The Roma Community in Scotland 2016

Report

July 2016
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The Roma Community in Scotland 2016

1. Introduction and Acknowledgements

Community InfoSource was commissioned by the Scottish Churches Racial Justice Group to report on the situation of Roma communities in Scotland in 2016. The report was compiled through a combination of literature and research review, interviewing staff from organisations working with Roma communities, focus group, interviews with individuals and attendance at provision aimed at or engaging Roma people. A full list of literature reviewed and organisations consulted can be found at Appendices 1 and 2.

Many thanks go to those organisations and individuals who willingly gave their time to share their experience. Particular thanks to Romano Lav (Roma Voice) community organisation for sharing the photographs we have used throughout the report. These were taken as part of a project involving a talented team of Roma young people from Govanhill, aiming to raise awareness about International Roma Day, encourage increased Roma pride and celebrate Roma culture and diversity. Thanks also to Romane Cierhenia Dance Group (Roma Stars) for the photographs of their members. And finally, we would like to thank Monika Cicakova and Erik Gazil for their great work in supporting the consultations and activities undertaken with their communities.

2. Background to Roma Communities in Europe

The term “Roma” is used by the European Commission, as well as by a number of international organisations and representatives of Roma groups in Europe, to refer to a number of different groups (such as Roma, Sinti, Kale, Gypsies, Romanichels, Boyash, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom) and also includes Travellers, without denying the specificities and varieties of lifestyles and situations of these groups.

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1 National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework, European Commission
Roma are the largest trans-national ethnic minority in Europe and although they are frequently referred to as a community, they are a collection of different peoples with diversity in language, ethnicity and religion. They originally migrated from Northern India in the 11th Century and most now live in Central, Southern and Eastern Europe predominantly as settled communities. Despite this they are often referred to as ‘travellers’ or ‘gypsies’. The correct terminology to describe their ethnicity is Roma and the language they speak is described as Romanes or Romani, although this has seven different varieties which are divergent enough to be considered as languages in their own right. Some Roma communities speak mixed languages based on the national language e.g. Polish, with retained Romani-derived vocabulary.

Many of the estimated 10-12 million Roma population in Europe face discrimination, stigmatisation and exclusion, living in deep poverty with no access to proper housing and healthcare. Living conditions are often segregated and overcrowded, without access to utilities, failing to meet basic human rights. As many as 1 in 4 Roma people do not have access to drinking water and sanitation.

Poor education and discrimination in the job market have led to high unemployment rates or low quality, low paid jobs for Roma people. Prejudice against Roma people throughout European Union countries is given expression through a range of acts and behaviours from marches, violence and threats, to anti-immigration sentiment expressed in national press and local communities to systematic exclusion from education, employment, housing, healthcare and welfare services. This history of persecution and stigmatisation has led Roma families to extreme poverty without access to basic services or legal protection and in some cases to forced migration.
3. EU Framework

In 2005 several European governments came together to discuss policy measures and commit to the ‘Decade of Roma Inclusion’ (2005 to 2015) to be implemented through ‘Decade Action Plans’ and monitored through the EU Framework for National Roma Integration. The aims were to work towards eliminating discrimination, close the gap between Roma and the rest of society, support full involvement of national Roma communities and identify inclusion outcomes for education, health, housing, employment and civic partnership.

The first EU Roma Summit in 2008 was significant in devising a set of 10 Common Basic Principles\(^2\) to effect inclusion:

1. Respect and realise the core values of the European Union, including human rights and dignity, non-discrimination, equality of opportunity and economic development.

2. Explicit but not exclusive targeting focusing on Roma people but not to the exclusion of others sharing similar socio-economic circumstances.

3. Promote inter-cultural approaches combating prejudices and stereotypes.

4. Insert Roma in the mainstream of society (educational institutions, mainstream jobs, and mainstream housing).

5. Take account of the needs and circumstances of Roma women to address issues such as multiple discrimination, access to health care, child support, domestic violence and exploitation.

6. Learn from the experience of developing Roma inclusion initiatives and share experiences with other Member States.

7. Use European Union legal, financial and co-ordination instruments in the development and implementation of policies aimed at Roma inclusion.

8. Design, develop, implement and evaluate Roma inclusion policy initiatives in close cooperation with regional and local authorities as they play a key role in the practical implementation of policies.

9. Involve civil society such as NGOs, social partners and academics, for the mobilisation of expertise and the dissemination of knowledge required to develop public debate and accountability throughout the policy process.

\(^2\) The European Council, Council’s Conclusions on Inclusion of the Roma 8 June 2009
10. Roma involvement must take place at both national and European levels through the input of expertise from Roma experts and civil servants, as well as by consultation with a range of Roma stakeholders in the design, implementation and evaluation of policy initiatives. It is of vital importance that inclusion policies are based on openness and transparency and tackle difficult or taboo subjects in an appropriate and effective manner. Support for the full participation of Roma people in public life, stimulation of their active citizenship and development of their human resources are also essential.
4. UK Context and Strategy

Prior to accession to the EU by Eastern European member states some Roma sought asylum in the UK due to the high levels of persecution and discrimination faced in their country of origin. For the last twelve years Roma from new EU member states have exercised their right to move and are choosing to live in older member states. This movement has presented significant challenges to Roma families and arose from a combination factors; poverty and poor living conditions being the main push factors while the search for employment and improved access to education and healthcare were the main motivators. In Eastern Slovakia and Romania where the majority of the Scottish Roma population originated, there were high levels of unemployment in the general population which resulted in almost 100% unemployment in the Roma population.

On 1st May 2004 the EU expanded with the accession of the A8 nations (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) and there was an initial migration of Roma people to the UK. Many A8 nationals had restrictions imposed on their right to work, claim benefits and access social housing during their accession period until 1st May 2011 when restrictions ended.

This was followed on 1st January 2007 by the accession of the A2 countries, Bulgaria and Romania, allowing entry to the UK but with ‘no recourse to public funds’ which meant they could not take up work and had no entitlement to welfare benefits until the accession period was completed on 1st January 2014. Remaining in the UK was therefore dependent on the ability to prove that they were ‘self-supporting’, a condition which was not uniformly applied across agencies. Current estimates place the total figure for Roma people in the UK at between 225,000 and 300,000, living predominantly in urban, multi-cultural areas within the private rental housing sector.

The UK’s National Roma Integration Strategy\(^3\) is not a strategy but a set of measures within the UK’s social inclusion policies aimed at the elimination of poverty and social exclusion among marginalised Roma Communities. These measures are based on the principles of equal opportunities and the need to ensure access to mainstream services. It highlights the areas of education, employment, healthcare and housing and recognises the importance of developing local action plans corresponding to and reflecting the needs of individual communities.

\(^3\) Council Conclusions on an EU Framework Strategy for Roma Integration up to 2020: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
It does not highlight the challenges of concentrations of new Roma populations living in poverty, focusing more on Gypsy Traveller Education Projects. The only specific reference to Roma in the main document is: ‘The term “Roma” is usually used in the UK for people of Roma origin who have come to the UK in recent years, particularly following the end of the Cold war and successive enlargements of the EU in 2004 and 2007. There are no reliable data on the number Roma in the UK – entrants to the UK are not monitored by ethnic origin.’

Due to devolved responsibility for the policy areas covered, the UK policy measures include a roadmap each for Scotland, Northern Island, England and Wales, stressing the key role that local and regional authorities must play in the integration of Roma and Travellers. It is important to note that in the UK context, the definition of Roma used in the Council Conclusions on Roma Integration adopted by EU states includes a diverse range of groups: Romany Gypsies and Irish /Scottish Travellers, as well as Roma who have migrated to the UK from other parts of Europe.
5. Scottish Context and Mapping

The fact that Scotland has not approved its own National Roma Integration Strategy is an inherent weakness in ensuring the implementation of Roma Inclusion priorities. The Scottish ‘Roadmap’ section of the UK Roma strategy is a nine page document with less than two pages devoted to the Roma Community and no adequate reflection of the situation of Roma in Scotland. In this section the Scottish Government outlines its commitment to eradicating racial discrimination, recognises that the Roma community is one of the most disenfranchised and discriminated against in Scotland and from a legal perspective highlights that Roma are an ethnic group for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010.

