

Guide for the Implementation and Monitoring of Child Guarantee Local Units

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1. Brief Framework for the European Child Guarantee

The European Union (EU) is committed to being a pioneer in the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Some of these objectives are based, among others, on the eradication of poverty, the guarantee of a healthy life and the promotion of well-being, as well as the guarantee of inclusive, quality and equitable education.

The European Parliament, in its resolution of 11 March 2021, advised the Commission to incorporate concrete measures to eradicate child poverty into the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, including the establishment of a European Child Guarantee. The European Parliament also called on Member States to invest all possible resources, including Union funds, in the fight against poverty and social exclusion of children as well as in the establishment of national action plans for the Child Guarantee.

The European Semester's economic and employment policy coordination process, supported by the Social Scoreboard, has highlighted the problem of poverty and social exclusion of children, and some Member States have received specific recommendations in this regard.

Council Recommendation 2021/1004/EU of 14 June 2021 on the Child Guarantee, adopted unanimously during the Portuguese Presidency of the EU, complements Recommendation 2013/112/EU as a concrete outcome of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and complements the Union's comprehensive Strategy on the Rights of the Child.



1.1 Objective

Prevent and combat social exclusion, ensuring access for children and young people at risk of poverty or social exclusion to a set of essential services, with a view to combating child poverty and promoting equal opportunities.

1.2 Recipients

Children and young people at risk of child poverty or social exclusion, in particular:

- a) Children and young people in a situation of homelessness or in a situation of severe housing shortage;
- b) Children and young people with disabilities;
- c) Children and young people with mental health problems;
- d) Migrant children and young people or ethnic minorities;
- e) Children and young people in residential care;
- f) Children and young people with vulnerable family situations:
 - Single-parent household;
 - Disability;
 - Mental health or long-term illness;
 - Drug addiction;
 - Domestic violence;
 - Children of citizens born in the European Union, whose parents have moved to another Member State and their children have remained in the State of origin;
 - Mothers/teenage children;
 - Reclusive Father/Mother.

1.3 Essential Services

Ensure access to essential services for children and young people, including:

- Care and education in 1st Childhood;
- Education and activities in a school context;
- One healthy meal per school day;
- Health Care;
- Healthy Eating;
- Decent housing;

2. Child Guarantee Organisation Chart

The implementation, management and operationalization of the Child Guarantee Action Plan requires a governance model that includes cooperation and articulation between the four levels that comprise it:

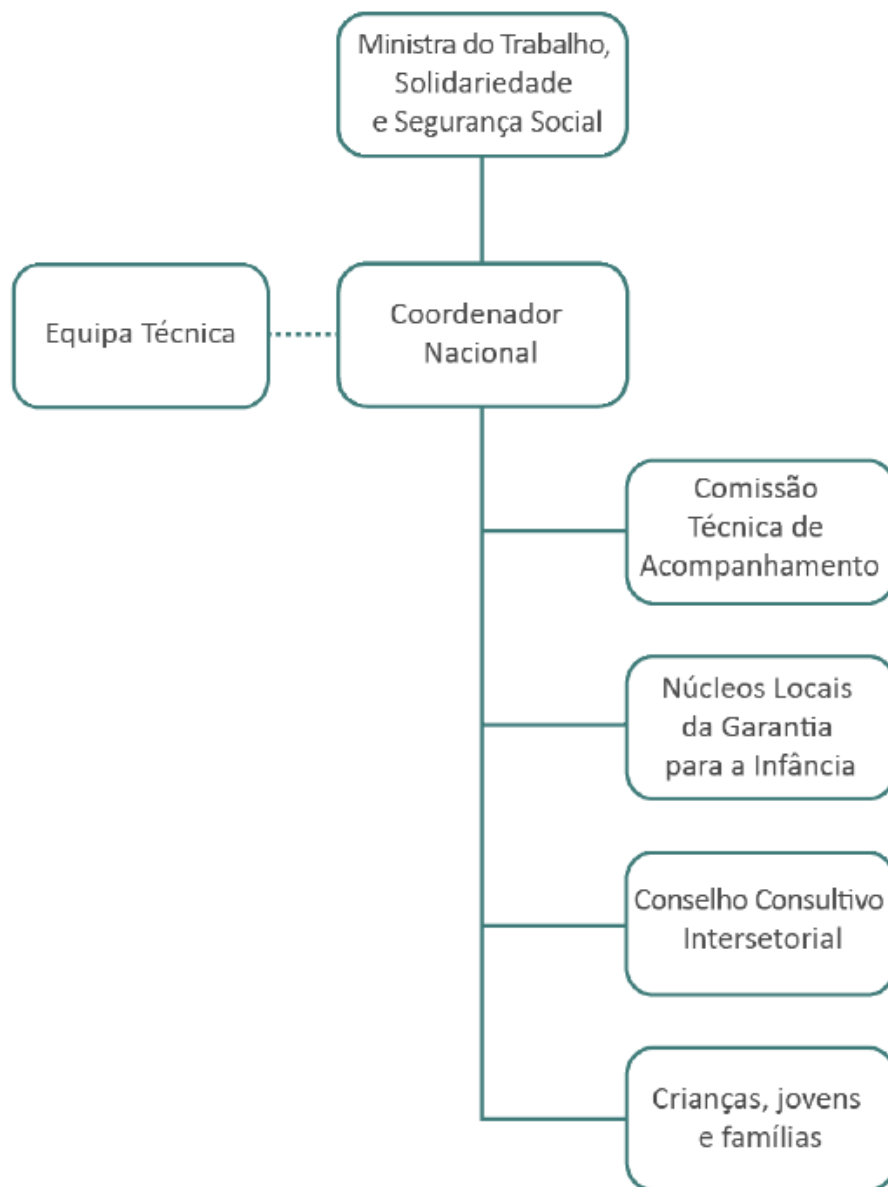
General Structure of the National Coordination of the Child Guarantee

