



Guidance Note

Bulgaria Inter-Agency Referral Form

Purpose

This Guidance Note accompanies the Inter-Agency Referral Form. The Inter-Agency Referral Form is developed to facilitate and coordinate efficient multi-sectoral referrals of individual cases between humanitarian organizations who are providing services to refugees and asylum seekers in Bulgaria. This form ensures that coordinated referrals lead to prompt support for individuals or families requiring assistance.

This referral form is not used for referrals from humanitarian organizations to government services which may have its own referral mechanisms and pathways.

Guiding Principles

- **Complementarity:** Working in support and complementarity with states, communities, civil society and other actors to maximize resources.
- **Urgency:** Prioritization of providing immediate response to urgent cases, ensuring that any multi-sectoral response is well-coordinated.
- **Confidentiality:** All humanitarian actors adhere to confidentiality guidelines and need-to-know basis when referring individual cases. There are exceptions to confidentiality, e.g., when there are threats of ongoing violence or harm to a child and the need to protect them in line with their best interest overrides confidentiality; situations in which national laws require mandatory reporting of certain types of violence or abuse; and situation in which individuals may try to hurt her/himself. If applicable, these exceptions should be communicated to the individual at the outset of counselling and service delivery.
- **Do No Harm:** Conducting actions in a way that do not expose the individual at further risk of harm, especially as a result of unintended consequences.
- **Rights based approach:** promoting the direct involvement of all individuals in decisions relating to their own protection and their full enjoyment of human rights. A rights-based approach also requires that culturally appropriate and acceptable services are available, accessible and affordable.
- **Survivor-centred approach:** When it comes to referrals of at-risk or survivors of gender-based violence, respecting the interest and wishes of the survivor and prioritizing rights, dignity, wishes, choices, needs and safety of survivors in the design and implementation of prevention and response implementations.

Inter-Agency Referral Form

1. Form:

- **Priority:** Indicate the priority and urgency of the case being referred. This will inform the timeframe for the receiving agency to respond. High priority refers to immediate action needed due to serious or imminent risk to personal safety and request for urgent response within 24 hours.



- **Code:** This is for the referring organization's internal records and documentation and follow-up purposes, especially if providing case management services.
- **Background Information and Reason for Referral:** Describe the minimum information required by the receiving agency to be able to respond to the referral. For referral of Gender-Based Violence, child protection and other protection case management, do not provide details of the incident.
- **Consent:** Read the consent form with the individual or with the caregiver, in case the referral is for a child. Answer any questions before s/he signs below. Inform the individual how the information will be used by the receiving service provider. Sign on behalf of the individual or caregiver if consent is given verbally and the individual cannot sign.
 - If a child is between 14-17 years of age, in addition to the caregiver's consent, they can also provide informed assent to share the information for the referral.
- **Details of Referral:** If there are any restrictions to the contact, explain this specifically in the form. For instance, a survivor of GBV may want to be contacted at certain hours/days or prefer a certain method to be reached. Indicate whether the referring organization would want to receive a response on the referral.

2. Referral:

When sharing electronically, password protect the form ('File' - -> 'Info' - -> 'Protect Document' - -> 'Encrypt with Password') when attaching the document.

Separately share the password of the referral form with receiving organization's focal point (when possible, share through different method – e.g., phone contacts if available – or in a separate email).

Available services, locations and contacts of humanitarian organizations providing services to refugees and asylum seekers are available in below listed platforms:

- [2024 Refugee Response Plan for Bulgaria – ActivityInfo dashboard](#)
- [UNHCR Bulgaria Help Page, Assistance and Services](#)
- [Foundation for Access to Rights service mapping](#)

3. Documentation and Recording:

It is up to each organization to document the referrals and feedback received from referring organizations.

4. Follow-up:

When form is received via email, the receiving agency should respond with acknowledgment of receipt and intake of the case. The referring agency should follow-up with the receiving agency to confirm receipt of the referral and any next steps. Both agencies should maintain confidential communication ensure the individual receives the required services and support.

Inter-Agency Coordination team
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