

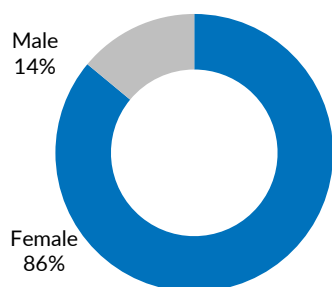
# PROTECTION MONITORING BRIEF #3

## Poland

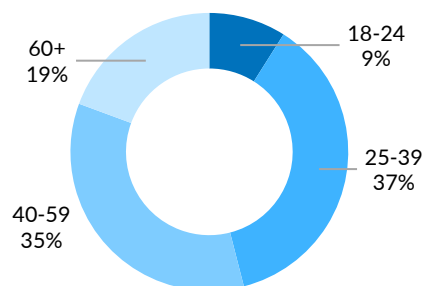
### Operational Context & Analysis

As part of its continuous Protection Monitoring exercise, to assess basic needs and identify vulnerabilities, UNHCR in the period from 23 November 2022 to 31 March 2023, conducted 13 431 interviews with refugees from Ukraine in nine voivodeships: Dolnoslaskie, Lodzkie, Lubelskie, Malopolskie, Mazowieckie, Podkarpackie, Pomorskie, Slaskie, and Wiedkopolskie. The results are presented below. Statistical results may vary from other surveys conducted by UNHCR, as Protection Monitoring primarily focuses on the most vulnerable refugees.

**Respondents' gender**



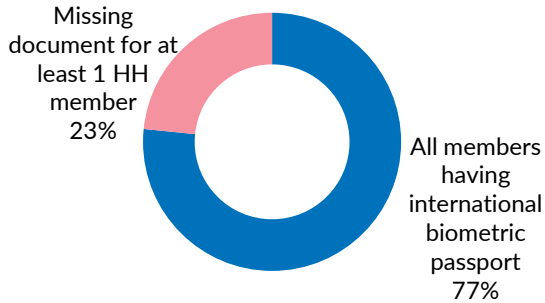
**Respondents' age group**



A refugee family attends a clothing distribution organized by UNHCR in Lublin. © UNHCR/ L.Kucharski

# Key Trends & Figures

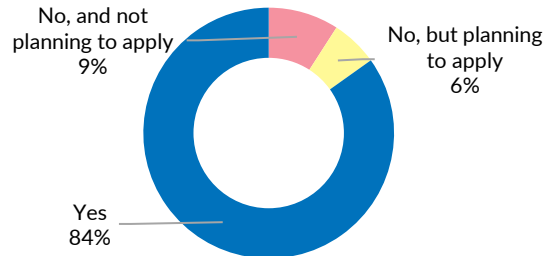
## Individuals having an identity document\*



While 95% of interviewees confirmed having at least one identity document, the most frequently reported missing document is an International Biometric Passport (23% of the respondents); among those missing at least one ID document, 26% stated being unable to replace/renew it in Poland.

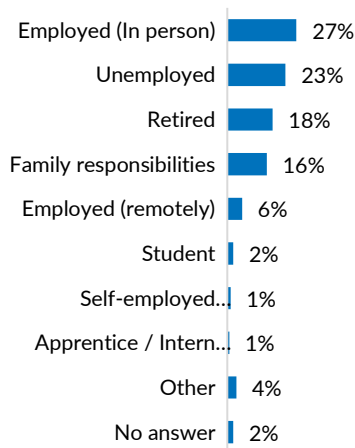
\*Household level

## Application for temporary protection



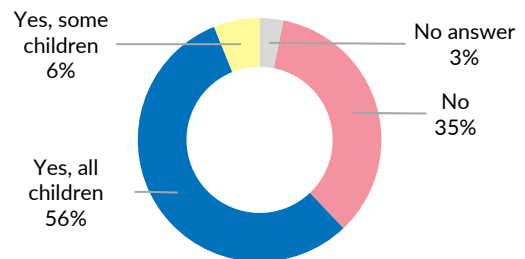
84% of interviewees had applied for temporary protection, of which 97% had already received it and 2% were still waiting at the time of the interview. 88% of those who do not intend to apply are motivated by plans to leave Poland. 86% of those planning to apply arrived in Poland within 30 days of the interview.

