

WE WANTED TO LEARN ABOUT THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIVING IN INSTITUTIONS



An institution is not a natural place to live

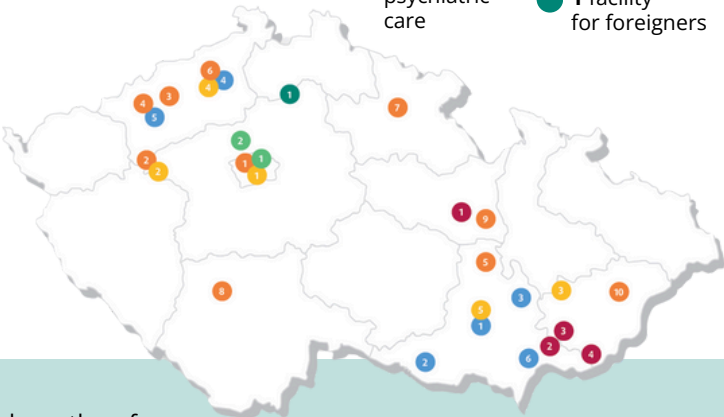
Many people with disabilities still live in institutions. The Czech Republic has committed to a change. People with disabilities should live where they choose and participate in society. This is a process of deinstitutionalisation. However, it is not happening fast enough or with sufficient quality. Our research has shown that progress is running up against public prejudice and that the state and regional authorities do not have a plan to abolish institutions and replace them with community-based services. Similarly, we want to ensure that children in children's homes are not isolated, live in an environment similar to a regular home, and have sufficient privacy and decision-making power.

Children in institutions should receive care appropriate to their needs

The number of children in children's homes and other institutions is not decreasing significantly. The state often fails to help children who have all kinds of needs and problems. There is a shortage of staff and the set-up of methods to work with trauma or aggression. Moreover, the system is governed based on an outdated law on institutional and protective education. The Ministry of Education has promised to prepare new legislation to replace it.

We examined the living conditions of people in 28 facilities

- 4 social service facilities
- 5 facilities providing inpatient psychiatric care
- 6 police cells
- 2 prisons
- 1 facility for foreigners
- 10 facilities for children




Young children do not belong in institutions

As of the end of 2024, infant care centres no longer exist. We have therefore addressed how the system is prepared and how care for young children will be provided. We visited five of the 23 centres where 170 children live. The law said that infant homes should look after children up to 3 years old with health problems.

But **two thirds** of the children were over 3 years old.

1 in 10 children were over 10 years old.

Many of the children were there for social reasons, not because they needed regular medical care. We asked that the situation of these children be resolved urgently.



We recommended that the founders convert the infant care centres to another type of facility that would meet the needs of the target group.

Another milestone will be 1 January 2028, when the ban on placing children under 7 years of age in institutions comes into force. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs must submit a bill for comprehensive reform of care for children at risk.

WHAT AWAITS US IN 2025?

Major changes are coming!


On 1 July 2025, the institution of the Children's Ombudsman has been established and the Ombudsman will become a national human rights institution.





We celebrate 25 years of the ombudsman in the Czech Republic.





ombudsman

Public Defender of Rights

YEAR 2024

SUMMARY

7 451

489

in 98 %

5 632

264

16

6

220+

16 000+

complaints resolved

authorities were reproached for their mistakes of cases

the authorities remedied the error after our intervention

people used our information line

legislative comments submitted

recorded podcasts

Newsletters published

posts published on Facebook

followers on social media

WE PUSHED FOR CHANGES

Care allowance needs to be increased

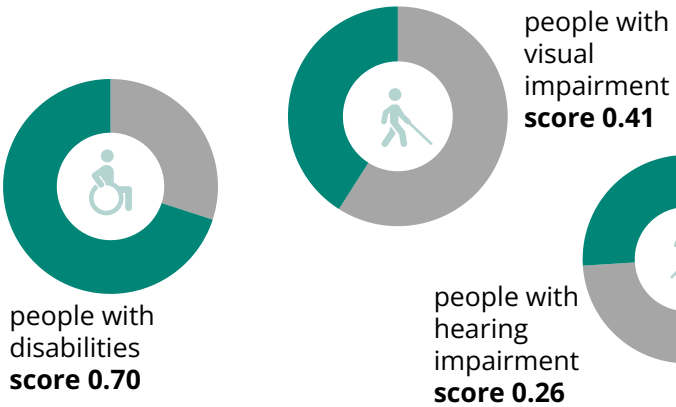
People with disabilities in the Czech Republic often do not have enough money to provide for their basic living needs, such as hygiene or food. This situation prevents them from leading an independent and dignified life. That is why we have been working to remedy this for a long time. We are pleased that the Chamber of Deputies has approved an increase in the allowance for the highest levels of dependency. However, the allowance is still insufficient in the first and second degrees. The state should ensure that people with disabilities have a support system that meets their individual needs and the real cost of social services.



