

29 April 2022

KEY FIGURES

2.6 million views of UNHCR Poland HELP page, making it the most visited HELP site globally

Over 70,000 leaflets on risks of exploitation, abuse and trafficking, legal aid and other services distributed to refugees in Poland

5 Blue Dot hubs active across Poland (Warsaw, Krakow, Medyka, Przemyśl, Korczowa) and more being established

Over 3,000 refugees received in person support and counselling at Blue Dots in Poland so far



Children and families keep warm on a rainy day at the Blue Dot hub in Warsaw 1 Cash Enrolment Centre. © UNHCR/S. Etzold, 2 April 2022

What protection risks do refugees from Ukraine face?

As most refugees from Ukraine arriving in Poland are women and children, the risks of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, psychological trauma and family separation are multiplied. Trafficking risks by those who might try to exploit refugees' vulnerability with promises of free transport, accommodation, employment or other forms of aid are heightened, especially at border areas. UNHCR's work to protect refugees from Ukraine in Poland encompasses a wide range of interventions, including information and communication with refugee communities, protection monitoring, identification of people with specific needs, referrals to specialised services. Such interventions are increasingly tailored to specific groups, including the LGBTIQ+ community, people with disability, isolated older persons, minorities, women and girls at risk.

How UNHCR protects 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 fleeing alone, people with disability, and older persons—and caring for mental wellbeing through psychosocial services.

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. This **protection monitoring** and mapping the needs of people forced to flee is an essential activity to understand their ever-changing situation during an emergency and enables UNHCR to allocate aid where it is needed most, as well as engage host communities, authorities and partners more effectively by advising them about the refugee needs. In urgent cases, we intervene immediately to provide life-saving assistance and counselling.

UNHCR leads the overarching refugee coordination structure in Poland, including the Protection Sector, the Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence sub-sectors, and the Accountability to Affected Populations working group. Its protection presence is mainstreamed across other sectors and working groups, including those related to cash, trafficking, third country nationals, education, health.



“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

Information and communication

Compared to initial arrivals, refugees arriving in Poland are less resourced and more disoriented, distressed, and without an onward plan. They ask for reliable information and ways to communicate their needs and seek advice. To address critical gaps in information, UNHCR has quickly 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 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.

Blue Dots

The Blue Dot Safe Space, Protection, and Support Hubs - are safe spaces, jointly run by UNHCR and UNICEF, to provide refugees fleeing Ukraine with critical information and practical support, particularly for the most vulnerable. They are one-stop-shops offering a wide range of services for refugees who need additional support, such as children travelling on their own, people with disability, and women experiencing or at risk of gender-based violence. The Blue Dots aim to be an extension of the government's national protection system and therefore are closely linked to the national and local referral pathways and services such as the national child protection architecture in Poland.

Where are the Blue Dots and who works at them?

Blue Dots are strategically located where refugees are moving, including border points, reception sites, and UNHCR's cash assistance enrolment centres. As of 29 April, 5 Blue Dots have been established in Poland, with at least 10 more upcoming. Trained protection experts, case workers, mental health specialists, legal aid providers and interpreters operate the Blue Dots, and refugees can be referred to specialized services for access to additional support.

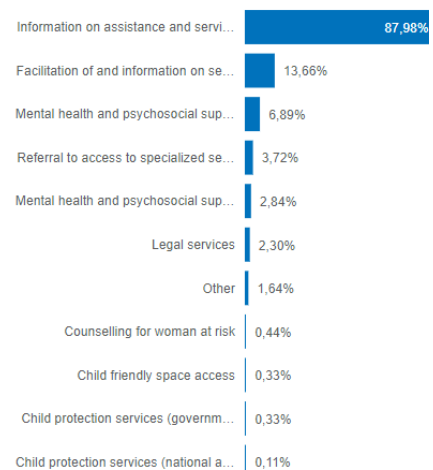
What services are available at Blue Dots?

UNHCR and partners provide the following services at Blue Dots:

- **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/toddler spaces for breastfeeding.
- **Mental health and psychosocial support:** psychological first aid, counselling, group and individual activities that support recovery, resilience and psychological wellbeing.
- **Identification, rapid assessment and referral of children at risk:** family tracing and immediate referral to local child protection structures/services.
- **Legal aid and counselling:** support and advice on application for asylum and EU Temporary Protection, registration, documentation, registering births, reunifying with family members and other critical legal information.
- **Information and Advice Desks:** trained staff and volunteers provide information on local services which are available and how to access physical and online support, including access to Wi-Fi connectivity and phone charging stations.

SUPPORT PROVIDED AT BLUE DOTS IN POLAND

Intervention



Referrals

