Reception - Norway

Reception system

Overview

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Relevant EU legislation

Norway is not bound by the recast Reception Conditions Directive. A similar national legal framework applies: the Immigration Act I Lov om utlendingers adgang til riket og deres opphold her (utlendingsloven) and the Immigration Regulation | Regulations on Foreigners' Access to the Kingdom and their Stay Here (the Immigration Regulations) | Forskrift om utlendingers adgang til riket og deres opphold her (utlendingsforskriften), as well as instructions and guidelines issued by the Directorate of Immigration (UDI).

National legislation

15/05/2008: the Immigration Act I Lov om utlendingers adgang til riket og deres opphold her (utlendingsloven) and the Immigration Regulation | Regulations on Foreigners' Access to the Kingdom and their Stay Here (the Immigration Regulations) | Forskrift om utlendingers adgang til riket og deres opphold her (utlendingsforskriften), as well as instructions and guidelines issued by the Directorate of Immigration (UDI).

Competent authority and stakeholders

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Authority responsible	The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration | Utlendingsdirektoratet (UDI) under the authority of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security is in charge of the reception at national level The UDI carries overall, both executive and financial responsibility for the reception facilities. There are, however, no formal coordination mechanisms for the reception facilities in place. The municipalities hosting reception centres are responsible for providing services (i.e., healthcare, child protection, education and kindergarten) to all applicants residing in the centres. The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs | Barne-, ungdoms- og familiedirektoratet (BUFDIR) is responsible for providing reception to unaccompanied minors under the age of 16.

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Other actors involved	The UDI has entered into contracts with operational operators, which are commercial/private NGOs and municipalities in charge of the day-to-day operation of the centre (UDI: The distribution of roles between UDI and the operating operator). The operation is based on a contract with UDI awarded to them based on a public tender. Their role is day-to-day operation of the centre (security, information provision, catering (in arrival and transit centres), administration of the building, cleaning, employer responsibility, including hiring of the staff, manager, social workers, etc. The host municipalities are responsible for providing health, childcare services, and education. On an ad hoc and voluntary basis, NGOs can provide and carry out additional activities, recreational and sport activities, Norwegian language courses, etc. The admission of volunteers into the centres and the accessibility to residents, especially children, is strictly regulated. (UDI: You can now apply for grants for activity offers for children in asylum reception).

Organisational aspects

Reception in Norway is managed at the central level by the UDI, but the daily management of reception centres is subcontracted to operational operators, which are commercial/private operators (UDI: The distribution of roles between UDI and the operating operator).

Allocation of applicants to geographical areas within the territory

Information is currently not available.

Staff and training

Information is currently not available.

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Reception phases

The National Arrival Centre is the primary location for people to register an application for protection. Applicants stay at the centre until they have completed all the steps involved in applying for protection, which normally takes up to 21 days. The applicant will then be transferred to an ordinary reception facility, where the applicant will remain while the application is being processed (UDI: Asylum reception centres: the various types of facilities in Norway). In general, there is no time limit within which rejected applicants (holding a final negative decision) have to leave the reception centre.

Contingency planning

In the case of a high number of arrivals, when regular accommodation capacity is saturated and sufficient capacity cannot be provided quickly, temporary lodging is offered to applicants. Emergency accommodations offer modest, temporary facilities to meet residents' basic needs and ensure their safety and security. In addition, the police may offer temporary lodging for people waiting to register an application for protection (UDI: Asylum reception centres: the various types of facilities in Norway).

Facilities

Overview of the types of reception facilities according to national classification

There are various types of reception facilities in Norway.

The National Arrival Centre: is the primary location for people to register an application for protection. Applicants live at the centre until they have completed all the steps involved in applying for protection.

Transit centres: offer temporary accommodation to applicants while they wait to move on to an ordinary reception centre, private housing or leave Norway.

Regular reception centres: accommodate applicants following their interview with the UDI, and applicants stay in these centres while their application is being processed.

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Special accommodation, care facilities and reinforced centres: accommodate applicants with behavioural challenges or applicants who need extra care and assistance with their physical or mental health.

