wounds and burns are attended to. Any cases requiring hospital investigations/admissions are referred to Mater Dei Hospital. Furthermore, symptomatic screening is conducted for Tuberculosis (TB) and physical check-ups are conducted for any evident signs of other infectious diseases (e.g. scabies, chicken pox and lung consolidation).

Screening for active TB is coordinated by the IDCU in accordance with the National TB Strategy. A digital X-ray Unit was commissioned in June 2013 utilising emergency response funds at Lyster Detention Centre enabling the screening of irregular migrants at this Facility. A pool of radiographers is available to image the irregular migrants by means of a Chest X-Ray. These are reported by radiologists at Mater Dei Hospital (MDH) and results are communicated to IDCU.

Children under the age of 11 years and pregnant women are screened by means of a Mantoux test (a screening tool for tuberculosis applied to the skin), which is conducted by Chest Unit nurses and read within 48 hours. Further investigation may be required for any suspected cases. Migrants with possible active TB are referred to the Chest Clinic or to Accident and Emergency Department for further investigation.

Children with communicable diseases requiring specialist intervention would continue being cared for by the Paediatric Infectious Diseases specialist. All irregular migrants are updated with vaccinations in accordance with the local immunisation schedule by the Immunisation Centre at Primary Care.

Children who are at high risk of TB, in accordance with the Bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG) protocol, are assessed for HIV status and, if negative, given the BCG vaccine.

Accommodation

Initial Accommodation of newly arrived Irregular Migrants

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Newly arrived irregular migrants shall be accommodated at an Initial Reception Facility, a contained environment, in order for them to be medically screened and processed by the pertinent authorities, including AWAS and Police officials. The stay of an irregular migrant at an Initial Reception Centre shall be of limited duration and in no case shall such duration extend beyond the granting of medical clearance by the Health authorities.

Detention

Those irregular migrants who do not apply for international protection, or whose application for international protection has been definitively rejected, may be detained pursuant to the Immigration Act (Cap 217) and the Common Standards and Procedures for Returning Illegally Staying Third Country Nationals Regulations, SL 217.12.

Vulnerable persons in terms of the Reception of Asylum Seekers Regulations, SL 420.06 shall not be detained after being released from the Initial Reception Facility. Such persons shall instead be immediately accommodated at Open Centres suited to their specific circumstances.

Accommodation at Open Centres

Asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection released from detention shall, if no alternative accommodation arrangements are available to them, be offered accommodation at Open Centres. Irregular migrants (i.e. persons who have not submitted an asylum application or whose applications have been definitively rejected) may also be offered accommodation at Open Centres if humanitarian considerations so require; provided that priority shall be accorded to asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.

The objective of Open Centres is to provide accommodation to asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection until such time as they are able to settle independently in the community. The nature of such accommodation is therefore, by necessity, temporary.

Open Centres will not only accommodate asylum seekers who would have reached Malta in an irregular manner, but also asylum seekers who would have reached Malta in a regular manner, provided that Malta is the State responsible for determining their asylum applications. This includes asylum seekers formally resettled or relocated to Malta.

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Other migrants, on the other hand, are provided with accommodation until such time as they can be returned to their country of origin or other arrangements have been made.

Unless there are overriding humanitarian considerations, no migrant shall be allowed to reside at an Open Centre for more than 12 months.

Contingency planning

information not currently available.

Facilities

Overview of different types of reception facilities according to national classification

Malta's reception system is comprised of a mix of initial reception facilities, collective accommodation centres and other ad hoc/individual premises adapted for housing applicants with specific needs.

Premises at the border

Name of the reception facility	Detention Centre
Access description	Closed
Management	Detention Service Agency within the Ministry of Home Affairs, Security and Employment
Type of applicants accommodated	Individuals, whose identity or nationality is not verified yet; when there is a risk of absconding on the part of the applicant; when the applicant's right to enter Maltese territory has not been decided yet; when the applicant is subject to a return procedure and the Principal Officer can substantiate that the applicant is making an application to merely delay the enforcement of the return decision; for reasons of national security or public order; and in accordance with the Dublin III regulation.