Trends in the amount of care allowance for adults

	From 1 January 2007	From 1 January 2022	From 1 July 2024
in degree I	CZK 2,000	only CZK 880	only CZK 880
in degree II	CZK 4,000	CZK 4,400	CZK 4,900
in degree III	CZK 8,000	CZK 12,800	CZK 14,800
in degree IV	CZK 11,000	CZK 19,200	CZK 23,000 (residential service) CZK 27,000 (in home care)

Average accessibility score for all buildings



We are working to be more accessible (not just us)

Accessibility means ease of access for all people. This means not only barrier-free access of buildings, but also the comprehensibility of information and the possibility to make use of the services and goods offered. It applies to everyone - a person with a disability, but also a person with a crutch, a pram, or with different educational background. We try to set an example and we want others to be accessible. We have done research and found that public buildings tend to be inaccessible for people with disabilities. We are therefore preparing a practical guide to help public institutions improve.

Do you also want to be more accessible? Check out our website



People should be more involved in decision-making on issues that affect them

We want politicians, authorities and courts to involve people with disabilities, children and others in decision-making, planning and activities that affect them. This is the rule we follow ourselves. We work with an advisory body and several self-advocacy groups to monitor the rights of people with disabilities. We regularly organise excursions for children and find out directly from them what their concerns are and how we can help them. We are happy to know that we are not alone in this. Other institutions, such as the Ministry of Justice, are also beginning to see the importance of participation.

We want the authorities to write clearly

Official texts that people do not understand because they are unclear or complex cannot fulfil their purpose. That is why it is important for the authorities to communicate clearly. We contribute to the training of future civil servants, discuss with authorities about their documents and assist in making changes. For example, in cooperation with the Prison Service, we have prepared comprehensible instructions for defendants upon admission to pre-trial detention.



How to write clear official texts? We give advice in our guide



WE HAVE BEEN CONDUCTING RESEARCH

We gather information about systemic issues.



WE HAVE MADE RECOMMENDATIONS

We propose solutions to systemic issues.

Recommendations on the Appeal Committees of Ministries and Central Government Bodies

How to improve the situation of people with myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS)

Vulnerable groups of people in protective treatment

Accessibility of public buildings and services for people with disabilities

Publication of court decisions in the database of the Ministry of Justice

Supervision of the continuity of proceedings on applications for the enforcement of decisions in matters concerning the care of minors

Recording in court buildings outside the courtroom

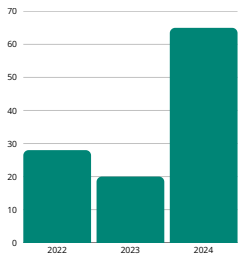
WE HELPED

Victims of crime

We have succeeded in the increase of the amount of financial assistance in the Victims Act. Our clearer application forms for victims of crime and bereaved people are already being used in practice.



Number of complaints from women seeking compensation for unlawful sterilization



A computer scientist with hearing impairment

Who was not allowed to participate in a retraining course. The training company did not agree real-time transcription of the course. After our intervention, they apologized and made the online course available to him free of charge.



In compensating unlawfully sterilised women

We have contacted the government. The Ministry of Health then promised to apologise to the claimants for the delay in processing their claims for compensation and to inform them when it will make a decision.

A man to receive higher disability pension

Although the man had suffered from serious health problems since childhood, a doctor stated that he had become disabled later. After a reassessment, his pension was increased and he received an additional payment.

To improve conditions for psychiatric patients

Inadequate material conditions can pose a risk of patient mistreatment. The Ministry of Health has promised to make changes in some psychiatric facilities.

To abolish the collection of the illegal handling fee

The municipality charged a fee for permits to enter a local road in the city. We explained to them that the general use of roads is free of charge.

People with disabilities in exercising their right to vote

We have been protecting against discrimination for 15 years

We celebrated 15 years of anti-discrimination law in the Czech Republic. In that time, we have done the following in the area of equal treatment:

For people from Ukraine to integrate more easily

With the protection of a historic house

The owner destroyed the valuable facade. We instructed the authority on how to proceed to get the owner to restore the house to its original condition.



A boy to get the Child Protection Authority to stand up for him in court

The authority has changed its rules, and will pay more attention to the wishes of the children.

A foreigner so that he would not have to return to Belarus and could continue working in the Czech Republic

The man reported the change of employment in the wrong form, but then corrected it. The Ministry of Interior agreed with our argument that the man had met the conditions for a change of employer and for a residence permit.

Neighbours and wolves

A man kept a pack of wolves in the backyard of his house in Prague in unsuitable conditions. The state took the wolves away from him and moved them to a rescue centre. We advocated for expanding the capacity of similar facilities.

