Reception - Finland

Reception system

Overview

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Relevant EU legislation

Finland is bound by the recast Reception Conditions Directive and has transposed its provisions through the Act on the Reception of Persons Seeking International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings 746/2015 | Laki kansainvälisen suojelun hakijoiden vastaanotosta ja ihmiskaupan uhrien tunnistamisesta ja avustamisesta 746/2015 and its amendment.

National legislation

01/10/2015: Finland transposed the recast Reception Conditions Directive by the Act on the Reception of Applicants for International Protection and on the Identification and Assistance of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings | Laki kansainvälistä suojelua hakevan vastaanotosta sekä ihmiskaupan uhrin tunnistamisesta ja auttamisesta and its amendments. Other relevant legislation is the Child Welfare Act.

Competent authority and stakeholders

Authority responsible for reception	The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for policy on the reception of asylum seekers, the provision of general guidelines and legislative processes. The Finnish Immigration Service is responsible for providing reception and operates under the ministry.

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Other actors involved	Private companies, municipalities, civil society organisations and state foundations (such as the Red Cross) can be involved in the provision of material reception conditions. Their role includes the possible establishment of centre and day-to-day operations, such as providing reception services in the centre. They have can have contracts on the organisation of reception activities with the Finnish Immigration Service. On a voluntary basis, civil society organisations can also carry out specific activities in and outside of the centres, e.g. leisure activities. Regional Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment are responsible for the relocation to municipalities of asylum seekers who were granted international protection and were issued a residence permit.

Organisational aspects

The Finnish reception system consists of both collective and more individual facilities. The guidelines for standards for reception centres ensure that the facilities must be suitable for reception purposes. Reception centres must fulfil the requirements for fire safety, personal safety, health requirements and environmental safety. The document details what the starting package includes, which is given to a resident upon arrival: pillow, blanket, cover sheet, sheet, pillowcase, towel, mattress, etc.

There are requirements listed for the surroundings of the reception centre (parking space, children’s play area), the rooms in the reception centre (minimum size of a room, what furniture it must contain), kitchen facilities and what they must contain, living and eating areas, bathroom facilities, laundries, offices for personnel, children’s play area and Internet.

Reception is managed at a central level. The Finnish Immigration Service carries the overall executive and financial responsibilities over reception facilities (i.e. it pays for the establishment and maintenance costs of reception, as well as

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compensation to service providers for organising reception services). The Finnish Immigration Service can decide on opening and closing (state and non-state) reception and registration centres and on their location.

Reception can be operated by non-profit organisations and private companies or by municipalities.

The Finnish Immigration Service has reception centres in Helsinki, Lappeenranta (Joutseno) and Oulu. Other reception centres are run, for example, by non-profit organisations and companies.

The Finnish Immigration Service launched on 2 February 2024 a tender for the operation of reception centres, with the aim not to increase the number of reception centres but to complete the tendering process for reception centre capacity that started in 2022. These centres will operate in eight sub-areas, opened on 1 July 2024, and each will have 300 places. The procurement of reception capacity was finalised in 2024 and 32 reception centres or their facilities closed down while the operator changed in 24 units. The demand for reception decreased significantly in 2024, leading to a reduction of capacity from 28,600 places to 14,500 places, with an average occupancy rate at 87%. The vast majority in reception centres were Ukrainian beneficiaries of temporary protection. In addition, in view of the changes in the reception system, the Finnish Immigration Service encouraged applicants to move to municipalities in 2024.

Applicants can also accommodate themselves in private accommodation, with friends, relatives or spouses, but under the condition of being registered at a reception centre because only a reception centre can provide services such as health, education, social assistance and reception allowance. Applicants subject to the border procedure cannot stay in a private accommodation.

Allocation of applicants to geographical areas within the territory

The Finnish Immigration Service decides on the allocation of applicants to geographical areas within their territory. Section 16 of the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings provides that the reception centre can decide on accommodation and transfers. The decision on a transfer is made after the applicant is heard or a child's representative for unaccompanied minors. The Finnish Immigration Service can decide on accommodation or

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transfers in two situations: i) if it is deemed necessary for the processing of an application for international protection; or ii) if no consensus was reached when deciding on the reception centre for a transfer, pursuant to Section 16(1).

When deciding on accommodation in a reception centre, the following circumstances are taken into account: age of the applicant, gender, family situation, health and other relevant circumstances.