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Number of centres	According to the Place of Detention Designation Order, S.L. 217.03, the following are declared to be places of detention for the purposes of the Immigration Act. 1. The quarters at the Special Assignment Group Complex, Ta' Kandja, limits of Siġġiewi. 2. The approved place of Police Custody at the Victoria Police Station, Gozo. 3. The lock up in the building housing the Courts of Justice at Valletta. 4. The lock up at the Police Headquarters at Floriana. 5. The approved place of Police Custody at the Malta International Airport. 6. The approved place of Police Custody at the Seaport, Valletta. 7. The approved place at Lyster Barracks, Ħal Far. 8. The approved place of the Police Complex at Fort Mosta, Mosta. 9. The Ħal-Far Immigration Reception Centre. 10. The approved place at the Safi Barracks, Safi. In practice, only 3 facilities are currently being used: 2 in Ħal Far, and 1 in Safi.
Capacity	Information is currently not available
Location of the centres within the country	Safi and Ħal Far

Initial reception centres

Name of the reception facility	Initial Reception Facility in Safi (detention)
Regime	Closed
Management	Detention Service Agency

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Type of applicants accommodated	Newly arrived irregular migrants shall be accommodated at an Initial Reception Facility, a contained environment, in order for them to be medically screened and processed by the pertinent authorities, including AWAS and Police officials. The stay of an irregular migrant at an Initial Reception Centre shall be of limited duration and in no case shall such duration extend beyond the granting of medical clearance by the Health authorities.
Number of centres	1
Capacity	Information is currently not available.
Location of the centres within the country	Safi

Collective accommodation centres

Name of the reception facility	Hal Far Tent Village (HTV) Hal Far Family Centre (HFC) Hangar Open Centre (HOC) Dar il-Liedna Balzan Open Centre
Regime	Open
Management	AWAS
Type of applicants accommodated	Applicants awaiting a final decision.

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Number of centres	Currently, 5 entities in use: Hal Far Tent Village (HTV); Hal Far Family Centre (HFC); Hangar Open Centre (HOC); Dar il-Liedna; Balzan Open Centre. Marsa Open Centre was closed down in April 2024.
Capacity	Approximately 2,900
Location of the centres within the country	• Balzan • Birżebbuġa • Fgura • Ħal Far • Marsa (closed down in April 2024)

Individual accommodation centres (such as private houses, flats, hotels)

Name of the reception facility	Apartments managed by Malta Emigrants' Commission; and Peace Lab (house managed by a Franciscan priest)
Regime	Open
Management	Malta Emigrants' Commission; and Franciscan priest
Type of applicants accommodated	Applicants awaiting a final decision and persons whose application has been rejected.
Number of centres	Approximately 10 MEC flats/houses; 1 house managed by a Franciscan priest (Peace Lab)
Capacity	Included in the capacity of 2,900
Location of the centres within the country	Apartments are situated in different localities, mainly in the centre of Malta; Peace Lab in Hal Far

Temporary solutions when housing capacities is temporarily exhausted

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Name of the reception facility	In exceptional cases, alternative venues may be utilized (e.g. shelters for homeless persons).
Regime	Open
Management	AWAS
Type of applicants accommodated	Applicants awaiting final decision
Number of centres	Information is currently not available
Capacity	Information is currently not available.
Location of the centres within the country	Variable, spread all over the country.

Reception facilities for applicants with special needs

Unaccompanied minors are accommodated in Dar il-Liedna in Fgura. This is a facility solely for unaccompanied minors.

Material reception conditions provided in kind and cash

Definition of material reception conditions

According to Article 11 of S.L. 420.06, the authorities responsible for the management of reception centres shall ensure that material reception conditions are available to applicants when they make their application for asylum. Applicants shall be provided with emergency health care and essential treatment of illness and serious mental disorders. Medical and other assistance shall be provided to applicants who have special reception needs, including mental health care.

