Reception - Netherlands

Reception system

Overview

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Relevant EU legislation

The Netherlands is bound by the 2024 Reception Conditions Directive.

National legislation

- Article 11 of the Aliens Law 2000, *Vreemdelingenwet 2000*, *Vw 2000*, BWBR0011823
- 19/05/1994: Law on the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, COA Law, *Wet Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers, Wet COA*, BWBR0006685
- 26/01/2005: Regulation on benefits in kind for asylum seekers and other categories of foreigners 2005, *Regeling verstrekkingen asielzoekers en andere categorieën vreemdelingen 2005, Rva 2005*, BWBR0017959
- 12/11/2008: Regulations on personal contribution for asylum seekers with income and assets 2008, *Regeling eigen bijdrage asielzoekers met inkomen en vermogen (REBA 2008)*, BWBR0024733
- 10/09/2015: Decision allowing COA to exclude certain categories of asylum seekers from benefits in kind Rva 2005, *Besluit verlening bevoegdheid aan COA tot uitsluiting bepaalde categorieën asielzoekers van verstrekkingen Rva 2005*, BWBR0037006
- 04/06/2014: Housing Act 2014, *Huisvestingswet 2014*, BWBR0035303
- 01/02/2024: Municipal Asylum Reception Conditions Act (Dispersal Act), *Wet gemeentelijke taak mogelijk maken asielopvangvoorzieningen*, BWBR0049307

Competent authority and stakeholders

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Authority responsible for reception	The authority responsible for reception is the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (*Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers (COA)*). COA is an independent administrative body that falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice and Security.
Other actors involved	Municipalities play a major role in the management and operation of sustainable municipal reception facilities (*duurzame gemeentelijke opvang, DGO*), while COA continues to carry out certain tasks. The municipality is responsible both for establishing the reception facility and providing the associated real estate, as well as for the day-to-day support, meaningful activities, activation and part of the disciplinary measures. COA remains ultimately responsible and carries out several tasks itself, such as counselling asylum seekers with a negative asylum decision and beneficiaries of international protection towards their housing in a municipality. COA determines who is accommodated in DGO facilities, and each DGO facility is linked to a COA reception centre nearby. DGO is operational since 1 January 2026. The municipalities also have the legal duty to accommodate beneficiaries of international protection. Nidos Foundation is responsible for accommodating and arranging accommodation for unaccompanied minors (UAM) below 15 years old and organises legal guardianship for all UAM. The Dutch Council for Refugees (*VluchtelingenWerk Nederland, VWN*) provides information to asylum seekers about the asylum procedures, including the right for reception. A list of collaboration partners which provide activities and support for residents of COA reception centres is available on COA's website.

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Organisational aspects

Asylum reception is centralised in the Netherlands and COA runs the majority of reception facilities (some are outsourced to municipalities for management). Their management is not outsourced to civil society or to private actors. The facilities' ownership is mixed: some of them are owned by COA (the state), some others by public or by private organisations. These private actors include holiday parks, event halls and festival grounds.

Allocation of applicants to geographical areas within the territory

The Municipal Asylum Reception Conditions Act (Dispersal Act) which entered into force on 1 February 2024 aims to distribute the number of reception places in the country in a balanced manner. Municipalities have to provide the support for sufficient reception places for asylum seekers who are still awaiting the decisions about their applications. COA remains responsible for organising the capacity.

Staff and training

Approximately 9,000 employees (September 2026) work for COA. Up-to-date figures are available on COA's website. There are various staff profiles, including:

Residential Support Worker (woonbegeleider, wb): The residential support worker is responsible for the care and support of residents during their stay at the centre. They contribute to a safe environment and work with colleagues to create a centre where residents are encouraged to take responsibility and actively contribute.

Programme Coordinator (programmabegeleider, pb): The programme coordinator is responsible for phase-specific programmes and support for residents, as well as for supporting residents in their activation. The programme coordinator contributes to a safe environment and, in collaboration with colleagues, creates a centre where residents are encouraged to take responsibility and actively contribute to the quality of life at the reception centre within the framework of the organisation and methods.

Case Manager (casemanager, cm): The case manager is responsible for the phased, methodical guidance of the individual asylum seeker from arrival to

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departure from the reception centre, focusing on their general functioning and future prospects. The case manager is familiar with the individual's story, ensures coordination within the organisation and the wider community regarding the strategy and approach for the individual during staying in and leaving the reception centre.

