

Unaccompanied children fleeing their country

Unaccompanied fleeing children are children who come to Iceland without their guardians. Most of them are boys, aged 12-17 years, some have been on the run for longer time than others. The Directorate of Immigration handles the cases of individuals who request international protection according to the Foreign Nationals Act 2016 no 80 and there are special rules for handling the cases of unaccompanied minors. When it comes to individuals under the age of 18 there is a reference to the Child Protection Act 2002 no 80, and the Child Protection Services are to provide the children with appropriate resources such as residence, education, leisure activities and financial support.

Application process for caretakers

Those who are willing to become caretakers have to apply for a permit with reference to art 84 of the Child Protection act. The Quality and Supervisory Agency of Welfare (GEV) handles those applications. The application form is at their [website](#). Applicants must provide a medical certificate and a consent regarding the obtainment of criminal record for every family member over 15 years old. The consent form regarding criminal record is at this [link](#). A medical certificate can be obtained from a general practitioner/health care center. The certificate has to affirm the general health of the individual and whether there are any long term illnesses, physical or mental, that could affect his daily activities.

The Quality and Supervisory Agency of Welfare (GEV) will forward the application to the Child Protection Services at the applicant's municipality and request their review. Then GEV will assess the application and decide whether a permit will be issued.

Child Protection Service

When GEV has issued a permit the CPS can make terms with the caretakers to take an unaccompanied child into care. The payments are to be negotiated between the caretakers and the CPS.

The National Agency for Children and Families (BOFS) will in cooperation with the CPS arrange a special course / tuition for the caretakers that take unaccompanied children into care. The purpose is to educate and support the caretakers in their role.

Qualification standards and caretaker's conditions.

Caretakers need to:

- Have a separate room for the child and the family has to be ready to take on this new role
- Have flexible working hours in their jobs, especially in the beginning of the child's stay
- Have general pedagogical abilities and be able to offer good care and support for a child that has likely been traumatized.
- Offer the child safety, maintain clear boundaries and rules but also to be flexible and meet the child on his/her own terms
- Accept that there may be limited information regarding the child's background
- Be able to show tolerance and respect regarding different culture and lifestyle
- Obtain knowledge about the child's culture, religion and traditions and support the child towards personal and social development, conformity and adaptation.
- Have the skill to be able to have a good communication and cooperation with every decision maker and worker in the child's case