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2.2 Safety risks

STANDARD 10: Ensure that staff working with unaccompanied children in a reception facility identify early safety risks and risks to children's welfare. Indicator 10.1: A standard risk assessment to identify the safety risks around unaccompanied children is in place.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *This instrument could serve as a checklist or interview guideline that helps staff to assess, based on available information, whether unaccompanied children run the safety risk of harm in the sense of abuse, neglect, exploitation or violence now or in the future, in- or outside the reception facility.*

Indicator 10.2: Safety risks of unaccompanied children are assessed in the first week upon arrival and this is repeated regularly at least every six months.

- **Additional remarks:** *It is recommended that the risk assessment take place during or as soon as possible after the intake in the reception facility but no later than a week upon arrival*

Indicator 10.3: Safety risks are systematically assessed.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *The situation of unaccompanied children can change under the influence of their environment (in or around the reception facility). Therefore, the identification or reassessment of risks is an ongoing process and will thus preferably take place every three to six months, or whenever triggered by a change in circumstances or an event*

Indicator 10.4: The outcome of the risk assessment is discussed in a multidisciplinary context.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *The representative or other specialised actors shall be involved in the risk assessment or its outcome.*

STANDARD 11: Safety risks are reduced to an absolute minimum.

Indicator 11.1: The necessary care and appropriate reception facility based on the risk assessment is provided within a week after arrival.

- ***Additional remarks****: A safe place to grow up is a basic need for all unaccompanied children*.

Indicator 11.2: Immediate action in acutely unsafe situations is taken by the reception authorities in order to eliminate the unsafe situation.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *When confronted with high security risks, such as signals of human trafficking and potential runaway behaviour to an unknown destination, it is important that professionals are able to recognise and know how they must act. If an unsafe situation occurs (threats from the trafficking network, threat of honour killings, bullying by roommates, etc.) it is important that professionals take action to establish a safe and stable situation as fast as possible.*

Good practice with regards to reducing risks and the risk of absconding
It is considered good practice to:

✓ Temporarily confiscate mobile phones on arrival, in respect of the principle of the best interests of the child, where indicators of potential human trafficking are detected, in order to reduce the risk of contact with a potential trafficking network. In that case, ensure that phone calls can still be made under supervision and children should especially be offered the possibility of contacting family in the country of origin or another country to tell them they are safe.

✓ Organise safe houses/specific facilities to protect unaccompanied children at risk of human trafficking, forced marriage, etc. This may entail protective measures like the movement of the unaccompanied child to a rural location, supervised shelter and intensive guidance.

Indicator 11.3: Reception facilities have an alert instrument and ensure the systematic reporting and immediate response of missing unaccompanied children.

- ***Additional remarks:*** *As soon as it is noted that an unaccompanied child is missing, a missing person's report must be filed with the police and the youth welfare office should be informed. A child will be understood to be missing if they have left the facility without first informing the reception personnel and the child's whereabouts are unknown. The first step to take is to look for the unaccompanied child; the duration and intensity of the search depends on the age of the unaccompanied child, previous behaviour and observations, and on the context. For a child under 14 years old it is generally not acceptable to wait overnight. Information on the person has to be given to the police as accurately as possible regarding clothing/mobile phone number, etc. As soon as the unaccompanied child reappears, the police and youth welfare office are to be informed. Any information given by the police or the youth welfare office are to be considered.*

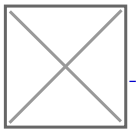
Good practice on alert instruments
It is considered good practice to:

✓ use a national alert system in order to find missing children, after consulting the police and representative to measure the impact of such a publication.

STANDARD 12: Ensure knowledge is provided to unaccompanied children on the subject of radicalisation and that staff share signals related to the (potential) radicalisation of unaccompanied children with responsible authorities.

Indicator 12.1: The subject of radicalisation is discussed with unaccompanied children where necessary by staff working with unaccompanied children.

Indicator 12.2: Reception facilities have an alert instrument in order to report signals of radicalisation to the responsible persons and authorities.

Good practice on the subject of radicalisation
It is considered good practice to:

✓ make a report form available to social workers which they can fill out in cases of radicalisation and transmit to the competent public authorities;
✓ foster coordination and the exchange of data and information with other competent public authorities by developing or enhancing collaboration within common workgroups.
✓ There should also be the possibility to hire a specialist on radicalisation or to have staff with specific knowledge to speak with the children.