**COMPONENT 3.3: Modernisation of employment services and labour market development**

**1. Description of the component**

*Member States are invited to fill in the summary box below.*

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| **Summary box** Modernisation of employment services and labour market development  Policy area/domain: Digital; social policy; Skills, education and training, public administratio**n**  Reforms and/or investments: **Development and modernisation of community-based services for children at risk**  **New Reform: Reform in the care of children at risk**  The aim is to support the availability of community-based services for children and families at risk (community-based residential, outpatient and outreach services) through the transformation of existing residential facilities and newly built services.  **New Investment: Development and modernisation of infrastructure in the field of care for children at risk**  The aim of the measure is to address the inadequate and inappropriate infrastructure of the care of children at risk and to support the process of transition to community-based care in the Czech Republic. Investments will support the building of infrastructure of facilities, either through renovation of existing buildings or through the purchase of real estate.  Estimated cost overall:  The total estimated cost is CZK 948,2, of which CZK 474,1 million will be spent on the purchase of new housing unit for the provision of residential community care and CZK 474,1 million for the creation of new capacities of community character through the construction or reconstruction of existing services for all subjects. |

**2. Main challenges and objectives**

a) Main challenges

The data shows an increasing number of children growing up outside their own families. Moreover, the Czech Republic has long been characterised by a high number of children growing up in institutional care. According to the available statistical data, in recent years there has been only a decline in the number of children in children's homes for children up to 3 years of age, mainly due to legislative changes, while the number of children in children's homes and other institutions of the educational and social type has been high and unchanged for a long time.

As children at risk, we consider all children whose needs are not adequately fulfilled and the situation cannot be solved with family own sources. **In context of our transformation intentions we are focusing mainly on children deprived of family care (children with/without disabilities).[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Other substantive reasons, to which the call relates, include in particular: the current system of care for children at risk in the Czech Republic has its roots primarily in the 1950s. This system has a number of significant shortcomings.

The system of care for children at risk must focus on prevention and the creation of an accessible, available and appropriate network of help and support in the natural environment of the child and his/her family. The Czech system of care for children at risk is still characterised by: 1) a high number of children who are removed from the care of their parents (children removed from their families due to a lack of parental competence combined with the unstable social, economic and housing situation of the family), 2) a high number of children who are placed in residential collective care facilities, 3) the financial flows in the system are unevenly distributed, tending towards costly solutions to consequences rather than prevention.

b) Objectives

**The aim** is to support the deinstitutionalization of residential care for children at risk in the Czech Republic by increasing the availability of **community-type services** for children and families at risk (community-based residential, outpatient and outreach services) **through the transformation of existing residential facilities** and the replacement of existing facilities with **newly built services**.

It is therefore a call for projects with the aim of reducing the number of children living in large-scale residential institutions of the collective type. Thanks to this call, **the state, regions, municipalities and other entities** that establish residential facilities for children **can build a network of community-type residential facilities** and at the same time **strengthen the network of available outreach and outpatient social services** for children and families at risk through the transformation of existing facilities or newly built services[[2]](#footnote-2).

There are many types of residential facilities where children are placed in the Czech Republic. We would like to provide deinstitutionalisation of part of these facilities by replacing children into housing units and to provide background for supporting services for families and children. **The following residential facilities for children** are included in the transformation plan in this call: school facilities such as children's home, children's home with school, educational institute, diagnostic institute, medical facilities, i.e., children's home for children up to 3 years of age, as well as residential social service facilities for children (Home for persons with disabilities focused on minors - DOZP) and facilities for children in need of immediate assistance (ZDVOP).

**3. Description of the reforms and investments of the component**

**Reform: Reform in the care of children at risk**

The aim of the reform is to support, through investment, the modernisation and development of services for children and families at risk in the residential community form and thus to support the reform taking place in parallel in legislative form.

Support the availability of community-based services (residential care) is already possible under current legislation, but examples of good practice need to be supported. Changes in the area of services for children at risk are currently in progress in the Czech Republic, which is also determined and supported by the preparation of new legislation.

The reform is a follow-up to **the amendments to the Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children effective as of 1 January 2022**, which limited the placement of children in residential - institutional forms of foster care and **set age limits from 3 or 4 years** (children's homes up to 3 years of age, ZDVOP, DOZP), which is related to the necessary support for low-capacity social /community services of family type, as well as support for outreach and outpatient services that will support the stay of children in families.