Language Teacher (NT2 docent): The teacher provides Dutch as a second language lessons for residents, as part of the pre-integration programme that promotes the participation of beneficiaries of international protection.

Concierge (huismeester, hm): The concierge is responsible for the maintenance and cleaning, as well as for the construction and furnishing safety of buildings and grounds on the site. He or she plays an important role in signaling the safety and quality of life at the site for and by residents and employees. In addition, the caretaker facilitates the furnishing of offices and the housing of residents.

Management Assistant (managementassistent A, mas A): The management assistant A supports a team leader or (location) manager in developing the operational process, coordinating and directing it, and monitoring its implementation.

Senior Management Assistant (managementassistent B, mas B): The management assistant B supports the regional manager, performs regulatory, administrative, and substantive support tasks for the manager.

Deputy Location Manager (adjunct loma, if present on-site): Supports the location manager in their responsibility for the integrated management of the group of employees at the reception centre. The deputy location manager also supports the location manager in managing processes and results within the team.

Location Manager (loma): The location manager leads location-based reception and support teams, based on the social mission of the COA and the immigration process. The location manager is responsible for the integrated (and interdependent) management of a group of employees within a reception centre and/or organisational unit, processes, and results related to the reception and support of asylum seekers. The location manager ensures effective coordination and communication with the surrounding community to ensure optimal living conditions for residents.

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Reception phases

Applicants for international protection are entitled to material reception conditions from the start of their application for asylum. In practice, this is done by reporting at the central reception centre (*centrale ontvangstlocatie*, col) in Ter Apel. Applicants are first accommodated in a central reception centre (*centrale opvanglocatie*, col) during the registration and lodging phase. They are then moved to an asylum-seekers' centre (*asielzoekerscentrum*, azc).

For recognised beneficiaries of international protection, the entitlement to material reception conditions ends on the day when COA considers to have found suitable accommodation outside the asylum reception. For rejected applicants, the entitlement to material reception conditions ends the day after they have become lawfully removable. Article 7 of the Regulation on benefits for asylum seekers and other categories of foreigners 2005 further details the end of entitlement according to the different groups of applicants. For example, reception ends if the applicant does not arrive within 24 hours to the assigned reception facility at the moment this period expires. Reception also ends when the applicant does not report to the Aliens Police two consecutive times, two weeks after the first missed reporting.

Persons who have exhausted all legal remedies, who are no longer entitled to reception in a COA reception centre and want to return to their country of origin but need more time, move to a freedom restricting centre (*vrijheidsbeperkende locatie*, vbl). Families with minor children which have exhausted their legal remedies, who have no right for reception any longer but may end up in a situation of deprivation, are transferred to a family centre (*gezinslocatie*, glo).

Contingency planning

In July 2025 COA has approved an updated version of the contingency plan (now called 'COA Strategy up- and downscaling'), completely in line with the national EUAA contingency plan which has been delivered to the European Commission/EUAA around the same time.

The strategy has been updated on several fronts, such as an approved policy & funding of a minimum capacity threshold and the adoption of the Dispersal Act.

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At the heart of it is still a model which comprises several occupancy and capacity situations and follows several steps:

- Capacity year-cycle: the COA board decides at least once a year on the forecasted required reception capacity of COA. The in- and outflow is analyzed together with the other organisations in the migration chain and forms the basis for the projection on occupancy and volume of required capacity.
- Fixed baseline capacity: COA is allowed to maintain a fixed number of reception places as minimum capacity (41,000 as per October 2026). Part of the reserve capacity can be allocated to other societal purposes should the demand for asylum accommodation decline.
- Regular capacity: should the required capacity rise above the minimum capacity, regular reception capacity will be sought and opened together with municipalities.
- Disproportional pressure: should the required capacity rise above the regular capacity, emergency solutions are implemented, such as incidental capacity: hiring holiday parks or resorts, event venues, etc.
- Crisis: if the pressure rises even more, the Ministry of Justice & Security can resort to other measures, such as within the Dutch crisis and disaster infrastructure (using sports halls) or request other governmental organisations and NGO’s for assistance.