The Roadmap outlines the measure taken through the Scottish Government Race, Religion and Refugee Integration (RRRI) Funding Stream and additional funds, to allocate funding to voluntary organisations to develop projects up to 2012 which specifically target the Roma community. These include, The Bridges Programme, Crossroads Youth and Community Association and Govanhill Law Centre.

In September 2013 a report on the Mapping of the Roma Community in Scotland was produced to provide an evidence base to build an understanding of the profile and needs of the Roma population in Scotland and ensure that the European Commission’s Roma inclusion objectives were applied. Information was collected through a mix of online consultation from all 32 Council areas in Scotland, combined with workshops and focus groups. Overall Glasgow generated the most responses, with most respondents having direct contact with the Roma community in Govanhill where the majority of the community is concentrated. For other Council areas some respondents worked primarily with Gypsy Travellers and may misinterpreted questions and provided responses for the travelling community instead of Roma.

The majority of council areas provided little data with many responding ‘don’t know’ or ‘can’t say’ which can in part be attributed to low numbers and/or minimal contact with Roma communities.

Based on the responses gathered from the online questionnaire it was assumed that there were between 4,000 and 5,000 Roma people living in Scotland and that among those working closely with Roma people at a local level there was a sense that in the months prior to Sept 2013 populations had been increasing. This information is based on incomplete responses and estimated figures but it remains the only official attempt at scoping the size and geographical spread of Roma communities in Scotland. Grouped by council area this breaks down as follows:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council Area</th>
<th>Min. number of Roma</th>
<th>Max. number of Roma</th>
<th>Mid-point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow: Govanhill, Cessnock, Knightswood, Shawbridge, Ibrox, Kennishead, Queens Park, Castlemeilk, Townhead, Pollok, Govan, Crosshill, Springburn</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh: Pilton, Portobello, Leith, Meadowbank, Wester Hailes, Sighthill, Northfield, Muirhouse</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fife: Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes, Cupar, Dunfermline</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lanarkshire: Cumbernauld, Airdrie</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen City: Torry, Woodside, Gilmcomston Park, South Esplanade East</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50+</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falkirk: FK1 Postcode area</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other 26 council areas combined</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,804</td>
<td>4,946</td>
<td>4,376</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The report highlighted that the majority of Roma people seem settled, particularly in Glasgow but also in parts of Lothian, Falkirk and Fife. There is evidence of daily travel from Glasgow to Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire etc. for work purposes and during the compilation of this SCRJG report buses were still transporting people on a daily basis from Govanhill to potato farms and chicken factories outside Glasgow.

In terms of council responses, although most support the principle of equal opportunities and access to services, many are not prepared to support the cost of additional or tailored services, particularly where Roma communities are small. This lack of additional support and resource means that smaller Roma communities are further discriminated against in accessing services. This is compounded by lack of
information about new migrant Roma settling in smaller communities with some council employees reporting ‘seeing people’ they ‘assume to be Roma’. Families living in the Clydebank area interviewed by Community InfoSource were not self-identifying as Roma and did not want to raise issues regarding schooling or bullying in public places. This perpetuates the council negation of responsibility towards such communities but there is a need for a more pro-active strategy to Roma Inclusion throughout local authority areas. The Mapping Report highlighted the exception of Fife Council which reported that the small Roma population were ‘almost fully integrated into the community’. Irrespective of the size of the community the report concluded that the issues facing Roma in all areas are similar: housing, healthcare, employment and education.

The mapping exercise emphasises that for most Roma living in Scotland the main concern is the daily survival of the members of the whole extended family. The oldest son has the main responsibility to ensure basic needs are met and to provide for and organise the family. His role within the family is very influential, in some cases more influential than the father. Grass-roots workers with Roma communities consulted highlighted the importance of community and family but also stressed that the autonomy and responsibility for making choices given to relatively young adults were facets of Roma life which has consequences for local authorities and third sector organisations in their inter-action with Roma communities.

The report also examines some of the issues around street begging and selling associated with Roma communities. Begging is a reality for Roma, especially in Bulgaria and Romania where it can be described as ‘organised’. However contrary to public perception begging is not widely accepted across all Roma communities. Where it does occur in Scotland, mainly in Glasgow and Edinburgh, the report concludes that it is important for the response to be proportionate and the focus to be concentrated on any evidence of organised crime and exploitation of vulnerable people.
6. Govanhill

Of the approximate 5,000 Roma population of Scotland identified through the 2013 Mapping exercise, it is estimated that around 3,500 live in Glasgow. This population is predominantly Slovakian and Romanian in origin but there are also small numbers of Czech, Bulgarian, Polish and Latvian Roma. The Roma communities within the area are not a homogenous group and although needs may be similar, service delivery requires to take account of the differences and in some cases divisions that exist. The Slovakian Roma came from small towns, mainly Pavlovce and Michalovce, while the Romanian Roma families are mainly from Arhad city in Bihar Province. Within Glasgow the communities predominantly live within the Govanhill area in the South East of the City, concentrated into a small number of streets. Some Slovakian Roma families have moved from Govanhill to live in the Ibrox and Greater Govan areas, as well as Knightswood and Springburn and some have moved on to local authority areas bordering Glasgow City Council.

Govanhill has a long history of migration and is the most ethnically diverse community in Scotland, with 53 languages spoken in 13 housing blocks. It has a high proportion of privately owned rental properties, an important factor for the new Roma migrants due to restrictions on access to social housing. The area has the highest population density in Scotland with commensurate pressures on public services and the local environment.

Settlement difficulties faced by people from Roma communities were compounded by the inadequate response and in some cases discrimination of UK public authorities such as HMRC, The Department of Work and Pensions and local government departments charged with administering welfare benefits for Roma EU citizens in Glasgow. Research undertaken in 2011 by the Oxfam ‘Law into Practice Project’ and Govanhill Law Centre\(^5\) into access to services and benefits for Roma Communities arriving in Govanhill reviewed client files and revealed:

- 53% of cases had received a refusal of benefit based on an erroneous decision made by a public authority
- In 56% of cases there was an unreasonable delay in the authority providing a decision to the detriment and prejudice of clients
- At least 44% of cases involving HMRC were dealt with by the ‘Compliance Team’ without the client’s knowledge, incurring further delays in claims for child benefit or tax credits

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\(^5\) Unequal and Unlawful Treatment: barriers faced by the Roma Community in Govanhill when accessing welfare benefits and the implications of section 149 of the Equality Act 2010: Lindsay Patterson, Laura Simpson, Lorraine Barrie, Jitka Perinova. December 2011
• Once a favourable decision was made, 23% of cases were subject to further delays, e.g. after waiting two years for a favourable decision, a further four month delay before payment of benefit.

Evidence was found of HMRC and the DWP discrimination against Roma clients in a number of ways contrary to the 2010 Equalities Act and contravening their rights under EU law. The result of these failures and actions resulted in an increased risk of homelessness, destitution and poverty. The community has been further exploited by non-Roma, Romanian and Slovakian speaking individuals in the community who have set themselves up as agencies to help Roma migrants to register for work, tax and national insurance, charging exorbitant rates for carrying out work which could be done at no cost on their behalf by public and third sector support agencies.

The Roma population of Govanhill now comprises almost 20% of the local residents and those working in church and third sector organisations reported that the balance within the community has shifted since the mapping exercise took place in 2013, with increasing numbers of Romanian Roma and a decline in the population of Slovakian Roma and what has been described by some as ‘churn’ within migrant communities. Govanhill Community Development Trust reported that, based on caseload and participation in community provision, this appeared to be a definite trend, partly explained by the disproportionate effect of recent welfare reforms on the Slovakian Roma population. This has had an impact on the ability to deliver appropriate services to Roma communities in terms of the profile of bi-lingual staff and the needs of the communities.
7. Barriers to Roma Inclusion

Roma people have a long history of being discriminated against and excluded leading to the twin barriers of poverty and lack of access to services. This is compounded by a mistrust of officials and service organisations developed out of the experience of marginalisation and racism.

a. Housing

In the main, the housing conditions for Roma families living in Scotland are unacceptable. Roma are particularly vulnerable to private sector dependency due to their employment situation and consequently they experience high rents, sub-standard conditions and in some cases non-existent tenancy agreements. This contributes to overcrowding as families are forced to pool their resources to make accommodation affordable. Although the situation is unsatisfactory, conditions are tolerated because they are an improvement on the situation Roma people have escaped from in Eastern European countries.

