Reception - Poland

Reception system

Overview

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Relevant EU legislation

Poland is bound by the recast Reception Conditions Directive.

National legislation

Poland transposes the recast Reception Conditions Directive through the Act on granting protection to foreigners on the territory of the Republic of Poland of 13 June 2003 [Ustawa z dnia 13 czerwca 2003 r. o udzielaniu cudzoziemcom ochrony na terytorium Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, Dz.U. 2025 poz. 223 z późn.zm.].

Chapter V of the Act of 13 June 2003 on granting protection to foreigners on the territory of the Republic of Poland covers all aspects of reception, including social assistance, accommodation, material conditions, and rights of applicants.

Other relevant legislation includes:

- the Ordinance of the Ministry of Interior of 23 October 2015 on the rules of stay in the centre for foreigners (Rozporządzenie Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych z dnia 23 października 2015 r. w sprawie regulaminu pobytu w ośrodku dla cudzoziemców, 23 October 2015).
- Ordinance of the Minister of Interior and Administration of 6 October 2023 on the amount of assistance for foreigners seeking international protection (Rozporządzenie Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji z dnia 6 października 2023 r. w sprawie wysokości pomocy dla cudzoziemców ubiegających się o udzielenie ochrony międzynarodowej.

Competent authority and stakeholders

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Authority responsible for reception	The Office for Foreigners | Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców (UdSC) operating under the Ministry of the Interior and Administration manages reception facilities. The Office for Foreigners' Department for Social Assistance carries both executive and financial responsibilities over reception facilities. It finances the establishment and maintenance of reception facilities and compensates service providers for organising reception services.
Other actors involved	Private contractors which operate reception centres based on the agreement with the Office for Foreigners are involved in provision of material reception conditions. Their role is establishment and day-to-day organisation of the centres. The operation of the contracted centres is organised by staff hired by the Office for Foreigners. On ad-hoc and voluntary basis, NGOs carry out some activities, including language classes, assistance with homework, integration activities, psychological and legal assistance and other activities

Organisational aspects

Polish reception system is considered to be managed at a central level.

At the moment, the Department for Social Assistance of the Office for Foreigners (UDSC) has 4 owned centres (including 2 reception centres for initial reception and 2 accommodation centres) and 5 contracted facilities, selected through a tender procedure and run on the basis of concluded accommodation and boarding contracts.

In the centres that are run by private contractors, the contractors are responsible for logistical and facility management services, while the general operation and reception-related functions are provided by staff of the Office for Foreigners.

The centres can be located throughout Poland. The centres currently in operation are located in the Mazowieckie, Lubelskie, Podlaskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie

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voivodeships.

The reception system is based on a mixed model (collective and individual/private), where applicants may be accommodated in one of the centres for foreigners or receive cash benefits to cover on their own the costs of their stay in the territory of the Republic of Poland (‘benefits outside the centre’). In this case, foreigners find flats for rent throughout Poland on their own.

NGOs, CPT and the Ombudsperson monitor reception centres.

Allocation of applicants to geographical areas within the territory

The reception system consists of:

- 4 state owned centres managed by the Office for Foreigners (2 initial reception centres in Biała Podlaska and Podkowa Leśna-Dębak and 2 accommodation centres in Czerwony Bór and Linin) and
- 5 centres outsourced to contractors through tenders (in Bezwola, Białystok, Grupa, Horbów and Łuków).

Applicants for international protection in Poland are not distributed to specific regions but according to the location of centres for foreigners.

Staff and training

Each reception and accommodation centre is managed by reception specialists who provide every day support to the residents. In addition, each centre employs directly or through the contractor an administrator, maintenance personnel, staff to conduct educational and adaptation classes, and 24/7 security guards (minimum two per shift).

Medical services are provided under contract with an external operator, ensuring the presence in each centre of a doctor, a nurse, and a psychologist. Educational and orientation classes, including Polish language courses for adults and children, are delivered by external contractors who are required to have higher education, pedagogical qualifications, and documented experience in working with children.