Facilities

Overview of different types of reception facilities according to national classification

Central reception centre (*centrale ontvangstlocatie*, col): Applicants for international protection are first accommodated here during the Reception and Preparation of the Asylum Application phase (*Ontvangst en voorbereiding asielaanvraag*, OVA). They are given accommodation in the col of COA in Ter Apel or Budel for between 4-7 days, which could be longer due to high influx. During their accommodation, applicants receive a medical intake, tuberculosis examination and an invitation for an interview from the Immigration Service IND. COA also screens for vulnerable applicants. Unaccompanied minors (UAM) are accommodated in the central reception location for unaccompanied minors in Ter Apel.

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Asylum-seekers' centre (*asielzoekerscentrum*, azc): These centres accommodate applicants for international protection, as well as beneficiaries of international protection pending their transfer to accommodation in a municipality. They also accommodate rejected asylum seekers for a maximum of 28 days whilst they prepare for their departure. They receive a living allowance and have to take care of their own shopping and meals. Residents of azc's are obliged to report to the authorities once a week and their freedom of movement is not restricted.

Applicants for international protection receive individual support from COA. This guidance is based on six areas or domains: selfcare, day structure, social network, personal well-being, external contacts, and planning for the future. Each area includes three skills (see the overall list in Dutch), that applicants need to apply to live in a reception facility and prepare themselves for the future.

Asylum-seekers' centre with basic AMMR facility (*AMbV-onderdaklocatie*, aol): Foreign nationals whose right to reception has ended under the AMMR after the transfer decision will be accommodated here. Around twenty asylum seeker centres (including four family centres) have been designated across the country to provide accommodation for this target group. These are not separate facilities exclusively for this target group; rather, they are integrated into regular reception centres.

Article 21 of the recast Reception Conditions Directive stipulates that the right to reception conditions ceases following a transfer decision. A minimum standard of living though must be guaranteed in accordance with EU law including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union as well as international obligations. The aol fulfills this obligation by providing, among other things, shelter, medically necessary care, a food allowance, and personal care products in kind.

Reception centre with intensive guidance (*intensief begeleidende opvang*, ibo): Asylum seekers who are not sufficiently capable of functioning independently in a reception centre, whose conduct causes problems for the employees of a reception centre, for fellow residents and/or for themselves can voluntarily move to an ibo. They remain here for a temporary period (3-6 months) in order to learn skills to function independently and increase their self-reliance, with the objective to move back to an azc as soon as possible. Ibo's are open facilities, residents are obliged to report once a week.

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Enforcement and supervision centre (*handhaving en toezichtslocatie*, htl): This type of facility started operating in February 2020, building on the experience and transforming the previous reception centres with additional guidance and supervision (*extra begeleiding en toezicht locatie*, ebtl). Applicants with serious disruptive behaviour can be temporarily placed in the htl, in principle up to thirteen weeks. Strict rules, such as a mandatory presence order (Art. 56 Vw.), apply to residents and they are enforced by community service officers (*buitengewone opsporingsambtenaren*, boa's). The centre provides material reception conditions in kind, and shops and services are available on the territory as applicants can only leave with permission. Residents follow a comprehensive programme to learn about the Dutch norms, values and rules of behaviour and they consider their own conduct in this framework.

Premises at the border

Name of the reception facility	Custodial Complex Schiphol (Justitieel Complex Schiphol)
Access description	Closed
Management	The daily management of the facility is provided by the Custodial Institutions Agency (*Dienst Justitiële Inrichtingen*, DJI).
Type of applicants accommodated	Applicants in the border procedure.
Number of centres	One.
Capacity	Approximately 900 places (including places in the criminal section)
Location of the centres within the country	Amsterdam-Schiphol International Airport

Initial reception centres

Name of the reception facility	• Central reception centre (col)
Regime	Open

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Management	The daily management of the facilities is provided the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (*Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers,* COA).
Type of applicants accommodated	All applicants
Number of centres	2
Capacity	The capacity of the col in Ter Apel is about 1000 persons. Together with the other reception modalities present there the arrival centre in Ter Apel must not exceed an occupancy of 2000 persons or it will face penalties. The capacity of the col in Budel is 700 persons.
Location of the centres within the country	Ter Apel and Budel

Collective accommodation centres

Name of the reception facility	Asylum-seekers' centre (*asielzoekerscentrum*, azc)
Regime	Open
Management	The daily management of the facilities is provided the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (*Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers,* COA).
Type of applicants accommodated	Applicants for international protection in the asylum procedure. Beneficiaries of international protection waiting for their allocated housing in a municipality. Applicants under first appeal. Rejected applicants for maximum four weeks after the negative decision (period of voluntary departure). Rejected applicants waiting for a transfer under the AMMR.
Number of centres	111 (as of October 2026). The number of centres is updated on a regular basis on COA's website.