Premises at the border

Name of the reception facility	• National Arrival Center, • Ørnen Transit Reception Center, • Kasper Transit Reception Center, • Kirkenes Transit Reception Center (department in a regular reception centre), • Hurdal Temporary Transit Reception Center. • Mysebu Transit Reception Center for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers between the ages of 15 and 18
Access description	N/a
Management	Commercial/private operators are responsible for daily management.
Type of applicants accommodated	The National Arrival Centre is the primary location for all applicants to lodge an application, except for unaccompanied minors.
Number of centres	National Arrival Centre: 1, Transit centres: 5 (1 for unaccompanied minors) (UDI: Asylum reception Østfold).
Capacity	• National Arrival Centre : 850 • Ørmen Transit Centre: 220 • Kasper Transit Centre: 174 • Hurdal Transit Centre: 200 • Kirkenes Transit Centre: 15 • Mysebu Transit Centre for unaccompanied minors: 60

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Location of the centres within the country	• The National Arrival Centre is in Råde. • Ørmen Transit Centre is in Fredrikstad. • Kasper Transit Centre is in Våler (Østfold) • Kirkenes Transit Centre is in Sør-Varanger. • Hurdal Transit Centre is in Hurdal. • Mysebu State Transit Reception Centre is in Indre Østfold

Initial reception centres

Name of the reception facility	• National Arrival Centre | Nasjonalt ankomstsenter • Ørmen Reception Centre | Ørmen transittmottak • Kasper Transit Reception Centre | Kasper transittmottak • Kirkenes Transit Reception Department (department in a regular reception centre | Kirkenes mottakssenter • Hurdal Temporary Transit Centre | Hurdal Midlertidig Transittsenter • Mysebu State Transit Reception Centre (for unaccompanied minors) | Mysebu transittmottak for enslige mindreårige (UDI: Asylum reception Østfold)
Regime	Open
Management	Commercial/private operators are responsible for daily management.
Type of applicants accommodated	The National Arrival Centre is the primary location for all applicants to lodge an application. Transit Centres accommodate all applicants, including unaccompanied minors between the ages of 15-18, while they wait to move on to an ordinary reception centre, private housing or leave Norway (UDI: Asylum reception centres: the various types of facilities in Norway).

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Number of centres	National Arrival Centre: 1 Transit centres: 5 (1 for unaccompanied minors) (UDI: Asylum reception Østfold).
Capacity	Information is currently not available,
Location of the centres within the country	• The National Arrival Centre is in Råde. • The Ørmen Reception Centre is in Fredrikstad. • The Kasper Transit Reception Centre is in Våler (Østfold) • Kirkenes Transit Reception Centre is in Sør-Varanger. • Hurdal Temporary Transit Centre is in Hurdal. • Mysebu State Transit Reception Centre is in Indre (Østfold). (UDI: Asylum reception Østfold).

Collective accommodation centres

Name of the reception facility	Regular reception centres, special accommodation, care facilities and reinforced centres.
Regime	Open
Management	Regular reception centres, special accommodation, care facilities and reinforced centres are managed by commercial/private operators, municipalities or NGOs (humanitarian organisations). (UDI: Asylum reception centre addresses).

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Type of applicants accommodated	Regular reception centres accommodate all applicants who are awaiting a final decision after the personal interview with the UDI. Unaccompanied minors between the ages of 15-18 are accommodated in separate centres or units adapted to their individual needs in regular reception centres. Special accommodation units accommodate applicants with behavioural challenges who may pose a threat to their surroundings. Care facilities / reinforced (adapted) centres accommodate applicants who need extra care or assistance in connection with their physical or mental health and who need help to cope with everyday life. (UDI: Asylum reception centres: the various types of facilities in Norway).
Number of centres	• Regular reception centres: 56 • Regular reception centres (for unaccompanied minors): 18 • Special accommodation units: 2 • Care facilities: 4 • Reinforced (adapted) centres: 8
Capacity	• Regular reception centres: 9381 • Regular reception centres (for unaccompanied minors): 351 • Special accommodation units: 24 • Care facilities: 53 • Reinforced (adapted) centres: 160
Location of the centres within the country	Regular reception centres are in all regions in Norway. (UDI: Asylum reception centre addresses)

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

Name of the reception facility	Alternative accommodation to reception centres (UDI: Alternative accommodation to reception centres).
Regime	Open

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Management	Municipalities manage alternative accommodation to reception centres (UDI: Alternative accommodation to reception centres).
Type of applicants accommodated	• Applicants who have close family (spouse, cohabitant, child or parent) living in a municipality and would like to live together with them. • Unaccompanied minors who would like to live with someone who can take care of them (even if that person is not a close family member). • Applicants who have needs for personalised care or follow-up that cannot be met in an ordinary reception centre. • Applicants who have been subjected to human trafficking. (UDI: Alternative accommodation to reception centres).
Number of centres	Variable depending on the municipality (UDI: Alternative accommodation to reception centres).
Capacity	Variable depending on the municipality (UDI: Alternative accommodation to reception centres).
Location of the centres within the country	Spread across different municipalities throughout Norway (UDI: Asylum reception centre addresses).