Level I - Political Coordination - Ensured by the member of the Government responsible for the area of solidarity and social security.

Level II - Strategic and Technical Coordination - ensured by the National Coordinator and his team, assisted by the technical monitoring committee (CTA), composed of representatives of the governmental areas with responsibilities in the implementation of actions within the scope of the respective areas of intervention;

Level III - Operationalization - ensured by the bodies

responsible for implementing the measures, with the operationalization developed at the local level within the scope of the NLGPI, created within the scope of the CLAS, as representative structures that implement the Recommendation locally;



Level IV - Advisory - composed of the Intersectoral Advisory Council, as a body that issues opinions and recommendations and aims to ensure the mobilization, participation and contribution of organizations representing civil society, as well as children, young people and families.

3. Methodology for the Implementation of the Child Guarantee Local Units

3.1 Integrated and Participatory Local Intervention Model

"Strengthening cooperation and coordination between services at various levels ensures effective prevention and promotes the social inclusion of children."

Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June 2021

In order to achieve the objectives of the Child Guarantee, it is of utmost importance to ensure an integrated social intervention between different public services, entities and social organisations, which favours local and proximity action in terms of the phenomena of poverty and social exclusion and considers the specific needs of children, young people and their families, depending on the particularities of urban, rural, remote or disadvantaged areas (Point 6(b) of the Recommendation).

In fact, within the scope of the Child Guarantee, it is important to ensure effective and quality responses that allow and guarantee the access of all children and young people to a set of essential services in early childhood care, education and activities in a school context, health, healthy eating and housing, creating levels of access to different public services that are appropriate to the different socio-territorial realities, taking into account the prevalence rate of poverty or social exclusion in the territories.

In this context, and in the context of an articulation with municipalities and other local government entities, an integrated and coordinated social intervention can be decisive for the effective implementation and application of public policies to combat poverty, while preventing and breaking the intergenerationality of poverty phenomena.

By having a privileged position due to the proximity they have to people and their problems, entities at the local level assume a position that allows them to identify and respond more quickly and with greater rigor to their needs and needs.

challenges, as well as enhancing and monetizing the most appropriate resources for each situation.