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Capacity	Regularly updated data on capacity is available on COA's website. As of Mid-October 2026, there were 41,612 persons residing in COA regular shelters.
Location of the centres within the country	Dispersed over the country. For exact location, see COA website.

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

Name of the reception facility	Lodging scheme (stay with friends, family or a host family with access to COA basic facilities such as a weekly allowance and medical insurance maintained).
Regime	Open
Management	The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (*Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers*, COA). Host families can sign up with 'takecarebnb' to be matched with a status holder.
Type of applicants accommodated	Beneficiaries of international protection who are waiting to be offered housing by the municipalities and asylum seekers in the regular asylum procedure can make use of the lodging scheme.
Number of centres	There is no fixed number of entities.
Capacity	There is no fixed capacity due to the nature of the lodging scheme.
Location of the centres within the country	Dispersed across the country
Name of the reception facility	Decentralisation grant for temporary accommodation
Regime	Open
Management	The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (*Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekersm*, COA) and the Ministry of Asylum and Migration

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Type of applicants accommodated	Beneficiaries of international protection who are waiting to be offered housing can be temporarily placed in hotels by the municipalities.
Number of centres	There is no fixed number of entities.
Capacity	There is no fixed capacity.
Location of the centres within the country	Dispersed across the country

Temporary solutions when housing capacities is temporarily exhausted

Name of the reception facility	Emergency shelter (*noodopvang*) There are two types: Temporary emergency shelters and crisis emergency shelters/temporary municipal shelter)
Regime	Open
Management	The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (*Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers,* COA).
Type of applicants accommodated	The emergency shelter was intended to be used only for residents who have yet to begin their asylum procedure, and for a short period. Due to a long-standing shortage of shelter space, residents who have already started or completed their asylum procedure are now also staying there. This means that there are also refugees in the emergency shelter who are waiting for housing in the municipality. They often stay longer at the COA due to the tight housing market. Asylum seekers with complex care needs and other vulnerable groups are not accommodated in the emergency shelter unless they can receive tailored support. There are several emergency shelters for UAM, but these meet the quality requirements of an UAM location. Both the location and the support provided are tailored to the needs of these locations.
Number of centres	209 as of October 2026. The number of centres is updated on a regular basis on COA's website.

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Capacity	Regularly updated data on capacity is available on COA's website. As of Mid-October 2026, there were 33,959 persons residing in COA emergency shelter.
Location of the centres within the country	Dispersed over the country. For exact location, see the COA website.

Reception facilities for applicants with special needs

Special types of reception facilities were created for unaccompanied minors (UAM), such as separate reception centres for UAM, UAM reception facilities as a part of regular reception centres, or small-scale housing facilities (*kleinschalige woonvoorziening*, kwv).

The law requires COA to ensure that the specific situation of vulnerable asylum seekers is taken into account in the reception system. Most of these vulnerabilities are provided for within the mainstream reception facility structure or the mainstream health care services are used.

There is an intensive support shelter in place. Asylum seekers who are not sufficiently capable of functioning independently in a reception centre temporarily can be accommodated in the reception centre for intensive guidance and support (ibo) in Schalkhaar. They can only go there voluntarily. These could be persons with a low intelligence quotient (IQ) or psychological and/or psychosocial problems. In the regular reception centre, their behaviour causes problems for themselves, staff and/or other asylum seekers. They stay in the reception centre for intensive guidance and support for 3-6 months.

For unaccompanied minors who have behavioural issues, resulting in the inability of COA to provide proper supervision, COA can transfer them to the Nidos Perspective Reception (*Perspectief Opvang Nidos*, PON) after consulting with Nidos. The maximum capacity of the PON is 12 persons, and intensive guidance is provided to the applicants for them to work on their behaviour and future prospects.

