

# Reception - Netherlands | DIP EUAA

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## Reception system

### Overview

### Relevant EU legislation

The Netherlands is bound by the recast Reception Conditions Directive and has transposed its provisions by [Law 293 of 8 July 2015](#), amending the [Aliens Act 2000](#) (Vreemdelingenwet, 2000)

### National legislation

23/11/2000: Aliens Law 2000, *Vreemdelingenwet 2000*, Vw 2000, [BWBR0011823](#)

23/11/2000: Aliens Decree 2000, *Vreemdelingenbesluit 2000*, Vb 2000, [BWBR0011825](#)

02/03/2001: Aliens Circular 2000 (A), *Vreemdelingencirculaire 2000 (A)*, Vc, [BWBR0012287](#)

02/03/2001: Aliens Circular 2000 (B), *Vreemdelingencirculaire 2000 (B)*, Vc, [BWBR0012289](#)

02/03/2001: Aliens Circular 2000 (C), *Vreemdelingencirculaire 2000 (C)*, Vc, [BWBR0012288](#)

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](#)

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](#)

## Competent authority and stakeholders

<b>Authority responsible for reception</b>	The authority responsible for reception is the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers ( <i>Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers (COA)</i> ). The COA is an independent administrative body that falls under the responsibility of the Ministry for Asylum and Migration.
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<p><b>Other actors involved</b></p>	<p>The municipalities have the legal duty to accommodate beneficiaries of international protection.</p> <p>The Nidos Foundation is responsible for accommodating and arranging accommodation for minors.</p> <p>The Refugee Council Netherlands provides information to the asylum seekers about the asylum procedures, including the right for reception.</p> <p>Through art workshops and creative activities, the Foundation for the Promotion of Happiness provides a positive outlet for young asylum seekers, investing in their development, resilience and well-being.</p>
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## Organisational aspects

Reception is centralised in the Netherlands and COA runs all reception facilities. 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. In 2023 COA, Red cross and the Ministry of Justice and Security signed an agreement about long-term involvement of Red Cross in asylum reception under the final responsibility of COA.

## Allocation of applicants to geographical areas within their territory

The Municipal Asylum Reception Conditions Act (The Distribution 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. The COA remains responsible for organising the capacity.

## Staff and training

Approximately 7000 employees (July 2024) work for the agency. There are various staff profiles, including:

**Residential Support Worker (wb):** The residential support worker is responsible for the care and support of residents

during their stay at the location. They contribute to a safe environment and work with colleagues at the location to create a center where residents are encouraged to take responsibility and actively contribute.

**Program Coordinator (pb):** The program coordinator is responsible for phase-specific programs and support for residents, as well as for supporting residents in their activation. The program coordinator contributes to a safe environment and, in collaboration with colleagues at the location, creates a center where residents are encouraged to take responsibility and actively contribute to the quality of life at the location within the framework of the organization and methods.

**Case Manager (CM):** The case manager is responsible for the phased, methodical guidance of the

individual asylum seeker from arrival to departure from the reception center, 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 center, and monitors the legality of the reception center.

**Language Teacher:** The teacher provides Dutch as a Second Language lessons for residents, as part of the pre-integration program that promotes the participation of permit holders.

**Concierge (hm):** The concierge is responsible for the maintenance and cleaning, and 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 (MA):** Performs regulatory, administrative, and substantive support tasks for the manager.

**Senior Management Assistant (SM, if present on-site):** Supports a team leader or (location) manager in developing the operational process, coordinating and directing it, and monitoring its implementation.

**Deputy Location Manager (Deputy LOM, if present on-site):** Supports the location manager in their responsibility for the integrated management of the group of employees at the location. 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 (Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers) and the immigration process. The location manager is responsible for the integrated (and interdependent) management of a group of employees within a location and/or organizational 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.