## Livelihood activities in Poland



Prior to fleeing Ukraine, 67% of working-age respondents were employed, self-employed or working in a family business.

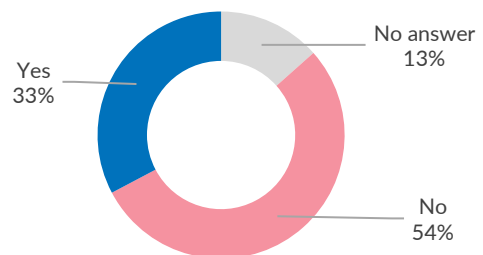
## Enrollment in formal school in Poland among HHs with children\*



\* children aged 5-17

Enrollment rates are self-reported and may not correspond to rates reported by authorities.

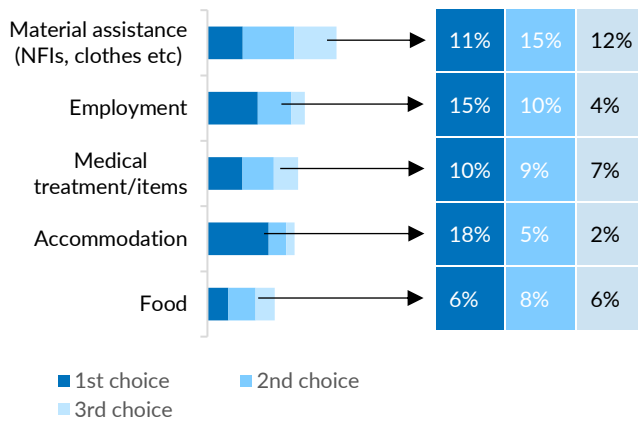
## Childcare access among HHs with infants\*



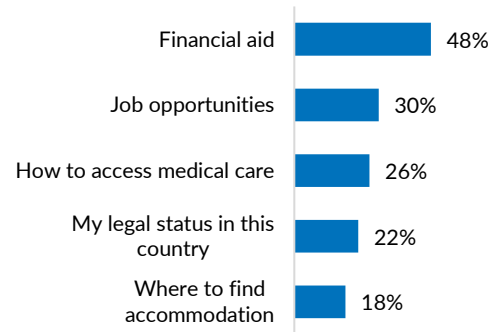
\* children aged 0-4

51% of households reported having at least one child. Among HHs which do not have their children enrolled, 70% cited preference to continue online learning according to the Ukrainian curriculum as the main reason for non-enrollment in the Polish education system.

### Top 5 priority needs



### Top 5 information needs



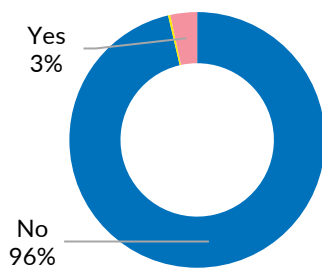
Cash assistance was the preferred mode of support among those who declared having at least one urgent need (82%). 16% of respondents said they had no urgent needs, while 14% said they only had one need. 93% of respondents who applied for governmental social protection schemes or benefits, had no difficulty accessing these schemes or benefits.

The majority of respondents (65%) preferred to get information from social media and messaging apps. During the interviewing process, 61% of respondents were provided with additional information, in response to questions about financial support (35%), access to health/medical services (33%), and employment opportunities (32%).