Material reception conditions provided in kind and cash

Definition of material reception conditions

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Material reception conditions are defined by the Article 9(1) of the Regulation on benefits for asylum seekers and other categories of foreigners 2005 which lists the following items included under material reception conditions:

- Accommodation in reception facilities offering an adequate standard of housing or in private houses, apartments, hotels or other accommodation spaces adapted for asylum seekers;
- Weekly financial allowance covering for food, clothing and other personal needs;
- Public transport cards to and from the legal aid provider, in issues related to the asylum procedure;
- Recreational and educational activities;
- The coverage of the medical costs, in accordance with the relevant health insurance scheme;
- Insurance for the financial consequences of legal liability;
- Coverage of exceptional costs, i.e. costs that reasonably cannot be expected to be paid by the asylum seekers themselves .

Material reception conditions provided in kind

Type and purpose	In the central reception centre (*centrale opvanglocatie* , col) applicants only receive food and personal care items in kind during the first 8 days. From that day on, they have to cook themselves and receive allowances for the costs. Also, from then on, they get access to their allowance for clothing and hygiene products. They no longer receive these products in kind and have to buy these themselves. Residents at the enforcement and supervision centre (htl) do not receive financial allowances as part of the htl-measure. As they are provided with meals in kind.
Duration and recurrence	Applicants receive three meals per day, clothing and personal care items are offered on need’s basis. Residents of the col receive food and personal care items in kind during the first 8 days.

Financial allowances and vouchers

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Type and purpose	According to the Rva 2005 regulation, every asylum seeker who is granted shelter is entitled to a "weekly financial allowance for food, clothing, products for personal hygiene and other personal expenses" (Rva 2005, article 9, first paragraph, part b).
Duration and recurrence	The allowance is paid to applicants weekly.
Calculation and amount	The amount of the living allowance for clothing, personal hygiene products and other personal expenses is the same for every applicant (RVA 2005 Article 14). Additionally, the amount of food allowance depends on the number of persons (adults or minors) in the household. Unaccompanied minors are considered as a one-person household. These amounts vary each year due to inflation. The most updated amounts are available on the COA website. No financial allowance is granted for the purpose of food to asylum seekers who receive their meals in kind.
Applicants granted allowance	Applicants in central reception centres (col) and asylum seekers centres (azc's) receive financial allowance. Asylum seekers accommodated in the col are entitled to this allowance from day one but they get access to their account on day 8 and only then receive the money retroactively starting from day one. Residents at the enforcement and supervision centre (htl) do not receive financial allowances as part of the htl-measure. As they are provided with meals in kind, they do not receive food vouchers either.
Modalities of provision	The weekly allowance is paid to the applicants' debit cards and related accounts.

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Material reception conditions for vulnerable persons

In addition to the abovementioned reception provisions, national legislation provides for specialised services and support for vulnerable persons. The Regulation on benefits for asylum seekers and other categories of foreigners 2005, under its chapter IVa on persons with special reception needs, makes reference to minors (and specifically to minors who have been the victim of any form of ill-treatment, neglect, exploitation, torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or who have suffered from armed conflict), unaccompanied minors, dependent adults and persons who have undergone torture, rape or other serious forms of violence. Article 18a stipulates that the COA assesses as soon as possible after the submission of an asylum application is an asylum seeker has special reception need. The applicants file must include a description of the visible condition, or the statements or conduct relevant to the assessment of the special reception needs as well as the measures adopted to address those needs. Specific support and guidance shall be provided in addition to benefits in kinds for applicants with special reception needs, if necessary. The assessment must be completed within 30 days after the submission of the asylum application.

For example, the Regulation underlines specifically that children asylum seekers need to be accommodated together with their parents (unless their best interest requires otherwise), and that leisure activities, including play and recreational activities, rehabilitation services and qualified counselling, as well as access to teaching material needs to be available for minors.

The Regulation also stipulates that dependent adult asylum seekers should be accommodated together with their relatives, if possible. Furthermore, according to the Regulation appropriate medical and psychological treatment and care must be offered for victims of torture, rape or other serious forms of violence, including rehabilitation services and counselling.

COA provides specialised support for LGBTIQ+ applicants. COA has trained hundreds of employees on how to better address LGBTIQ+ applicants' needs. Furthermore, there is a COA LGBTIQ+ contact person in every reception centre, who is responsible for coordinating the organisation of activities and information provision for LGBTIQ+ applicants. In addition to LGBTQI+ contact persons, COA aims to appoint and train focal points at each reception facility with specific expertise on a particular topic related to vulnerability, such as human trafficking, domestic violence, or the reception of children.