Specialist support is also available through contracted services, cultural assistants (often recruited through cooperation with international or non-governmental organisations) who provide linguistic and intercultural assistance,

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and interpreters arranged via an external translation company.

Staff training is a key component of the reception system. The Office for Foreigners provides both in-person and e-learning courses on general and specialised topics, such as personal development, customer service, coping with stress, personal data protection, cybersecurity, human trafficking, child protection, and ethics in public administration. Staff also participate in training from the EU Asylum Agency (EUAA), translated into Polish. All persons working with minors must complete training under the Policy on Protection of Children from Abuse in Facilities for Foreigners, which includes an e-learning module and certification.

Through this combined staffing structure, involving permanent staff, external contractors, and specialised service providers and ongoing targeted training, reception centres ensure that a range of professional competences is available on site to meet the needs of residents, including those with special reception needs.

Reception phases

Asylum seekers are entitled to reception conditions from the moment they submit their application and this entitlement is activated upon arrival at a first reception centre. Newcomers are initially accommodated at the Biała Podlaska centre, which serves as the first point of reception. Here, asylum seekers undergo essential procedures such as registration in reception system, initial medical checks, and interviews. For applicants under the Dublin procedure and those who submit subsequent applications, the reception is handled at the Podkowa Leśna-Dębak centre.

The provision of material reception conditions, such as accommodation and meals, is triggered immediately. However, applicants must appear at the designated centre for foreigners to access these provisions. They are also eligible for cash benefits to help cover the costs of their stay, but they must apply either in person or by post to the Office for Foreigners. If an asylum seeker does not indicate a residence address on their application, they are directed to the centre for foreigners, where they must appear to continue their proceedings. Failing to appear at the designated centre can result in the discontinuation of the procedure. While applicants are required to register at the initial reception centre within 2 days of applying for international protection, there are exceptions for

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special situations where urgent medical assistance can be provided even before registration if health or life is at risk.

The end of an applicant’s entitlement to reception conditions is determined by the finality of the decision on their asylum application. If the decision is positive, material reception conditions cease 2 months after the decision becomes final. If the decision involves discontinuation of the procedure, the applicant's entitlement to reception conditions ends 14 days after the decision is final (Article 74(1) Act on the Protection of Foreigners). If the decision is negative, applicants lose their entitlement 30 days after the decision becomes final. During the appeal process before the Voivodship Administrative Court, applicants receive access to reception conditions if they request the suspension of the negative asylum decision and if the court allows the suspension of the enforcement of the contested decision.

Contingency planning

The Office for Foreigners coordinates emergency responses. The main objectives of the contingency planning are to ensure that entities administering accommodation centres have the capacity to increase the number of beds any given time and to activate a 'crisis infrastructure base’, which consists of pre-verified facilities designated to be opened or contracted in the event of disproportional number of applicants in reception. In the event of a mass influx, other bodies and their resources can be also activated, with the Ministry of Interior and Administration remaining the leading entity.

This ensures that there is always flexibility to provide appropriate care and respond swiftly to sudden increases in the number of applicants for international protection.

Facilities

Overview of different types of reception facilities according to national classification

There are 2 initial reception centres at Biała Podlaska and Podkowa Leśna-Dębak, used for all applicants at the beginning of the asylum process, for identification and registration. Applicants are placed in UDSC reception centres after their

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identity has been established and their application for international protection has been registered. They are collective accommodations.

There are also 7 collective accommodation centres, used both for applicants, rejected applicants and beneficiaries of protection, with the possibility of being accommodated in these centres for a specific amount of time depending on the status.

There are no centres for persons with behavioural issues.