Temporary solutions when housing capacities normally available are temporarily exhausted

Name of the reception facility	The National Arrival Centre has an emergency response function and can be scaled up in the event of a mass influx (UDI: Asylum reception centres: the various types of facilities in Norway).
Regime	Open
Management	Link is responsible for the National Arrivals Centre (UDI: Asylum reception Østfold).

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Type of applicants accommodated	All applicants.
Number of centres	1
Capacity	Information is currently not available
Location of the centres within the country	Råde

Reception facilities for applicants with special needs

The General Standards for Operation of Asylum Reception outlines the requirements for vulnerable applicants inside reception centres and identifies the profile of applicants who are thought to be vulnerable.

Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers between the ages of 15-18 receive an offer of accommodation in separate centres or units adapted to their needs.

Unaccompanied minors under the age of 15 are sent to separate care centres, under the responsibility of the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufetat).

For applicants with special needs, the UDI has reception centres in connection with ordinary reception centres, where accommodation is tailored to the applicant's needs, such as for individuals need help to manage their daily life due to physical or mental health issues. These customised care units are staffed 24 hours with stricter competence requirements compared to ordinary reception centres (UDI: Asylum reception centres: the various types of facilities in Norway).

Material reception conditions provided in kind and cash

Definition of material reception conditions

Section 95 of the Immigration Act regulates the right to free accommodation in a reception centre for a foreign national while an application for protection is being considered, and the possibility of accommodation for a foreign national whose application for protection has been rejected and is pending an exit from the

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country. Material reception conditions are determined by instructions and guidelines issued by the UDI (EUAA: Roadmap Dublin transfer fact sheet – Norway).

Material reception conditions provided in kind

Type and purpose	Accommodation, food, clothing, transport, and welcome packages.
Duration and recurrence	Food is provided during the stay in the arrival centre. Clothing is provided at the initial stage of the procedure (UDI: The organisation of reception facilities for asylum seekers in Norway). Transport is only provided in specific cases of necessary travel costs. Accommodation is provided for the duration of the asylum procedure

Financial allowances and vouchers

Type and purpose	A daily expense allowance, 'basic amount', is given to applicants accommodated in the reception centre (UDI 2024-002V1 Rates for financial benefits for residents in reception in 2024).
Duration and recurrence	A daily expense allowance is paid to applicants on the 1st and 16th of every month for the entire duration of the asylum procedure (UDI 2024-002V1 Rates for financial benefits for residents in reception in 2024).
Calculation and amount	The daily expense allowance depends on whether the applicant has an application that is being processed, the status of the application, the type of reception centre where the applicant is living, the applicant's age and possible family composition (UDI 2024-002V1 Rates for financial benefits for residents in reception in 2024).

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Applicants granted allowance	All applicants who are registered as a resident of an asylum reception centre according to Section 95 of the Immigration Act and who spend their daily time in the reception centre are entitled to benefits (Regulations on benefits for residents of asylum reception centres Section 2(3a)).
Modalities of provision	The payment may be done in cash or card (UDI 2024-002 Allowance for residents in asylum reception centres).

Material reception conditions for vulnerable persons

Structured and targeted measures are put into place once it has been identified that an applicant has special needs. A discussion takes place with the applicant about their physical and mental health. The reception centre must follow up with people in vulnerable groups and with special needs according to the procedures of the Directorate of Immigration, which has written procedures in place for victims of child marriage, forced marriage, human trafficking as well as sexual abuse, harassment and gender-based violence (EUAA: Information on procedural elements and rights of applicants subject to a Dublin transfer to Norway).

The accommodation is adapted to safeguard residents with special needs, for example individuals are given help to manage their daily life (UDI: Asylum reception centres: the various types of facilities in Norway). Leisure activities for persons with special needs should be tailored to their interests. Applicants with special needs have the right to receive information on matters of particular importance to them, such as legal rights and support mechanisms, in cooperation with other authorities such as the health sector and NGOs (EUAA: Information on procedural elements and rights of applicants subject to a Dublin transfer to Norway).