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Rights and obligations during reception

Provision of information and counselling

Modalities of information provision on benefits and obligations related to reception conditions	According to Article 2 of the RVA 2005, COA provides applicants as soon as possible, and not later than 3 days after the asylum application with information related to the rights and obligations concerning reception, organisations or persons providing specific legal assistance, including information on organisations or groups of persons who do so free of charge, and with information related to reception conditions, including health care. COA ensures that information is provided in a concise, transparent, intelligible and accessible form and in a language that the applicant understands or can reasonably be assumed to understand. Information may also be provided orally or in a visual form if necessary. The information is provided in person during group sessions. Applicants are provided with a document stipulating their rights and obligations and are requested to sign this document at the end of the interview. COA developed a number of brochures that are distributed in these group sessions, for which a signature is required upon receipt. Information is also provided by COA through the MyCOA platform, in several languages. Information is provided to unaccompanied minors in an age-appropriate manner using materials tailored to minors.
Provision of legal assistance on the reception conditions available	Legal assistance on reception may be provided by the Dutch Council for Refugees who are present in some municipalities and asylum seekers' centres.

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House rules	House rules are established at the national level. They cover practical aspects of the life at the reception centre including house rules for living in harmony, house rules concerning living quarters, house rules for fire safety and house rules concerning liability. Not abiding by the house rules may lead to disciplinary measures. Applicants must sign them during the first days of arrival at the reception centre.

Freedom of movement within the territory

Assignment of a particular area of residence to applicants	In general, applicants can freely move within the territory of the Netherlands, except for those residing at an enforcement and supervision centre (htl). Persons residing at a freedom-restricting centre (vbl) and at a family centre (glo) must obtain permission to leave the municipality. It should be noted that both vbl and glo are shelters for foreign nationals without the right to reception under the Reception Directive, and as such, this accommodation falls under the responsibility of the Minister.
Reporting obligations	Applicants in an azc need to report once a week. Foreign nationals whose right to reception has ended after the transfer decision under the AMMR are subject to a daily in-house reporting obligation. Applicants in an enforcement and supervision centre (htl) are obliged to report daily. Unaccompanied minors in small-scale housing facilities (kwv) need to report twice daily. In freedom restricting centres (vbl) and family centres (glo) – used for return purposes – former applicants are obliged to report every day, except for weekends and public holidays.

Employment and vocational training

Time limit to access the labour market	Applicants are entitled to access the labour market 6 months after having lodged the application.

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Criteria to access the labour market	In order for applicants to be employed, an employer must request a work permit (*tewerkstellingsvergunning*) for the applicant from the Employee Insurance Agency (*Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen*, UWV) at no cost. There are a number of criteria which must be met in order to apply for a work permit. These include that the applicant must be above 18 years old, must have an asylum application pending since at least six months, must be residing at a COA reception centre, must have valid identity card (*W-document*) and must receive a competitive wage in the Dutch labour market.
Employment support for applicants	About 50 reception centres have a Participation Desk (*Meedoenbalie*) where volunteer work, paid work, recreational and other activities are offered – with funding from the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The Participation Desk provides information about working in the Netherlands, job openings, support with writing resumes, information about organisations that can help with finding work, and about the opportunities offered by municipalities. COA does not act as a temporary employment agency, employment broker, or job hunter but relies on a coalition of partners for support, collaborating and making agreements with local and regional partners to arrange job placements. Applicants can also find information about employment in the Netherlands on MyCoa.

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Adults' access to vocational training	For adults, vocational education is provided by private actors, and the specific access criteria might be different from organisation to organisation. These training programmes are typically also subject to fees, which needs to be covered by the applicants themselves. Applicants have access to these trainings from the beginning of the asylum procedure and they do not have to wait for the right to access the labour market to enroll in vocational education. Youngsters under the age of 18 can follow vocational education within the school framework. Municipalities are responsible for all minors at compulsory school age (5-15 years, between 16-18 there is a qualification obligation) to receive education. In the Netherlands, the education system is designed to integrate refugee children into the mainstream educational system. Younger children are often integrated directly into regular primary schools. Schools may provide additional language support within the classroom or through special pull-out programmes. Children between 12 and 18 typically start their education in International Transition Classes (*internationale schakelklassen*, ISK). Depending on their age, level of Dutch knowledge, educational background, and future perspectives, it is determined which class to enroll them in. These classes focus on intensive Dutch language instruction and basic education to prepare students for transition into regular Dutch schools.

