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Reception facilities for unaccompanied children

To ensure equal treatment of applicants for international protection throughout the EU, the RCD should apply during all stages and types of procedures concerning applications for international protection, and should apply in all locations and facilities hosting applicants for international protection (14). Therefore, the scope of the guidance includes all locations and facilities hosting unaccompanied children.

Foster care (15) is an adequate and often preferable and cost-effective setting for accommodating unaccompanied children.It must be noted, however, that standards regarding the management of foster care are not within the scope of this guidance. This is due to the fact that the personal and structural setting of foster families differs from the aforementioned locations and facilities hosting unaccompanied children.

Most EU+ States accommodate unaccompanied children in separate reception facilities specifically for unaccompanied children, designated areas for unaccompanied children within mainstream reception facilities, mainstream care facilities or foster families. This guidance prescribes standards and indicators for unaccompanied children in reception and in care facilities including: accommodation centres, small-scale reception structures, mainstream childcare centres and (shared) individual housing. This guidance is applicable as long as reception according to the RCD is concerned.

Locations and facilities hosting unaccompanied children			
Accommodation centres	**Small-scale reception structures**	**Mainstream childcare centres**	**(Shared) Individual housing**

Figure 7. Locations and facilities (scope).

Without prejudice to the existence of national systems regulating the equal distribution of applicants for international protection across the territories of MS, questions on allocation should be read and implemented fully in line with the above-mentioned principle of the best interests of the child and the principle of family unity, as well as respect for the special reception needs unaccompanied children might have. When unaccompanied children are provided with accommodation in institutions, such facilities shall be adapted to the specific needs of the

children, and be staffed with personnel qualified to take into account the needs of unaccompanied children. Detailed guidance on allocation is provided in Chapter VI.

As regards the provision of adequate reception conditions, the purpose of the guidance is not to prescribe a method for the provision of reception conditions. Unless stated otherwise, the standards and indicators in this document are applicable to the provision of reception conditions irrespective of whether these are provided in kind, as a financial allowance or in the form of vouchers. This approach follows Article 2(g) RCD, which lists different modalities for the provision of reception conditions.

(14) Recital 8 RCD.
(15) For reception and living in families see NIDOS, Reception and Living in Families (RLF), Final report, 2015, available at https://engi.eu/wp-content/plugins/download-attachments/includes/download.php?id=595; for Alternative Family Care (ALFACA) projects and tools see European Network of Guardianship Institutions (ENGI), Alternative Family Care (ALFACA), available at https://engi.eu/projects/alfaca

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