Specifically, there has been **a reduction in the placement of the youngest children in institutional care:**

* setting a limit of 3 years of age of the child for the provision of residential services for children in need of immediate assistance on the basis of a contract and a court decision → with effect from 1 January 2024;
* setting a limit of 3 years of age of a child for ordering a temporary stay of a child in a child care centre, a facility for children in need of immediate assistance, a health care facility or a Home for persons with disabilities focused on minors on the basis of an educational order of a court pursuant to Section 13a of the ZSPOD → from 1 January 2025;
* setting a limit of 3 years of age for the possibility of the court to order a temporary placement of a child in a suitable educational environment other than the care of a natural person at the suggestion of the Authority for social and legal protection of children (OSPOD) → from 1 January 2025;
* setting a limit of 4 years of age in 109/2002 Coll. for the placement of a child in a school institution for the performance of institutional education (children's home, children's home with school, diagnostic institute)

with the exception of co-location of siblings → from 1 January 2025;

* setting a limit of 4 years of age in § 48 of the Social Services Act for the provision of residential services in homes for persons with disabilities, except for children with a degree of dependence on the assistance of another natural person III and IV → from 1. 1. 2025.

**It also follows up on the legislative changes in the amendment to the Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children with effect from 1 January 202, specifically the adjustment of the exclusion of the regulation of children's homes up to 3 years from the law and the de facto termination of the activities of these institutions, and thus the emerging need to build a network of field and outpatient services for children and families.**

In short, we could say that the amendment of the Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children effective from January 2022 approved the ban of placing children of the age 3, resp. 4 years old gradually until 2025. However, it has left some gaps, especially in relation to children's homes under the age of three. Recently prepared amendment intents to cancel the housing facilities for the youngest children (children under 3 years of age) as a such. New amended Act already ban the placement children younger than 4 years old in residential care, from 1.1.2024.

**Following the Government's Programme Declaration, a bill is being prepared that would further unify care for families and children at risk, strengthen social work and services for children at risk, and regulate the conditions of care for children at risk in institutional settings, the paragraph wording of which is expected to be submitted to the Government by the end of 2024.**

The National Strategy for the Protection of Children's Rights 2021-2029[[3]](#footnote-3) , which includes, among other things, the Recommendation: to implement reforms in the field of institutional care for children aimed at greater openness of the system, interconnection of individual specialties, integration of residential services into the mainstream social environment.

One of the objectives is the transformation of all current residential institutions for children, a new unified legal regulation of the provision of all residential services for children with an emphasis on strengthening outpatient and outreach services.

This builds on previous activities in this area, which included mapping services and collecting data on the needs for transforming the system (e.g. activities in the project "Support for Systemic Changes in the Area of Services for Vulnerable children, Young people and Families in the Czech Republic", which mapped residential services in 209 institutions in the Czech Republic and then evaluated them according to the criteria of the need for relationships, safety, learning, health and the environment in which children live (material provision). **The mapping showed that there are currently 141 children´s homes in the Czech Republic with a capacity of 5,046 children, the average size ranges between 35-40 children per facility. For children´s homes with school there are 28 facilities with a capacity of 969. For children´s homes under 3 years of age, there are 20 facilities with a capacity of 138 children under 3 years of age**.

At the same time, it follows the standard of residential services from the Pardubice Region, which transformed a total of 12 households in 5 children's homes (Polička, Pardubice, Holice, Moravská Třebová, Čermná).

*For investments:*

**Investment: Development and modernisation of infrastructure in the field of care for children at risk**

**Description of activities:**

1. **Transformation of the institutional facility(s) for children** through reconstruction and adaptation of the building or facilities for the provision of residential care into a small community residential service. Furthermore, there is also the option to supplement the transformation with services for children, families and young adults (change from a high-capacity residential form to outreach, outpatient and low-capacity services provided in a residential form)
2. **or creation of a new service** through the purchase of real estate to provide a community residential service without an additional complementary social service.

**The aim is not to increase existing service capacities, but on the contrary to reduce them.**

The aim is to transform the institutional service for children at risk or to create a new service to support small residential services. The aim is to make these community-based residential services for children as family-like as possible.

In the framework of the transformation of the current facility, the project of a small **residential service can be combined with the creation of an environment for a suitable social service of an outpatient or field character focused on children and families at risk.** The support of the social service is always complementary to the main activity,[[4]](#footnote-4) which is the adaptation of the current residential service for children towards a smaller community service.