Poor regulation of private housing enables bad practice in this sector to go unchecked, resulting in sub-standard housing conditions including infestations of bed bugs and cockroaches and inflated rent charges. The lack of tenancy agreements leaves tenants with less protection, vulnerable to landlord exploitation and in some cases subject to illegal evictions when in some cases their property is thrown into the streets in black bags.

High population density within the Govanhill area leads to overcrowded accommodation. The Glasgow Indicators Project\(^6\) outlines that occurrence of overcrowded households in Govanhill in 2011 was 55% above the average level for the City of Glasgow. There are in excess of 2,000 registered private landlords owning rental property in the area, accounting for 93% of the rental stock.

Govanhill Law Centre reported that a considerable number of private landlords act with impunity and exploit vulnerable residents and that many of the properties in the area are in a state of disrepair. Roma communities in general are unsure about their entitlement to support with housing costs or how to engage with agencies which provide services and support.

Roma families tend to socialise outdoors, a traditional custom which becomes more of a necessity when living conditions are overcrowded. These gatherings can be construed as threatening by other people within the community and tensions with neighbours can escalate. These outdoor gatherings are not indicators of criminal or threatening behaviour but are as a result of over-crowding and a different cultural approach to socialising with family and friends.

\(^6\) Glasgow Centre for Population Health, The Glasgow Indicators Project, Govanhill Profile
b. Employment

As with Roma populations throughout Europe, gaining access to the labour market and securing employment is particularly difficult and in common with most migrant groups, there is a significant concentration of working age people among the Scottish Roma community. Low literacy levels and language barriers are challenges but they can lead to the perception on the part of employers that these factors are a barrier to all work. Access to employment for most Roma people means mainly unskilled, low-paid jobs, often working in poor conditions in the ‘grey’ economy for £1 - £2 per hour. Many Roma in Scotland are undertaking jobs which would otherwise be hard to fill, working on zero-hours contracts or as casual labourers in food processing plants, warehouses or agricultural settings.

At the time of the Mapping Report (September 2013) the exercise revealed that Romanian Roma people, not having the right to take up employment in the UK because of the A2 restrictions, were mainly surviving at a subsistence level in precarious self-employment such as Big Issue vendors, finding and selling scrap metal or selling used clothing. At that time, more than 50% of The Big Issue vendors in Scotland were Romanian Roma and the report describes them as ‘vulnerable homeless or living in multiple occupancy housing.

c. Education

Roma children continue to be excluded from mainstream schooling in many European countries and face segregation in special needs schools. A study carried out by the Roma Education Fund in 2011 with Roma migrant children in the UK7 highlighted that 85% had previously been in a special school or class in their country of origin, but only 2-4% of pupils were assessed as requiring additional support in the UK, with the majority studying in mainstream schools.

In some cases there are systems failures such as lack of a birth certificate or missed registration days which lead to delays for Roma children being accepted but there are also attitudinal problems on the part of teachers in EU countries leading to Roma children being treated differently from other pupils. Against this backdrop and the history of stigmatisation which Roma communities have faced for generations, Roma children face bulling and discrimination and remain the lowest achievers in education amongst all ethnicities Europe-wide with illiteracy levels amongst Roma as high as 90%. Poor experiences of Primary Schooling reinforce marginalisation, limit employment opportunities and prospects of progressing through education. A research project conducted in Govanhill in 20148 to explore Roma families engagement with local services highlighted the main barriers to involvement that families and schools had to overcome:

7. Roma in Glasgow Presentation by Keith Moore-Milne, Team Leader of Roma Children and Families Team, Social Work Department, Glasgow City Council

8. Sime, Daniela and Fassetta, Giovanna and McClung, Michele (2014), Roma Families’ Engagement with Education and Other Services, University of Strathclyde
• Apprehension on the part of parents that their children would be placed in a special school based on the previous history of segregation

• Parents’ literacy levels which create reluctance to become engaged and lead to difficulties in completing forms, dealing with school correspondence etc.

• Low expectations that children will achieve academically or that schools would encourage them to do so

• Distrust about children attending pre-school education

• Bullying of Roma children, particularly at secondary school level

• Absenteeism at times caused by lack of outerwear for cold and wet weather

The research demonstrated that parents recognised the value of education and were aware of its potential in providing a route out of low-income, transitory employment. However, the over-arching effects of poverty and limited family resources meant that boys had to leave school to work and girls to help in the home to be able to run households in later years.

d. Health and Social Care

Poor housing and poverty are major contributors to reduced health outcomes for Roma people. There are considerable language and cultural barriers to accessing health services which impact on the ability of Roma communities to register with GPs and on their understanding of services available and protocols such as booking appointments. Health care professionals have found cases of malnutrition amongst children and overcrowding and infestation, issues which carry significant public health risks. The Glasgow City Council Roma Children and Families Team estimate that 80% of referrals to the Team are due to poverty.9

There is evidence of health inequalities in the Roma communities which have similarities to those identified amongst Travelling Communities in the UK. Life-threatening conditions such as heart disease and diabetes often go untreated. Women’s health is a particular area of concern as many Roma women feel uncomfortable about discussing sexual health, contraception or maternity care with a GP or midwife.

e. Language

Access to all services and employment opportunities, whether through oral or written information, is dependent on language and literacy skills and this has proved to be a major barrier for Roma communities in Scotland. This is particularly problematic for those individuals who are not literate in their mother tongue, making acquisition of literacy skills in a second language more difficult. All systems for accessing public services, applying for national insurance and tax registration, health etc are based on completing forms. Without English language skills, opportunities available for Roma adults and, by extension, the range of experiences they can offer their children, is limited.

f. Media portrayal

“Roma inclusion will continue to face challenges as long as little is done to combat deep-seated anti-Gypsy and discriminatory tendencies prevalent in European societies. Attitudes towards Roma are becoming increasingly hostile”. European Roma Policy Coalition (2012)

Key challenges facing Roma people and the communities they settle in centre on areas such as employment, education, housing and healthcare which are complex and inter-connected. The extensive impact of these issues can result in negative stereotypes of Roma people in public opinion and in local and national media coverage. The result is a vicious circle that leads to further discrimination and lack of access to public services which perpetuates the cycle of poverty. In such circumstances some Roma individuals may feel they have no recourse to public assistance and resort to the ‘grey economy’ or begging to provide for their families, reinforcing negative stereotypes of the Roma community which the media picks up on and perpetuates. Negative reporting of Roma people selling The Big Issue reflects some sections within society and the paper has evidence that some customers have stopped buying the magazine from Roma vendors, receiving regular complaints.

g. Commitment to Inclusion

The concept of integration has been a problematic one throughout the history of race relations with implications that responsibility lies with individual migrants rather than creating a societal context favourable to integration. Roma people’s history of being systematically discriminated against compounds their exclusion as their precarious work situation and reliance on informal networks of support makes them particularly vulnerable.

It is difficult for the Roma community to contemplate or talk about integration into a society where the discourse is dominated by racist stereotypes and stigmatisation, and where there is little evidence of acceptance. As one respondent to the University of the West of Scotland research (2014) commented: “How can we speak of integration when some people don’t want to accept you? … We can learn from each
There is a strong feeling among some grass roots workers in Scotland that Roma people are excluded from involvement in creating, developing and delivering strategies to promote integration despite being as capable as any other migrant group of being involved in the process. There is recognition that resources and efforts are being focused on the Roma Community, but access to resources and decision-making which would be of community benefit are still largely outwith their hands. This can be particularly frustrating for Roma communities and workers when Glasgow is promoted in the media as a model of good practice in Roma inclusion.

