

Country Profile

Romania¹

Children in care in Romania

- There are about 60,000 children in alternative care in Romania
- 21,986 are in residential care; 19,065 are in foster families; 14,588 are in kinship care; 4,004 have been placed in other families; 1,616 children are in guardianship
- 7,746 children in alternative care are registered as disabled
- Social workers may be responsible for anything from 30 – 150 children. However, the average is normally between 75 children.
- In residential services, children might meet regularly with their social worker; for children in foster care, meetings may take place once every two months (at best)

Overview of care arrangements

The de-institutionalisation process in Romania began in 2011 and was accompanied in 2014 by a ban on institutionalising children under 3 years old. The National Strategy for Protecting and Promoting Child Rights (2014-2020) aims to identify problems and priority areas for children's rights. An important focus has been to reduce the number of children separated from their families by developing policies directed towards addressing family breakdown.

Formal inclusion of children's rights

Children's rights are included within various national laws and policies – for example, the Law for the Protection and Promotion of Children's Rights (no. 272/2004), Order No. 35/2003 for the Approval of Minimum Mandatory Standards for Child Protection in Foster Families and Implementation Guide. The National Authority for the Protection of the Rights of the Child is the central authority for monitoring children's rights and an independent Ombudsman also exists. However, the official monitoring bodies are judged as 'not very effective'. Inadequate mechanisms, a lack of resources and poorly trained staff are contributing factors. Certain initiatives exist which have been set up by civil society organisations to monitor or take complaints about children's rights.

Child Care Service Workforce

The legal minimum requirement in terms of professional education for social workers and professionals giving specialised support to children in Romania is a university degree (Bachelor or Master of Science). Child Rights are reported to form the basis and integral part of the education of social workers, but are only given minimal attention for professionals giving specialised support to children. Social workers and professionals giving specialised support to children are also required by law to follow accredited courses relevant to their work; however, this is not mandatory for the renewal of their licence. The respondent furthermore reports that this is not upheld in practice even though courses are regularly available.

The legal minimum requirement for caregivers in residential care in terms of professional education is a lower vocational educational degree where Child Rights are stated not to be given any attention. Caregivers in residential care are required by law to follow accredited courses relevant to their work, to keep or renew their license to practice. This is however stated not to be upheld in practice and there are no continuous learning opportunities regularly available.

¹ The information in this country profile was drawn from the responses to three surveys which were answered by three national experts.

The figures are for June 2014.

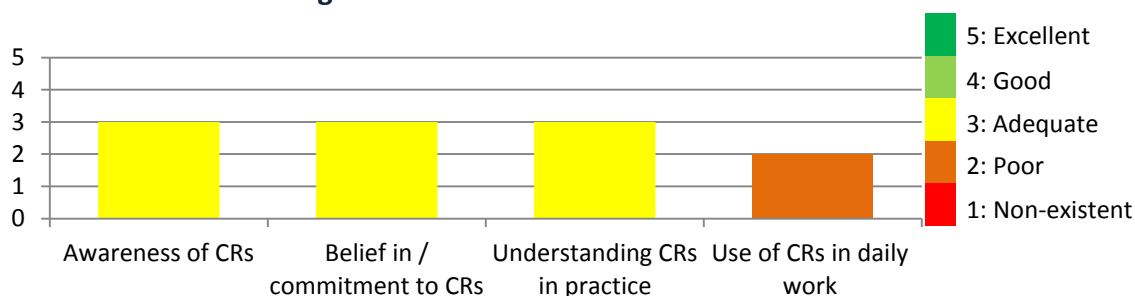
Caregivers in family-like care usually support social parents and are required to have at least a lower vocational educational degree. In most cases a high school diploma is sufficient. There is no legal requirement to follow accredited courses relevant to their work, to keep or renew their license to practice.

Professional foster parents are required to follow an accredited/official preparatory course and subsequent follow-up training on a regular basis. Child Rights are not given attention in the preparatory course but they are a substantial part of the follow-up training.

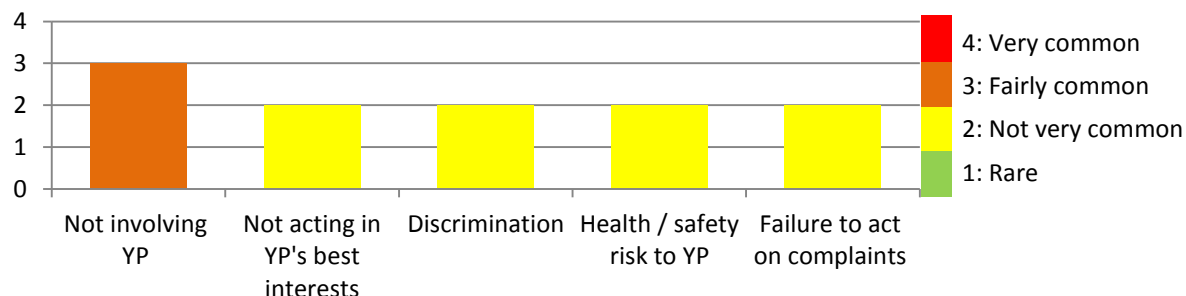
Assessing the state of children's rights

Respondents were asked to give their personal assessment with regards to care professionals and children's rights. The results are shown in the charts below.

Your assessment: care professionals and children's rights



Your assessment: how common are the following?



Key challenges

- There are significant shortages in human and financial resources within the public sector. This means that training for care professionals is inadequate, as are attempts to ensure proper monitoring of children's rights
- There is currently no system to reward or recognise high quality work on the part of individual care professionals or of institutions (despite the passing of the Law on Quality of Services in 2012)
- There is a poor understanding among care professionals of certain issues – for example, how to respond to the psychological needs of children in care, how to ensure a safe environment for children, how to address bad behaviour, positive parenting etc.
- Violence is still seen as an acceptable response in certain cases: for example, there is an underlying belief that the child should be 'obedient', so smacking may sometimes be an appropriate response
- Many care professionals do not have many of the skills needed to take a child-centred approach – for example, managing tantrums effectively, ensuring child participation etc