Our intention is to go through two possible modalities. One is the transformation of current large capacity facility to create small housing unit (flats). The other option is to create community type of housing for children in common housing (family houses, semi-detached houses), with possibilities to use some space to create the background for out-of-house and ambulatory services for children and families at risk.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Newly built or transformed services are intended to replace the capacity of existing services, not to supplement them.**

Specifically, the activity description for the small residential service is subject to the following changes and conditions, which will be binding for obtaining financial support:

* The condition for receiving the support is to transform or create services that will with their residential capacity correspond to the community facility. The created residential service has the parameters of a normal household in an apartment or house.
* The maximum household capacity is 6 children, with a maximum of 2 to 3 family households per property; this number of children per household can only be exceeded if siblings are entrusted to the care of these facilities.
* The service is located in a separate building, ideally in an apartment or family house away from the premises of a school facility, health care facility or other residential services for children (DOZP, ZDVOP).
* Inclusionary housing is a priority and a prerequisite, especially in a dispersed form in a conventional housing development, e.g., an apartment or two apartments in an apartment building occupied by ordinary households.
* Regular public transportation with regular service connections and commuter access to common services (schools, shops, services, doctors) within the community must be provided.
* The minimum technical standard sets the minimum area of a single room per child at 8 m2. Each child has his/her own room (siblings may be exempted). The room cannot be pass-through.
* The spatial and material equipment corresponds to an ordinary household with the existence of a common living room and kitchenette and without the elements of an institution (i.e., there is no office, no visiting room).
* The furnishings and layout of the rooms must also allow for visits and stays by the child's loved one, so that the loved one can have a sense of private space with the child. The individual needs of the children and the security of their privacy shall always be taken into account.
* The condition is the preparation and submission of a transformation plan for the facility, which, in addition to the technical and spatial conditions, will also include the procedure for preparing and supporting staff, children and their families for the transition to another type of service and ensuring the quality of the service provided, including how to monitor the quality.

**The setting of the form is based on the existing mapping of services and the transformation of facilities that has already taken place[[6]](#footnote-6).**

**Eligible applicants are:**

- central government bodies according to Act No. 2/1969 Coll. (Competence Act),

- Regions under Act No 129/2000 Coll., on Regions

- the Capital City of Prague pursuant to Act No 131/2000 Coll., the Act on the Capital City of Prague

- municipalities according to Act No. 128/2000 Coll., on Municipalities

- non-state non-profit organisations (public benefit societies, registered churches, associations, institutes, foundations).

**4. Open strategic autonomy and security issues**

Not relevant in terms of the component content.

**5. Cross-border and multi-country projects**

Not relevant in terms of the component content.

**6. Green dimension of the component**

*See attachment “1. Costing 2023 Revisions”.*

**7. Digital dimension of the component**

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**8. Do no significant harm**

**Activity No. 1: Transformation of residential care facility(s) for children through reconstruction and adaptation of the building or facilities for the provision of residential care (...)**

The standard approach here should be along the lines of the already implemented NRP calls of Component 3.3 for the development of social infrastructure and children's groups. For this reason, it is necessary to make a substantive assessment that the activities of this Activity No. 2 contribute to the objectives set by DNSH based on the technical screening criteria for Area No. 7 CONSTRUCTION AND REAL ESTATE ACTIVITIES "to determine under what conditions an economic activity qualifies as a significant contribution to climate change mitigation or adaptation and whether the economic activity significantly undermines any of the other environmental objectives." Each activity in this Activity 2 should be assessed against the six DNSH objectives. A similar format to the annexes attached to the social infrastructure and children's groups appeals can be used. This activity No. 2 is practically the same focus as the above-mentioned calls, i.e. the main activities are the construction of new facilities, and the reconstruction of existing infrastructure facilities in the field of care for vulnerable children.

**9. Milestones, targets and timeline**

**Milestones and targets.** Member States are invited to fill in table 1 on Milestones and targets, provided separately in excel format.

**MILESTONE:**

1. **Amendment to the Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children shall enter into force – 31.12.2024, ensuring that:**

**1)the placement of children below 4 years of age in institutional care is banned, with at most two exceptions: i) stays no longer than (at most) two month, ii) children in the 3. or 4. intensity-of-care category**

**2)Institutional care (“Dětské domovy pro děti do 3 let věku”) for children below 4 years of age are abolished**

**OBJECTIVE:**

**at least 5580 m2 of the housing area shall be acquired as housing for children at risk nationwide by Q4/2025 and at least 237 places shall be in the facilities for children at risk through construction or renovation of existing services for all entities by Q2/2026. If at least 237 places are fulfilled, the unspent allocation will be transferred in favor of the purchase of apartments, which will support the deinstitutionalization of care for children at risk**

**10. Financing and costs**

**Estimated cost of the plan.** Member States are invited to fill in table 2 on Estimated cost of the plan, provided separately in excel format.