The reception centre must also ensure structured cooperation with health services, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration and other relevant actors so that the rights of persons in vulnerable groups and with special needs are ensured (EUAA: Information on procedural elements and rights of applicants subject to a Dublin transfer to Norway).

Rights and obligations during reception

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Provision of information and counselling

Modalities of information provision on benefits and obligations related to reception conditions	The police provide the applicant with information on how to access accommodation and other material reception conditions during the registration of the application. This information is also provided when an applicant receives general information on the asylum procedure (EUAA: Information on procedural elements and rights of applicants subject to a Dublin transfer to Norway). Caritas Norway is contracted by the UDI to provide information and guidance services to newly-arrived applicants at the National Arrivals Centre in Råde. Caritas provides information on the asylum process and the rights and obligations of an asylum seeker, including about reception conditions UNHCR Norway: What happens when you apply for asylum). Information on the reception system is also published on the website of the UDI, available in English and Norwegian.
Provision of legal assistance concerning the available reception conditions	Legal assistance and representation in complaints/appeals involving reception conditions is available to asylum seekers at the applicant's expense at first instance. There are no legal remedies to make use of for an applicant who wishes to complain about material reception conditions. The applicants can, however, contact the associated regional UDI office (EUAA: Information on procedural elements and rights of applicants subject to a Dublin transfer to Norway).

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House rules	House rules are established at the national level. They cover practical aspects of life at a reception centre (use of the rooms and equipment, supplies, security safety, hygiene and overnight visits) (House rules for the asylum reception centre). Applicants must sign them during the first days of arrival to the reception centre.

Freedom of movement within the territory

Assignment of a particular area of residence to applicants	As a general rule, applicants can move freely within the territory. However, applicants are assigned to a specific reception facility where they are entitled to material reception conditions. The UDI decides in which centre an applicant will be accommodated, taking into consideration immediate family, any serious illness, nationality and language. Applicants can also apply to be allocated in a centre of their choice, but the UDI requires them to have strong reasons for moving, for example they have immediate family in or near the reception centre, they need specific medical treatment, have received a job offer, schooling requires them to move, or are nationally and linguistically isolated at the reception centre they want to move from (UDI: Living at or moving from a reception centre).
Reporting obligations	As a general rule, all applicants are able to leave and enter the reception centre freely. Applicants can also apply to leave a centre for more than 3 days without losing their place and allowance (UDI: leave of absence from a reception centre).

Employment and vocational training

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

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Criteria for accessing the labour market	The applicant must first be granted a temporary work permit issued by the UDI. The procedure for issuing a work permit can be found here (UDI: Can I work when I have applied for protection (asylum)?).
Employment support for applicants	The 'New in Norway' website of the Directorate of Immigration and Integration (IMDi) provides information on how applicants can look for a job, where they can get guidance to find a job, and what rights and obligations applicants have as an employee (IMDi: New in Norway: Work) If an applicant does not succeed in finding a job on their own, they can contact the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) which can provide information, guidance and various measures to help increase applicants' opportunities in the labour market (IMDi: New in Norway: Work) Caritas Norway also helps refugees integrate into employment and the society by teaching social and labour market skills, as well as providing general advice and guidance (Caritas Norway: About Caritas Norway).
Adults' access to vocational training	There is no access to vocational training provided under the law.
Access to tertiary education	Applicants can access tertiary education under the same conditions as nationals and may receive additional assistance for the purchase of books and learning materials (IMDi: Family and children). Rates for educational support at university or college follow rates for allowances for teaching aids from the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV).

Healthcare

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Medical Screening	Applicants must undergo a medical screening upon arrival. The medical screening consists of the identification of transmissible diseases, such as tuberculosis (IMDi: New in Norway: Healthcare upon arrival).
Level of health care	Applicants are entitled to the same healthcare as other residents of Norway, including doctor's appointments, hospital treatment and some types of medicine (UDI: Have applied: Healthcare).
Access to health care	The right to healthcare applies from the day the applicant arrives in Norway and applies for international protection (UDI: Have applied: Healthcare). To have access to healthcare services, the applicant must be registered as an asylum seeker. The applicant will receive an ID called a D-number which can be used to access health services (IMDi: New in Norway: Healthcare)

Education of minors

Children between 6 and 15 years old have the right and obligation to attend school. The classes are organised within the state education system and within the mainstream school infrastructure. The reception centre can help the applicant to apply. The availability of preparatory classes depends on the municipality (UDI: Have applied: Schools and kindergartens). The right to attend school applies as long as it is likely that the child will stay in Norway for more than 3 months (UDI: Schooling for children who are asylum seekers).