Section 17 of the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings stipulates that unaccompanied minors must be accommodated in a group home or another accommodation facility intended for children, provided that the conditions are fully complied with on the number of children and the number of staff, in line with Sections 59 and 60 of the Child Welfare Act.

Applicants subject to the border procedure are accommodated in the Joutseno reception centre (adults and families) since 1 September 2024. It is planned to accommodate unaccompanied minors subject to the border procedure in the Oulu reception centre.

Staff and training

The Finnish Immigration Service is the authority who guides, plans and supervises the practical operation of the reception and assistance system, pursuant to Section 8 of the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings.

The Finnish Immigration Service is responsible for maintaining state reception and possible processing centres and decides on their establishment, closure and locations.

The state reception and possible processing centers are maintained by the Finnish Immigration Service which decides on their establishment, locations and closure. Section 9 of the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings requires that the director of a state reception and processing centre must have: '*a qualification suitable for the position, good familiarity with the duties of the position, demonstrated leadership skills in practice and proficiency in a foreign language required for the position'.* The rules

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of procedure for positions in state reception and processing centers can be determined by government decree.

There is also the possibility to have non-state reception or processing centers for which the Finnish Immigration Service can agree with a municipality, joint municipal authority, other public law entity, or private entity or foundation on the establishment, closure, and location of a reception or arrangement centre. Each contract must include a minimum of information on requirements related to: i) reception and coordination centre facilities and staff; ii) organisation of reception services in line with rules in the act and general administrative laws; iii) reimbursement of costs; iv) guidance and supervision; v) rules for the extension, reduction and closure of the reception and processing centre; and vi) contingency plan. The qualifications for the director of a non-state reception centre are the same as for state reception center. A person who exercises public authority when conducting duties on reception services are criminally liable for official acts.

The Finnish Immigration Services informed in its annual activity report for 2024 that the Digital Reception Service project, funded by AMIF was also launched. Its task is to advance a multidisciplinary information system development for reception services with the aim to streamline operations and services.

Training of personnel is a key component of the activities of the Finnish Immigration Service. It reported a slight increase in educational activities in 2024 and implemented the human resources Osku system which supports the introduction of competencies common to all, and specific competencies for specific posts.

The personnel of the Joutseno reception center were trained in 2024 on the border procedure and the operational aspects related to its implementation.

Section 13 of the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings defines the reception services as including accommodation, reception and spending money, social services, healthcare services, interpretation and translation services, and work and study activities. The reception center employs specialised staff in order to provide all these services.

The unaccompanied minors are usually accommodated in a group home, provided that the requirements of staffing and number of children under Sections 59 and 60 of the Child Welfare Act are complied with. Precisely, there should be a maximum of seven children or young people to be cared for in a residential unit

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and a maximum of 24 children or young people in one building. Also, there should be a minimum of seven employees in care and upbringing work in a residential unit. For more than one residential unit in the same building, the requirements is a minimum of six employees in care and upbringing work per residential unit. The qualifications of the staff must be adequate and take into account the special needs of the children and the nature of the activities in those units. Accommodation can be arranged for unaccompanied minors also in other facilities intended for children provided that the above-mentioned requirements are met.

For unaccompanied children who reached the age of 16, the accommodation can be organised in a supported housing units when it is justified based on the development and well being of the minor. The requirements are: a maximum of 40 minors in the same building and at least three employees for every ten children. The number of staff can be less only in exceptional situations – see Section 17 of the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings.

Reception phases

The provision of reception conditions is triggered upon making an application for international protection and arrival at the reception centre to all applicants indiscriminately, unless they have sufficient means to sustain themselves. Access to reception centres is provided immediately without further requirements.

Upon arrival, applicants are placed in one of the five transit centres in each area (see Map). The transit centres are located near or within easy reach of one of the service points of the Finnish Immigration Service, which are primarily meant for new asylum seekers who have just arrived in Finland. Applicants are accommodated in transit centres for the duration of the Finnish Immigration Service's active investigation, and after the personal interview, they are transferred to another reception centre (long term accommodation) to await a decision.

Contingency planning

The Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection was amended in order for the Finnish Immigration Service to take on central

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responsibility for preparedness planning concerning the organisation of reception services in the event of a mass influx of migrants – see Section 12.

The amendment aimed to improve preparedness for large numbers of migrants and to clarify the division of duties between the authorities. The overall responsibility for preparedness planning and measures lies with the Finnish Immigration Service, which has the lead in operational responsibility in the event of a mass influx of migrants and also the highest level of expertise in organising reception services.