## Reception phases

Asylum seekers are entitled to material reception conditions from the making of an application, when they express their wish to apply for asylum. In practice, this is done by reporting at the central reception centre (*centrale ontfangstlocatie*, col) in Ter Apel. Applicants are firstly accommodated in a central reception centre (centraal opvanglocatie, col) during the registration and lodging phase. They are then moved to a process reception centre (process opvanglocatie, pol) for the rest and preparation period and for the period of the regular asylum procedure. After the regular asylum procedure, applicants are transferred to an asylum-seekers' centre (

*asielzoekerscentrum, azc).*

For recognised beneficiaries of international protection, the entitlement to material reception conditions ends on the day when the COA considers to have found suitable accommodation outside of reception. For rejected applicants, the entitlement to material reception conditions ends the day after the day when they 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 exhausted all legal remedies, who are not entitled to reception in an azc anymore and want to return to their country of origin but need more time, move to a freedom restricting centre (*vrijheidsbeperkende locatie, vbl*). Families having exhausted their legal remedies, who have no more right for reception and may end up in a situation of deprivation, are transferred to family centres (*gezinslocatie*).

## **Contingency planning**

A combined contingency plan of the Foreigners' chain was approved in December 2018. COA established a model which comprises of several steps:

- regular capacity: the board of COA decides twice a year on this (or more often, if necessary). COA analysis in- and outflow together with the other members of the Foreigners' chain and basis its projection on that.
- reserve capacity
- incidental capacity: hiring holiday parks or resorts
- hiring event venues

resorting to Dutch crisis infrastructure, such as sports halls: in this case, responsibility for reception transferred to crises and disaster infrastructure

## **Facilities**

## **Overview of different types of reception facilities according to national classification**

**Central reception centre (*centrale ontvangstlocatie, col*):** applicants are firstly accommodated here during the registration and lodging phase after reporting to the Aliens Police (AVIM). They are given accommodation in the col of the COA in Ter Apel or Budel for between 3-10 days, which could be longer due to high influx. During their accommodation, applicants receive a medical intake, tuberculosis examination and the registration interview. The COA also screens for vulnerable applicants. Unaccompanied minors are accommodated in the 'central reception location for unaccompanied minors' in Ter Apel.

**Pre-process reception centre (*pre-process opvanglocatie, pre-pol*):** This type of facility is used for asylum seekers for whom there is no immediate place at a Process reception centre to start the general asylum procedure following their stay at the central reception centre, where they undergo a rest and preparation period before the procedure begins. These centres are used on a temporary basis by COA, in case of high influx. They are located on the grounds of an asylum seekers' centre.

**Process reception centre (*processopvanglocatie, pol*):** Applicants move to the process reception centres after the registration interviews, and stay here to prepare themselves for the general asylum procedure and during the regular asylum procedure. Pols are typically near an IND office and they provide a place for medical advice, information provision and support from the staff of COA and VWN and meetings with the appointed lawyer. Unaccompanied minors between the ages of 15-18 stay in a 'process reception centre for unaccompanied minors (pol.amv)', whilst those between the ages of 13-14 who were unable to be placed in a foster family supervised by Nidos are sent to a small-scale residential facility. COA mentors provide 24 hour supervision to unaccompanied minors at the process reception centre and provide them with food and living allowances as well as a range of activities.

**Asylum-seekers' centre (*asielzoekerscentrum, azc*):** These centres are used to accommodate asylum seekers with a residence permit pending their transfer to an

accommodation in a municipality. They also accommodate applicants going through the extended asylum procedure, as well as rejected asylum seekers for a maximum of 28 days whilst they prepare for their departure. They receive a living allowance and they have to take care of their own shopping and meals. Habitants are under the duty to report to the authorities once a week and their freedom of movement is not restricted.

**Reception centre with intensive guidance (*intensief begeleidende opvang, ibo*):** asylum seekers with behavioural or psychiatric issues whose conduct causes problems for the employees of a reception centre or for fellow residents can voluntarily move to an ibo. They remain here for a temporary period in order to learn skills to function independently and increase their self-reliance, with the objective to move back as soon as possible to an azc. Ibos are open facilities, habitants are under the duty to report once a week.

**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, ebtI*). Applicants with serious disruptive behaviour can be placed in the HTL. Strict rules apply to residents and they are enforced by community service officers (*buitengewone opsporingsambtenaren, boas*). 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

<b>Name of the reception facility</b>	Custodial Complex Schiphol (Justitieel Complex Schiphol)
<b>Access description</b>	Closed
<b>Management</b>	The daily management of the facility is provided by the Custodial Institutions Agency (Dienst Justitiële Inrichtingen, DJI).



