

## **Age assessment**

Age assessment is the process by which authorities seek to establish the chronological age, or range of age, or whether an individual is an adult or a child.

It is an important, yet complex and challenging issue that authorities may need to undertake in order to determine whether an individual is an adult or a child in circumstances where their age is unknown. This is so as to ensure children are protected and afforded the provisions entitled to them under law, and also to prevent adults from being placed amongst children and from taking advantage of additional provisions, such as access to education, provision of a representative, that are not afforded to adults. Age assessment should only be used where there are grounds for serious doubt of an individual's age.

The European Asylum Support Office published an 'Age assessment practice in Europe' publication in 2014. The purpose of this publication is to provide practical support to Member States in the field of age assessment. This publication is a non-binding tool for interpretation and implementation of the EU acquis and should serve as a reference tool to support policymakers and officials active in the development, review or implementation of age assessment policy and procedures.

The following have been identified by EASO as key issues for consideration:

- the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in age assessment procedures;
- the circumstances in which age assessment may be a legitimate and necessary aim;
- the relevant procedural measures and safeguards which should be in place during the age assessment procedure;
- the possible methods in use, their respective advantages and disadvantages and what needs to be in place to ensure they meet the minimum requirements of legislation;
- the role of other actors within the age assessment procedure.

The publication is currently available in English, French, German, Greek, Italian and Spanish. You can find the English version on this website.