This lack of a community development approach at strategic level results in further disempowerment and disadvantage for Roma communities and individuals and perpetuates the situation of Roma communities described by Daniela Sime in 2015: ‘Living on the margins limits Roma people’s chances of getting involved in mainstream economic, social and political life and leaves them open to abuse and exploitation’.11

The additional resources and effort targeted on the Govanhill area are due largely to the numbers of Roma residents living there. Smaller Roma communities in areas such as Paisley and Clydebank go largely unnoticed. This is partly due to their location in local authority areas outside Glasgow’s boundaries but there is also a feeling that there is a problem-based approach to the situation, which concentrates resources in order to ‘keep a lid’ on a potential difficulties, rather than a rights-based approach which promotes integration and racial justice.

The smaller Roma communities feel isolated, their needs overlooked, aware that they do not receive the levels of support and funding available within the integrated service approach of Govanhill. Their situation goes largely unnoticed by policy makers when considering the disbursement of development funds.

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10 Glasgow’s Ellis Island? The integration and stigmatisation of Govanhill’s Roma population Colin Robert Clark* University of the West of Scotland (UWS). People, Place and Policy (2014): 8/1, pp. 34-50

8. Response to the Challenges

Due to the demographics of Roma settlement in Scotland the vast majority of policy response and service provision has been concentrated in Glasgow. In most other local authority areas the scale of settlement has not triggered a tailored or additional public policy and service response.

In 2009 Glasgow was one of nine European cities which formed the Roma-NeT partnership, committed to improving the social inclusion and community integration of Roma populations living in their cities. A local support group of key service providers was established to draw up and implement a local action plan setting out the approach to improving social and economic inclusion of the Roma population of the city. This was embodied in the Local Action Plan for 2012 to 2013, a strategic framework covering the main inclusion areas of Education, Employment, Health and Social Care and Housing and a specific post of Roma Development Officer has been created within Glasgow City Council.

The main recommendations of the plan are summarised below. There has been no update of the plan since it was produced and when Community InfoSource met with the Development Officer in March this year the Local Action Plan was to be reviewed at a later date in 2016. The key action points under the EU Roma Integration priorities are:

a) Education: Key Issues

- School receptionists should use instant access translation services already used by police and other Glasgow City Council staff
- Roma workers should be employed as mediators in Early Years, Primary and Secondary schools
- Intensive English induction programmes for new arrivals and people whose English is at the emerging/developing stage
- Increased nursery school provision
- Initiatives to address non-attendance at Primary and Secondary school
- Increased provision of informal community-based ESOL classes appropriate for people with limited literacy skills

Current Situation:

Despite barriers, Roma parents' attitudes towards schools are predominantly positive. Trust has a huge part to play in the uptake of services by Roma communities and engagement with organisations on their part. Many parents now trust teachers for the first time and have begun to have hope for their children, both
that they will be treated fairly and that they have the chance to become successful academically.

Interviews conducted for this SCRJG report indicated that there were high levels of satisfaction with schooling amongst parents, with primary schools in particular viewed as supportive of the children and the Roma community in the Govanhill area. This was not necessarily the case in smaller Roma communities where children felt more isolated and bullying had occurred and persisted despite drawing it to the attention of the teaching staff. Parents are reluctant to pursue it as they feel it would give rise to further discrimination and accusations against their children.

While school attendance levels remain lower for Roma pupils than the general school population, 81.5% at primary and 57.9% at secondary compared with levels of over 90% generally, these rates have improved over recent years and many schools reported that Roma parents are supportive of their children’s education.

However concerns persist. Roma children have the lowest levels of attainment in the country with 37.5% of all Roma S4 pupils attaining English and Maths qualifications (SCQF level 3 or better) compared to 94% of pupils in the general school population. Similarly, 37.5% of Roma pupils attained 5 or more awards at SCQF level 3 or better compared to 94% of the general school population in Glasgow. Attainment is linked to the development of English language skills and the high levels of poverty in the community but unless this gap in attainment is tackled, Roma children are at risk of disadvantage, exclusion and poverty.

These underlying issues become more entrenched by secondary school and there is a gradual drift away from schooling for S2 onwards. In addition to the pull factor of paid employment to contribute to the family economy, one parent interviewed suggested that the prospect of academic achievement in itself was not enough of an incentive for children to stay on at school as the expectation was that discrimination in employment practices would prevent young Roma people with qualifications from securing employment commensurate with their qualifications and capabilities.

With regard to Early Years Education, Govanhill Nursery and Cuthbertson Primary School Nursery both have targeted interventions to support pre-school children who have English as an Additional Language and report that this has an impact on English Language acquisition. Pre-school education places are limited in Govanhill but organisations such as Crossreach, a Church of Scotland initiative, have been active in adapting and delivering services to meet the needs of Roma children and families.

A network of ESOL classes has been developed in community venues such as church halls and consists of a range of community classes, an ESOL café and a programme of outings to improve functional English and knowledge of services and facilities in Glasgow. The Big Issue introduced compulsory attendance at English
classes for those vendors who required support for English to improve their ability to carry out their job effectively, involving over 100 Roma people in classes tailored for the needs of magazine vendors and new arrivals. This has shown benefits in reducing barriers and making those involved more able to communicate and engage with service providers.

However in terms of translation and interpretation, grass-roots workers in Govanhill still report that translation services are inadequate to meet the demands placed on them and that public services such as schools and NHS clinics do not always fulfil their obligation to use translation services or provide interpreters for Roma people. This sometimes leads to inappropriate situations where children and other family members are still being used to interpret in schools and GP surgeries.

b) Employment: Key Issues

1. Provide interpreting services for small community organisations which do not have bilingual staff and work with Roma communities

2. Create a training and employment programme for people in Roma communities to work as intermediaries in the areas of health, social work, education, welfare benefits, housing and employment

3. Active English language tuition for Roma adults

4. Skills development and job-seeking seminars

5. Encourage 2nd generation young people to stay on in full time education beyond primary school to acquire qualifications

Current Situation: The main employment initiative undertaken during the period 2011 to 2013 was the Roma Employability Project funded by the European Social Fund, led by Jobs and Business Glasgow (JBG) and involving a range of partners, Crossroads, Govanhill Law Centre, Govanhill Development Trust and Govanhill Housing Association. The project provided a range of advocacy and employability support to encourage clients to access mainstream employability service provision, training and employment opportunities and assisted them to compete for work in Glasgow. Support included a range of information and training for employment such as ESOL classes, information on ILA and bursaries, support to complete application forms, job searches and compile CVs, and information on Worker’s Registration Scheme, tax and NI issues. However it also addressed stabilising other areas of personal life such as finance, accommodation and utilities, health, housing benefit and council tax.

JBG adapted their service to meet the needs of clients, due to low levels of English and literacy which proved to be a major challenge to progress. They concentrated on ‘hands-on training’, through volunteering and work placements to demonstrate
client’s abilities to potential employers, but also to develop client’s English levels through integrating with colleagues. The outcomes achieved were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>TARGET</th>
<th>ACTUAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Into Work</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Into Education/Training</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaining a Qualification</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustaining Employment (26 weeks)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2008 Govanhill Housing Association submitted a petition to the Scottish Parliament’s Petitions Committee, urging the Scottish Government to conduct an inquiry into the responsibilities of private landlords, below standard housing and the impact of poor living conditions on the health and well-being of residents. In June 2010, the Scottish Government announced that it would invest £1.8 million in Govanhill over two years including £1 million for the Backcourt Improvements and Employability Initiative. Training was delivered for 60 local people involved in the initiative and support provided by Glasgow’s Regeneration Agency to help increase their chances of getting a job at the end of the Backcourts Initiative. A third of the training places were allocated to local Roma residents and Oxfam engaged with the Roma community to encourage participation in the project.

The Clean Green Team (CGT) was set up with Romano Lav as the lead organisation to bridge skills development areas of individuals before moving into the Backcourts Initiative. Those who participated in this project progressed on to the Backcourt Initiative training programme for 10-12 weeks of intensive skills development. However there was concern about the message the CGT project sent out as the focus of the project was clearing waste. Concerns that it might reinforce beliefs in the Govanhill community that Roma people were causing the waste, a source of local tension, were challenged by Romano Lav explaining that the project had been developed as it was similar to schemes run for those on benefits in Slovakia and having handed power over to the group to make the decision, the outcome had to be respected.