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Access to tertiary education	Applicants have legal access to tertiary/higher education, but they need to cover the costs themselves. Students aged 18 and older who attend secondary vocational education (MBO), higher level vocational education (HBO), university, or full-time adult secondary education, are required to pay tuition fees. A resident who does not meet the nationality requirement and therefore does not receive student finance or a student allowance, can submit a request to the Education Executive Agency (DUO) to be exempt from paying the tuition fees. This is known as 'exemption from collection'. To qualify for this exemption, the resident must meet several conditions including that they must be lawfully residing in the Netherlands at the time of school enrolment, they must be unable to pay the tuition fees, and no other organisation is covering these costs, and they must be under 30 years old on August 1st, at the start of the academic year.

Healthcare

Medical screening	As soon as possible after an asylum seeker has been placed in a reception facility for the first time, an initial examination of their health takes place (See Article 9(2) of the RVA 2005). Applicants from high-risk tuberculosis countries are also tested for tuberculosis (as an obligation), typically after registering their application. Prior to the medical intake the applicants undertake a digital questionnaire during the IND OVA-procedure (Reception and Preparation of the Asylum Application), that i.a. checks the medical situation and potential vulnerabilities.

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Level of healthcare	Applicants above the age of 18 are entitled to emergency healthcare (literally according to the Dutch legislation: medically necessary and non-postponable care - *medisch noodzakelijke en niet uitstelbare zorg*) for two months following their application. The treatments covered are not listed, the general practitioner assesses the necessity in each individual case according to the circumstances. Children are always and directly entitled to healthcare as described below (RMA). After two months, applicants are covered by the Asylum Seekers' Medical Care Regulation (Regeling Medische zorg Asielzoekers, RMA). This includes all basic health care treatments, such as consultation with a general practitioner or psychologist, hospitalisation, basic dental care, physiotherapy. The treatments covered are listed in detail here. Asylum applicants are not entitled to transgender operations, in-vitro-fertilisation and cochlear implants because these treatments can interfere with the outcome of the asylum procedure. Almost every azc has a medical centre where applicants can have an appointment with a general practitioner. These centres are run by Asylum Seekers Health Care (*Gezondheidszorg asielzoekers*, GZA). GZA also provides an infoline available 24/7.

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Access to healthcare	For general practitioner care, asylum seekers go to Asylum Seekers Healthcare (GZA), a national general practice operated by Doctor and Care (*Arts en Zorg*). There is a GZA post in or near each asylum seekers' centre. There, a general practitioner works with a practice nurse, a mental health practice assistant (poh ggz), and a practice assistant. They are all attentive to language and cultural differences. If necessary, the general practitioner will refer to other healthcare providers, such as a medical specialist. If an asylum seeker does not speak sufficient Dutch or English, a healthcare provider can arrange for a professional interpreter. COA will then reimburse the costs. As with all other residents of the Netherlands, the Municipal Health Service (*Gemeentelijke gezondheidsdienst*, GGD) is responsible for public healthcare for asylum seekers. This care includes youth healthcare, infectious disease control and prevention, and health education. GGD provides group information sessions at each asylum seekers' centre on various topics, such as self-care and mental and sexual health. GGD also conducts mandatory tuberculosis screenings upon arrival for asylum seekers from countries with a high incidence of tuberculosis. GGD also monitors hygiene in the asylum seekers' centres.

Education for minors

Children have the right to access the national education system shortly after their arrival. Applicant children must be enrolled in school within two months after an application for international protection has been submitted. Children in compulsory school age (5-15 years, between 16-18 there is a qualification obligation) are registered in school typically 6 weeks after arrival. Children

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generally start in preparatory or newcomer classes, focusing on acquiring sufficient knowledge of the Dutch language. For children aged 5-12 this is often organized in separate newcomer classes within mainstream schools. Children aged 12-18 often attend International Transition Classes (*internationale schakelklassen*, ISK), for at least two years, after which they transition to mainstream education.

Access to education is facilitated by municipalities and the local schools in cooperation with the reception facilities. Challenges may arise regarding pressure on school capacity, teacher shortages or frequent relocations of families between reception facilities, which can affect the continuity of a child's education.