The material reception conditions shall be as such as to ensure a standard of living adequate for the health of applicants and capable of ensuring their subsistence. Authorities are to ensure that this standard of living is met in the specific situation of persons who have special needs, according to law, as well as

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in relation to the situation of persons who are in detention.

The provision of material reception conditions and health care shall be subject to the condition that applicants do not have sufficient means to have a standard of living adequate for their health and to enable their subsistence

Material reception conditions provided in kind

Type and purpose	Food, Provided in kind. This does not affect the daily financial allowance Health Care, provided through the National Healthcare System(some conditions may apply).
Duration and recurrence	Entire asylum procedure.

Financial allowances and vouchers

Type and purpose	Daily amount of the food and transport financial allowance is provided. Recipients need to sign 3 times a week at the reception centre to receive the financial allowance. If living outside the open centres, applicants receive assistance through the regular social assistance scheme.
Duration and recurrence	Usually given for a year, but exceptions are known to have been made on a case by case basis depending on the individual’s needs and degree of vulnerability.
Calculation and amount	In 2016 - 4.66 euros/day with an extra 2.33 euros per child. Persons returned under the Dublin III Regulation receive the amount of 2.91 euros.
Applicants granted allowance	Unemployed residents of Open Centres. The following categories may be excluded: • Individuals in subsequent application procedures. • Individuals who have received a final negative decision

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Modalities of provision	Information is currently not available.

Material reception conditions for vulnerable persons

In terms of Article 3 of S.L. 420.07, "vulnerable persons" means persons in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect, including minors, unaccompanied minors, disabled people, elderly people, pregnant women, single parents with minor children, victims of human trafficking, persons with mental disorders and persons who have been subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence

According to Article 14 of S.L. 420.06, the implementation of the provisions relating to material reception conditions and health care, including mental health, account shall be taken of the specific situation of vulnerable persons who shall include 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 or psychological, physical or sexual violence, such as victims of female genital mutilation, found to have special needs after an individual evaluation of their situation:

- the entity for the welfare of asylum seekers shall assess in conjunction with other authorities as necessary, whether the applicant is an applicant with special reception needs and shall also indicate the nature of such needs. This assessment shall be initiated within a reasonable period of time after an application for international protection has been submitted.
- the entity for the welfare of asylum seekers shall also ensure that support is being provided to applicants with special reception needs, taking into account their special reception needs throughout the duration of the asylum procedure, whilst conducting appropriate monitoring of their situation.
- Minors who have been victims of any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation, torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or who have suffered from armed conflicts shall be given access to pertinent rehabilitation services in terms of the Victims of Crime Act, further to being provided with the required mental healthcare. For the purposes of this provision an evaluation by the entity responsible for the welfare of asylum seekers,

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carried out in conjunction with other authorities as necessary shall be conducted as soon as practicably possible:
    - Provided that applicants identified as minors shall not be detained, except as a measure of last resort:
    - Provided further that applicants who claim to be minors shall not be detained, except as a measure of last resort, unless the claim is evidently and manifestly unfounded.

Whenever the vulnerability of an applicant becomes apparent at a later stage, assistance and support shall be provided from that point onwards, pursuant to a reassessment of the case.

Rights and obligations during reception

Provision of information and counselling

Modalities of information provision on benefits and obligations related to reception conditions	Legislation provides that within 15 days from lodging an application, applicants are informed of reception benefits and obligations, and of groups and individuals providing legal and other forms of support. At the IRC, individuals are informed by officials from the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers about their right to apply for international protection. UNHCR also provides relevant information at the IRC. AWAS provides information about the reception conditions available, about the centre applicants reside in, and general information related to applicants' stay in Malta. In Open Centres, within days of their placement, residents are provided with detailed information on their rights and obligations. An Information Booklet for Residents of Open Centres is available here.
Provision of legal assistance on the reception conditions available	Free legal assistance on reception conditions is provided by two civil society organisations, Aditus and Jesuit Refugee Service Malta.

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House rules	House rules are created and administered by the Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers. In terms of Article 61(2)(a) of the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers Regulations, S.L. 217.11, AWAS shall oversee the daily management of accommodation facilities either directly or through subcontracting agreements.