The Finnish Immigration Service has standard contract templates and guides to ensure extra capacity needs are covered quickly. These include, among others, the Guidance for Registration Centre (hotspot), the Guidance for Reception Centre, the Guidance for Emergency Accommodation Unit and the Guidance for Reception Centres Contingency Plan.

Contingency plans for extra capacity needs are made in provinces (6 areas). The Finnish Red Cross can activate temporary accommodation units, and they have equipment for camps of 10,000 people (for domestic or foreign needs) in a warehouse.

Reception centres themselves have been instructed to draw up self-monitoring and contingency plans. The Finnish Immigration Service conducts inspections at the reception centers and their branches to check their contingency plans and their material readiness.

Also, a plan for the establishment of a hotspot was started with one of the Centres for possible large-scale influx.

According to the Finnish Immigration Service Annual Report and Financial statements for 2024, a personnel pool was created within the framework of a contingency plan and a plan for the use of the Joutseno reception centre for the border procedure.

Facilities

Overview of different types of reception facilities according to national classification

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The Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings provides for the following types of reception units:

- State reception and processing centers – provided under Section 9,
- Non-state reception or processing centers – provided under Section 10.

The type of reception center can be an apartment based, where applicants live in flats rented by the center or institutional one, where the applicants live in the same building with others.

There are reception centres of different types in different parts of Finland, for example:

- reception centres with catering, where the reception centre offers meals to everyone who lives there;
- reception centres with individual or shared kitchens where the residents cook their own meals.

All reception centres offer the same reception services to the people who live there and to the people who organize their own accommodation, and all reception centres operate according to the same principles.

Section 13 of the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings defines the reception services as including accommodation, reception and spending money, social services, healthcare services, interpretation and translation services, and work and study activities.

Premises at the border

Name of the reception facility	Joutseno reception centre for adults and families since 1st September 2024 Oulu reception center for unaccompanied minors
Access description	The center was reorganised in order to cater for implementation of the border procedure. Fences and access control structures were acquired.
Management	Under the Finnish Immigration Service

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Type of applicants accommodated	Applicants subject to the border procedure Minors subject to the border procedure are planned to be accommodated in the Oulu Reception Center.
Number of centres	1 for adults and families 1 for unaccompanied minors
Capacity	In the Joutseno Reception Center the capacity for applicants in the border procedure is 170 places. In the Oulu Reception Center the capacity for unaccompanied minors in the border procedure is 14 places.
Location of the centres within the country	Eastern land border

Initial reception centres

Name of the reception facility	Transit Centres
Regime	Open
Management	The Finnish Immigration Service is responsible for directing, planning and supervising the operations of all reception centres. Municipalities, civil society organisations and private companies may manage the daily operation of the reception centre – see Section 8 of the Reception Act.

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Type of applicants accommodated	All new applicants at the start of the process to lodge an application (until the personal interview is conducted). The transit centres are located near the service points of the Finnish Immigration Service that hold asylum interviews. After the interview, the applicant is transferred to another reception centre while awaiting the decision.
Number of centres	5 centres
Capacity	The reception capacity was reduced in 2024 from 28,600 to 14,500 places, due to decreased demand.
Location of the centres within the country	Oulu, Turku, Espoo, Helsinki, Joutseno (see map)

Collective accommodation centres

Name of the reception facility	Reception centres/units for adults
Regime	Open
Management	The Finnish Immigration Service is responsible for directing, planning and supervising the operations of all reception centres. Municipalities, civil society organisations and private companies may manage the daily operation of the reception centre.

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Type of applicants accommodated	• Applicants awaiting a final decision (including applicants who lodged a subsequent application, applicants under the Dublin procedure and applicants who lodged an appeal procedure); • Persons who received a final decision rejecting the application (up to the moment when they are required to leave); • Persons who received a final decision granting protection (for a reasonable period of time); • Applicants from EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland (only until they are notified of the negative decision; in case they agree to return, they are entitled to reception until they leave the country, however for up to a maximum of 7 days) – see Section 14a of the Reception Act.
Number of centres	Varies depending on need. At the moment there are 45 reception centres for adults (see map) and 14 for minors.
Capacity	The reception capacity was reduced in 2024 from 28,600 to 14,500 places, due to decreased demand.
Location of the centres within the country	Varies, predominantly in the south of the country (see map)

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

Name of the reception facility	Reception centres/units for adults
Regime	Open
Management	The Finnish Immigration Service is responsible for directing, planning and supervising the operations of all reception centres. Municipalities, civil society organisations and private companies may manage the daily operation of the reception centre.