Premises at the border

Name of the reception facility	N/a
Access description	N/a
Management	N/a
Type of applicants accommodated	N/a
Number of centres	N/a
Capacity	N/a
Location of the centres within the country	N/a

Initial reception centres

Name of the reception facility	First reception centres
Regime	Open
Management	Office for Foreigners
Type of applicants accommodated	All applicants at the beginning of the asylum process.
Number of centres	2
Capacity	465 including 138 places for single women and single women with children

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Location of the centres within the country	Biała Podlaska and Podkowa Leśna-Dębak

Collective accommodation centres

Name of the reception facility	Accommodation centres (collective)
Regime	Open
Management	Office for Foreigners and external contractors
Type of applicants accommodated	• Applicants awaiting a final decision, including for subsequent applications and applicants under Dublin procedures. • Persons who received a rejection decision, until they are required to leave, for 30 days in most cases. • Persons who received a final decision granting protection, for up to 2 months after the decision becomes final. • Persons who received a discontinuation decision for up to 14 days.
Number of centres	7
Capacity	1004
Location of the centres within the country	Czerwony Bór, Linin, Bezwola, Białystok, Grupa, Horbów and Łuków (see: list)

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

Name of the reception facility	N/a
Regime	N/a
Management	N/a

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Type of applicants accommodated	N/a
Number of centres	N/a
Capacity	N/a
Location of the centres within the country	N/a

Temporary solutions when housing capacities is temporarily exhausted

Name of the reception facility	Emergency Accommodation
Regime	Open
Management	Office for Foreigners
Type of applicants accommodated	• Applicants awaiting a final decision, including for subsequent applications and applicants under Dublin procedure. • Persons who received a final decision rejecting the application, up to the moment when they are required to leave, in most cases 30 days. • Persons who received a final decision granting protection, for up to 2 months after the decision becomes final. • Persons who received a discontinuation decision, for up to 14 days.

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Number of centres	The reception system managed by the Head of the Office for Foreigners consists of 9 centres for foreigners - 2 reception and 7 accommodation centres. The availability of free places is monitored daily by the Department for Social Assistance and reported internally to ensure operational readiness. In case of increased influx of foreigners, the Office may: • Contract additional places from existing contractors; • Adapt extra rooms in its own facilities; • Activate a “crisis infrastructure base”, which consists of pre-verified facilities designated to be opened in the event of a mass influx. This crisis infrastructure, though informally referred to as “crisis places”, serves as a contingency network and is not a separate category of facilities. Its number varies. Additionally, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration maintains a Register of Designated Accommodation Places for Foreigners, primarily reserved for Ukrainian nationals but may be extended for other groups in mass influx situations.
Capacity	number varies
Location of the centres within the country	These facilities only become emergency accommodation once they are activated

Reception facilities for applicants with special needs

Specific housing arrangements are made for vulnerable groups such as single women, single mothers, and other vulnerable individuals. These arrangements

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are usually provided in a dedicated part of a reception centre, such as the one in Podkowa Leśna-Dębak. The Office for Foreigners is the responsible authority for managing these facilities.

There is no fixed time limit for a stay in these facilities and the average duration of stay varies. The duration of stay for single women and single mothers in the specific designated part of the Podkowa Leśna-Dębak reception centre is based on their individual circumstances.

Material reception conditions provided in kind and cash

Definition of material reception conditions

According to Article 70 of the Act of 13 June 2003 on the Protection of Foreigners, applicants for international protection are entitled to social assistance. Article 71 notes that social assistance includes:

Assistance provided at the centre, including:

1. accommodation,
2. all-day group meals or cash equivalent in exchange for meals,
3. pocket money for small personal expenses,
4. permanent financial assistance for cleaning and personal hygiene products,
5. one-off cash assistance or vouchers for clothing and footwear,
6. learning Polish and basic materials necessary to learn the language,
7. teaching aids for children benefiting from education and care in public institutions, primary schools or secondary schools,
8. to cover, as far as possible, the costs of extracurricular activities and recreational and sports activities for children,
9. public transport in order to attend appointments related to the asylum procedure, medical examinations, vaccinations, or other justified circumstances.