Freedom of movement within the territory

Assignment of a particular area of residence to applicants	Freedom of movement is provided, unless in initial reception centre (and if on public health grounds) or detention. Individuals in the asylum process may be also provided with a travel document when serious humanitarian reasons arise that require their presence in another State.
Reporting obligations	Obligation for reporting once a week.

Employment and vocational training

Time limit to access the labour market	As soon as the Asylum Seeker Document is obtained from the International Protection Agency. Typically, access is provided after a period no longer than 9 months as per Article 10(1) of the Reception of Asylum Seekers Regulations, S.L. 420.06.

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Criteria to access the labour market	To apply for an employment license with JobsPlus, the following documentation is needed: An application form signed by the employer; A valid Police Immigration Certificate or a copy of an appointment slip if the Police Immigration Certificate is expired; or a copy of the Asylum Confirmation document issued by the International Protection Agency; and A processing fee of €58 for a new application or €34 for a renewed Employment Licence to be paid upon issue of the licence. The document from Jobsplus is given to the employer and not the employee, within 5 working days from receiving confirmation by the International Protection Agency on the status of the applicant. No labour market test is required. These licenses are issued on a temporary basis, for instance a 3-month or a 6-month period. International protection applicants are allowed to be self-employed without having to meet the requirements applicable to third country nationals.

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Employment support for applicants	As a measure aimed to regulate employment and working conditions for migrant workers, a Job Brokerage Office was set up in May 2017. Through the opening of the Job Brokerage Office, employers who require occasional labour market services from migrants for short term employment can do so in a regularised manner. This ensures that working conditions are in accordance with national law. Public Employment Service personnel carry out migrants' registration for short term employment taking into account their qualification and experience. A database of job opportunities including information related to the length of services being provided, description of service, full details of the employer requesting such service as well as details about when the employer requires such service is maintained by the Job Brokerage Office. Following the request from employers, potential jobseekers are matched with the employment opportunity.

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Adults' access to vocational training	Access to vocational training is granted as long as a copy of the police file is attached to the application. Vocational training courses offered by Jobsplus are also accessible to asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers. Overall, while applicants for international protection do have access to existing vocational training opportunities, these are not organized specifically for them. A number of structures are in place within Malta's education system in a bid to help asylum seekers/beneficiaries of international protection integrate better in the system within a short time. Migrants students without the linguistic competences in English and Maltese and who have difficulties to communicate are incorporated into the education system through linguistic induction provided in classes/hubs/centres for the learning of these languages. With regard to vocational training, similar support to migrant students is provided at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), which offers the possibility of additional support in English for MCAST students, asylum applicants and beneficiaries of protection through its Learning Support Unit. Regarding language and adaptations courses provided to applicants for international protection at MCAST, the College encourages such students to use the support services which it offers on a voluntary basis through its Learning Support Unit. However, in MCAST's Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) level 1, 2 and 3 courses where Maltese is a compulsory key skill for all students, such students need to follow the Maltese for Foreigners unit.
Access to tertiary education	Legislation provides for the schooling and education of minors (Article 9 of the Reception of Asylum Seekers Regulation S.L. 420.06). Tertiary education normally becomes accessible once the applicant has obtained international protection.

Healthcare

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Medical screening	Newly arrived irregular migrants, relocated asylum seekers, rescued migrants including those airlifted, “drop-ins” who arrive at AWAS Main Office requesting accommodation after applying for asylum and individuals seeking international protection, except from vulnerable groups, are accommodated at an Initial Reception Centre, a contained environment, in order for them to be medically screened and processed by the pertinent authorities. The stay of an irregular migrant at an Initial Reception Centre shall be of a limited duration and in no case shall such duration extend beyond the granting of medical clearance by the Health authorities. The asylum seekers accommodated at the Initial Reception Centre can go in and out of the centre until the medical clearance is received unless otherwise ordered by the Health authorities on medical grounds.
Level of healthcare	Applicants are provided with emergency healthcare and essential treatment of illness and serious mental disorders. Medical and other assistance is provided to applicants who have special reception needs, including mental health care (Article 11(2) of the Reception of Asylum Seekers Regulations, S.L. 420.06)
Access to healthcare	AWAS facilitates access to health care for residents of its reception centres. Documentation issued by the International Protection Agency (the Asylum Seeker’s Document) is sufficient to access national healthcare services.

