



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The UN Migration Agency

**METHODOLOGY
ON THE CONDITIONS AND ORGANIZATION OF SOCIAL SUPPORT IN
THE SAFETY ZONES
FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

Since 2016, more than 100,000 asylum-seeking children, of which 33,800 unaccompanied or separated asylum-seeking children have passed through Bulgaria, Turkey, Spain, and Italy on the way to Western and Northern Europe. According to different sources, at least a third of the migration flow is comprised of unaccompanied or separated asylum-seeking children, fleeing individually or with their families from wars, ethnic conflicts, poverty, false promises of a better life, and other factors which force them to leave their countries of origin.¹

As an external border of the European Union (EU), Bulgaria was actively affected by the migration processes in the region during the period 2014-2016, when the number of unaccompanied migrant children (UMC) in the country increased progressively: in 2014 there were 940 asylum-seeking children (UASC), in 2015 – 1815 UASC, and in 2016 – 2750 UASC. The statistics for 2017 and 2018 show a decreased number of registered UASC in Bulgaria: in 2017 there were 440, and in 2018 – 481 (9,32% increase compared to the previous year).²

Most of the migrants who have irregularly entered the territory of Bulgaria, including UASC are accommodated in the State Agency for Refugees' (SAR) Registration and Reception Centers (RRC) after submitting an application for international protection. UASC are accommodated in separate rooms from adults within the SAR territorial units during the procedure for international protection and until a decision enters into force or until reaching 18 years of age. Another option for the accommodation of UASC is the establishment of Safety zones within the RRC – separate, specifically adapted premises where the UASC reside until the end of their -procedure. Such Safety zones ensure that the UASC receive specialized services and care in a protected environment.

Following the example of IOM and other humanitarian organizations in Greece, where Safety zones for UASC were established and maintained, as well as good practices from other EU Member States, IOM Bulgaria proposes to pilot a Safety Zone (Zone) model, to provide a safe and pleasant living environment for UASC during their procedure for international protection or until they reach 18 years of age. In partnership with SAR, IOM renovated and furnished separate floors in RRC Sofia - Voenna Rampa and Ovcha Kupel in order to establish two Safety Zones.

The implementation of the project is divided in two stages:

- 1) Renovation works and reconstruction of the premises (3 floors, rooms, common areas and toilets/showers) envisaged for the establishment of the zones, followed by provision and installation of equipment and furniture.
- 2) Recruitment of social workers and signing a contract with a private security company, and organization of the work in the zone for an initial project period of up to one year.

1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE METHODOLOGY

The present Methodology describes the activities that will take place in the Safety Zones and the organization thereof. The Methodology makes it possible to assess the resources necessary, to organize the provision of care and support to the UASC, as well as to monitor the work carried out by the team in the zones.

¹ See for example: Factsheet. Refugee and Migrant Children Including Unaccompanied and separated Children – in the EU. Overview of trends in 2016. UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM

² According to SAR data, published at <http://www.aref.government.bg/index.php/bg/aktualna-informacia-i-spravki>

2. FORMULATION

The Safety Zones for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) are located on the premises of the State Agency for Refugees' (SAR) Registration and reception centers (RRC) in Sofia - Voenna Rampa and Ovcha Kupel. The objective of their establishment is to provide a safe living environment that ensures the possibility to follow and safeguard the best interests of the child through the provision of social support during the children's procedure for international protection.

2.1. TARGET GROUPS

The target groups of the Safety Zones and the present Methodology are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) seeking international protection in the Republic of Bulgaria, until a decision enters into force or until they reach 18 years of age.

According to the Law on Asylum and Refugees (LAR), an unaccompanied minor is foreign national, under the age of 18, who is on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, and is not accompanied by a parent or another adult, who is responsible for them by law or custom.³

3. MAIN PRINCIPLES AND APPROACHES

As regards working with children, IOM follows the international legal framework, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and, at the local level, the Law on Child Protection in the Republic of Bulgaria. Applying the principles enshrined in the Convention, the Law on Child Protection and its mandate, IOM implements a wide range of projects and initiatives that directly or indirectly address the needs and interests of children, by adhering to Art. 3 (1) of the Convention, namely that "In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration"⁴.

Principles and approaches to be followed and respected while working in the Safety Zones:

- Non-discrimination
- Rights of the child
- Confidentiality
- Best interests of the child
- Participation in the decision-making process on matters affecting the child
- "Do no harm"
- Individual approach to casework interventions
- Tolerance towards/for and consideration of the characteristics of each child in terms of gender, age, ethnic origin, religious, cultural and linguistic characteristics
- Respect for the personality of each child, respect for his or her dignity and ensuring his or her participation in resolving all issues relating to the use of the services provided
- Teamwork and interinstitutional cooperation
- Partnership between the team and the beneficiaries, and a mutually agreed model of work

All IOM initiatives and actions with regard to children accommodated in the Safety Zones are in compliance with the legal provisions applied by the SAR on unaccompanied minor foreign nationals accommodated in

³ 1, item 4 of the Additional Provisions of the LAR

⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

RRCs (Safety Zones) under Article 25 of the LAR⁵, which stipulates the responsibilities of the legal representative of the UASC until they reach the age of majority/adulthood. In this sense, all decisions concerning children and their stay in the Safety Zones will be coordinated with the child, with SAR's social experts and the legal representative of the child in question.

