**Information**

**on the state of reform of institutional care and upbringing of children**

 *At the beginning of the reform of the system of institutional care and upbringing of children in 2017 in Ukraine there were 751 institutions:*

- 39 institutions that belonged to the Ministry of Health;

- 132 institutions that belonged to the sphere of management of the Ministry of Social Policy;

- 580 institutions of various types, which belonged to the sphere of management of the Ministry of Education and Science.

The normative legal act aimed at changing the system of institutional care and upbringing of children in Ukraine to a system that provides care and upbringing of a child in a family or close to family environment is the order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 09.08.2017 № 526-r “On national the strategy of reforming the system of institutional care and upbringing of children for 2017–2026 and the Action Plan for the implementation of its first stage ”.

The strategy adopted in 2017 stipulated that changing the system of institutional care and upbringing of children could not be simply closing boarding schools. It provides for the creation of a system that provides care and upbringing of the child in a family or close to family environment, and the liquidation of appropriate institutions is a consequence of the fact that there is no need to accommodate children.

*The strategy provides for three stages:*

I - preparatory, which ended in 2019;

II - active phase of the reform of 2020-2024;

Stage III, in 2025 - 2026 - summarizing.

Implementation of the Strategy will be accompanied by the development of educational, social, medical, rehabilitation services for children and families with children at the local community level.

Particular attention is paid to the introduction and construction of a system of early intervention, inclusive education and the development of family forms of child rearing.

*According to the results of the first stage of the Strategy implementation:*

• the number of children in institutional care and upbringing institutions was reduced: from 1.4% of the total child population at the initial stage of reform to 1.1%;

• 59 boarding schools were reformed;

• A new type of assistance has been introduced for children under the age of six who are brought up in large families

in the amount of UAH 1,700 (in addition to the existing types of state aid);

• increased from 2 to 2.5 subsistence minimums, and if a child with a disability - up to 3.5 the amount of state social assistance for orphans and children deprived of parental care, who are raised in foster families, family-type orphanages, seven guardians (trustees);

• the amount of financial support for foster parents, foster parents has been increased to one subsistence level for an able-bodied person for each foster child, foster child;

• one-time in-kind assistance “baby package” was initiated at the birth of a child, and from July 2020 - monetization of this service;

• provided state financial support for a small group home, child care services;

• the number of family-type orphanages increased from 973 in 2017 to 1,236 in 2020 (by 263) and the total number of children in foster families and family-type orphanages from 13,592 in 2017 to 14,225 in 2020 (by 663 children).

• approved by the Government and submitted to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine: draft Law of Ukraine on deinstitutionalization, which provides for a change in the practice of institutional care and upbringing of children to ensure safe care and upbringing of each child in a family or family environment;

• a draft Law of Ukraine on promoting responsible parenthood was prepared;

• the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the safety of children and their protection from abuse was adopted.

Currently in Ukraine there is an active phase of decentralization of power.Services will now be more accessible and will be provided at the level of the community, which is the guardianship authority, empowered and responsible for identifying children in difficult life circumstances and ensuring their social protection.

The legislation stipulates that a children's service and a commission for the protection of children's rights must be established in each territorial community.

Provision of social services to people in difficult life circumstances and in need of outside help, including children and young people in difficult life situations due to disability, illness, orphanhood, homelessness, poverty, conflict and abuse in the family - all these are the powers of the territorial community. The development of the necessary services in communities is a guarantee that children will grow up in families and study in regular schools.

In 2020, the challenge for the whole world was the COVID-19 pandemic and the establishment of quarantine as one of the means to combat it.

With the introduction of quarantine measures, without prior study of the situation in the family, 42,000 children returned to their families from educational boarding schools were returned to their families at the request of their parents. thus demonstrating that the need for parents to live around the clock in the institution is not so urgent.

This prompted the introduction of a fundamentally new approach to the placement of children in institutions for round-the-clock stay, which proved to be effective by reducing by 19% the number of children placed in institutions for round-the-clock stay.

According to the monitoring data, there are 77,010 children in institutions of institutional care and upbringing, of which 34,159 are round the clock:

• 28,225 children with parents who are not restricted in their parental rights and responsibilities;

• 3,640 orphans and children deprived of parental care who are in full state support;

• 985 children who have guardians / trustees;

• 141 children from family-type orphanages;

• 48 of the adopted children.

• 284 children abandoned in a maternity hospital, other health care facility, children refused to be picked up by their parents or other relatives, abandoned or found;

• 375 children taken from their parents or guardians due to a threat to life or health.

The Ministry of Social Policy has prepared a draft of amendments to the Strategy, which was adopted on June 2, 2021 at a meeting of the Government of Ukraine, which provides:

• providing access to medical, social, educational, rehabilitation services for children and families with children in the local community at the place of residence according to their needs;

• reforming institutions of institutional care and upbringing of children (except for special institutions of general secondary education for children with visual, hearing impairments, children with severe developmental disabilities and institutions of specialized education, which are enrolled in competitive selection) by reorganizing and transforming them into institutions with daily provision of services;

• ensuring the development of early intervention and child care services at the family's place of residence in local communities;

• introduction of positions of a specialist in social work in territorial communities to provide social work and social support for families in difficult life circumstances;

• provision of educational and social services for children with special educational needs, including those with disabilities, including children who are blind and visually impaired, deaf and hard of hearing or deafblind, children with severe developmental disabilities, with severe disabilities.