Assistance provided outside the centre, consisting in the payment of a cash benefit to cover the costs of stay in Poland, excluding the costs of medical care.

There is no explicit legal or administrative definition of an “adequate standard of living” in Polish national legislation. However, reception conditions in centres for

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foreigners meet the requirements of the recast Reception Conditions Directive and are implemented in line with EUAA guidance (EASO guidance on reception conditions: operational standards and indicators). In practice, the adequacy of living standards is ensured through a combination of regulatory requirements, contractual provisions, and monitoring mechanisms. Quality standards are maintained via regular inspections, internal audits, operator contracts, and annual satisfaction surveys. Infrastructure, medical care, food provision, and safety measures are adapted to ensure dignity and the fulfilment of basic needs.

For contracted facilities, the terms and conditions of stay are specified in the tender documentation. The Office for Foreigners applies criteria aimed at improving the standard of foreigners' stay, including mandatory requirements (e.g. medical care, kindergarten, room for religious practices, recreational areas, classrooms, meeting rooms, and adequate numbers of fridges, washing machines and vacuum cleaners) as well as additional elements (e.g. facilities for persons with disabilities, en-suite bathrooms, good condition of the building façade, enhanced playground equipment, and upgraded sports areas).

Additionally, pursuant to Article 86(1) of the Act on the Protection of Foreigners, the amount of the cash benefit to cover the costs of stay outside reception centres is determined by regulation of the minister responsible for internal affairs.

Financial allowances and vouchers

Type and purpose	The daily expenses allowance provided in reception centres includes amounts for pocket money, clothing and footwear, personal hygiene products and transportation. Parents of school-aged children up to 6 years old receive an allowance equivalent to the value of board to help prepare school meals.

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Duration and recurrence	The allowance is provided during the entire asylum procedure and until a final decision is received and: • For up to 2 months after a positive decision becomes final. • For up to 14 days after a discontinuation decision.

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Calculation and amount	The following amounts are provided in reception centres: • pocket money PLN 50 (EUR 11.59) per month, plus an additional PLN 50 (EUR 11.59) per month if the applicant performs work in the centre (e.g., cleaning, providing translation or interpretation to facilitate communication between staff and applicants, or organizing cultural and educational activities for other residents). • A one-off allowance of PLN 140 (EUR 32.45) is provided for the purchase of clothing and footwear. • Special allowance to buy personal hygiene products: PLN 20 (EUR 4.60) per month. • Reimbursement of transportation costs is provided in specific cases, such as attending appointments related to the asylum procedure, medical examinations, vaccinations, or other justified circumstances. • Parents of school-aged children up to 6 years old receive an allowance equivalent to the value of board (PLN 11 / EUR2.5 per day) to help prepare school meals. The following amounts are provided outside the centres: • PLN 25 (approx. EUR 6.25) per day or PLN 750 (approx. EUR 187.5) per month for one person. • PLN 20 (EUR 5) per day per person or PLN 600 (approx. EUR 150) for two persons. • PLN 15 (EUR 3.75) per day per person or PLN 450 (approx. EUR 112.5) for three persons. • PLN 12.50 (EUR 3) per day per person or PLN 375 (approx. EUR 93.75) for four persons.

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Applicants granted allowance	All applicants are granted allowances except for: • Applicants who have received a final decision (i.e., 2 months after receiving a positive decision or 14 days after receiving a discontinuation decision). • Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection. • Individuals residing in Poland based on humanitarian stay, "tolerated stay", temporary stay permits, permanent stay permits, or long-term residence permits. • Individuals accommodated in youth care facilities, detention centres, pre-trial custody, or detention for criminal purposes.
Modalities of provision	Allowances are paid in cash.