## Protection risks

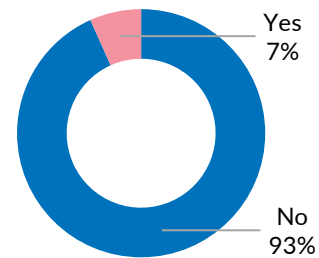
### 1. Status

#### Difficulties to register for PESEL UKR



Among those who applied for temporary protection (84% of all respondents), 3% experienced difficulties in registering for PESEL. The most frequently mentioned difficulties were long queues and waiting times (56%), lack of information (16%) and lack of required documents (15%).

#### Difficulties to access social protection



Among those who applied for governmental social protection schemes or benefits in Poland (68% of all respondents), 7% reported difficulties in accessing social protection. UNHCR does not specify the type of social assistance available, but most participants referred to the 500+ programme. Long waiting times (41%), lack of information (26%) and language barriers (20%) were the most frequently mentioned difficulties.

Those who reported difficulties related to registration for PESEL UKR were more likely to experience difficulties in accessing governmental social protection programmes and benefits (24%).

Based on the information gathered during the protection monitoring interviews, UNHCR has continued to observe numerous cases of unlawful withdrawal of legal status, which adversely affects refugees who have never left Poland or have been outside the country for less than 30 days; thus not falling within Article 11 (2) of the Special Act on assistance for Ukrainian refugees.

Refugees who have lost their temporary protection status without leaving Poland or for a period not exceeding 30 days became aware of these changes only after their social assistance was discontinued, resulting in the suspension of assistance. Although restoration of temporary protection status is usually immediate, the process of reinstating social assistance and resuming entitlements can take several months due to a lack of data synchronization between government entities. Given the reduction in cash assistance programmes by humanitarian actors and international organizations, it is particularly important that social benefits are restored in a timely manner, and that deactivation does not affect those who have not left Poland or left for a period less than 30 days.

Refugees from Ukraine who sought temporary protection in other EU Member States and then settled in Poland frequently face difficulties when attempting to register for PESEL UKR because they must first deregister in the relevant Member State before registering in Poland.

It is important to note that those who no longer enjoy temporary protection in another EU Member State should be able to apply for temporary protection in Poland because they are not covered by Article 11 (3) of the Special Act. According to reports, some municipalities advise refugees to return to Ukraine and re-enter to be able to register for temporary protection.

## 2. Documentation

Out of the total number of respondents interviewed, 23% stated the need to renew or obtain an international biometric passport. Discussions with refugees suggest difficulties in obtaining international biometric passports either high costs or technical difficulties with payments as the primary issues.

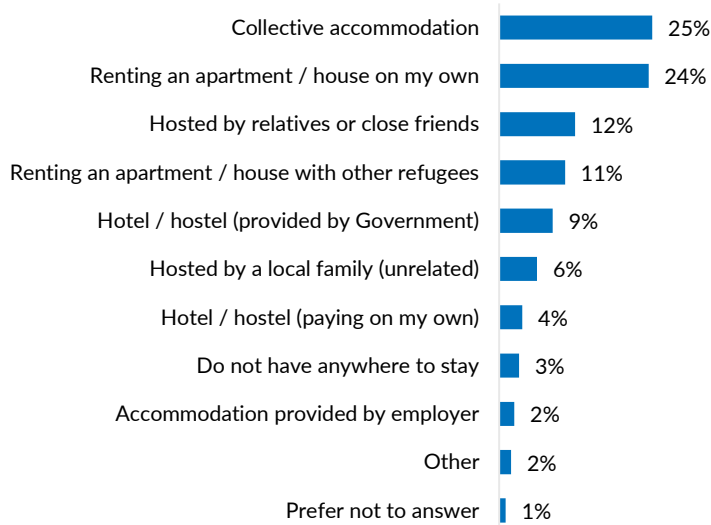
Specific challenges were reported by refugees travelling from the occupied territories in Ukraine. In some cases, refugees are reportedly advised by the Consular services to travel to the nearest Ukrainian city to obtain proof of their nationality.