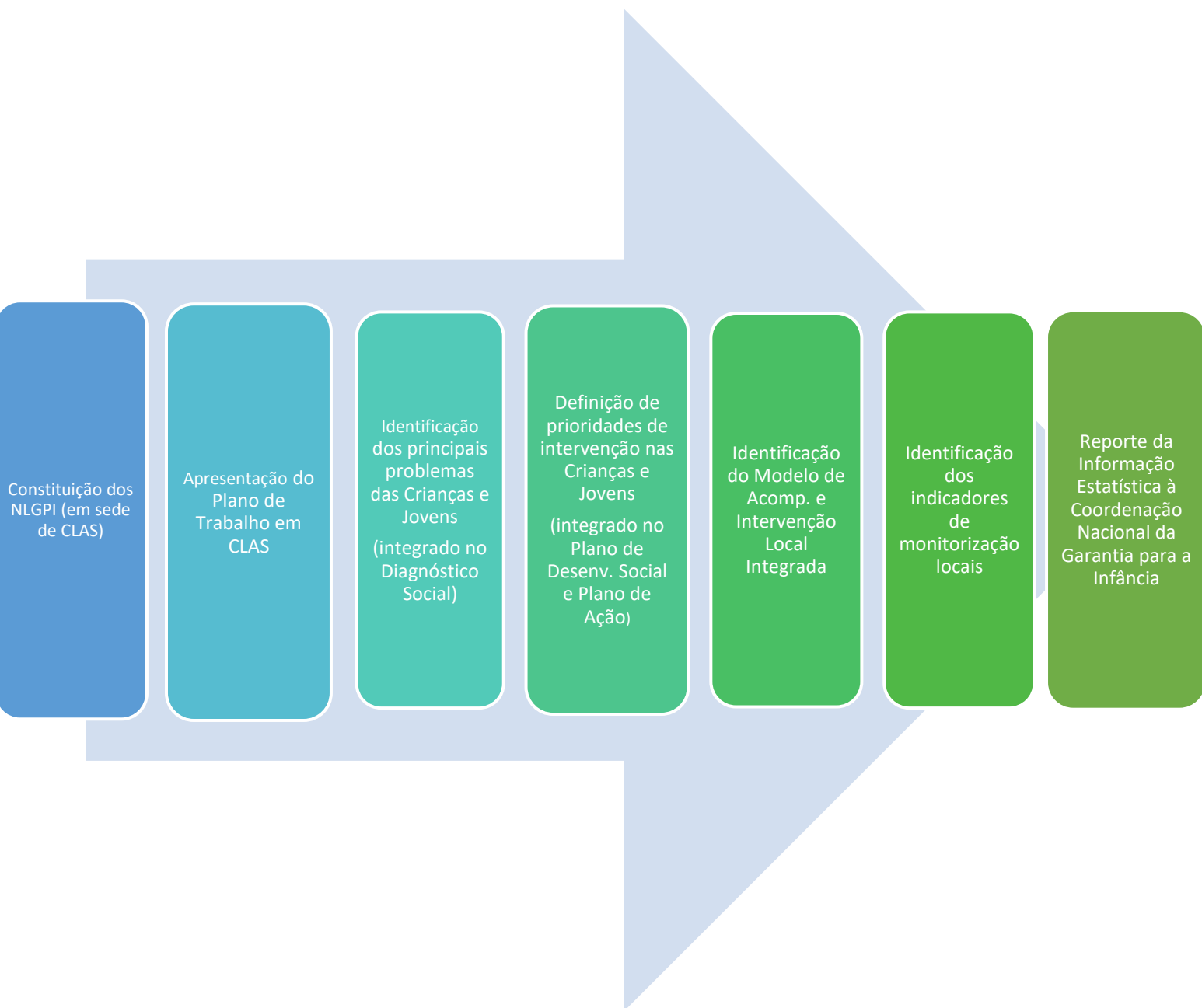
In this context, local social intervention policies are thus recognized as fundamental and also as enhancers and creators of economic development and social cohesion, intra and interterritorial.

In this context, the Social Network (implemented in Portugal, since 2006, through Decree-Law No. 115/2006 of 14 June, in its current wording), as an articulation platform that brings together different public, private and social sector entities in a logic of action in broad, effective and dynamic partnership, aiming at the strategic planning of social intervention at the local level, it is the structure that is most effectively able to respond to the achievement of the objectives of the Child Guarantee and the new challenges it poses.