Education for minors

UAMs have access to the education system under similar conditions as Maltese nationals, as long as an expulsion measure against them or their parents is not actually enforced.

In practice, rarely UAMs living in reception facilities attend school. Most of the time they attend either short courses or there are also those who attend a full year course at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. Most of the

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UAMs, of 16 years or older, prefer to look for employment.

UAMs over 16 liaise with various institutions such as Jobsplus and Adult Education Division to identify courses or vocational training of interest. The Office of the Children and Young Person partly funds attendance in such courses.

Minor children of applicants and applicants who are minors have access to the education system under similar conditions as Maltese nationals, as long as an expulsion measure against them or their parents is not actually enforced.

Access to education may only be postponed for up to 3 months from the date of submission of the asylum application. This 3-month period may be extended to 1 year “where specific education is provided in order to facilitate access to the education system”.

Practical challenges include lack of information about educational background prior to arrival; and difficulties in communication and understanding classroom discussion.

Socio-cultural orientation and language learning

Access to socio-cultural orientation	Information is currently not available.
Language classes	Language courses are provided through the state education system. They are organised by the Directorate of Lifelong Learning and Early School Leavers within the Ministry for Education and Employment. English lessons are also provided by AWAS at the Marsa Open Centre. Residents from other centres are allowed to attend these classes. Some NGOs also organise lessons in English and/or Maltese.

Sufficient means

Arrangement of private accommodation

Information is currently not available.

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Contribution to reception and healthcare costs

Article 11(5) of S.L. 420.06 states that where applicants have sufficient resources, or if they have been working for a reasonable period of time, applicants may be required to cover or contribute to the cost of the material reception conditions and of the health care. If it transpires that an applicant had sufficient means to cover material reception conditions and health care at the time when these basic needs were being covered, the asylum seeker may be asked for a refund.

Sufficient means test

Information is currently not available

Sanction regimes, reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions

Circumstances for reducing or withdrawing material reception conditions

Material reception conditions can be reduced or withdrawn if an applicant abandons the assigned place of residence. In practice, this occurs often. In addition, material reception conditions may be reduced or withdrawn if an applicant does not comply with reporting duties or with requests to provide information, or if s/he fails to appear for the personal interview concerning the asylum procedure (relatively often). Such reduction or withdrawal may also occur if an applicant, for no justifiable reason, does not lodge an application for international protection as soon as reasonably practicable after arrival in Malta (rarely). It may also occur in case an applicant has concealed financial resources. Finally, material reception conditions are occasionally reduced or withdrawn in cases of serious breaches of the rules of the accommodation centres, as well as serious violent behaviour. It should be noted that reduction is very rarely applicable.

Legislation provides for the possibility that applicants with sufficient means contribute to the cost of the material reception conditions. No specific indication is provided as to the level of personal resources that is deemed as ‘sufficient

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means' neither as to how this is determined and by whom. This provision is not applied in practice.

Possible sanctions and procedure

Withdrawal of material reception conditions comes through a decision made by the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers. The circumstances of withdrawal are outlined in the 'Framework of service provision' document signed by AWAS and each applicant in receipt of AWAS services. A system of written warnings is used. The third warning leads to withdrawal. In extremely serious cases, withdrawal may be immediate. All decisions are provided in writing. The decision is made by the CEO and/or operations director.

Review of the sanction decision

Applicants can request that AWAS review the decision to reduce or withdraw material reception conditions. Ex officio review of the decision by AWAS is possible in exceptional circumstances, usually related to the vulnerability of the applicant, the lack of alternative services available to the applicant, and other reasons on a case-by-case basis. Finally, the decision for the withdrawal of material reception conditions may be appealed at the Immigration Appeals Board within 7 days.

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