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Type of applicants accommodated	• Applicants awaiting a final decision (including applicants who lodged a subsequent application, applicants under the Dublin procedure and applicants who lodged an appeal procedure); • Persons who received a final decision rejecting the application (up to the moment when they are required to leave); • Persons who received a final decision granting protection (for a reasonable period of time); • Applicants from EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland (only until they are notified of the negative decision; in case they agree to return, they are entitled to reception until they leave the country, however for up to a maximum of 7 days) - see Section 14a of the Reception Act.
Number of centres	Varies depending on need. At the moment there are 52 reception centres for adults (see map)
Capacity	The reception capacity was reduced in 2024 from 28,600 to 14,500 places, due to decreased demand.
Location of the centres within the country	Varies, predominantly in the south of the country (see map)

Temporary solutions when housing capacities is temporarily exhausted

Finland does not have such temporary solutions. New centers are being opened in existing structures, when needed.

Name of the reception facility	N/a
Regime	N/a
Management	N/a
Type of applicants accommodated	N/a

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Number of centres	N/a
Capacity	N/a
Location of the centres within the country	N/a

Reception facilities for applicants with special needs

Unaccompanied minors

During the asylum process, unaccompanied minor asylum seekers live in group homes or supported residential units intended for minors. After receiving a residence permit, they usually move on to family group homes. The activities of the family group homes are coordinated by the ELY Centres (Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment), and the operation of the group homes is coordinated by the Finnish Immigration Service. A minor, who is an asylum seeker or who has been issued with a residence permit may also live in private accommodation while being registered with a group home or a family group home.

Group homes for accommodation of children under 16 years of age may be located in connection with a reception centre which must always have a separate building.

According to Section 17 of the Reception Act and Sections 59 and 60 of Child Welfare Act, a group of a maximum of seven children may be accommodated together in one group home and a maximum of 24 children may be placed in one building; for each building, there should be a minimum of seven employees working in care and education tasks.

Section 17 of the Reception Act there can be supported housing units used for accommodating children between 16 and 17 years of age. Each unit has capacity of between 7 and 40 places, they are administered by the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment under the control of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. For ten children, there should be a minimum of three employees working in care and education tasks.

There are currently 14 units for minors according to the list on the available map.

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Applicants with disabilities and special health needs are placed in accommodation arrangements adapted to special needs. People with serious illnesses have the possibility to stay in hospital, if needed.

Victims of human trafficking, torture or other forms of violence are accommodated in Joutseno reception centre , which provides assistance for the victims of human trafficking throughout Finland, if the persons do not have a municipality of residence – see Section 38b of the Reception Act.

LGBTIQ applicants are accommodated in reception centres. There are places in reception centres located in larger cities, enabling asylum seekers to participate in services intended for LGBTIQ minorities outside the reception centres.

Material reception conditions provided in kind and cash

Definition of material reception conditions

According to article 13 of the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings reception services are organised by the reception centres for asylum applicants or beneficiaries of temporary protection and include:

- accommodation
- meals
- social and health services
- reception allowance
- interpretation, and work and study activities.

Material reception conditions provided in kind

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Type and purpose	**Accommodation:** is provided in kind at a reception centre. Housing expenses are not taken into account when granting the reception allowance if a person arranges accommodation independently in private accommodation. **Food:** Unless an applicant is accommodated in a reception centre with an individual or shared kitchen (it is the case mainly for the first reception centres and centres hosting vulnerable groups). If food is provided, the daily expenses allowance is reduced. **Clothing:** In centres hosting unaccompanied minors. **Welcome package:** All applicants receive a welcome package that will provide for basic needs until they receive an allowance. At reception centres where meals are provided, the welcome package includes bed linen, towel, soap and possibly some other hygiene products. If meals are not provided, the welcome package will also include some cooking utensils and basic food products.