The West of Scotland Regional Equality Council has set up a Minority Ethnic Employment and Training Support initiative (MEETS) to provide support to minority ethnic individuals who face substantial employment barriers. The aim is to increase skills and confidence through training and one-to-one support prior to entering employment or further education. The Roma community is one of the target communities for this initiative and advisers are employed who speak Romanian, Slovakian and Czech languages. Practical support includes advice on creating a CV, support in applying for jobs, access to vacancies & training courses, work experience
and Modern Apprenticeships (MAP), a weekly job club with job search and career advice.

c) Health and Social Services: Key Points

1. Consider advantages of Roma mediators in the health service

2. Consolidate and support community based services that provide bi-lingual advocacy and support services to Roma communities

3. Ensure adequate funding is in place to support and sustain key community based services that provide essential crisis support and advice to Roma communities

There is evidence from consulting patterns that Roma communities are growing in confidence in accessing health services via GP practices. Roma families consulted in a 2014 study on engagement with services \(^{12}\) commented positively on their experiences of health care in Scotland, in particular with reference to the availability of free care and medication. Some areas of dissatisfaction were mentioned, concerning the standard of care received from GPs and waiting times for treatment. In addition, the problem of inadequate availability of interpreting for appointments is an ongoing issue which creates barriers to good healthcare.

Access to health services and preventative care, as well as lack of understanding of maternity services were identified as major issues in the South Lanarkshire area. NHS Lanarkshire set up a one-stop health clinic aimed at the Roma community in Cumbernauld to increase understanding of health and the importance of preventative measures.

Glasgow City Council Social Work has set up a Roma Children and Families Team which mainly works with Romanian and Slovakian citizens at risk. They use a blend of casework and community development approaches to work in a preventative way to support families and avoid statutory measures. An example of their integrated approach, working with Health, Education and the Third Sector was an initiative to tackle poverty.

There are approximately 500 children from Eastern European backgrounds across the four primary schools in Govanhill, but only about 25% of the children were in receipt of free school meals and clothing grants compared with the Glasgow average of 36%. Using the School Meals Service, a sample meal was provided and made available to all school parents. At the same time welfare benefits checks were carried out for everyone involved, including school janitors and cleaners.

As a result of the initiative 56 more children are now entitled to free school meals, over 100 receive a clothing grant and the equivalent of £30,000 additional value per

\(^{12}\) Sime, Daniela and Fassetta, Giovanna and McClung, Michele (2014) Roma Families’ Engagement with Education and Other Services. University of Strathclyde
year has been generated. The area has become more of a priority in terms of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, leveraging more resources and potential funding for the whole ward. The initiative also engaged 25 people who joined up for a parents group which influenced the Peoples Health Trust to invest in Govanhill Roma projects for a seven year period.

d) Housing: Key Points

1. Encourage Glasgow City Council to enforce private landlords to improve properties
2. Encourage wider debate about Roma access to good quality social rented housing
3. Take first steps to discuss potential re-housing and wider integration with Glasgow City Council and local Housing Associations

Current Situation:

Govanhill Law Centre continues to assist with cases of general disrepair, illegal eviction and homelessness. Emergency accommodation should be provided to Roma people who are homeless but there are many barriers to securing emergency accommodation which mean that provision is delayed or not forthcoming leaving people vulnerable to further exploitation. The situation is compounded as the attitude of front-line staff and interpreters continues to be dismissive of the Roma community. Roma people do eventually get an alternative tenancy through the Homeless Casework Team but they have to attend and wait, sometimes for several days, unable to work in the meantime. The Law Centre works closely with the Police to bring cases for damages against landlords carrying out illegal practices to court and this joint approach results in considerable fines.

A recent investigation by BBC Scotland highlighted that several de-registered landlords were continuing to lease property in the area despite being officially struck off as registered landlords. Chief Inspector Mcnarlin of Police Scotland confirmed that they were investigating the issue of landlords taking over derelict property and taking several months rent in advance despite not being the legal owner while Govanhill Law Centre reported that they see hundreds of clients every year living in substandard homes or who have had their deposit stolen.

A recent initiative, the South-West Govanhill Property Acquisition and Repair Programme, will run a two-year pilot from 2015 to 2017. The Scottish Government has provided a £4.3 million grant, supplemented by £5 million from Glasgow City Council for Govanhill Housing Association to purchase and improve properties for social letting. They aim to buy up to 80 properties from private owners and landlords in four tenement blocks to repair, let and then manage.

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13 BBC Scotland, 24th August 2016, Lucy Adams, Political Correspondent
The aims of the programme are to provide better living conditions and tackle overcrowding in the area, while also helping to deliver a more effective system of property management and maintenance. The focus will be on properties where common repair schemes have been carried out or are planned or factoring arrangements could be improved. A consultation with the community will be held before a report on the pilot is submitted to the Scottish Government. Glasgow City Council has applied to the government to designate the four target blocks as an Enhanced Enforcement Area, which would provide additional powers to enter and inspect rented properties, deal with overcrowding, carry out works and take action against landlords if necessary.
9. Community Development and Capacity Building

The Council of Europe Principles on Roma Inclusion stress that the full participation of Roma people in public life, stimulation of their active citizenship and development of their human resources are essential. The West of Scotland Regional Equality Council Report on the Roma Community (2013) concluded that 'more community development and cultural development activities, ….would help raise people’s self esteem and cultural pride, and would allow them to contribute to the development of their own communities, as well as promote engagement with other local communities.'

Organisations and agencies working in Govanhill have met with varying degrees of success in engaging with the Roma Community to build capacity of individuals and groups. It has been suggested by some workers in Third Sector organisations that the most urgent needs of Roma communities and individuals are met through their sector and they are concerned with building community capacity and promoting leadership within the community to provide long-term solutions. Organisations consulted in compiling this report emphasised the need for building trust and the importance of taking time to establish relationships in laying the foundations of the work with Roma communities and in many cases individual workers have developed good relationships with Roma service users and participants. Relationship building over the long term has been difficult as the effects of poverty on Roma families can mean additional struggles such as childcare pressures and the need to travel to meet family commitments.

While Roma communities in Glasgow come from nations where the culture of civic involvement and volunteering is less developed than in Scotland, participation in community activities has been increasing over recent years, partly due to the emergence of organisations such as Romano Lav (Roma Voice) which aims to raise awareness of Roma Culture, promote opportunities for involvement in community life and improve the local environment and living standards.

The Romano Lav worker, funded partly through the Scottish Government Equalities Fund, sees the role of the organisation as giving Roma people a voice and involving them at all stages of planning and carrying out activities and events. Fundraising for programming and resources is challenging for the small grass-roots organisation as making funding applications and reporting to funders is time-consuming. They have identified the need for participatory research to identify exactly what the community feels is necessary for their development.

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Initiatives to date have included organising International Roma Day Celebrations and associated workshops in local schools leading up to the event and Youth Work, including a recent photography project, residential trips and an environmental initiative. Funding permitting Romano Lav employs sessional workers from a Slovakian Roma background to support initiatives as well as specialist leaders for activities. As previously cited, Romana Lav led on an initiative to recruit local Govanhill Roma volunteers who helped to form The Green Clean Team and joined forces with Govanhill Community Development Trust, local environmental group Great Gardens and Oxfam to take part in litter-picking, cleaning back courts and planting trees.

The Roma Society of Scotland, a recently formed charity, has been established to assist primarily in the field of education and employability in order to raise the living standards and wellbeing of Roma communities and to support Roma integration into Scottish society. The charity is very much in the initial stages of setting up but envisages a future role in representing Roma communities and influencing strategy and policy as well as providing support and networking opportunities. Despite the need for this type of community-based organisation as part of a community development approach to Roma integration, they reported having difficulties in getting access to council staff to discuss support for development and securing premises and resources.