<b>Type of applicants accommodated</b>	Applicants in the border procedure.
<b>Number of centres</b>	One.
<b>Capacity</b>	Approximately 900 places (including places in the criminal section)
<b>Location of the centres within the country</b>	Amsterdam-Schiphol International Airport

## Initial reception centres

<b>Name of the reception facility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central reception centre (col)</li> <li>• Pre-process reception centre (pre-pol)</li> <li>• Process reception centre (pol)</li> </ul>
<b>Regime</b>	Open
<b>Management</b>	The daily management of the facilities are provided the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers ( <i>Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers</i> (COA)).
<b>Type of applicants accommodated</b>	All applicants
<b>Number of centres</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• col: 2</li> <li>• pre-pol: 41</li> <li>• pol: 5</li> </ul>
<b>Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• col: By a <a href="#">court ruling</a>, Ter Apel must not exceed an occupancy of 2000 or it will face penalties. The capacity of Budel is 1500.</li> <li>• pre-pol: estimated 9045</li> <li>• pol: total capacity of 2000 places</li> </ul>

<b>Location of the centres within the country</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• col: Ter Apel, Budel</li> <li>• pre-pol: for example, Zutphen, Rijswijk</li> <li>• pol: Ter Apel, Budel, Gilze, Wageningen and Schiphol</li> </ul> <p>Locations can be found on <a href="#">this map</a>, provided by the COA.</p>
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## Collective accommodation centres

<b>Name of the reception facility</b>	Asylum-seekers' centre ( <i>asielzoekerscentrum</i> , azc)
<b>Regime</b>	Open
<b>Management</b>	The daily management of the facilities are provided the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers ( <i>Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers</i> (COA)).
<b>Type of applicants accommodated</b>	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 Dublin transfer.
<b>Number of centres</b>	56
<b>Capacity</b>	Estimated 15642 places.
<b>Location of the centres within the country</b>	Dispersed over the country. For exact location, see <a href="#">here</a> on the COA website.

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

<b>Name of the reception facility</b>	Lodging scheme (stay with friends, family or a host family with access to COA basic facilities such as a weekly allowance and medical care maintained)
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<b>Regime</b>	Open
<b>Management</b>	the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers ( <i>Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers</i> (COA)).  Host families can sign up with ' <a href="#">takecarebnb</a> ' to be matched with a status holder.
<b>Type of applicants accommodated</b>	Status holders who are waiting to be offered housing by the municipalities and asylum seekers in track 4 can make use of the lodging scheme.
<b>Number of centres</b>	There is no fixed number of entities.
<b>Capacity</b>	There is no fixed capacity due to the nature of the lodging scheme.
<b>Location of the centres within the country</b>	Dispersed across the country

### Temporary solutions when housing capacities is temporarily exhausted

<b>Name of the reception facility</b>	Emergency shelter ( <i>noodopvang</i> ) There are two types: Temporary emergency shelters and Crisis emergency shelters/Temporary municipal shelter)
<b>Regime</b>	Open
<b>Management</b>	The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers ( <i>Centraal Orgaan opvang asielzoekers</i> (COA)).

<b>Type of applicants accommodated</b>	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.
<b>Number of centres</b>	210 (The locations for emergency shelter and Municipal Shelter Ukraine (GOO) are not included in this number. They are not managed by the COA, but by the Safety Region/municipalities. The locations for emergency shelter and Municipal Shelter Ukraine (GOO) are not included in this number. They are not managed by the COA, but by the Safety Region/municipalities.)
<b>Capacity</b>	Regularly updated data on capacity is available on COA's <a href="#">website</a> . As of 1 September 2025, there were 30,176 people residing in COA emergency shelter.
<b>Location of the centres within the country</b>	Dispersed over the country

## Reception facilities for applicants with special needs

Special types of reception facilities were created for UAMs, such as the process reception centres for unaccompanied minors (*procesopvanglocatie voor alleenstaande minderjarige vreemdelingen*, pol-amv), UAM reception facilities as a part of regular reception centers, or small-scale housing facilities (*kleinschalige*

*woonvoorziening, kwv.*

The law requires the 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 center temporarily go to the reception center for intensive guidance and support (ibo) in Schalkhaar. They can only go here voluntarily. They could be people with a low intelligence quotient (IQ) or psychological and/or psychosocial problems. In the reception center, their behavior causes problems for staff and other asylum seekers. They stay in the reception center for intensive guidance and support for up to 3 months.

## **Material reception conditions provided in kind and cash**

### **Definition of material reception conditions**

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 offering an adequate standard of housing;
- 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.