The costs are based on the following data and experience from past transformations

1. **To acquire the object** 
   * A housing unit for a residential community service including building modifications = average price CZK 8 mil. CZK
   * with an allocation of CZK 474,100,000 this meansat least 5580 m2 of housing area for the care of children at risk.
2. **To transform of the facility, including modifications for an additional social service**

* It can be based on data that according to the price indicators in the construction industry for 2023, the price per 1 m3 of built-up space in the case of buildings for education and training is CZK 15 890.
* The price indicator used takes into account renovation of existing facilities for children at risk. This will be mainly reconstruction of old buildings in various (mostly unsatisfactory) technical conditions. The construction costing assumes that the construction works will require reconstruction of the building, including a change in the layout, reconstruction of technical installations and building equipment, based on the current operational requirements and in accordance with the applicable standards. As many of these are buildings with varying degrees of conservation protection, the construction works will be mostly technically demanding. The building standards must meet the conditions for the relevant subsidy programmes in terms of the energy performance of the buildings and the conditions of the DNSH. For these reasons, our estimated indicative indicator for the construction costs estimate is at the following level.
* The minimum technical standard set the minimum area of a single room at 8 m2. From these parameters, it is possible to derive an approximate cost of the construction costs for the improvement of one place in the residential service is around CZK 1 286 000.
* The cost of transformation of a facility on the average from 6 to 18 places for children in the residential service and facilities for the provision of an additional social service is estimated on the average of CZK 22,727,272.
* **With the allocation of CZK 474,100,000, we estimate to support 237 places for children at risk**

**11. Loan request justification (if applicable)**

We do not plan loan support.

1. Additionally, legal definition of children at risk is following: Children at risk are considered as children (the Law on Social and Legal Protection of Children): 1. whose parents are deceased OR 2. they fail to fulfil the obligations arising from parental responsibility OR fail to exercise or abuse the rights of parental responsibility. 2. who have been entrusted to the care of another person responsible and that person fails to fulfil the obligations arising from the entrustment of the child to his care; 3. who lead an idle or immoral life (neglect school, not working even if they do not have a sufficient source of livelihood, using alcohol or addictive substances, being at risk of addiction, living in prostitution, have committed a criminal offence), 4. who repeatedly commit runaways from their parents or other persons responsible for the upbringing of the child;, 5. on whom an offence endangering life (health, liberty, human dignity, moral development or property has been committed or is suspected of having been committed)., 6. who, on the basis of requests from parents or other persons responsible for the upbringing of the child, are repeatedly placed in institutions providing continuous care for children or their placement in such institutions lasts longer than 6 months; 7. who are threatened by violence between parents or other persons responsible for the upbringing of the child, 8. who are applicants for international protection, asylum seekers or persons enjoying subsidiary protection  unaccompanied foreign children [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Outpatient and outreach services for children and families in risk. For example Center for children, Family Therapy Center or Center for families, Outpatient and outreach social services like Crisis assistance, telephone crisis assistance, Basic social counselling, social therapy workshops focused on families and children. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. **The National Strategy for the Protection of Children's Rights 2021-2029** The main objective of this strategy is to ensure the quality of life of children so that they can grow up in a safe family environment and have equal opportunities to develop to their full potential) [4d20b44e-a8c5-6882-d46f-a8d0fb7695d5 (mpsv.cz)](https://www.mpsv.cz/documents/20142/225508/NARODNI+STRATEGIE+OCHRANY+PRAV+DETI+2021_2029_FINAL.pdf/4d20b44e-a8c5-6882-d46f-a8d0fb7695d5) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For example Center for children, Family Therapy Center or Center for families, Outpatient and outreach social services - Crisis assistance, telephone crisis assistance, Basic social counselling. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. It does not mean children in common housing facilities would not have the access to social services, they would just use the services by external or in house visits, as any other children [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The data are based on the implementation of the systemic project "Support for Systemic Changes in the Area of Care Services for Vulnerable Children, Young people and Families in the Czech Republic", which mapped residential services in 209 facilities in the Czech Republic and then evaluated them according to the criteria of the need for relationships, safety, learning, health and the environment in which the children live (material provision). **The mapping showed that there are currently 141 children´s homes in the Czech Republic with a capacity of 5,046 children, the average size is between 35-40 children per facility. For children´s homes with school there are 28 facilities with a capacity of 969. For children´s homes under 3 years of age, there are 20 facilities with a capacity of 138 children under 3 years of age.**

   At the same time, it follows **the standard of residential services from the Pardubice Region, which transformed a total of 12 households in 5 children's homes** (Polička, Pardubice, Holice, Moravská Třebová, Čermná). Each **household has a maximum capacity of 6 children, with a five-member staff rotating in two-shift operation.** The transformation was carried out through relocation to a rented flat for the residential service, purchase of a suitable house in a family housing estate, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)