Many of the local agencies and organisations have adopted a community development model aiming to achieve the Roma Inclusion Principle of ‘Explicit but not exclusive targeting focusing on Roma people to the exclusion of others sharing similar socio-economic circumstances.’ In some cases this has proved difficult for a variety of reasons such as the extent of discrimination faced by the Roma community, wider community tensions and multiple barriers to involvement and so positive action has been adopted within this model to achieve inclusion and equality.
10. The Role of Third Sector Organisations

There is a range of Third Sector organisations operating in Govanhill which tailor services or provide additional support to Roma communities. Community Workers in these organisations have considered the issue of building capacity, encouraging community development and supporting Roma intermediaries who can work between services and the community. Some workers also expressed an awareness of the risks for those individuals in stepping out of traditional community boundaries to take on this work.

There is undoubtedly a need for a community development approach to shaping service provision, driven by the Roma communities and reflecting the diversity of views and interests. The relatively rapid growth of the Romanian Roma community has resulted in a mismatch between the worker profile in the area and the community profile. One worker reported that in March 2016 one of the local health centres had registered 18 new Romanian patients. There are several organisations employing Slovakian and Czech workers, but there are very low numbers of Romanian-speaking workers and no Roma Development Workers leading to a huge demand on the small Romanian speaking workforce. Govanhill Community Development Trust employs both a Romanian and a Slovak speaking Community Development Worker but some organisations have struggled to fill posts designated for Romanian speakers, partly due to discrimination against working with Roma communities.

Two Romanian speaking workers interviewed for this report who are employed by organisations working with Roma people in Govanhill are from a Scottish background and were brought up for part of their childhood in Romania. They explained the language barriers, even for Romanian speaking workers, in communicating with the Romanian Roma community whose first language is Romani, requiring more indirect ways of conveying information. These difficulties are compounded as a large proportion of the adult Romanian Roma community have been excluded from education and are consequently illiterate in their mother-tongue, making concepts such as dates, directions etc. more difficult to communicate while all systems for welfare, housing, employment etc are dependent on literacy as well as knowledge of the system, leading to exploitation of some members of the community despite the availability of support services.

The following summary provides a flavour of some of the approaches and activities developed by Third Sector Organisations working with Roma communities in Govanhill. (Church and faith organisations are described separately in Section 11, Page 26)

Govanhill Community Development Trust (GCDT)

The Trust is a Wholly Owned Subsidiary of Govanhill Housing Association (GHA) set up with the objectives of encouraging community involvement, supporting business locating to the area, assisting local people to access training and employment and
promoting a culture of enterprise and lifelong learning. The concept of understanding rights and responsibilities and building community capacity underpins the work they undertake.

GCDT has developed a Peer Education Project to train Roma people about NHS services available locally. Run jointly with the NHS Health Improvement team it has been adapted from an existing programme to suit the needs of the Roma Community. Eight Roma people were trained to run the ‘Peer to Peer’ sessions to raise awareness of interpretation services, smoking cessation, health promotion, NHS 24 and Family Planning. There is a major role for organisations to support ambassadors and peer-educators who face major barriers in acquiring skills and confidence in a literacy-based culture. GDCT are preparing to train a further group in health issues but are also considering adapting this approach to address other relevant areas such as housing issues.

GDT provides network co-ordination of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision across Govanhill and together with local partners has been responsible for developing and running an ESOL Café based at Govanhill Trinity Church which functions twice a week supported by an ESOL integration worker. The ESOL café is well attended with a mix of learners from various ethnic backgrounds including Romanian and Slovakian Roma. Peer literacy support is encouraged through a buddy and orientation system and learners are generally encouraged to be pro-active and take responsibility for their learning. A crèche is provided for pre-school children as well as refreshments for learners and their children. There are also two other regular ESOL classes per week and funding has been secured for a programme of trips using public transport to help with orientation and knowledge of public facilities and services which increases understanding of access and improves functional English speaking.

The Trust supports individuals as well as working with community groups and the Romanian speaking Community Development Worker interviewed for the SCRJG report had a welfare caseload of over 140 people in April of this year. This comprised a mix of signposting and direct support on issues such as employment, housing, healthcare, national insurance, school placement, banking and bill payment. The worker also provides support for the Welfare Hub and the Housing Association.

**Crossroads Youth and Community Association (CYCA)**

Crossroads has a dedicated Govanhill Community Team with a co-ordinator, two community workers (one generic and one dedicated for the Roma community), one project worker and two sessional members of staff who are Slovak speakers. They have a long history of working with the Roma community and ran an advice and information service for six years to help people with initial support for settlement. A dedicated Roma community work post has been created to undertake community development work primarily with the Slovak and Czech Roma communities. They recognise the need for a Romanian speaking worker but have faced difficulties in
securing funding and therefore work in partnership with GCDT and West of Scotland Regional Equality Council Romanian speaking workers.

CYCA describe the context of their work as operating within a neighbourhood where, ‘there is mutual suspicion between different groups, ethnic tensions and some organised crime’\textsuperscript{15} and acknowledge that this has led to difficulties in involving Roma people in activities which are not specifically targeted at the Roma communities. An example of an attempt to integrate Roma women into general provision is the ‘Feel Good Group’ aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of participants, weight loss and reduced stress. The class is followed by a session designed to meet the needs identified by group members e.g. stress management, mindfulness etc. The workers took the approach of working with six Roma women separately and gradually integrated women into the wider group but over the next few weeks the number of Roma women attending gradually dwindled until there were none taking part. This can be attributed to several factors but workers have mentioned the lack of confidence on the part of many Roma women to become involved in activities which involve mixing and communicating in English.

Targeted approaches have included a Roma Baking group aimed at the development of soft employability skills and laying the foundations for a potential future social enterprise. In addition, the Tuesday Evening Drop-In (The Bothy or Koki Koki Group) which Crossroads runs in partnership with Daisy Chain and Govanhill Free Church is the longest-running community activity for Slovak and Czech Roma in the local area. The Crossroads Roma Street work initiative proved to be effective in engaging ‘hard to reach’ members of the Roma community, supported people into volunteering and helped to resolve situations for individuals facing complex difficulties. While this project is no longer in operation Crossroads continues to support the Street Work carried out by WSREC with the Roma community.

Crossroads also provides individual support for 25 to 30 people identified through group work as facing particular barriers and for whom signposting to other services alone would not be sufficient for their needs. These situations can be complex and workers engage with young people with disabilities to support them to lead more independent lives while coping with difficult health issues.

\textbf{Govanhill Law Centre}

Govanhill Law Centre has established a reputation within the Roma communities as an independent, trusted organisation which maintains confidentiality and works on their behalf to redress inequalities. They report that within the Roma community there is serious under-reporting of crime, mainly due to the lack of expectation that their rights will be upheld. Their heavy caseload includes Welfare Reform support, preventing people from becoming homeless, eviction issues and matters relating to tenants’ rights, private landlords and housing benefit as well as disability and

\textsuperscript{15} Crossroads Youth and Community Association Annual Report 2015
employment discrimination issues. The project provides a specialist housing law service to prevent evictions, enforcing tenant’s rights to repairs and tackling illegal evictions and landlord or letting agency harassment.

In terms of housing issues related to the Roma population they deal with:

- General Disrepair: dampness, no heating/ hot water, unreliable or unsafe gas and electricity supply
- Homelessness and Illegal Eviction: securing emergency accommodation through the Social Work Casework Team and seeking Urgent Judicial Review for public authorities failing in meeting their statutory duties with regard to housing provision

In terms of Welfare Rights there is a Slovak-speaking Welfare Rights Worker who supports clients with applications and appeals for benefits and represents clients at tribunals. This is a part-time post and there is a huge demand for the service.

Employment Law is the third main area of work in relation to the Roma Community. The remedy for exploitation in terms of illegal wages and conditions is to take unscrupulous employers to Employment Tribunal. However in many cases this is not in the client’s best interest as they will lose their job, so it becomes an advocacy issue, advising of their rights and taking a ‘soft approach to start’ in order to secure their P45 or Maternity Benefit and then raise an action.
11. Role of the churches and faith-based organisations

The majority of the Roma living in the UK are Christian; Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal or belonging to the Evangelical churches. However there are a few Roma who come from the former Yugoslav states, who are Muslims, and also some who have joined Mormon and Jehovah Witness congregations. The 2014 study on engagement of Roma communities in Govanhill \textsuperscript{16} reported that religion was an important aspect of life for many Roma families, with Romanian participants emphasising this more than the Slovak groups. In particular women mentioned the importance of church in giving them support and direction through emotional difficulties. In some cases, individuals had gone through changes in terms of religious belonging after migration. Some had moved from the Orthodox tradition, the majority religion in Romania, to other Christian churches, mainly because they were available locally and were accepting of Roma families. Others had become more relaxed in the way in which they practiced their faith, with some loosening of the norms. Churches and faith organisations in the Govanhill area reported a high degree of co-ordination and co-operation in working with Roma communities and good working relationships with certain third sector organisations. This co-ordinated approach allows resources to be maximised and better service coverage to all sections of the Roma community, Slovakian, Czech and Romanian.