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Duration and recurrence	The material reception conditions are provided in kind to applicants for the entire duration of the asylum procedure, until a final decision is received, pursuant to Section 14a of the Reception Act. For third country nationals who did not apply for assisted voluntary return, reception services are suspended no later than 30 days after the decision to remove from the country has become enforceable and the police have informed the reception centre that enforcement of removal from the country by official action is not possible. If, despite the application, the assisted return has not taken place or the application has been cancelled, the reception services will cease, however no later than 90 days after the application for assisted voluntary return, unless the third-country national has been granted a residence permit. The provisions related to duration of reception services and voluntary return are not applicable for unaccompanied children, as provided under Section 14a (3) of the Reception Act. For special personal reasons related to an applicant, the manager of the reception centre can decide that a person will be given reception services for a reasonable time, regardless of the abovementioned deadlines - as provided under Section 14a (4) of the Reception Act.

Financial allowances and vouchers

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Type and purpose	Asylum seekers and those who applied for or have been granted temporary protection may be granted reception allowance, upon request, and if the applicant or his family members do not have sufficient financial resources. The reception allowance is money intended to cover the immediate basic needs of an applicant and his/her your family, such as food and clothing. The reception allowance consists of the basic component and the supplementary reception allowance. The reception allowance consists of a basic element and a supplementary element. The basic amount is intended for essential daily expenses if the person has no income or assets, for example for clothing, minor health care costs, expenses on the use of local transport, and telephone costs, for example. The basic component is also intended for food costs if the reception centre does not offer daily meals. A supplementary reception allowance may be granted for special needs arising from the life situation of an individual or family. The basic amount of the reception allowance is the same for applicants for international protection, beneficiaries of temporary protection and victims of human trafficking with no municipality of residence. The monthly reception allowance and spending allowance were reduced for the period 1 September 2024 – 31 December 2025.

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Duration and recurrence	The daily expense allowance is paid to applicants every month for the entire duration of the asylum procedure, until a final decision is received. For third country nationals who did not apply for assisted voluntary return, reception services are suspended no later than 30 days after the decision to remove from the country has become enforceable and the police have informed the reception centre that enforcement of removal from the country by official action is not possible. If, despite the application, the assisted return has not taken place or the application has been cancelled, the reception services will cease, however no later than 90 days after the application for assisted voluntary return, unless the third-country national has been granted a residence permit. The provisions related to duration of reception services and voluntary return are not applicable for unaccompanied children, as provided under Section 14a (3) of the Reception Act. For special personal reasons related to an applicant, the manager of the reception centre can decide that a person will be given reception services for a reasonable time, regardless of the abovementioned deadlines - as provided under Section 14a (4) of the Reception Act.

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Calculation and amount	Daily expenses allowance when food is provided, as reduced for the period 1st September 2024 – 31 December 2025: • EUR 97/month for a single parent • EUR 88/month for adults living alone • EUR 72/month for other adults • EUR 60/month for a child aged 10–17 years who lives with his/her family • EUR 57/month for children aged under 10 years living with their family When food is not provided: • EUR 336 month for a single parent • EUR 300/month for adults living alone • EUR 254/month for other persons over 18 years old EUR 210/month for a child aged 10–17 years who lives with his/her family • EUR 191/month for children aged under 10 years living with their family Daily expenses allowance for unaccompanied minors: • Up to EUR 26/month for an unaccompanied minor younger than 16 years • Up to EUR 47/month for an unaccompanied minor between 16 and 17 years Supplementary reception allowance may be provided if special needs arise.

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Applicants granted allowance	All applicants can apply and receive the allowance, except those who received a final decision rejecting the application (with the exception of unaccompanied minors): • whose removal cannot be enforced by the authorities and who refuse to return voluntarily to their home country; or • who applied for voluntary return but did not leave the country 90 days after the application for voluntary return. Applicants who received a final decision rejecting the application who are nationals of EU Member State, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland (after they are notified of the negative decision or in case they do not agree to return).
Modalities of provision	Asylum applicants and beneficiaries of temporary protection are entitled to reception allowance, intended to meet immediate basic needs of the applicant and his/her family. The reception allowance is not granted automatically but upon application via an application form to be submitted at the reception centre and if the applicants' financial situation meets the requirements. The allowance is transferred to the applicant's prepaid card or to a Finnish bank account. The reception centre provides instructions on the prepaid cards.

Material reception conditions for vulnerable persons

Section 6 of the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings provides that special needs deriving from the status of vulnerability of an applicant for international protection, a beneficiary of temporary protection, or a victim of trafficking in human beings, including age, physical or mental condition, must be taken into account when applying the law

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related to reception. Also, the vulnerable status and the special needs arising from it must be assessed individually within a reasonable period of time after the case has been initiated.