Socio-cultural orientation and language learning

Access to socio-cultural orientation	Socio-cultural orientation is not obligatory for applicants. COA organises several activities, in cooperation with municipalities and civil society partners, that help applicants to get to know the Dutch everyday life. As part of the pre-integration programme, recognised beneficiaries of international protection get offered training on general knowledge of Dutch society.
Language classes	Language learning is not obligatory for applicants. Recognised beneficiaries of international protection must pass a civic integration exam. COA offers a pre-integration programme for recognised beneficiaries with Dutch language classes, training on general knowledge of Dutch society and the labour market and individual support. Basic language support is offered to all applicants and is usually offered by civil society organisations at reception facilities.

Sufficient means

Arrangement of private accommodation

Applicants can stay with family members who are living independently. In this case, applicants receive provision and financial allowance, unless the family

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member has an income above social welfare. When the family member's income is above this limit, the applicant does not receive provisions. The relevant municipality's permission is necessary, so that the applicant can stay with family outside a COA centre.

Other applicants, who already live in the Netherlands, can live outside reception structures as well. In this case, they do not receive provision and financial allowances. In practice, COA is not aware of such a situation.

Contribution to reception and healthcare costs

Article 2(1) of the Regulation on benefits for asylum seekers and other categories of foreigners 2005 notes that only those applicants are entitled to reception, who do not have sufficient means to cover the necessary costs of living. Based on Article 34 of the Participation Act, this limit is € 8,000 of assets for single persons and € 16,000 for single parents and couples.

Residents with paid work and/or assets above the determined limits are requested to contribute to the reception costs. This is pursuant to Article 5(4) of the Regulation on personal contribution of asylum seekers with income and assets (Reba) 2008. For more detailed info, see Own contribution for your reception (Reba).

Sufficient means test

Under Article 20(1) applicants are obliged to report any circumstances that might influence their right to reception, including their financial situation.

Sanction regimes, reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions

Circumstances for reducing or withdrawing material reception conditions

Article 10 of the Regulation on benefits for asylum seekers and other categories of foreigners 2005 foresees the possibility of COA to limit the benefits in kind and the weekly financial allowance, when the applicant has:

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- Left the reception centre without informing COA or without the eventually required permission;
- Failed to report to the authorities consecutively two times;
- Failed for two weeks to reply to a request from information by COA, including providing the details required to register and lodge the application;
- Not appeared at the personal interview for the asylum application procedure for two consecutive times;
- Introduced a subsequent application after a final decision has been delivered, including after an explicit or implicit withdrawal of the application;
- Concealed financial resources and consequently unduly benefited from reception conditions;
- Financial means above the limit determined by law and does not pay the contribution towards the reception costs (Reba);
- Seriously or repeatedly violated his/her reception duties, such as complying with the house rules, following the instructions of the reception staff, cleaning, reporting duties and eventual programme participation duties;
- Has behaved in a violent or threatening manner in the reception facility.

Additionally, this regulation also notes that material reception conditions can be reduced or withdrawn when the applicant did not apply for asylum as soon as possible upon arrival to the Netherlands.

Possible sanctions and procedure

The decision to apply sanction measures is taken by COA. The decision to withhold provisions is motivated and written. All sanction measures are noted in the applicant's file as well.

COA foresees two types of measures for residents violating the house rules:

- A measure conform to the rules for withholding provisions (*reglement onthouding verstrekkingen*, ROV): Every asylum seeker, who has the right to reception, has the duty to comply with the house rules. If an asylum seeker does not comply with these rules, COA has the right to withhold benefits. The 11 grades of ROV measures provide for a system with gradually more and more serious consequences, which include the withdrawal (partial or full) of the living allowance and transfer to a different

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facility.

- Other alternative measures:
  - corrective interview;
  - warning letter;
  - educational measure.

    Additional to the three mentioned alternative measures, specifically for the central reception centre (col), two extra alternative measures apply:
  - A cooling off period. In that case an applicant is requested for a time period of at maximum 4 hours to leave the reception centre.
  - Replacement of the financial food allowance into meals provided by COA.

Apart from the ROV-measures a htl measure can be given.

Review of the sanction decision

COA sanction decisions can be appealed in a similar manner, as the decisions within the asylum procedure. The Court of the Hague and its branches decide as a first appeal instance, which can be further appealed to the Council of State. The sanctions cannot be appealed through the COA complaints procedure: this is reserved for cases when an applicant feels to have been wrongly treated by a COA worker or by the system as a whole.

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