The work standards applied by IOM's teams in the Safety Zones follow the principles developed by the Inter-agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (IAWG UASC)⁶, EASO's Guidance on reception conditions for unaccompanied children: operational standards and indicators⁷, as well as other established international standards and practices (e.g. the Keeping Children Safe standards)⁸, that will be adapted to the local context and implemented in the zones.

The work of IOM's teams in the Safety Zones is governed by IOM's Standards of Conduct, signed and annexed to the personal file of each staff member when commencing employment with the organization, regardless of the type and duration of their contract. This includes not only full-time staff, but also interns, consultants and persons with part-time contracts. The standards regulate the core values and principles of work at IOM, and also define the core requirements for IOM's staff members which include integrity, loyalty, independence and neutrality. In addition, the Standards of Conduct define and regulate the obligation of each IOM staff member to protect and safeguard the beneficiaries of services provided by the organization, from sexual exploitation and abuse.

All IOM staff members and sub-contractors commit themselves to comply with IOM's Policy and Procedures for Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA Policy). IOM enforces a zero-tolerance policy for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), emphasizing several key principles. These basic principles, part of IOM's Standards of Conduct, are in short:

- SEA acts constitute serious misconduct and are grounds for termination of employment.
- Sexual activity with children (persons under 18 years of age) is prohibited.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex with beneficiaries is prohibited.
- IOM's staff a duty to report any violations of the Standards of Conduct, incl. PSEA policy.
- IOM's staff especially those in managerial positions, are required to create and maintain an environment that prevents SEA.

Oversight of the work of IOM's staff, including those employed on the field in the Safety Zones, is exercised by the Head of Mission of IOM in Bulgaria. Alongside to the Head of Mission, beneficiaries or organization on the field may write to the IOM Ethics and Behavior Office, which receives and reviews allegations of corruption, harassment, abuse of power, discrimination, and conflict of interest by the organization's staff members.⁹

4. SAFETY ZONE WORK PROCEDURES

4.1. ACCOMMODATION

⁵ See: <https://lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2135453184>

⁶ See for example: Field handbook on unaccompanied and separated children. Inter-agency working group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/handbook-web-2017-0322.pdf>); Toolkit on unaccompanied and separated children. Inter-agency working group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children (<https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/TOOLS-WEB-2017-0322.pdf>);

⁷ See: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/news-events/new-easo-guidance-reception-conditions-unaccompanied-children>

⁸ See: Child Safeguarding standards and how to implement them. Keeping Children safe standards (https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/standards_child_protection_kcsc_en_1.pdf)

⁹ For more information and reporting alerts, see: <https://www.iom.int/ethics-and-conduct-office>

Accommodation in each Zone is done in accordance with the Rules and Regulations on the Reception Conditions and the Internal Order in the Centers of the State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers (SAR Rules and Regulations). A SAR staff member, appointed by the RRC's director/chief of department, and an IOM social worker on duty in the Safety Zone, accommodate the child after passing all relevant procedures under the SAR Rules and Regulations and obtaining the consent of the child's legal representative. In case of doubt concerning the child's age, an age assessment is made following the written consent of the child and/or the legal representative, as stipulated under Article 61, para. 3 of the LAR, namely "Where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the foreign national is not a minor, the interviewing authority shall appoint an age assessment expertise."

4.2. SAFETY ZONES ADMISSION PROCEDURE

1. After completing the procedures for accommodation in the RRC in accordance with SAR's Rules and Regulations, the child is handed over to an IOM social worker on duty for registration and accommodation in the Zone. All administrative procedures are carried out in the presence of an interpreter appointed to the Zone.
2. The social worker prepares, and the child and/or the legal representative sign(s) a Registration Form for accommodation in the Zone (Annex I).¹⁰
3. The social worker acquaints the child with the Zone's Rules (Annex II), provides information on the daily regime and access to services of other organizations in the RRC, presents the other residents, and informs the child of the Zone's Bonus Point System (Annex V).
4. The child and/or the legal representative sign the Zone's Rules in a language that the child understands.
5. The social worker opens a personal file for the minor, which includes the Registration form for admission and other documentation received from the SAR, the Child Protection Department and/or other responsible organizations.
6. The social worker enters the child's information into a database.
7. A SAR social expert and an IOM social worker prepare a rapid assessment of the best interests of the child¹¹ within 24 hours of accommodation in the Zone.
8. A SAR social expert and an IOM social worker prepare a full assessment¹² when there is an established medium/high risk for the child, up to fourteen (14) days after his/her accommodation in the Zone.
9. IOM's social worker develops an Individual Care Plan (Annex IV) based on initial assessments and additional conversations with the child up to seven (7) days from the child's accommodation in the Zone, as well as after contacting the child's family, where this is possible.