Children born in the Donbas region after 2014, who may not be in possession of Ukrainian documents, can obtain documents in Poland through the respective Consulates and/or State Enterprise "Document". Among the total population interviewed, 1% reported difficulties with documentation as compared to 4% for persons from Crimea, Luhansk, and Donetsk who may need to obtain new documentation.

## 3. Accommodation-related risks

Despite the robust assistance programme provided by the Government of Poland supported by the humanitarian community, refugees fleeing Ukraine continue to face difficulties in meeting their basic needs. Elderly persons, whose free accommodation programme has ended, and single parent households are among the most impacted groups. Risks of exploitation and trafficking linked to limited safeguards available in some of the collective shelters have been reported during UNHCR's monitoring.

Due to increasing rental costs in cities with employment opportunities, persons interviewed have reported difficulties paying rent. The majority of refugees interviewed stay in collective shelters, followed by those renting accommodation or those being hosted by relatives or close friends. However, it has to be noted that due to nature of protection monitoring that this does not indicate that most refugees stay in collective shelters, but rather the fact that UNHCR protection monitoring sample primarily includes those in collective accommodation.



According to data published by the [Polish Economic Institute](#) in May 2023, 62% of refugees from Ukraine pay the full amount for their accommodation, nearly 14% receive assistance from the authorities (40 PLN/day), and 20% do not pay for accommodation (this does not include persons residing with family or friends).

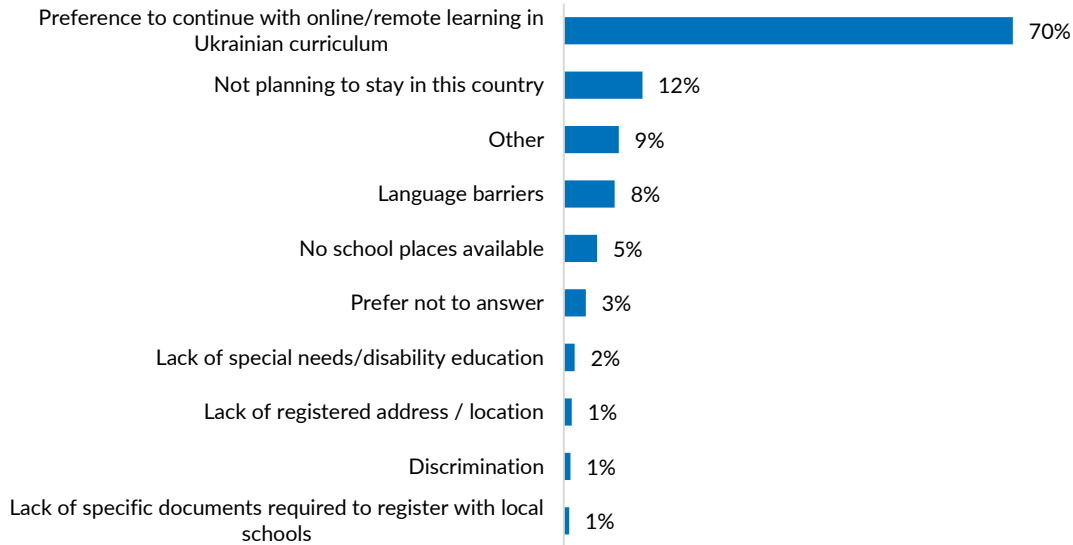
The rapid increase in demand for housing is occurring in a context of significant pre-existing challenges in terms of access to and availability of affordable, social and communal housing, an example of this is rental prices, which have increased by approximately 10% per year in Poland in recent years (according to the [OECD report on Housing Support for refugees from Ukraine in receiving countries](#)).

## 4. Children out of formal education

According to data from the [Center for Citizenship Education](#) more than half of school-aged refugee children remain outside the Polish education system (56%). This figure is higher for children of secondary school age, as approximately only one in five refugee children from Ukraine attends Polish school (78% are not enrolled in the Polish education system).