At the most basic level there is good availability of church halls and premises available as venues for ongoing weekly activity groups as well as one-off events but the role of the churches is far more comprehensive; they are among the leading service providers seeking to overcome the barriers to economic, social and civic inclusion of the Roma communities. Workers interviewed stressed the importance of taking the time and effort to build relationships and engage people in services and also the unique role that church organisations can play in building trust. This was borne out in interviews conducted for the 2014 research into Roma families’ engagement with education and other services in Glasgow\textsuperscript{17} which highlighted that churches often helped with families’ engagement with services citing the example of Romanian mothers who were reluctant to have their children in nursery but attended a playgroup organised by their local church, and through the pastor, were reassured and supported to then access formal provision.

In order to capture a flavour of the role of the churches and faith organisations in working with Roma we have outlined a thumbnail sketch of some of the major organisations based on interviews with key staff:

\textsuperscript{16} Sime, Daniela and Fassetta, Giovanna and McClung, Michele (2014) \textit{Roma Families’ Engagement with Education and Other Services}. University of Strathclyde

\textsuperscript{17} Sime, Daniela and Fassetta, Giovanna and McClung, Michele (2014) \textit{Roma Families’ Engagement with Education and Other Services}. University of Strathclyde
The Well (Advice and Information)

Established twenty four years ago by The Church of Scotland in recognition that Govanhill was the first place of residence for many migrants to Glasgow and there was a need for a quality advice and information service that was accessible, sensitive to diverse cultures and provided services appropriate for women to attend and use. 35 volunteers from a variety of faith backgrounds provide support for information and advice sessions which are run on a drop-in basis to make them more accessible as there is no requirement to make an appointment.

A great deal of attention and time has been spent building relationships and trust. The Well is a safe and homely place where they have consciously tried to break down barriers of ‘them and us’. Clients appreciate the faith-based nature of the organisation and the shared ‘anchor of faith’ between workers and clients. Consequently 98% of people who use their services have been recommended by word of mouth. In particular they have worked hard to earn the trust of the Roma communities in Govanhill, identifying Slovak speaking intermediaries to act as go-betweens, encouraging people to attend and respect the ethos of the service. Other clients sometimes found it intimidating if large groups attended the office together so they were able to explain this and encourage people to come in small groups.

The Well also works closely with the Govanhill Free Church of Scotland which employs two part-time Slovakian development workers and this has improved communication and relationship building. ‘The Well’ has developed Cultural Sensitivity training which it delivers to ‘Well’ volunteers and workers as well as staff from external organisations. The training supports stepping outside cultural norms when working with clients and encourages consideration in small matters to value them and build strong relationships. Drop-ins are often very busy and people have to wait, but they understand and respect that each client will be given the amount of time required to resolve their particular issue.

During the calendar year January to December 2015 the advice service provided support for 950 people who each attended on average 8 appointments. Approximately 21% were Roma clients and workers feel that the dynamics within the community over the last two years have seen an increase in Romanian Roma clients and a decrease in the Slovakian Roma population who have moved for employment and housing. Work and benefits are major priorities for Roma clients, as they have particular problems in accessing work which is not exploitative in terms of hours and rates of pay. Moreover if Roma people do not have a realistic prospect of securing work within 3 to 6 months then there is no eligibility for Job Seekers Allowance or Housing Benefit, making them particularly vulnerable to having to work in the grey economy or resort to begging. Roma people are also more likely to travel to other parts of the country to secure short-term employment but have to go through the process of re-applying for benefits under new welfare rules each time they return.
**The Space**

The Space is a project of The Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, a Roman Catholic Order of women whose mission is to serve the poorest in society. They set up a pilot project two years ago to give service to the community and Govanhill emerged as an area of concern. ‘The Space’ provides a place where the most destitute and marginalised in the Govanhill community belong, are valued and accepted. It’s a place of safety where all people are welcomed and supported to develop a sense of purpose and direction in their lives and to pursue skills that will develop self-esteem and empower them to move out of poverty. The worker believes that the local churches work well together to communicate and maximise resources, pulling together on a practical, financial and spiritual level. The Space is open to partnership working with other organisations which share their value base of respect for dignity and compassion. They receive no council or statutory funding and rely on fundraising and individual giving to cover costs.

The Space is only able to function due to the involvement of volunteers in three forms of support:

1. The Community Drop-In: A crisis point for people who are destitute, providing sanctuary and access to resources such as cots, school uniforms, winter-wear packs and organic vegetables for extremely low prices. People are treated with respect and dignity and the organisation has built trust and honesty as a result. Their approach emphasises responsibilities and rights and they see it as part of their role to make Roma people aware of cultural norms with regard to parenting, health and hygiene.

2. Community Integration: The Space ensures that all marginalised people, including Roma, have access to services and brokers relationships such as registration with schools and GPs, Housing and Council Services, including accompanying people to individual appointments.

3. Building Better Futures: raising awareness of the value of education, encouraging participation in school attendance and positive parenting

**Elim Church Food Bank**

Roma families face poverty for various reasons and are referred predominantly from The Space to the Food Bank to relieve the situation. The Space works with some of the most vulnerable families in the area and encourages the families to recognise that vouchers are distributed on the basis of need. Limited employment opportunities lead to casual employment such as selling The Big Issue or washing cars at £2 per hour which is classed as self-employment. Most Roma families are on limited benefits and for the year April 2015 and to March 2016, 33% of all people referred to the Food Bank (727 of 2,400 referrals) have been Roma. Sixty Roma families per month benefit from the Food Bank and while this does not provide a long-term solution to the underlying issues it can alleviate some of the more acute difficulties.
Crossreach: The Daisy Chain Early Years Project

‘Crossreach’ is the Church of Scotland Board of Social Responsibility providing care and support to some of the most vulnerable people in Scotland. The Daisy Chain Project, based at The Elim Pentecostal Church, opened in December 2011 as one of Crossreach’s Children and Family Services using play–based interventions to improve the lives of children under 8 by ensuring they are safe, healthy, included, nurtured and engaged as per the wellbeing outcomes set by the Scottish Government for Children, Young People and Families.

The project aims to promote attachment between parents and children through play, creative and literacy activities. Initiatives to achieve this aim include Loc de Juaca (A Place to Play), a parent and toddler group which is officially for children aged 0-5 but also includes families who are new to the country with children who are not yet enrolled at a local school. It is specifically aimed at the Romanian Roma community to support social inclusion and workers encourage parents to engage and communicate with their children through play. Attendance is high and children take part in creative and imaginative play. There is a healthy eating programme and children take part in the Child Smile Oral Health Programme. A Scottish Romanian-speaking community worker is present and helps parents with correspondence regarding appointments, utility bills etc. following this up by accompanying people to appointments and drafting correspondence.

The Govanhill Free Church of Scotland

The church employs two part-time Slovakian bi-lingual Outreach Workers who see their role as flexible, varying according to the needs of the community and encompassing the linked areas of social and spiritual requirements. The church runs a weekly evening group in their premises, initially called ‘The Bothy’, but re-named by the Slovakian and Czech Republic Roma who attend as the ‘Koki Koki’ group. It was set up to provide a place of safety, where people could gather and socialise and the outreach workers could find out more about their support needs. ‘Money Matters’ provides advice on welfare rights, financial issues and official correspondence. All ages attend and the evening has developed into a blend between activity and support. It is run jointly with Daisy Chain which provides the positive parenting/play input and Crossroads which organises the craft work and activities.