Material reception conditions for vulnerable persons

Applicants with special reception needs are provided additional health care, according to the results of the initial medical examination. Health care services for applicants living outside reception centres are provided through medical offices in provincial cities. Applicants can schedule medical appointments through the medical operator’s ("Petra Medica") hotline.

Unaccompanied minors: Immediately after receiving an application from a minor, the Border Guard takes them to a professional foster family functioning as an emergency shelter or a special educational care facility (youth care facility for crisis situations). All unaccompanied minors (UAMs), following the decision of the guardianship court, are placed in professional foster care facilities. The Office for Foreigners is responsible for covering the costs of a UAMs’ stay in a professional foster family for approximately 3 months after lodging the application. Once the guardianship court issues a decision on placing the UAM in a professional foster care facility, the responsibility shifts to the municipality and district. UAMs placed in care and education centres are provided with clothing, shoes, underwear and other personal items, according to their age and individual needs. They are also provided with pocket money from the age of 5, which is determined by the head

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of the institutional care centre according to age and the type of school attended.

Accompanied minors: Accompanied minors are accommodated in regular reception centres, with family members. Parents of children up to 6 years old receive the equivalent value of board (PLN 11 per day) to help prepare school meals. Special dietary needs are also accommodated based on medical recommendation. Parents receive a layette for children, which includes essential items like bottles, diapers, and care products. Single parents are provided transport by the Border Guard to reception centres, with meals offered if needed during travel.

Victims of human trafficking, torture, or other forms of violence: Victims of human trafficking, torture, or other forms of violence are typically accommodated in regular reception centres. In some cases, applicants may be placed in single rooms or in dedicated shelters provided by NGOs, such as La Strada Foundation against Human Trafficking and Slavery or the Po MOC Mary Immaculate Association for Women and Children under the National Consulting and Intervention Centre for Victims of Trafficking.

Women: There is one specialised section of a reception centre for single women and mothers with children, located in Podkowa Leśna-Dębak, with a capacity of 138 places. Pregnant women are generally accommodated in regular reception centres. If necessary, for their safety, they may be placed in private accommodation and receive a financial allowance to cover living costs.

LGBTIQ applicants: LGBTIQ applicants are accommodated in regular reception centres according to the gender indicated in their official documents. If needed, accommodation in a single room may be provided. To ensure their safety, they can also live in private accommodation and receive a financial allowance to cover living costs.

Applicants with disabilities and special health needs: Applicants with disabilities or special health needs are primarily accommodated in regular reception centres. If necessary, they may be placed in a single room or referred to a psychiatric hospital. Individuals with special medical needs may be moved to 24-hour care centres or hospices. Reception centres are equipped with special entrances and bathrooms adapted for wheelchair users.

Six out of the nine reception centres managed by the Office for Foreigners are adapted for applicants with disabilities, with continuous medical and psychological support from staff. Equipment such as wheelchairs, crutches, and

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hygiene products are provided free of charge (subject to availability), or subsidized if required. Applicants with disabilities, severe disabilities, or bedridden, who cannot be cared for in a reception centre, are referred to specialised care and treatment facilities that provide round-the-clock long-term care (see EUAA, Persons with disabilities in asylum and reception systems).

Elderly applicants: Elderly applicants are accommodated in regular reception centres. If needed, they are provided with a single room or placed in 24-hour care centres or hospices.

Rights and obligations during reception

Provision of information and counselling

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Modalities of information provision on benefits and obligations related to reception conditions	Information on reception conditions is provided to applicants upon their arrival at the reception centre. This information is communicated both in writing and orally by the employees of the centre, ensuring that applicants understand the conditions and their rights. The written information includes a detailed list of rules of stay within the centre. The Office for Foreigners organizes orientation courses in the centres for foreigners, catering to both children and adult groups. These courses are designed to provide essential information on various aspects of living in Poland, including social assistance, daily life, customs, access to medical care, rights and obligations, and employment issues. These courses are conducted in languages that are understandable to the participants, especially in English and Russian, to ensure that the information is accessible. Participants receive materials and brochures, which include key information about their rights, obligations, and the rules they must adhere to within the reception centre. Participation in these orientation courses is encouraged, but not mandatory.
Provision of legal assistance on the reception conditions available	NGOs offer counselling activities, mainly in the form of free legal aid.
House rules	A detailed list of rules of stay in the centre is provided and the rules of stay in the centre are defined in the Regulation of the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration on the rules of stay in the centres of 23 October 2015.