All **unaccompanied** and **accompanied minors** are offered a health examination by a nurse upon their arrival at a reception centre and later on, whenever deemed necessary. In the health examination, also psychological well-being is discussed A discretionary allowance can be also granted if, for example, glasses or other aids are needed.

All unaccompanied minors are offered general as well as individual leisure activities by receptions centres. In addition, a bus ticket or monetary support for bus ticket is provided depending on the location of the group home and the school.

Also, an applicant's plan (which includes a record of the support and services needed) is drafted by a social worker for each unaccompanied minor. When necessary, it is supplemented with a more detailed care and upbringing plan (covers day-to-day work with a child) which is prepared by the child’s counsellor (all children have one or two personal counsellors / educators, besides social worker). An independence promotion plan is also made for those approaching adulthood. The implementation of the plans is monitored, and they are updated on a regular basis.

In addition, to prevent a radicalisation among unaccompanied minors and ensure their social and psychological well-being, specific courses and lessons are provided e.g. on extremism to social workers and other people involved in provision of reception to unaccompanied minors.

When necessary, medical support for **applicants with disabilities** are utilised, when necessary. The same applies for individuals, who have been subject to torture, rape, or other forms of physical, psychological, and sexual violence. Overall, services are provided by staff from reception facilities, experts from public health institutions, private operators contracted by authorities, and civil society organisations.

Transportation is also provided for people with disabilities. In case of individuals with mental disorder, guardian is appointed.

Victims of human trafficking may receive additional assistance (including therapy) from the National Assistance System for Victims of Trafficking in Human

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Beings (managed by the Finnish Immigration Service) coordinated by the Joutseno reception centre – see Section 38a and 38b of the Reception Act.

When necessary, **LGBTIQ** individuals and families are provided with any additional medical support.

Pregnant women are provided with the necessary healthcare and enjoy practical support from volunteer support persons (doulas), who have been trained accordingly and accompany mothers during childbirth.

Supplementary reception allowance is allocated to applicants if special needs arise.

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	Section 15 of the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings regulates the provision of information in reception and provides that: • The police or border authority provides the information to the applicant for international protection when the later submits his application as soon as possible, but no later than 15 days after submitting the application for international protection. The reception centre provides the information after the applicant is registered in the reception centre. • The information is provided in writing in the native language of the person applying for international protection or in a language that s/he can reasonably be expected to understand. If necessary, the information can also be given orally. • Information on reception conditions is provided in writing and orally by officials of the first reception centre
Provision of legal assistance on the reception conditions available	General provisions related to legal aid are applicable. An applicant can appeal against measures related to reception as provided by Section 55 of the Act on the reception of applicants for international protection and the identification and assistance of victims of human trafficking. Free legal aid is provided, subject to a means test, by public legal aid offices and private lawyers. The scope of it is general (overall assistance in the process, as well as consultation in withdrawal of reception conditions for example), while in case of an appeal, the aid also included drafting of the appeal.

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House rules	The rules of conduct are in written form and are communicated to the customer (applicants for asylum) upon arrival at the reception center. The customer does not need to sign the rules, as they apply to them regardless. The rules of conduct specifically address the behaviour and actions expected of customers at the reception center. The rules of conduct are laid down in the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings. The Immigration Service has also issued instructions on this matter to receptions centres. Section 15 (1,2) of the Reception Act provides that reception centers personnel have the duty to inform the applicants accommodated therein of rights and obligations related to reception, legal aid, and organizations that assist with reception-related issues.

Freedom of movement within the territory

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Assignment of a particular area of residence to applicants	In principle, accommodation is assigned by the Finnish Immigration Service taking into consideration family ties and the capacity of reception centres. Asylum seekers are not free to choose their place of residence. Applicants may apply to be allocated in a centre of their choice, but such a request has to be justified. According to Section 118 and 120 of the Aliens Act, an applicant may be imposed an obligation to register at a specific reception centre, or to reside in a certain reception centre. This is considered an alternative to detention measure. For applicants subject to the border procedure, there is an obligation to stay within the area of the assigned reception center. It is not allowed to leave the reception center without permission.
Reporting obligations	All applicants who are registered at a reception center in order to apply and receive material reception conditions have the obligation to inform that center of any change in the contact details as well as of any absence of up to 7 days. It is not allowed to be absent from the reception center for more than 14 days without a justified reason. Failure to comply with the rules may result in ending reception services. When staying in private accommodation, an applicant must notify the reception centre of a change of address as soon as possible. An applicant residing in a private accommodation must still be registered at a reception center.