## Material reception conditions provided in kind

<b>Type and purpose</b>	Next to accommodation, in col, pre-pol, pol and htl applicants receive food, clothing, personal care items in kind.
<b>Duration and recurrence</b>	Applicants receive three meals per day, clothing and personal care items are offered on need's basis.

## Financial allowances and vouchers

<b>Type and purpose</b>	According to the Rva 2005 regulation, every asylum seeker who is granted shelter is entitled to a "weekly financial allowance to be provided by the COA for food, clothing and other personal expenses" (Rva 2005, article 9, first paragraph, part b).
<b>Duration and recurrence</b>	The daily expense allowance is paid to applicants weekly.
<b>Calculation and amount</b>	The amount of the living allowance is the same for every applicant, currently €12,95euro a week. 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, <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Applicants granted allowance</b>	Applicants in col, pre-pol, pol and htl do not receive financial allowance, As they are typically provided with meals in kind, they also do not receive food vouchers.
<b>Modalities of provision</b>	The weekly allowance is paid via debit card

## 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 IV on vulnerable persons, 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. COA also provides specialised support for LGBTI applicants. 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 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.

COA has also trained hundreds of employees on how to better address LGBTI applicants' needs. Furthermore, there is a COA LGBTI contact person in every reception centre who is responsible for coordinating the organisation of activities and information provision for LGBTI applicants.

## **Rights and obligations during reception**

### **Provision of information and counselling**

<b>Modalities of information provision on benefits and obligations related to reception conditions</b>	<p>The COA provides applicants as soon as possible, and not later than 15 days after the asylum application with information related to the benefits and obligations concerning reception, organisations or persons providing legal aid, and with information related to reception conditions, including health care. The information is provided in person during an interview. 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 wide range of info sheets (available online in several languages <a href="#">here</a>). Information is also provided by COA through the <a href="#">MyCOA</a> platform.</p>
<b>Provision of legal assistance on the reception conditions available</b>	<p>Legal assistance on reception is provided by the Dutch Council for Refugees who are present in 74% of all municipalities and in all asylum seekers' centres.</p>
<b>House rules</b>	<p><a href="#">House rules</a> 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. Applicant must sign them during the first days of arrival to the reception centre.</p>

## Freedom of movement within the territory

<b>Assignment of a particular area of residence to applicants</b>	<p>In general, applicants can freely move within the territory of the Netherlands, except for those residing at enforcement and supervision centres (htl). For persons residing at freedom-restricting centre (vbl) and at a family centre, they must obtain permission from the COA to leave the municipality.</p>
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<b>Reporting obligations</b>	Applicants in pre-pol, pol and azc need to report once a week. Applicants in enforcement and supervision centres (htl) are obliged to report twice daily. Unaccompanied minors in special process reception centres (pol amv) and small-scale housing facilities (kwv) also need to report twice daily. In freedom restricting centres (vbl) and family locations (gl) – used for return purposes – former applicants are obliged to report every day, except for weekends and public holidays.
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## Employment and vocational training

<b>Time limit to access the labour market</b>	Applicants are entitled to access the labour market 6 months after having lodged the application.
<b>Criteria to access the labour market</b>	In order for applicants to be employed, an employer must request a work permit ( <i>tewerkstellingsvergunning</i> ) for the applicant from the Employee Insurance Institute, at no cost ( <i>Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen</i> , UWV). 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 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 40 reception centres have got a Meedoen-balie (a participation desk) where volunteering and work activities are offered. The participation desk provides information about working in the Netherlands, job openings, support with writing resumes, information about organizations that can help with finding work, and about the opportunities offered by municipalities. COA aims to have a participation desk at every reception location by 2026.

The 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](#).

**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 enrol 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 ( *basisscholen*). Schools may provide additional language support within the classroom or through special pull-out programs. Children between 12 and 18 typically start their education in International Transition Classes (*Internationale Schakelklassen* or 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.

