

Inspection visit to the Vägeva Unit of the Vao Centre of the Accommodation Centre for Asylum Seekers

Advisors to the Chancellor of Justice paid an unannounced visit to the Vägeva Unit of the Vao Centre of the Accommodation Centre for Asylum Seekers on 4 June 2018.

The helpful attitude of the centre's staff towards the residents and their readiness to solve everyday concerns quickly made a very good impression. Health services are guaranteed to the residents of the centre: primary medical examination, the possibility to visit the local family doctor and medical specialists.

The help of a translator is used during appointments if necessary. This allows the patient to establish a trusting relationship with the doctor and guarantees adequate information exchange upon the provision of health services. The necessary medicines are easily obtained. The children living at the centre have been able to see a dentist free of charge and the residents can get psychological counselling if they need it. It is commendable that school-age children attend the local school and learn the Estonian language. Language lessons are also offered at the centre, where the residents can also participate in leisure activities.

Unfortunately, it is still not possible for the younger children living at the centre to attend a nursery school. The Chancellor of Justice already drew attention to this during the inspection visit to the Vao Centre of the Accommodation Centre for Asylum Seekers in 2014. During the tour of the centre, it seemed that the children have few toys and activities suitable for their age. Situations where the head of the centre is forced to act as the translator between a patient and a doctor, e.g. when a woman needs to visit a gynaecologist, should be avoided. As there are many vacant rooms at the centre, the option of accommodating families in separate flats should be considered.

During the visit, the advisors inspected the centre's building and territory, spoke with the residents and employees of the centre and reviewed the documents concerning the residents. The advisor to the Chancellor of Justice also spoke with the family doctor who provides health services to the centre's residents.