Based on a set of principles that are common to Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/2014 of 14 June 2021 and to the Child Guarantee in Portugal, the Social Network, through its bodies, promotes partnership work involving different social actors, of different but complementary natures and areas of intervention, with the aim of contributing to the eradication of poverty and social exclusion and to the promotion of social development at the same time. local level. In fact, the structural and operational logic of the Social Network allows action in the territories, based on equality between the intervening partners, respect for the knowledge, identity, potential and intrinsic values of each one, as well as on the sharing, participation, collaboration and concertation of the actions developed by the different local agents, optimizing endogenous and exogenous resources in the territory, in pursuit of common objectives.

From this perspective, attentive to the competences of the local councils for social action (CLAS) within the scope of the Social Network, it is of utmost importance to set up **Local Child Guarantee Nuclei (NLGPI)** especially aimed at the problems and needs of children, young people and their families, in situations of social vulnerability.

4. Methodological Steps of Implementing the Child Guarantee at Local Level



5. Establishment of the Local Child Guarantee Nuclei (NLGPI)

The Coordination of the Child Guarantee proposes the presentation of the Child Guarantee Recommendation first on the Supra-municipal Platforms and, at a later stage, to the Local Councils for Social Action.

In this context, the importance of the supra-municipal platforms deserves special mention, as they are responsible, in particular, for ensuring the harmonisation and articulation of the initiatives developed by the different CLAS, promoting thematic meetings for knowledge and analysis of the social problems of the territory and, implementing the principle of subsidiarity, analysing and promoting the resolution or referral to the national level of the problems presented to it by the different CLAS that integrate them.

These meetings aim to clarify to the different entities that make up these structures, Supra-municipal Platforms and/or Local Councils for Social Action, the field of action of the Child Guarantee, the impacts generated and the potential in the consultation of this Recommendation with the Social Network.

Thus, within the framework of effective cooperation and related application of national and local policies that are especially attentive to the particularities of the different territories, in addition to an integrated and multidisciplinary approach to the problems, a more appropriate and more immediate response to the specific needs of children, young people and their families is achieved, pursuing the objectives of the European Recommendation on the Child Guarantee.

In these meetings, the Local Councils for Social Action, hereinafter referred to as CLAS, should be made aware of the importance of creating a working group that will be called the **Local Nucleus of the Child Guarantee (NLGPI)**, whose materialization should be ensured by a protocol prepared and made available by the National Coordination of the Child Guarantee.

Thus, the NLGPI, to be constituted in the plenary of the respective CLAS, article 26(c), in which it states that this body has the competence to create thematic working groups, whenever deemed necessary for the treatment of issues

specific areas, aims to integrate local and institutional partners with intervention in the areas of early childhood care, education, health, food, housing, social inclusion

and integration, the rights of children and young people, non-discrimination and the promotion of equality, provide a broad and integrated approach, as well as a more objective and targeted intervention to combat poverty in children and young people, at the same time that they guarantee the articulation, the interlocution, assumed by the coordinator of each Social Network, and the report with the National Coordination of the Child Guarantee.



The **NLGPI** are especially aimed at the problems and needs of children, young people and their families in situations of social vulnerability and, in addition to the areas listed, they can always include people who, not being part of the CLAS, can be an asset in these thematic areas.

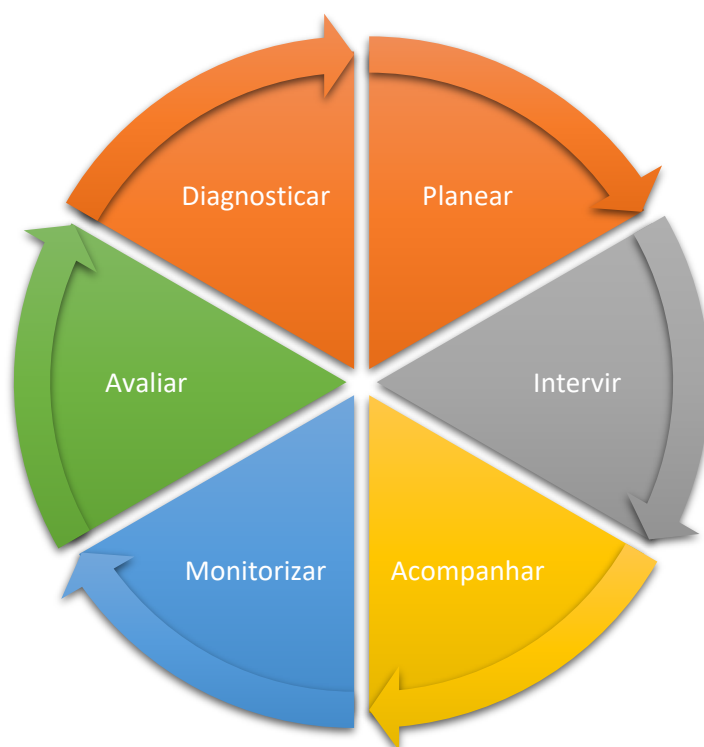
This group may have a variable composition, depending on the size of each territory, however it should seek to cover all the areas contemplated in the Recommendation, with the following functions:

- Define a focal point (Social Network technical);
- Analyze the Child Guarantee Recommendation;
- Attend the training provided by the National Coordination of the Child Guarantee;

- Prepare a work plan based on the guidelines of the National Coordination of Child Guarantee, which will be returned and agreed upon in CLAS;
- Actively participate in the preparation of local social planning documents (diagnosis, social development plan and action plan);
- Ensure in a concerted manner the implementation of the responses that emerge from the social development plan;
- Collaborate in the monitoring of the evaluation indicators defined by the Child Guarantee.

5.1 NLGPI Working Methodology

The NLGPI's work methodology is based on the participatory planning strategy of the Social Network, which arises in response to the need to understand, analyze and act on social conditions in the area of childhood and youth in a local context.



6. Diagnose and Plan

"Territory is a complex, multidimensional concept with different interpretations, but complementary."

Dias, R. C., & Seixas, P. C. (2020). Territorialization of public policies, process or approach?. *RPER*, (55)

Diagnosis is a process of elaboration and systematization of information that implies knowing and understanding the problems, their causes and evolution over time, conditioning risk factors and trends in a given context.

The diagnostic and planning approach is part of the Social Network methodology, and the dimensions of Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 should be considered in the scope of the NLGPI.

To this end, the realization of a territorial diagnosis, namely of the **Children and Youth axis**, must follow a set of steps:

- a) Characterization of the phenomenon of child poverty in the territory(ies);
- b) Identification of problems in terms of access to essential services mentioned in Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004 of 14 June;
- c) Characterization, in a logic of integrated response, of the model of social intervention in the territory;
- d) Identification and characterization of other responses in the field of childhood and youth developed in the territory (Ex CLDS);
- e) Ensuring a diagnostic approach that includes the sectoral areas with responsibilities at the level of essential services enshrined in Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004;
- f) Collection and/or production of qualitative and quantitative information based on a set of indicators defined by the Child Guarantee;
- g) Prioritisation based on the scale or severity of the problems listed in the Child Guarantee Recommendation.

The methodological proposal adopted for the elaboration of the Diagnosis will be transversal to the axis of children and young people, although it must obey the steps previously listed.

At the same time, the National Coordination of the Child Guarantee may complement its intervention, if justified, with training in methods and techniques of social research, with the partners that make up the Children and Youth Axis.

The social development plan with a strategic axis of prevention and intervention in the context of the phenomenon of child poverty must be based on the following assumptions:

- a) Existence of planning and planning that provides for the achievement of the objectives of Council Recommendation (EU) 2021/1004;
- b) Demand for an approach of intervention and close monitoring, aimed at children and young people, and their families, combating child poverty and promoting equal opportunities;
- c) Ensuring the participation and involvement of children and young people, as well as their families.

7. Intervene and Follow Up

Within the framework of the problems identified, and depending on the specific local reality, an integrated and multidimensional intervention and monitoring of the phenomenon of social exclusion and child poverty should be ensured, with a view to minimising the problems identified and pursuing the objectives of the Recommendation.

The Social Network Action Plan prepared by the executive nucleus of the Local Council for Social Action (CLAS), in close coordination with the NLGPI in the corresponding matter, is approved in the plenary of the CLAS that corresponds to the territory to be intervened.

The actions of each axis of intervention, in which the axis of children and young people must be foreseen, are materialized through the Action Plan of the Social Network of each municipality, based on the planning instruments of the CLAS, namely in the Diagnosis and Social Development Plan of the Municipalities.