Refugee children from Ukraine are exempted from mandatory education in Poland as families have the option to sign a disclaimer confirming children attend online education according to the Ukrainian curriculum. 41% of those who were interviewed and have school-aged children, reported not having registered some or all of their children in Polish schools. The primary reason reported was a preference to continue online learning using the Ukrainian curriculum. It is worthy to note that there is no available national data on the number of refugee children enrolled in online education, following the Ukrainian curriculum.

The lack of preparatory classes has been identified as one of the main barriers to inclusion by education stakeholders in Poland, as it is seen as one of the best avenues for inclusion in the national education system for foreign children, including refugee children from Ukraine.



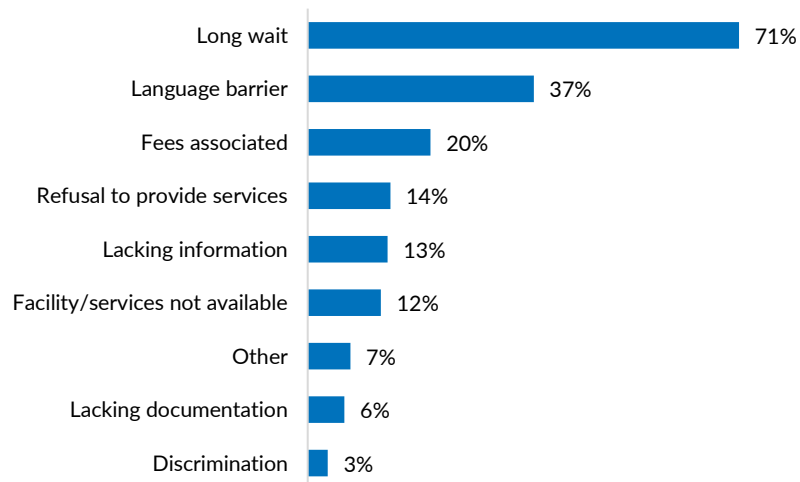
## 5. Barriers to childcare

The majority of refugees reported being unable to access childcare services for their children due to the limited places in free-of-charge kindergartens, especially in urban areas. This is especially a concern for households headed by a single parent. During protection monitoring interviews, it was reported that in the absence of available places, refugees either resort to part-time employment to be able to care for children or have enrolled children in non-formal kindergartens that are run by individuals.

## 6. Barriers to access to healthcare

Access to healthcare is reported to be difficult due to long waiting periods and language barriers. Long waiting periods are particularly concerning for those who require urgent or continuous medical care, as those interviewees stated that they do not have the financial means to cover private doctor visits and are forced to wait for their scheduled appointments, resulting in worsening health conditions. Long waiting times impact all patients, including refugees.

During the period from 23 November 2022 to 31 March 2023, 30% of those who claimed to use medical care mentioned facing difficulties. The following reasons were mentioned among them:



# Recommendations

UNHCR recommends that the Government of Poland put in place necessary measures to prevent arbitrary withdrawal of temporary protection status and ensures proper recording of exit and entries of TPD holders.

UNHCR recommends that the Social Insurance Institution strengthen coordination on entry/exit data with other State institutions to ensure prompt reactivation of social assistance and benefits.

UNHCR recommends that, in light of UNHCR's non-return advisory for Ukraine, the Government of Poland consider providing refugees from Ukraine with relevant identification documentation in Poland to avoid the risk of statelessness for refugees, particularly those from the occupied territories

UNHCR recommends that more resources be made available to teachers to help them welcome and support refugee children in classrooms. This includes empowering teachers with skills and knowledge on teaching Polish as a foreign language, as well as providing mental health and psychosocial support in classrooms.

UNHCR recommends increased support for schools to bolster inclusion efforts and reduce dropout rates among children already enrolled in the Polish education system, including increased funding for preparatory classes and hiring teachers, teaching assistants and cultural mediators.

## Previous publications:



Poland Protection  
Monitoring Brief  
#1 (June 2022 to  
August 2022)



Poland Protection  
Monitoring Brief  
#2 (August 2022 to  
November 2022)

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