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9.1 Location

Introductory remarks

The standards and indicators included in this subchapter refer to the location of the premises in relation to the environment. The location of the housing has a strong influence on other aspects of the reception system, including the accessibility of relevant services (e.g. education services, health services, legal aid, or services related to the different instances of the asylum procedure), and has even more influence on the integration opportunities and prospects. Therefore, the standards and indicators included in this subchapter are closely linked to those of the following subchapters. This means that the choice of where to set up the housing should be made with full consideration given to other aspects of reception conditions addressed in the different chapters of this document.

At the same time, the definition of some of the indicators used within this subchapter (e.g. based on evaluation on the level of maturity: what constitutes a ‘reasonable walking distance’, an ‘adequate duration of a journey’ or ‘regularity of organised transportation’) would depend on the type of service to be accessed and the frequency of the need to access this service. For example, where unaccompanied children need to access school, access needs to be possible on a daily basis and the duration should be short. At the same time, the duration of travel to facilitate the participation of the applicant for international protection in the personal interview could be longer, in particular if transportation is provided by the responsible authority.

It is generally understood that housing facilities should be located in areas that are designated for residential use.

STANDARD 43: Ensure effective geographic access to relevant services, such as public services, school, healthcare, social and legal assistance, a shop for daily needs, laundry, and leisure activities.

Indicator 43.1: Specific arrangements are in place for unaccompanied children with special needs.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *For example, unaccompanied children with substantially reduced mobility should not be expected to access relevant services by walking. The unaccompanied children’s age and maturity should also be taken into consideration. Alternative arrangements should be made in such cases.*

Alternative indicators on ensuring geographic accessibility:

Indicator 43.1 a): The relevant services are provided within the housing; **OR**

Indicator 43.1 b): The facility is located at a reasonable walking distance from relevant services and the available infrastructure is safe for walking; **OR**

- ***Additional remarks:*** *This indicator should be developed in relation to a maximum specific distance, taking into account the national context and the environment, such as whether there is a footpath available, whether the area is very hilly, etc. For example, maximum 3 km to public services in general and 2 km to healthcare facilities and school.*

Indicator 43.1 c): Relevant services are accessible by public transport and the duration of the journey is reasonable;

- ***Additional remarks:*** *The assessment of whether the duration of the journey is reasonable would be made in relation to the type of service to be accessed and the regularity in which this service needs to be accessed by unaccompanied children (e.g. the time needed for unaccompanied children to go to school via the public transport, the time needed to travel to the personal interview). Additionally, the regularity of the public transport itself should be taken into account, allowing unaccompanied children to effectively avail themselves of the service by taking a safe return journey. Accessibility by public transport should be understood as transport costs being reimbursed or transport being free of charge when needed as a minimum for the following: healthcare and obtaining medication, the asylum procedure and legal assistance and education for unaccompanied children enrolled in school and in vocational training.*

OR

Indicator 43.1 d): Relevant services are accessible through organised transport provided by the EU+ States.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *The provision of transport should be clarified by specifying the regularity of transport provided by the EU+ States.*

Good practice on defining the location of housing
It is considered good practice to:

✓ define the location of housing with the purpose of accommodating unaccompanied children in the longer term with a view to enable interaction between them and the local population, in order to avoid isolation and facilitate integration in the longer term;
✓ limit the duration of the journey (one way) by public transport to a maximum of 45 minutes for school or vocational training;
✓ involve the local resident populations in the definition of the location of a housing facility.