The accommodation of the children in the zones takes place in accordance with their ethnicity, country of origin, age, gender, state of health, etc.¹³

When determining the place of accommodation of a UASC, the best interests of the child are taken into account. As far as possible, siblings are to be accommodated together.¹⁴

Every night, at curfew, attendance verification of the accommodated children is carried out by the IOM social worker on duty. Every absence is recorded in the Attendance list of the Safety Zone (Annex VI), and in case of unauthorized absence, the Director of SAR's RRC informs the law enforcement authorities accordingly.

4.3. SAFETY ZONE RULES, SANCTIONS AND APPEALS

¹⁰ Proposed protocols are exemplary and subject to adaptation and revision in the work process and in coordination with field partners.

¹¹ According to an established template by SAR

¹² *ibid*

¹³ Art. 10, para. 2 of the SAR Rules and Regulations

¹⁴ Art. 10, para. 5 of the SAR Rules and Regulations

The Safety Zone Rules (Annex II: Rules for Use of the Safety Zones) apply to the accommodated children and the staff in the Zone.

In the event of non-compliance with the Zone's Rules by the accommodated UASC, and/or insulting the staff and/or other children in the Zone, sanctions will be imposed. The extent and type of sanctions depend on the circumstances in which the Rules were violated. In case of a violation of the Rules, the Zone Coordinator ensures a fair and objective hearing of the parties concerned and assesses whether a sanction is necessary or not. The Zone Coordinator prepares a protocol, informing the child of the sanction imposed. The protocol is to be signed by the child and/or his or her legal representative, in the presence of an interpreter.

The sanctions are not to undermine the authority and self-esteem of the accommodated UASC, they are not to violate their rights and are not to relate to any physical methods. The Zone's Rules and sanctions policy will be placed in a public and accessible location for all, in the languages spoken by the UASC.

Every UASC accommodated in the Zone will be able to participate voluntarily in the Bonus Point System, developed by the IOM team (see Annex V Bonus Point System), which aims to stimulate the interest and motivation of UASC to follow the Safety Zone Rules and their inclusion in a variety of educational and recreational activities.

The types of internal sanctions that may be imposed in the Zone (described in Annex II: Rules for Use of the Safety Zones) include:

1. A formal warning recorded in the UASC's personal file;
2. Restricted access to some activities organized by the Zone's team during leisure time, which are not related to basic needs and do not restrict the rights of the child;
3. Care for hygiene maintenance in the common areas of the Zone;
4. Point deduction for those participating in the bonus system.

The UASC has the right to object, in writing (or verbally) to the Zone Coordinator and, if necessary, to the RRC's Director, to the sanction imposed, within five (5) days after its execution. The objection does not suspend the execution of the sanction, which is to remain in force until a final response to the objection is provided.

In case of more than three violations of the Zone's Rules and/or endangering the health and life of the other UASC accommodated in the Zone, including their own health and life, the IOM social worker on duty refers the UASC to Section IV and VI of SAR's Rules and Regulations: "Administrative criminal liability - Identification of violations" and the resulting administrative and legal consequences. The Director of the RRC, representatives of SAR from the RRC and the legal representative of the UASC are informed of the violations committed.

The UASC may file a complaint about the living conditions in Zone and/or the Zone's Rules to the Zone Coordinator, the Director of the RRC and/or his/her legal representative, who may initiate a meeting/discussion with the Zone team concerning the complaint with a view to resolving the issue.

Questions related to the Zone's Rules, sanctions, and objections regarding the organization of the life in the Zone may be discussed with the IOM social worker assigned to the UASC at any time.

4.4. CARE FOR THE UASC ACCOMMODATED IN EACH SAFETY ZONE

Care for the UASC accommodated in the Safety Zone is provided in cooperation between IOM and SAR, and if necessary, other organizations and/or institutions.

The Safety Zone Coordinator assigns an IOM social worker for each UASC within two (2) days from the date of accommodation. The assigned social worker is responsible for working with the UASC, participating in the

preparation of a rapid and, in the case of an established risk, full assessment, and developing an Individual Care Plan.

4.4.1. Rapid and full assessments

Collecting initial information for each UASC and conducting a rapid assessment must be done within 24 hours from the child's accommodation. If during the rapid assessment there are risks/vulnerabilities established for the child, a full assessment must be carried out within fourteen (14) days of his/her accommodation in the Zone.

The rapid assessment includes the following:

- Basic information
- Protection, safety and security
- Family
- Initial risk assessment
- Recommendations and next steps

4.4.2. Individual Care Plan

In parallel with preparing a rapid and, if necessary, a full assessment, the assigned IOM social worker prepares an Individual Care Plan for each UASC for whom he or she is responsible. The Plan considers the following aspects of the child's life in the Zone – sample weekly schedule, medical and psychological status, elective activities and education:

- The social worker is responsible for the implementation of the Plan together with a SAR social expert. The child's legal representative is notified of the Care Plan.
- The assigned IOM social worker initiates a meeting to discuss the Individual Care Plan with the team, the child, the assigned SAR social expert, Child Protection Department at the Social Assistance Directorate and the child's legal representative.
- The assigned IOM social worker coordinates and monitors the day-to-day implementation of the Individual Care Plan.
- The assigned IOM social worker, in coordination with the SAR and other responsible parties, revises the Individual Care Plan every three (3) months. If necessary and/or upon request by the child, the Plan may be reviewed and revised at a shorter interval.
- IOM's Safety Zone Coordinator monitors and oversees the implementation of the Individual Care Plans.

4.4.3. Psychological assessment

Within the first weeks of working with the UASC, a psychological assessment by a psychologist is prepared, and if necessary, other meetings with field experts are planned.

4.4.4. Formation of a multidisciplinary team

In accordance with the needs of the accommodated UASC, the assigned IOM social worker forms, together with the Zone's Coordinator and the SAR social expert, who was involved in the preparation of the rapid assessment, a multidisciplinary team to work on the case. This team may include representatives of IOM, SAR, UASC's legal representative, Child Protection Department, representatives of NGOs who have concluded an agreement with SAR to work with UASC, psychologist, cultural mediator, etc.

The assigned IOM social worker coordinates the work and meetings of the multidisciplinary team and prepares minutes of the meetings that are kept in the child's personal file.

4.4.5. Personal file of the UASC

A personal file (hardcopy and/or electronic) is kept for each UASC, which contains:

- Personal data – name, Personal Number of Foreigner, date of birth;
- Mandatory accommodation documentation – registration form, signed Zone Rules;
- Rapid and, at if done, full assessment;
- Individual Care Plan;
- Psychological assessment by a psychologist;
- Minutes from multidisciplinary team meetings;
- Medical, educational and other documentation;
- Photo of the UASC;
- Reports submitted to the Child Protection Department and others, concerning the child.

The child's file is to be kept in compliance with IOM's rules and requirements and the Bulgarian Law on Protection of Personal Data. Access to the child's file is available to the assigned IOM social worker, the SAR social expert, the legal representative and all members of IOM and SAR's team working on the case, provided that confidentiality requirements are respected.

4.4.6. Report on the results achieved

Upon discharge the assigned IOM social worker prepares a brief report to the Zone's Coordinator and the Director of the Social Activity and Adaptation Directorate at the SAR presenting the results achieved, the specificities of the casework and the necessity and type of subsequent support.

The files of all closed cases are stored in a separate IOM archive at the Zone or in a secure folder with restricted access on IOM Bulgaria's server, the files being classified in alphabetical order. After the completion of the project, IOM hands over the archive in hardcopy and electronic format to SAR.

IOM Data Protection Principles

The International Organization for Migration, as an UN agency, is obliged to maintain a high standard of data management and protection and as such IOM's rules are in line with Regulation 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data (General Data Protection Regulation).

Under its mandate and responsibilities, IOM enjoys privileges, immunities and obligations concerning data protection: "IOM will undertake all precautions to protect the confidentiality of personal data and the anonymity of the data subjects. All personal data will be collected, used, transmitted and stored in a safe place according to privacy principles. "

The main principles of work include:

- Respect for the right to privacy of data subjects;
- Protect the integrity and confidentiality of personal data;
- Avoid unnecessary and improper disclosure of personal data;
- Train staff on basic concepts regarding international data protection standards;
- Follow operational guidelines for the implementation of data protection principles;
- Apply institutional safeguard mechanisms for work with personal data.

The duration of accommodation in the Safety Zone, according to the SAR Rules and Regulations, lasts until a decision enters into force or until reaching 18 years of age.

4.5. PROTECTION FROM ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

IOM's team in the Safety Zones holds daily meetings and conversations with the accommodated UASC concerning the prevention of violence and abuse. In case of abuse and violence on part of the accommodated children, the sanction procedures set out in the Rules for Use of the Safety Zones (Annex II) apply. In the case of abuse or violence on part of the IOM team, the procedures set out in Section 3 of the present Methodology, i.e. "Basic Principles and Approaches", and IOM's Standards of Conduct are to be followed. SAR's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the prevention and response to sexual and gender-related violence are implemented by IOM, SAR, and other organizations providing services in the Zone to address any such cases that are identified.

The team does not permit any acts of violence.

On duty IOM social workers and staff other organizations working in the field with specific experience and expertise on the subject, carry out group activities on the prevention of all forms of violence. Each UASC participates in individual and group work on topics related to prevention of and response to violence, such as:

- Physical/emotional development, including expressing emotions, love, affection, etc.
- Physical, emotional violence and neglect – giving and receiving affection; what is an insult; the role family members and relatives; dealing with anger and aggressive behavior; the rights of the child; what is violence;
- Sexual violence, trafficking and exploitation – what is sexual abuse; characteristics of an abuser; the difference between sex and love; child prostitution; appropriate and inappropriate touching; provocative behavior; safe sex and others;
- Children and the Internet – conversations and meetings with strangers on the Web;
- Trafficking in human beings and smuggling.

The topics are discussed according to the age and cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious and other specifics of the participants. The leader of the group activity checks the level of comprehension and acquisition of knowledge of the topics.

5. EVERYDAY LIFE

The Safety Zone is a separate area within the territory of the RRC with limited and controlled access. Adhering to a certain daily regime, UASC accommodated in the Zone live in a secure and controlled environment that meets their daily needs and basic necessities (see SAR Rules and Regulations).

- The basic needs of the UASC such as food, clothing and shoes (depending on the season), sanitary and hygienic essentials are provided by SAR, depending on availability, to all asylum seekers accommodated in SAR RRCs.
- Health and dental services, assistance in accessing healthcare services and hospital treatment, supply of medicines, medical examinations and specialized examinations/consultations for UASC are provided in accordance with the Law on Health Insurance of the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as through complementary projects implemented by organizations working in the field.
- The assigned IOM social worker monitors and cares for the child's health and personal hygiene. Every UASC is registered with a General Practitioner. An IOM social worker or a SAR social expert on duty accompanies the UASC to the doctor/dentist. The child's file contains information about the GP – phone number and address. In case of incidents and/or in case of need of urgent medical care, IOM or SAR social worker on duty calls the emergency number 112.

- In the Safety Zones, a first-aid kit is kept, the contents of which are coordinated with a SAR medical practitioner. The first-aid kit is stored in a special cabinet that is available to all staff on duty. UASC are not allowed to have direct access to the medical cabinet.
- IOM’s social workers on duty guide and stimulate the accommodated UASC to take care of their personal hygiene and lead a healthy lifestyle, through conversations, talks, film screenings, and supply of various information materials at accessible locations in the Zone (stickers, posters, etc., provided by SAR and NGOs on the field). UASC are provided with the opportunity to maintain personal hygiene:
 - Daily access to bathing facilities is provided;
 - Zone staff teaches UASC to wash their hands before and after eating, and provides the means for washing, drying, etc.;
 - UASC are taught and encouraged to keep their clothes and appearance clean.

6. SUPPORT PROVIDED

6.1. SOCIAL SUPPORT (See 6.5)

Social support in the Zone is provided by a team of social workers in close cooperation with an assigned social expert from SAR.

The UASC accommodated in the Zone have access to services provided outside the Zone by NGOs and other organizations working in the RRCs. Such services may include:

- Organizing leisure time and creating conditions enabling the individual expression of the abilities of each UASC;
- Consultation, escort, mediation, in accordance with the individual needs and in observance of the best interests of the child;
- Social work to restore and strengthen the relationship between UASC and their families, as well as family tracing. Support and mediation in making important life decisions;
- Administrative services – assisting UASC to enroll in school, search for employment (applies to minors 16 years of age or over), contacts with institutions.

6.2. EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT, SOCIAL ADAPTION AND CULTURAL ORIENTATION

In accordance with Bulgarian law, UASC have access to primary and secondary education, including vocational education and vocational training, under the conditions and procedures envisaged for Bulgarian citizens.¹⁵ Access to the education system cannot be delayed by more than three (3) months, from the date of filing the application for international protection.¹⁶

The Safety Zone team motivates regular school attendance and supports the inclusion of each UASC in literacy and educational activities. Social workers support vocational orientation and pre-vocational training for UASC, in accordance with their educational needs and abilities. UASC are enrolled in Bulgarian language courses provided by SAR and NGOs in the field. IOM’s social workers on duty provide the UASC with support with homework and general understanding of school lessons, with the assistance of a volunteer-teacher and/or NGOs offering similar support on-site.

The assigned IOM social worker motivates the UASC who do not attend school to rebuild and/or build new knowledge, skills and habits with a view to their enrolment or return to the relevant school level.

If possible, it is planned that UASC who have not attended school and are unable to integrate into the education system should be included in literacy classes.

¹⁵ Art. 26, para.1 of LAR

¹⁶ Art. 26, para.2 of LAR

IOM is to work with the assistance of volunteers and NGOs on the field, towards the social adaptation and cultural orientation of the UASC accommodated in the Zone as part of their integration process in Bulgaria as well as residents of the European Union by acquainting them with the culture and life in Europe.

All information relating to each UASC's learning process is reflected in his/her personal file and Individual Care Plan.

6.3. LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMS

The Safety Zone team works with each UASC to support him/her in acquiring knowledge, developing and maintaining skills and habits for independent living and integration into society. Based on the rapid/full assessment for each UASC, his/her inclusion in various activities is ensured so as to acquire skills for independent living and enhance personal, social and civic culture and competence. Activities can be group and individual on the following topics and monthly programs, developed by IOM in partnership with SAR and NGOs on-site.

Possible discussion and group/individual work topics include:

- Developing self-knowledge skills – updating the beliefs, values and inner potential of the child; encouraging self-confidence and self-assessment.
- Developing social skills for independent living – gaining basic knowledge of the immediate surrounding environment and building a sense of belonging to the community; awareness of the peculiarities of independent life and assuming responsibility with a view to an effective transition to it; developing skills to maintain formal and informal social support networks.
- Determining the individual personal style of behavior in a conflict situation and developing skills for the effective management of interpersonal conflicts.
- Participation in volunteer projects to enhance personal commitment to the well-being of society as a whole.
- Everyday life skills:
 - Maintaining personal and sexual hygiene.
 - Skills to maintain a household independently: allocation of personal budget – money, prices, goods; washing and ironing of clothes, cleaning, tidying personal belongings, etc.
- Health and sex education:
 - Family – developing qualities for a fulfilling family life.
 - Awareness of the need for expressing emotions and thoughts, love, affection, etc.
 - Civil skills – introducing children and young people, depending on their individual and age characteristics and capabilities, with their rights, duties and public responsibilities, the activities of public institutions.

Individual and group work is to be conducted in accordance with the age and characteristics of the participants. The coordinator of the activities will examine the understanding of the topics and the children's acquisition of knowledge, skills and habits.

6.4. SUPPORT IN FINDING EMPLOYMENT

The assigned IOM social worker, in partnership with a SAR social expert and NGOs in the field, implements activities to support UASC over the age of 16 who want to develop professional skills and/or plan their professional careers. To this end, the Zone staff maintain relations with and refers UASC looking for work to local employers and the Public Employment Office.

The assigned IOM social worker, in partnership with a SAR social expert and NGOs in the field, supports interested UASC in developing job-hunting skills: using sources of information, filling in paperwork, interview skills, etc. He/she also assists UASC after they start work: visiting the workplace, talking to colleagues and

employers, looking for ways to help solve workplace problems, encouraging young people to keep their jobs without that being detrimental to their health and/or education.

6.5. PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT (See 6.1)

The Zone provides access to psychological support based on the individual needs of each UASC. Every newly accommodated UASC goes through an assessment with a psychologist to evaluate the need for long-term counseling, which is documented in writing in an expert report. The assessment is filed in the child's personal file. The assessment of the need for psychological support and consultation is based on reported experiences of violence, neglect and exploitation and subsequent injuries.

The psychologist provides opportunities for individual and group psychological counseling and support. The psychologist assists and supports the UASC in setting priorities for achieving short- and longer-term life goals and encourages self-expression and independent decision-making.

The psychologist assists and guides the development of skills for effectively managing interpersonal conflicts and identifying internal coping resources.

The psychologist supports the UASC in finding mechanisms to overcome traumatic experiences.

6.6. CREATIVITY AND LEISURE

IOM's social workers, together with the SAR social experts and the NGOs in the field, organize programs to stimulate and develop the individual interests and talents of the UASC accommodated in the Zone.

The assigned IOM social worker familiarizes himself/herself with the individual interests and abilities of each UASC assigned to him/her, based on the availability of creative and recreational programs, includes specific activities in his/her Individual Care Plan. The activities may include drawing, computers, music, sports, etc., depending on the UASC's wishes and abilities, and regular participation could be tied to the Bonus Points System. Different options for spare time activities include celebrating holidays and observing traditions; outdoor games; nature walks; visits to sites of natural and cultural significance; participation in summer camps and other forms of recreation.

7. LOCATION AND FACILITIES

7.1. FLOOR PLAN OF THE SAFETY ZONE FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN UNDER 14 YEARS OF AGE IN RCC SOFIA - OVCHA KUPEL¹⁷

In accordance with the renovation works plan¹⁸ the Safety Zone will include:

- 23 rooms for residential use, each with a private toilet and shower, with a maximum capacity of 6 UASC each (total capacity of 138 UASC), situated on one floor of RRC Sofia - Ovcha Kupel. The rooms are designed to accommodate 3 UASC normally, but it is possible to add bunk beds, if necessary.
- The rooms are designed in accordance with the occupants' cultural traditions: a bed with a washable hygienic mattress protector and a cabinet for personal belongings and clothes. There are also 3-6 beanbag chairs with sturdy washable cases, a low table and a wardrobe with clothes hangers and shelves. In the corridor there are lockers for clothes and personal belongings.

¹⁷ Based on a concept design, floor 3 or 4 of the lower building of RRC Sofia - Ovcha Kupel.

¹⁸ The plan is subject to change and adaptation.

- Two of the residential rooms will be allocated for girls/UASC with special needs, and two other rooms will be allocated for newly arrived UASC – the so-called adaptation rooms. The adaptation rooms will be used for an initial period of 1-2 days by all newly accommodated UASC prior to their introduction to the Rules and daily schedule of the Zone.
- Three rooms for staff/office use (two with storage facilities and one with a toilet/shower). Two of the rooms are designated for use by the social workers and other IOM experts working in the Zone. The third room – the so-called safe room – can be used for individual consultations/work with the accommodated UASC. The three rooms are located at both ends of the corridor to allow for better monitoring during night shifts. At the end of the corridor, the pre-existing staff resting room with a kitchenette and toilet/shower will be kept.
- A multifunctional entertainment room with a bathroom and kitchen, with a total capacity of 25 seats.
- A room with a capacity of 12 seats and designed for educational and group activities for those accommodated in the Zone. The premises can also be used for activities for other people accommodated in the RRC, Bulgarian language lessons, information sessions, etc., based on a weekly schedule.
- The Safety Zone will be accessed via the central staircase, and access to outsiders will be restricted and monitored by permanent security guards in the common foyer/beginning of the central staircase.

7.2. FLOOR PLAN OF THE SAFETY ZONE FOR UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN AGED 14 OR OLDER IN RRC SOFIA - VOENNA RAMPA

Following the completed renovation works and reorganization of the space, the Safety Zone will occupy the second, third and fourth floors of Building B in RRC Sofia - Voenna Rampa.

- The existing rooms and shared bathrooms on the second, third and fourth floor are renovated and furnished based on a pre-approved architectural project.
- The residential premises on the second floor have a capacity of 28 UASC (4 minors per room), divided into 7 rooms with two bunk beds each (the upper beds will be added if necessary), a locker for personal belongings with a compartment for each minor (in the corridor) and a foldable table with four chairs.
- At the beginning of the corridor and next to the social workers' office on the second floor, there will be a residential room for 4 girls and/or UASC with special needs. Two more rooms – the so-called adaptation rooms – will be allocated on the second floor for newly-accommodated UASC for a period of 1-2 days prior to their introduction to the Rules and daily schedule of the Zone.
- The rooms on the third and fourth floor have a capacity of 36 UASC per floor (9 rooms per floor), with furnishing similar to that on the second floor: two bunk beds per room, lockers for personal belongings in the corridor and a table with the appropriate number of chairs.
- Staff rooms/offices. On each floor of the Zone, at the beginning of the corridor, there is one office designated for IOM's social workers, which will also serve as a resting room for staff members working night shifts. On the second floor of the Zone is the so-called safe room, which can be used for individual consultations/work with UASC accommodated in the Zone.
- The security guards' room is located on the second floor, with the entire Zone covered by 24/7 CCTV.

- No multifunctional premises are envisioned in the Zone. The computer room on the first floor of the RRC will be used for recreational, educational and other similar activities.

8. SAFETY AND SECURITY

IOM provides security in the Safety Zones. To this end, a licensed security company will be used. The security service provider will prepare an action/response plan in the case of emergency situations. Access to the Zone is regulated by the SAR Rules and Regulations, and all visitors are to comply with the regulations. Visits to the Zone are to be coordinated with the Zone Coordinator and an IOM social worker on duty.

The rules governing security checks set out in Section V of the SAR Rules and Regulations apply on the territory of the Safety Zones.

Section V. Control

Art. 24. (1) The security guards shall monitor on a daily basis the presence of every accommodated foreigner by carrying out a complete attendance check/roll-call every night no later than 23:00 hrs. Absent foreigners shall be recorded in a register which is to be handed over to officials from the respective center the following day. Foreigners who have moved to another room without formal authorization shall have a statement of findings drawn up and shall be returned to the rooms originally allocated to them.

(2) At any given time when missing objects and material damage in the rooms and facilities are established, and in cases of negligent use of water and electricity by the accommodated foreigners, the security guards shall draw up a statement of findings.

Art. 25. (1) Random checks on the condition and use of the residential premises in the centers shall be carried out by committees composed of staff members of the State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers.

(2) The composition of the committees under para. 1 shall be determined by an order issued by the Chairperson of the State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers.

(3) The findings of the commissions under para. 1, following the inspections carried out, shall be submitted to the Chairperson of the State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers and to the Director of the respective RRC.

(4) An admission officer from the relevant center is to carry out a complete inspection of the premises at least once a week with a view of monitoring the use of the facilities by the accommodated foreigners and the need for ongoing repairs. He/she shall report any irregularities, damages and necessary repairs to the Director of the RRC.

9. TEAM STRUCTURE AND TRAINING OF STAFF IN THE SAFETY ZONE

9.1 TEAM STRUCTURE

(A) social expert(s) and other SAR staff work in close cooperation with IOM in the respective SAR RRC where the Safety Zone is located.

The structure of IOM's staff and the organization of the work in the Safety Zone includes:

- a) A team of social workers:

- 1 coordinator, 4 social workers (1 social worker for 8-15 accommodated minors, 1-3 social workers depending on the Zone's workload during night shifts);
- Sample work schedule for the social workers;¹⁹
 - Day shifts: first shift (8-16hrs), day shift (10-18hrs), second shift (14-22hrs), 1-2 social workers during the weekend;
 - Night shifts: one shift (21 – 9hrs). A possible work schedule is: 3 days' work/3 days off;
- b)** A team of interpreters: on an hourly basis in-person or on the phone, an on-call interpreter/in-person in case of emergencies during night shifts;
- c)** Support by a psychologist, a legal advisor and other IOM experts: hourly depending on demand in the Zone and/or on the phone.
- d)** A security company: 24 hours/7 days a week and permanent video surveillance of the Zone.

A team of about 15 people working according to a monthly work schedule is planned for each Zone. The staff can be reduced/increased depending on the workload in the Zone and the number of accommodated UASC.

9.2. SUPERVISION AND TRAINING

Psychological supervision is an instrument supporting IOM's teams who work in the Safety Zones with a view to improving care provision, professional development and emotional support, preventing occupational burnout, and supporting organizational development and interpersonal relations within the team.

Participation of IOM Safety Zone staff in psychological supervision sessions is mandatory. This gives each employee an opportunity to review their work; check in with their opinions and feelings regarding the beneficiaries, their colleagues or the work process; clarify roles and expectations from different perspectives. Individual or group supervision is carried out every month. The results and follow-up actions are recorded and signed by the supervisor. Supervisors must have at least 5 years of professional experience in supervising teams working with vulnerable groups and more professional experience than the staff members being supervised.

IOM's teams in the Safety Zones, SAR and Child Protection Department officers, receive training periodically based on their needs and in order to improve their expertise in line with international standards for working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Each IOM staff member does the following mandatory trainings:

- *Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)* – a training adapted to IOM's requirements on the basis of the materials and work of the IASC PSEA Taskforce,²⁰ which sets out IOM's Policy and Procedures on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA policy; IN/234);²¹
- *Ethics and Conduct: The Values We Share* – the training explains the organization's basic ethical principles (integrity, loyalty, independence and neutrality), the Organization's Standards of Conduct, IOM's Basic Staffing Principles;
- *I Know Gender* – a training developed by UN WOMEN which aims to develop and strengthen the knowledge and understanding of the concept of gender equality and empowerment of women;
- *BSAFE Training* – a UN security training.

Every IOM staff member in the Safety Zones is regularly provided with additional trainings by both external and internal experts on topics such as prevention of violence against children, identification of violence and work with children victims of violence.

¹⁹ The schedule will be updated during the work process.

²⁰ See: <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/course/description.php?id=2>

²¹ For more information see: <http://www.pseataaskforce.org/en/>

9.3. ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF IOM'S TEAM WORKING IN THE SAFETY ZONE

The service is provided 24 hours/7 days a week. During weekly team meetings staff members discuss the organization of the work and work discipline, report on and get assigned specific tasks (both individual staff members and the entire team) and coordinate their work with SAR social experts, the UASC's legal representatives and CPD. The IOM Safety Zone Coordinator briefs other IOM colleagues, SAR, the legal representative of the UASC and the Child Protection Department about all activities and events relevant to the functioning of the Zone and shares information that is relevant to individual cases. The joint work meetings are recorded and signed by the chairperson of the meeting, and the records are made available when IOM carries out internal monitoring.

Record-keeping and use of the documentation respect the requirements of confidentiality, accessibility and storage set out in the job descriptions of staff members.

The various digital databases maintained by IOM in accordance with the IOM Principles for Protection of Personal Data include the following:²²

- Personal file of each accommodated UASC, which is archived after the minor leaves the Zone;
- Minutes of team and other work meetings with SAR social experts, legal representatives, the CPD and NGOs in the field;
- Attendance sheet for the UASC in the Safety Zones;
- Logbook for recording and storing information about the work process during each shift and for each group/activity. At the end of their work shift, the IOM staff member on duty records the main aspects of their work, any incidents or other events that he/she believes are important for life in the Zone (supported electronically);
- Visitor's log – in accordance with the SAR Rules and Regulations (kept by the Zone's security guards);
- Logbook for registering complaints (which will be reviewed, recorded and addressed in writing);
- Logbook for recording incidents and other documents related to safety, occupational precautions and fire safety based on the needs of the Zone.

The information about each accommodated UASC is confidential and is provided to responsible authorities, human rights organizations, law enforcement and other organs and institutions in keeping with the legal requirements for personal data protection.

²² An indicative list, the documents will be piloted and finalized in the process of work in coordination with SAR.