The Action Plan must, in the event that there is another programme and/or project aimed at children and young people in the same territory, provide for ways of

articulating with these projects of these programmes, in order to coordinate the responses that are being developed in the territory.

In the case of integrating responses that are being funded, namely actions that mobilize the resources available in the community and that promote integrated development in various areas of intervention, they should be analysed how they respond to the objectives of the Child Guarantee and provide for this concertation in the context of the NLGPI.

With regard to the technical nature of the model, it is important to highlight the need for the intervention to be carried out with children and young people, and their families, who are in a situation of social vulnerability, to take place during the time necessary for the problems and vulnerabilities identified to be eliminated, and their causes or origins extinguished or reduced.

8. Monitor and Evaluate

In the monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of the objectives of the European Child Guarantee Recommendation, a common framework of indicators should be applied to enable the National Coordination of the Child Guarantee to monitor progress and evaluate the national implementation of the Recommendation.

To this end, a set of indicators to support diagnosis and regular monitoring and evaluation of the Child Guarantee will be made available shortly.

9. Child Guarantee Portal (GPI)

It is crucial to have an information and communication system in which it privileges a national and local aspect capable of generating a continuous flow of information that constitutes an effective added value for the implementation of the Child Guarantee.

It is intended that the Child Guarantee Portal, www.garantiainfancia.gov.pt, responds locally to the following needs/objectives:

1. Ensure the updating/construction of diagnoses and social development plans, in which the area of childhood and youth is contemplated, making available the links of the municipalities for dissemination purposes;
2. Ensure the circulation and dissemination of important information to the partners of the Social Network and the community, for example, information regarding applications that open for programs within the scope of GPI's action, publicity of actions promoted by the Child Guarantee and/or CLAS;
3. Feed the indicators pre-defined by the National Coordination of the Child Guarantee, available through a reserved area (under construction) for the Child Guarantee Local Units.

10. Glossary

Children and young people in situations of social vulnerability - people under 18 years of age at risk of poverty or social exclusion, namely those with a migrant background, from ethnic minorities, in particular from Roma communities, in a precarious family situation, in a situation of severe housing deprivation, with disabilities, with mental health problems, in alternative care facilities, above all institutional;

Children with a migrant background - children who are third-country nationals, regardless of their migratory status, and children who are nationals of a Member State and who have a migrant background in a third country because at least one of their parents was born abroad;

Children in a precarious family situation - children exposed to various risk factors that can lead to poverty or social exclusion, including: living in a family in which only one person receives earnings; living with a parent with a disability; living in a household where there are mental health problems or a long-term illness; living in a household where there are problems of drug addiction or domestic violence; being the child of an EU citizen who has moved to another Member State and the children have remained in their Member State of origin; being the child of an adolescent mother or being a teenage mother; and being the child of a prisoner parent;

Effective access - a situation where services are readily available, affordable, accessible, of good quality and provided in a timely manner, and where potential users are aware of their existence and of their right to use them;

Effective and free access - a situation where services are readily available, accessible, of good quality and provided in a timely manner, and where potential users are aware of their existence and of their right to use them, and the services in question are provided free of charge, either through the organisation and provision of those services, either by means of adequate services to cover their costs or burdens or in such a way that financial circumstances do not constitute an obstacle to equal access;

Activities in a school context - learning through sports, recreational or cultural activities carried out within or outside normal school hours, or organized by the school community;

Healthy meal or healthy eating - the balanced consumption of meals that provide children with the nutrients necessary for their physical and mental development and for physical activity, according to their physiological needs;

Adequate housing - a dwelling that meets the national technical standards in force, is in a reasonable state of maintenance, provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort and is available and accessible at an affordable price.

11. Legislation

[Council Recommendation 2021/1004/EU of 14 June 2021](#)

[Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 3/2023, of January 17](#)

12. Annexes

Partnership Protocol for the Implementation and Monitoring of the Child Guarantee Local Unit.

Contacts



REPÚBLICA
PORTUGUESA

National Coordination of the Child Guarantee

Av. October 5, 175B

1050-063 Lisbon, PORTUGAL

geral@garantiainfancia.gov.pt

TEL + 351 300 511 386

www.portugal.gov.pt