Employment and vocational training

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Time limit to access the labour market	Asylum seekers right to work is based on the Aliens Act. The right to find paid employment starts after 3- or 6-month after having submitted the asylum application as follows: • 3 months waiting period if the applicant presented a valid passport or other travel document to the authorities, and it has been verified as genuine. • 6 months waiting period if the applicant has not presented a travel document. The employment can continue as long as there is a right to work. This right must be checked upon receipt of the decision on the asylum application. In case of a negative decision, the right to work is valid during the appeal period, which is 30 days from the date when the decision of the Finnish Immigration Service notified the decision.

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Criteria to access the labour market	Asylum applicants do not need a certificate to take up employment or internship. However, an employer is obliged by law to verify that a foreign employee has the all the required documentation to work (residence permit for employed person, if needed). The Finnish Immigration Service can provide a document if requested. The document currently costs EUR 50 for applicants. If an applicant would like to start a self-employed business in Finland, he/she should apply for a residence permit application for self-employed persons. In case the person has no valid right to work, then s/he can do unpaid work such as: • unpaid internship as part of your studies or training organised by Employment and Economic Development Offices and • voluntary work organised by non-governmental organisations and associations. The Finnish law does not provide for unpaid internships other than as part of studies or training organised by Employment and Economic Development Offices.
Employment support for applicants	Reception centre can conduct a skills assessment of new asylum applicants to collect information about previous work experience, education and interests.
Adults' access to vocational training	It may be accessed by all applicants accommodated in reception. Work and study activities are compulsory in the reception centers and a refusal to participate may result into a reduction of the financial support of up to 20% - see Section 29 of the Reception Act.

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Access to tertiary education	The Aliens Act does not restrict asylum seekers' right to study. An asylum applicant can apply for and accept a study place if this is not against the rules and regulations of the educational institution in question. However, being granted a study place does not automatically mean that the asylum seeker will be allowed to stay in Finland.

Healthcare

Medical screening	A nurse carries out the initial voluntary health check in the reception facility and interviews the asylum applicant about the state of his/her health upon arrival. Contagious diseases are screened according to national guidelines. Applicants with special reception needs are provided additional health care, depending on the results of the initial medical examination. As a rule, outside medical services are provided by private and public service providers.
Level of healthcare	Health care for asylum applicants who are awaiting a decision is organised in and via the reception facility. Health care professionals (general nurses) are present in the reception facilities. As a rule, outside medical services are provided by private and public service providers. Applicants are entitled to all necessary health care provisions (including somatic care, mental health care and psycho-social support). As for citizens, resources and queues in the health care system depend on the service required. Adults receive all essential health care, while minors receive full health and dental care. Health care is publicly financed. If the asylum applicant receives an income, he/she may pay a customer fee (as nationals do) for an appointment at a public or private health care service provider.

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Access to healthcare	Access to healthcare services is the same level as for nationals. According to Section 26 of the Reception Act , applicants for international protection and a victim of human trafficking who does not have a municipality of residence in Finland as defined in the Municipality of Residence Act has the right to receive healthcare services under the Healthcare Act, Section 50 (1326/2010) Section 50, as well as the right to receive other health services deemed necessary by a healthcare professional. The same applies for children seeking international or temporary protection.

Education for minors

The Finnish law grants the children who live in reception centres the right to participate in basic education. All minors at the age 6-17 are obliged to attend kindergarten, primary and secondary school.

The municipality in which the reception centre is located organises basic education for all children who are of compulsory school age.

The municipality also organises pre-primary education for children who will reach the compulsory school age in the coming year.

Children up to 16 years old are entitled to preparatory classes organised to assist students whose Finnish or Swedish skills and/or other skills are insufficient for studying in a pre-primary or basic education group (a minimum of 900 hours of instruction is provided for 6–10-year-olds and a minimum of 1,000 hours for those over 10 years of age); a help of classroom assistants, school social workers and cultural interpreters.

When deemed necessary, educational staff working in group homes and supported housing units assist children, for instance by helping them with homework, by keeping in touch with the child’s teacher, by looking for summer courses suitable for minors or by arranging private tuition at a group home (also for young people over compulsory school age).

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Reception centre officials also search for various non-formal education activities especially for unaccompanied minors who have reached the age of 17.