Socio-cultural orientation and language learning

Access to socio-cultural orientation	Applicants who live in a reception centre and who are over the age of 18 have an obligation to participate in 50 hours of training in the Norwegian culture and values. The municipality must provide the training as soon as possible after the applicant has been registered and accommodated in a reception centre (Section 5 of the Integration Act).

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Language classes	Applicants over the age of 18 who live in a reception centre have a statutory right and obligation to participate in Norwegian language lessons. The language programme consists of 175 hours of training and begins shortly after the applicant arrives in Norway (UDI: Training in the Norwegian language and social studies).

Sufficient means

Arrangement of private accommodation

Applicants with sufficient means can apply to live outside of the reception centre. When moving out of the reception centre, the applicant loses the right to financial assistance from the Norwegian authorities.

If the applicant is moving to a private address after registering at the National Arrivals Centre, the applicant must inform the staff of the National Arrival Centre of their new address. The applicant must also notify the police in the municipality to which they are moving. If the applicant is moving to a private address after living in a reception centre or emergency accommodation, they must report the new address to the local police, the UDI and the reception centre (UDI: Living at or moving from a reception centre).

Applicants reside in ordinary reception facilities all across Norway (UDI: Asylum reception centres: the various types of facilities in Norway).

Contribution to reception and healthcare costs

The UDI offers accommodation to everyone who applies for international protection (UDI: Living at or moving from a reception centre). Applicants found to have sufficient means to live on their own are still provided with accommodation, but their daily allowance may be reduced or withdrawn if they have assets (cash, valuables, etc.) that exceed a certain amount and may be required to contribute to the costs of accommodation (Section 1 and Section 4 of the Regulations on benefits for residents in asylum reception centres). Applicants who have a certain amount of income from employment may also be required to contribute to the costs of accommodation (Section 10 of Regulations on benefits for residents in asylum reception centre).

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Sufficient means test

To assess an applicant's financial resources, the law provides for a sufficient means test which is applied to all applicants. The applicant must submit a self-declaration of income and assets on arrival at a transit reception centre (UDI: forms for residents and user guides for reception staff). The applicant must report to the UDI any changes that may have an impact on the payment of benefits. The UDI can at any time check the information on the applicant's income and assets and ask the applicant to prove account statements, tax certificates or other documentation. An applicant who does not submit a self-declaration form or the requested documents may be refused financial benefits (Section 5 of the Regulations on benefits for residents in asylum reception centres).

Sanction regimes and reduction or withdrawal of material reception conditions

Circumstances for reducing or withdrawing material reception conditions

Applicants who are absent from the place of residence without permission and applicants who break the house rules can have their benefits reduced. If an applicant causes damage to the reception centre, the UDI can reduce benefits until the costs of the damage have been paid (Section 12 of the Regulations on benefits for residents in asylum reception centres).

The daily allowance may be reduced or withdrawn if applicants have assets (cash, valuables, etc.) that exceed a specified amount or have a certain amount of income due to employment (Section 1 and Section 4 of the Regulations on benefits for residents in asylum reception centres).

Possible sanctions and procedure

Norway does not have a defined sanction regime or sanction procedure. The Ministry of Justice and Emergency Preparedness has delegated to the UDI to administer the benefit scheme and make decisions in accordance with regulations on benefits for residents in reception centres. Decisions according to

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the regulations are made by the UDI regional office (Section 13 of the Regulations on benefits for residents in asylum reception centres).

The right to accommodation in reception centres can be withdrawn and the level of financial support can be reduced as possible sanction regimes in reception centres Section 1 and Section 4 of the Regulations on benefits for residents in asylum reception centres).

The reduction of financial support is not part of a sanction regime, but a consequence of either the asylum seeker's financial position or the status on their asylum application. The UDI does not impose sanctions by reducing financial support.

Review of the sanction decision

The sanction can be appealed to the director of the Directorate of Immigration, who can delegate the UDI to review the sanction decision (Section 13 of the Regulations on benefits for residents in asylum reception centres).

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