Freedom of movement within the territory

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Assignment of a particular area of residence to applicants	Applicants have freedom of movement, unless they are in detention. However, a 2-day absence from the centre results in the withholding of social assistance until the moment of return. Applicants should inform the staff working in the centre if they want to leave for a longer period in order not to lose assistance. The Office for Foreigners decides in which centre an applicant will be accommodated, taking into consideration family ties, vulnerabilities, need for medical treatment, safety of the applicant and capacity of the centres. Applicants can also apply to be allocated to a centre of their choice, but the request must be justified.
Reporting obligations	If an applicant changes address, they must notify the reception authority (DPS UdSC) of the new address as soon as possible.

Employment and vocational training

Time limit to access the labour market	6 months after lodging an asylum application if no first instance decision has been taken and if the delay is not attributed to any fault of the applicant.

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Criteria to access the labour market	Pursuant to Article 34, Section 1 of the Act of June 13, 2003, on Granting Protection to Foreigners within the Territory of the Republic of Poland, the matter of granting international protection, excluding the cases referred to in Article 39, Section 1, shall be resolved within six months of submitting the application for international protection using the application form. Subsequently, in accordance with Article 35, Sections 1 and 3, if the matter of granting international protection is not resolved within the deadline referred to in Article 34, Section 1, and the delay is not due to the applicant's fault, the Head of the Office, at the request of the person concerned by the application for international protection, issues a certificate which, together with a temporary certificate of the foreigner's identity, entitles that person to work in the territory of the Republic of Poland under the terms and conditions specified in the Act of 20 March 2025 on the labour market and employment services. The certificate is valid until the date on which the decision on granting international protection becomes final.
Employment support for applicants	A foreigner who has the appropriate authorisation may register with the District Employment Office as a job seeker and take advantage of job vacancies available on the local labour market. The above options are available to persons covered by Article 35 of the Act on Granting Protection to Foreigners on the territory of the Republic of Poland, i.e. those who have received a certificate entitling them to work. Available support for these applicants is specified in the Act of 20 March 2025 on the labour market and employment services.

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Adults' access to vocational training	Available support for applicants to whom the above-mentioned certificate was issued by the Head of the Office for Foreigners is specified in the Act of 20 March 2025 on the labour market and employment services. Access to state vocational training for other applicants is not foreseen. NGOs can organise vocational training for applicants. If a person was granted refugee status or subsidiary protection, he or she has free access to the labour market in Poland and can benefit from the labour market support system. To receive support and assistance to become active in the labour market and take up employment, a person must register with the District Labour Office (Powiatowy Urząd Pracy – PUP) as unemployed to be covered by labour market services and instruments.
Access to tertiary education	In principle, all foreigners can study at Polish universities. However, the admission rules and study conditions at public universities are vary. However, applicants for international protection are not entitled to undertake studies at public universities on the same terms as Polish citizens (e.g. free of charge).

Healthcare

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Medical screening	A first medical screening is provided in Dębak-Podkowa Leśna Centre or in Biała Podlaska centre after registration. The Office for Foreigners implements epidemiological protection procedures, which involve thorough health checks of foreigners crossing the Polish border, applying for international protection. The primary goal is to diagnose, isolate, and immediately treat patients suffering from infectious diseases that pose a direct epidemiological threat to the whole society, as well as residents staying in collective reception facilities. Every foreigner admitted to both the Office's own centres and accommodated in rented centres undergoes a special three-stage initial procedure within the Sanitary-Epidemiological Filter, including, among others: an interview with a medical questionnaire and an examination by a doctor, laboratory tests of blood and urine (including for B and C viral infections, HIV status and positive (+) syphilis VDRL tests)

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Level of healthcare	Medical care is provided in all centres for foreigners. A doctor, nurse and psychologist work together to provide basic medical care, and send applicants for specialised testing, if needed. Health care provided to asylum applicants is not based on universal health insurance but financed from a separate budget by the Head of the Office for Foreigners. Full health care is provided and coordinated by a private medical operator, pursuant to an agreement concluded with the Office for Foreigners, which covers: • Medical points in the centres where doctors and nurses provide medical assistance. • Specialised treatment. • Psychological care provided in the centres. • Dental care in clinics with which the medical private contractor has signed agreements. Applicants receive vaccinations for children under the same conditions as Polish citizens. Medical care for asylum applicants living outside the centres is provided through outlets in provincial cities. Scheduling and coordination of medical visits is made through the medical operator's helpline where the applicant receives information about the date and place of the visit (see EMN Ad-Hoc Query 2020.18 on Health care provisions for asylum seekers, 30 April 2020).

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Access to healthcare	Foreigners applying for international protection are entitled to medical care in accordance with the provisions of the Act of June 13, 2003, on Granting Protection to Foreigners within the Territory of the Republic of Poland. Medical care for these foreigners is provided by the Head of the Office for Foreigners and is implemented through a medical provider bound by a civil law agreement with the Head of the Office. The Head of the Office provides medical care during: 1. the proceedings for granting international protection, starting from the date the foreigner reports to the centre, except that in special situations involving a threat to the foreigner's life or health, medical care is provided from the date the foreigner submits an application for international protection; 2. or from the date of submitting an application to the Head of the Office for the provision of medical care and social assistance outside the centre for foreigners. The primary identification document for a foreigner applying for international protection is the Temporary Foreigner Identity Certificate. Verification of a foreigner's eligibility for medical care services is based on the foreigner's personal data. Link: https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc-en/information-materials

Education for minors

In Poland, all children between the ages of 6 and 18 are required to attend one year of preschool preparation, as well as primary and secondary school, through the public education system. These minors gain access to education immediately

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upon arrival in Poland and during the school year, admission to kindergartens or the first year of primary school generally does not pose significant difficulties. For children entering higher educational levels, an assessment is carried out to place them in the appropriate classes, considering their education level from their country of origin.

Children receive textbooks, basic school supplies, and a cash equivalent for meals. Additionally, they may receive a special allowance for extracurricular, sport, and recreational activities.

In accommodation centres, educational and adaptation classes are organised for children aged 3-6, by qualified teachers who focus on didactic, motor, and emotional development, while also preparing children for compulsory education.

Children who are unable to enter the regular education system due to illness or other reasons, can be placed in special schools or assigned to individual teaching. Children can also participate in preparatory classes for foreign children who do not have sufficient command of Polish. Additionally, Polish language classes and remedial classes are organised by schools.

A multicultural assistant, who speaks the child’s language, may be employed by the school to assist the child in the education process. NGOs also provide support in some schools. Moreover, preparatory wards are available within both public and non-public schools, and children can stay in these wards for up to one school year.

Accompanied children in reception centres may take part in voluntary activities, such as recreational, educational, and adaptation activities, including Polish language classes, organised by the Office for Foreigners and external entities, often funded through AMIF projects or the national authority's budget.

Additionally, there are voluntary initiatives led by civil society organisations, providing language courses, recreational and educational activities, and adaptation programs.

In terms of language support, learning materials have been prepared to assist children in learning Polish. These materials include a Polish language teaching program that is specifically designed to meet the communication needs of children applying for international protection.

Socio-cultural orientation and language learning

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Access to socio-cultural orientation	Orientation courses are held in the centres for foreigners. Groups are divided into children and adults. Courses are conducted especially in English and Russian and cover topics such as host country history, functioning of the host country's society, its values and fundamental principles, access to employment for adults, access to social rights (social and family benefits, housing benefits, information on childcare), access to healthcare, information about education, prohibition of violence against women, children, rights and obligation of the citizen. During the courses, foreigners are informed about topics related to social assistance and the realities of everyday life in Poland, i.e. norms, customs, access to medical care, rights and obligations as well as employment issues. The activities involve a detailed discussion of issues that facilitate the participants' more efficient integration with Polish society and discussing problematic issues that may occur after arriving to the country. Participants of the courses are provided with materials, brochures including relevant information.

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Language classes	The Office for Foreigners provides Polish language classes and basic materials necessary to learn this language. Polish language classes for children include help with homework and remedial classes. A teacher conducting the classes is in contact with the schools attended by the children. Children who start their compulsory school education in Poland, can participate in Polish language classes aimed at facilitating adaptation to school community. These classes take form of learning Polish as a foreign language with real-life and socio-cultural elements. Children who begin their compulsory education in Poland benefit from the Polish language teaching program and methodological solutions. The curriculum considers the specific communication needs of children applying for international protection including the acquisition of basic skills. Polish classes for adults are held in all the centres for foreigners, in Warsaw and online. Classes are conducted on the basis of a curriculum developed at the request of the Office for Foreigners at A1 level with A2 elements and A2 level with B1 elements. The curriculum considers the specific communication needs of foreigners applying for international protection, including real-life and sociocultural content. The learning program includes acquisition and development of basic skills, such as simulated communication in a shop, in a restaurant, on the street, at the doctor's office, on the road, at school, at an interview or when renting and arranging an apartment. Free classes are also provided by NGOs on an ad-hoc basis (e.g. Ocalenie Foundation, Centrum Wielokulturowe) or in association with the Office for Foreigners (e.g. Linguae Mundi).

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Sufficient means

Arrangement of private accommodation

Applicants may decide to live in private accommodation if they have the necessary financial means. Applicants, regardless of their financial means, retain full access to the same range of services and financial allowances.

Contribution to reception and healthcare costs

There is no regulation at the national level that requires applicants to contribute to the costs of material reception conditions if they do have financial means.

Sufficient means test

There is no means test. There is no provision in the national law that would make reception conditional on the fact that the applicant does not have sufficient means to have an adequate standard for living.

Sanction regimes, reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions

Circumstances for reducing or withdrawing material reception conditions

Material reception conditions can be withdrawn if an applicant abandons the place of residence assigned by the competent authority without informing or without obtaining permission. Based on Article 77 of the Act on the Protection of Foreigners – if a foreigner receiving social assistance in a reception centre stays outside this centre for a period longer than 2 days, the provision of such assistance is suspended by operation of law until their return.

The Act of 24 April 2025 amending the Act on Foreigners and certain other acts repealed Articles 76 and 78 of the Act on the Protection of Foreigners regarding withdrawal and restoring social assistance in case of serious violations of the rules in the reception centre or aggressive behaviour towards other residents or staff (the changes came into force on 1 June 2025).

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Possible sanctions and procedure

In the event of extraordinary incidents involving foreigners (violation of regulations), the following forms of punishment/sanctions are possible:

- disciplinary interview conducted by a centre employee (oral warning);
- written ‘warning’;
- disciplinary interview at the Office for Foreigners in Warsaw;
- transfer to another centre;
- referral of a request to place the foreigner in a detention centre for foreigners.

To maintain public order, it is also possible to change ex officio the form of social assistance from accommodation in a reception facility to receiving cash benefits to cover the cost of living outside the centre, in accordance with Article 72(1)(2) of the Act on the Protection of Foreigners.

Review of the sanction decision

No information currently available

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