The outreach workers also provide practical, social and emotional support for Roma individuals and families, helping them with phone calls and correspondence, payment of bills, attending GP and Health appointments and providing emergency interpretation and translation. Together with ‘The Well’, Govanhill Free Church jointly runs two English classes per week during school term time, based in the church hall with separate provision for women and men. Classes are designed to cater for mixed levels of ability within the group.

In terms of religious observance, Aleluja, a Saturday evening service is conducted in Slovak and Roma, with English translation provided and a separate children’s
programme delivered during the sermon. Skupinka Home Group meetings are held every Wednesday at the home of one of the congregation where the group sings and discusses the sermon from Aleluja. (English translation is provided individually). On the first Sunday of the month a cross-cultural service is conducted in several languages using visual aids.

The Outreach Workers outlined difficulties encountered in trying to involve the Roma communities in more generic activities with people from different cultural backgrounds. People are hard to engage, they do not constitute a homogenous group and divisions exist within Roma communities between people from different countries, villages, clans and families. It takes a long time to build trust between the workers and the Roma population even without the extra dynamics of involvement with other nationalities and cultural backgrounds. A generic Parent and Toddlers group where workers tried to encourage people from all backgrounds to attend has by default become an Asian Mother and Toddlers group. This was a barrier to integration which other organisations mentioned and it appears that separate provision aimed at specific Roma nationalities may be a necessary step in the inclusion process at this stage of settlement.

The Joy Ministries

The Joy Ministries (Glasgow) led by Joseph Gilson has a congregation of Romanian Roma people who worship in the Daisy Street Neighbourhood Centre in Govanhill. The aim is for the church to operate as a family, providing social support, helping with hospital visits and fundraising for funerals. One member of the congregation has been trained as an assistant pastor and translates the service into Roma for the other worshippers. Joseph organises speakers such as Police officers from time to time to talk about issues affecting the Roma community and has arranged visits from Romanian Consulate representatives.

Pastor Gilson feels that there is a distinct role for the church in a variety of ways. The church provides a safe place to gather, raises awareness with parents of the role of education for the individual and the community in improving conditions, and can help people to understand their legal responsibilities and remain within the law. He feels there is also a role in helping people to understand their rights as the Roma community is stereotyped and has become a target, monitored closely by the police and often seen as suspects rather than treated equally under the law.

Equal opportunities for Roma people would also encompass skills training, particularly for young people, as there are multiple difficulties in finding steady employment. There is a particular emphasis on the importance of developing skills for employment to ensure that people are self-sufficient and do not have to rely on begging to supplement poorly paid unstable jobs. Having a permanent venue for the church rather than sharing a community facility is seen as necessary pre-requisite in developing such services to promote independence.
12. Reaching out to Isolated Roma Communities

Many of the organisations consulted during the course of compiling this report recognised the vital role that the churches in the Govanhill area play in engaging the Roma community and providing services and support for individuals. In particular their contribution to supporting people in times of crisis and acting as a safety net as well as the flexibility to bridge the gaps in services which public sector bodies do not have the ability or autonomy to meet was highlighted. As one Third Sector organisation expressed: ‘Churches can make the most of the opportunities presented to respond to changing needs due to the freedom to set their own priorities rather than adhering to the policies of funding and statutory bodies’.

Their expertise in running groups based in the communities that they serve, their knowledge of the local community and in many cases their excellent facilities can all make a significant contribution. However in terms of the Roma community they also have a major asset in having people’s trust, based often on a shared Christian faith and also on the recognition that there is no hidden motivation for offering services. They are viewed as supportive, non-judgmental and having an inclusive and welcoming ethos which is non-threatening to Roma communities.

Irrespective of the size or in some cases the presence, of Roma communities within local authority areas there are ways which Scottish churches could contribute further to their inclusion and wellbeing:

1. Strategic support for the development of Roma civic institutions and community development initiatives
2. Fundraising for churches and faith projects with established provision for Roma communities, dependent on donations for sustaining delivery of services
3. Organising events to increase general awareness of the Roma community in Scotland, their history of discrimination, the issues currently affecting the community and information to combat racist stereotypes and myths
4. Celebration of International Roma Day (April 8th) to raise awareness of Roma culture and encourage self-esteem and identity as a community
5. Commemorating the Roma Holocaust (2nd August), the genocide of Europe’s Roma and Sinti population when upward of 200,000 were murdered or died as a result of starvation or disease
6. Providing a safe space for local Roma communities to meet to provide social support, and a venue to hold events and activities.
7. Alleviating poverty through inclusion in initiatives such as food banks, clothing, furniture and equipment projects
8. Building soft skills for employability through volunteering in Church groups and projects

9. Community ESOL classes and cafés, 1:1 tutoring

10. Running Homework Clubs which provide support for children and parents

11. Support for positive parenting through family activity groups

12. Signposting to local advice and support agencies for housing, health, employment and welfare rights
13. Current situation of EU nationals

At the time of writing this report (July 2016) there has been no change to the rights and status of EU nationals in the UK, as a result of the referendum to leave the European Union. The decision about when to trigger Article 50 and start the formal process of leaving the EU will be for the new Prime Minister. The UK remains a member of the EU throughout this process, and until Article 50 negotiations have concluded. The UK Government website states that, ‘we fully expect that the legal status of EU nationals living in the UK, will be properly protected’ and the government recognises and values the important contribution made by EU and other non-UK citizens who work, study and live in the UK.

The latest advice is\textsuperscript{18}:

- EU nationals who have lived continuously and lawfully in the UK for at least 5 years automatically have a permanent right to reside. This means that they have a right to live in the UK permanently, in accordance with EU law. There is no requirement to register for documentation to confirm this status.

- EU nationals who have lived continuously and lawfully in the UK for at least 6 years are eligible to apply for British citizenship if they would like to do so.

- EU nationals who have lived less than 5 years in the UK continue to have a right to reside in the UK in accordance with EU law.

- Extended family members of EU nationals must continue to apply for a registration certificate or residence card (if they are a non-EU national) if they wish to reside in the UK.

\textsuperscript{18} UK Government statement: The status of EU nationals in the UK, 12\textsuperscript{th} July 2016

14. SUMMARY

The Roma Community in Scotland 2016

1. Background to Roma Communities in Europe

Roma are the largest trans-national ethnic minority in Europe, with an estimated population of 10 to 12 million people, mostly living in Central, Southern and Eastern Europe in predominantly settled communities. The majority of the Roma population in Europe face discrimination, stigmatisation and exclusion. Living conditions are often segregated and overcrowded, with one in four Roma having no access to drinking water and sanitation. Poor access to education and the labour market have led to high unemployment rates or low quality, low paid jobs. Throughout the European Union Roma face systematic exclusion from services, lack of access to legal protection and in some cases forced migration.

2. EU Framework

In 2005 the European Union committed to a ‘Decade of Roma Inclusion’ to be implemented through Decade Action Plans with the aims of eliminating discrimination and identifying inclusion outcomes for education, health, housing, employment and civic partnership. In 2008 the first EU Roma Summit devised a set of 10 Common Basic Principles for Roma integration which included the active participation of the Roma at every stage of the process to enhance the effectiveness of policies and support for their full participation in public life, stimulation of their active citizenship and development of their human resources.

3. UK Context and Strategy

Prior to accession to the EU by Eastern European states some Roma sought asylum in the UK due to levels of persecution and discrimination. Over the last twelve years Roma have exercised their right to move to live in older EU member states as a result of poverty and poor living conditions and in search of employment and access to services. On 1st May 2004 the EU expanded with the accession of the A8 nations (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) followed on 1st January 2007 by the accession of the A2 countries, Romania and Bulgaria. Restrictions were placed on their right to work, claim benefits and access social housing until the accession periods ended on 1st May 2011 and 1st January 2014 respectively. Current estimates place the total figure for the Roma population of the UK at between 225,000 and 300,000 living predominantly in urban, multi-cultural areas within the private rental housing sector.

The UK’s National Roma Integration Strategy is a set of measures within the UK’s social inclusion policies rather than a defined strategy. Due to devolved responsibility for the policy areas covered, housing, education, health and employment, UK policy measures include a Scottish ‘Roadmap’ stressing the key role of local authorities in achieving Roma integration.

4. