UKRAINE EMERGENCY – UNHCR POLAND PROTECTION FACTSHEET

15 August 2022

KEY FIGURES

Over 5.4 million views of UNHCR Poland HELP page, making it the most visited page on the site globally

10,697 respondents have been interviewed for protection profiling, and **2,192 refugees** using the protection monitoring tool

10 community centres providing counselling and assistance active across Poland, including **Blue Dots**

Over 31,500 refugees from **more than 14,000 households** received in person support and counselling in **Blue Dots** in Poland

876 people benefitted from protection-related trainings conducted by UNHCR and partners

"The Ukrainian refugee crisis is a **protection crisis for women and children** – they account for 90 per cent of all those fleeing from Ukraine across the borders."

GILLIAN TRIGGS
UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection

UNHCR staff at the Blue Dot Safe Space, Protection and Support Hub in Warsaw Praga cash enrolment centre. © UNHCR/Maciej Moskwa, 18 May 2022

What protection risks do refugees from Ukraine face?

As almost all refugees from Ukraine arriving in Poland are women, children and older people, the high level of distress, family separation resulting in large numbers of unaccompanied and separated children and single parents, and risks of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse are multiplied. Trafficking risks by those who might try to exploit refugees' vulnerability with promises of free transport, accommodation, employment, or other forms of assistance are heightened. UNHCR's work to protect refugees in Poland includes information and communication with communities, identification of people with specific needs, referrals to specialised services and legal counselling. These interventions are increasingly tailored to specific groups, including the LGBTIQ+ community, people with disability, isolated older persons, minorities, and women and girls at risk.

How does UNHCR help to protect refugees from Ukraine?

UNHCR works with authorities and partners to promote legal and physical protection for refugees, helping them to reach safety, identifying those in need of support — like women at risk, children separated from their parents or other family members, persons with disabilities, and older people without support.

UNHCR staff and partners in Poland speak with refugees in person, via phone and online to find out what kind of support they need and use these findings to shape their operational response. Protection monitoring and mapping the needs of people forced to flee are essential activities to understand their ever-changing situation during an emergency. It enables UNHCR to allocate aid where it is needed most, as well as to engage host communities, authorities and partners more effectively by advising them about refugee needs.

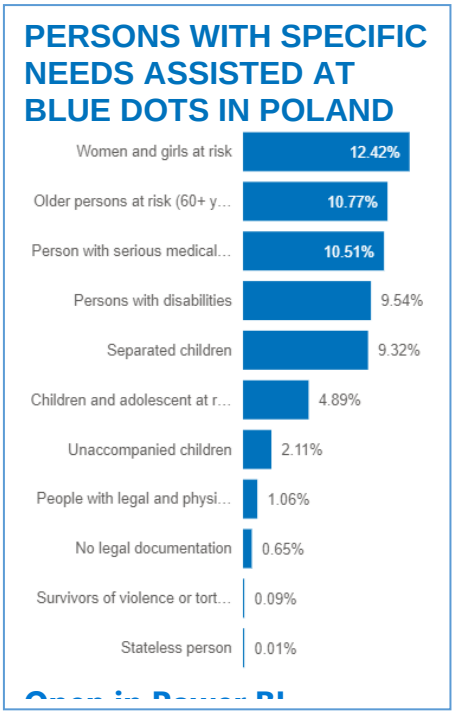
UNHCR leads the overarching refugee coordination structure in Poland, including the Protection Sector, the Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence sub-sectors, the Accountability to Affected Populations working group, and the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Technical working group and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) network. Protection is mainstreamed across other sectors and working groups, including on cash, trafficking, third country nationals, education, health.

Information and communication

To address critical gaps in information, UNHCR has set up and regularly updates a **UNHCR HELP page for Poland**, which has become the most visited HELP page worldwide, including from within Ukraine. UNHCR has also a **child-friendly HELP page in English, Polish and Ukrainian**. UNHCR has developed and circulates practical, safety and legal information to refugees at border points, in reception centres and urban areas, in the form of leaflets, posters, digital materials, social media and via apps like Telegram, which are widely used by people from Ukraine. A counselling phone line is now receiving calls from Monday to Friday; most queries so far relate to UNHCR cash programme.

Protection services

Community centres, including Blue Dots - Safe Space, Protection, and Support Hubs, established by UNHCR and UNICEF - bring together critical protection services and information for refugees, with a particular focus on supporting persons at heightened risk. These include unaccompanied or separated children, persons with disabilities, cases of suspected trafficking, survivors of gender-based violence and marginalized refugees including from minority backgrounds. Referrals are made to the existing national services, including health centres, psychosocial support lines and services within the child protection systems. Rolled out in countries hosting refugees from Ukraine, the Blue Dots aim at identification of persons with specific needs, information provision, guidance and counselling and referral to more specialized services.



Where are the Blue Dots and who works at them?

Blue Dots are strategically located where refugees are, including border points, reception sites, and urban centers. In cities, UNHCR has established Blue Dots linked to existing cash enrolment centres what helped to identify persons at heightened risk. As of 15 August, **8** Blue Dots are providing services across Poland in addition to **2** inclusive community centres in Rzeszow and Lublin. Protection staff, social workers, mental health and psychosocial support personnel, legal aid providers and interpreters operate these hubs to provide information, assistance and refer to specialized services to access further support.

What services are available at Blue Dots?

UNHCR and partners provide the following services at Blue Dots:

- **Information and Advice Desks:** trained staff provide information on available local services and how to access physical and online support, including Wi-Fi connectivity and phone charging.
- **Identification, assessment and referral of people with specific needs**: family tracing, referral to local child protection structures/services, specialized health services, GBV response.
- **Mental health and psychosocial support**: psychological first aid, counselling, information provision on stress management self-help, positive coping, parenting advice, how to access to specialized services for adults and children with pre-existing mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities, group and individual activities that support recovery, resilience and psychological wellbeing.
- **Legal aid and counselling:** support and advice on application for asylum and EU Temporary Protection, documentation, birth registration, family reunification and more critical legal information.
- **Child- and family-friendly spaces**: spaces for children to play with toys, sports equipment, art supplies, support for adolescent girls and boys, and mother and baby spaces for breastfeeding.

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