<p><b>Access to tertiary education</b></p>	<p>Applicants have legal access to tertiary/higher education, but they need to cover the costs themselves.</p> <p>Students aged 18 and older who attend MBO (secondary vocational education), 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 organization is covering these costs, and they must be under 30 years old on August 1, at the start of the academic year.</p>
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## Healthcare

<p><b>Medical screening</b></p>	<p>Applicants from high risk tuberculosis countries are also tested for tuberculosis(obligation), typically after registering their application, but still before the reporting interview. There is also a medical intake (voluntarily) for everyone directly after registration to check for medical problems which need immediate care, or which require special housing conditions. During the rest and preparation period, applicants undergo a free of charge medical and psychological examination by a primary care provider (MediFirst).</p>
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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 become 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](#) in Dutch. Asylum applicants are not entitled to transgender operations, in-vitro-fertilization 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 the [Gezondheidszorg Asielzoekers](#) (GZA). GZA also provides an infoline available 24/7.

<p><b>Access to healthcare</b></p>	<p>For general practitioner care, asylum seekers go to Asylum Seekers Healthcare (GZA), a national general practice operated by Arts en Zorg (Arts and Care). There is a center in or near each asylum seekers' center. 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.</p> <p>If necessary, the general practitioner will refer to other healthcare providers, such as a medical specialist.</p> <p>If an asylum seeker does not speak sufficient Dutch (or English), a healthcare provider can arrange for a professional interpreter. The COA will then reimburse the costs.</p> <p>As with all other residents of the Netherlands, the Municipal Health Service (GGD GHOR Nederland) is responsible for public healthcare for asylum seekers. This care includes youth healthcare (JGZ), infectious disease control and prevention, and health education.</p> <p>The GGD provides group information sessions at each asylum seekers' center on various topics, such as self-care and mental and sexual health. The GGD also conducts mandatory tuberculosis screenings upon arrival for asylum seekers from countries with a high incidence of tuberculosis. The GGD also monitors hygiene in the asylum seekers' centers.</p>
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## Education for minors

Children have the right to access the national education system soon after their arrival. The time limit to enrol applicant children is 3 months. 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 at compulsory school age start in preparatory classes, which are typically organised separately within the mainstream school infrastructure.

## Socio-cultural orientation and language learning

<b>Access to socio-cultural orientation</b>	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. Applicants receive individual support from COA and their guidance is based on six areas: selfcare, day structure, social network, personal well-being, external contacts, planning for the future. Each area includes three skills (see the overall list in Dutch <a href="#">here</a> ), that applicants need to apply to live in a reception facility and prepare themselves for the future.
<b>Language classes</b>	Language learning is not obligatory for applicants (but recognised beneficiaries of international protection must pass a Civic Integration Exam). Language classes are 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 member has an income above social welfare. When the family member's income is above this limit, the applicant doesn't receive provisions. The relevant municipality's permission is necessary, so that the applicant can stay with family outside of a COA location.

Other applicants, who already live in the Netherlands, can live outside reception structures as well. In this case, they don't 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 6225 euro of assets for single persons and 12 450 euro for single parents and couples. Applicants with assets above the determined limit are requested to contribute to the reception costs.

Employed applicants (at least for staying in a COA reception facility may keep 25% of their income, maximum 274 euro a month (article 5(4). This amount is for 2024, and is redetermined annually. Regulation personal contribution of asylum seekers with income and assets 2008). If the monthly income is more, than the amount of required contribution, applicants may also keep this part of the income

## **Sufficient means test**

Under Article 20(1) applicants are under the obligation to report any circumstances that might influence their right to reception, including their financial situation. In practice the COA typically does not make an assessment of the financial situation of applicants.

## **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 to reduce or – in exceptional situation - withdraw material reception conditions when the applicant has:

- Left the reception centre without informing the COA or without the eventually required permission;



- Failed consecutively two times to report to the authorities;
- 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 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;
- Seriously 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;
- Used a serious form of violence against fellow residents, employees of the reception facility or others.

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 is motivated and written. All sanction measures are noted in the applicant's file as well.

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

ROV (*reglement onthouding verstrekkingen*, rules for withholding provisions) measure: Every asylum seeker, who has the right to use reception, has the duty to comply to 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 provides 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 facility.

Other alternative measures:

- corrective interview;
- warning letter;
- educational measure;
- cooling-off period: transfer to a sober time-out place, where applicants receive material reception conditions in kind, but do not receive financial allowances, and they cannot participate in the activities organised at the reception facility. This measure has been set up recently to be able to better deal with heavy nuisance. This is the possibility of transferring an applicant to an enforcement and supervision centre (htl). This measure can be considered as replacing a ROV measure, depending on the situation and the person concerned.

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

## **Review of the sanction decision**

COA sanctions 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. (See for further details [here](#)). 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.