Some educational programmes are also conducted by civil society organisations.

Socio-cultural orientation and language learning

Access to socio-cultural orientation	Reception centres organise the Finnish society course online via Learning Management System Moodle and with practical teaching materials handed to asylum seekers. The course gives asylum seekers basic information about Finnish society and its functions. Course topics include Finnish society, legislation, non-discrimination and gender equality, working in Finland and sexual health and sexuality.
Language classes	Free Finnish or Swedish language classes are provided in almost all centres Attending language course may be obligatory for applicants who are bound to do so by a personal work and study activity plan agreed between a social worker and an applicant (the plan may also include household activities in the reception centre, e.g. maintaining the yard or cleaning, childcare, etc.). Free classes are also provided by civil society organisations or state foundations (e.g. Finnish Red Cross) on an ad hoc basis.

Sufficient means

Arrangement of private accommodation

Applicants have the possibility to live in reception centres or out of the centres, in private accommodation. In the latter case, they however receive no money to

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cover their stay in the private accommodation in Finland. However, applicants residing in private accommodation are requested to be registered at a reception center in order to have access to other reception services such as health care and a reception allowance.

Section 18 of the Reception Act provides that an applicant who is willing to arrange their own accommodation must provide their address in writing and submit a rental agreement or other proof of the private accommodation. For unaccompanied minors, the director of the reception center decides on his/her transfer to a private accommodation upon consultation with the child, the social worker of the reception center and the child legal representative.

Approximately 30 % of asylum seekers live in private accommodation and therefore can choose where in Finland they want to live. In this case, they are registered in the reception centre which is closest to them and receive the reception services there.

Contribution to reception and healthcare costs

Persons having sufficient means may be charged for some social and healthcare services.

Section 32 of the Reception Act provides that the director of the reception center may determine the payment of a reasonable fee for reception services, not exceeding the actual cost and provided that it does not endanger or affects the minimum level of subsistence of the applicant.

Sufficient means test

The applicant’s own financial resources are considered before granting the daily allowance. Depending on the amount, an applicant may not be entitled to financial allowance for some months (i.e. if an applicant has EUR 10,000 upon arrival) or the full amount may not be received (i.e. if an applicant has a salary of EUR 200/month).

Sanction regimes, reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions

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Circumstances for reducing or withdrawing material reception conditions

The circumstances for reducing or withdrawing material reception conditions can be:

- Withdrawn/reduction if the applicant abandons the place of residence determined by the competent authority without informing it or, if requested, without permission (foreseen by legislation and applied in practice). An applicant may be imposed an obligation to register at a specific reception center, Section 118 of the Aliens Act or to reside in a certain reception center, according to Section 120 of the Aliens Act.
- Withdrawn, if an applicant does not comply with reporting duties or with requests to provide information (foreseen by legislation and applied in practice). This occurs in particular, in cases where an applicant has relocated from a reception centre without providing an account of private accommodation when requested to do so or if the applicant lives in private accommodation in a flat for which the required, up-to-date information is not provided.

Possible sanctions and procedure

Reduction or withdrawal of reception conditions comes through a formal decision made by the reception authority, in particular the manager of the reception centre, in which the applicant concerned is accommodated.

The financial allowance may be reduced (by up to 20%) for a maximum of 2 months if an applicant accommodated in the reception centre repeatedly refuses to participate in work and study activities - Section 29 of the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings. See also Finnish Immigration Service page, work and study activities.

In Finland, it is not possible to exclude an applicant from the reception system as a consequence of a violation of house rules. However, he/she may be transferred from the reception centre to another one for security reasons. An applicant may be transferred to another reception centre for disturbing the personnel or other residents in such a severe way that the problem cannot be solved in the reception centre. In situations involving violence and threats, the police may be

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called, and the applicant may be taken into police custody and/or jail. After release, the applicant may be transferred to another reception centre – even against his/her own will. However, the transfer would not have any effect on the services provided or their standard. A disciplinary transfer has to be agreed upon between the sending and receiving reception centre in advance. Unaccompanied minors causing disturbance may be temporarily placed in a private child welfare facility.

Review of the sanction decision

Upon an applicant's request, the deciding authority may review the decision. The authority may also decide ex officio to review the decision and reinstall all or some of the material reception conditions.

An appeal is possible against the administrative decision pursuant to Section 55 of the Act on the Reception of Persons Applying for International Protection and on the Identification of and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings.

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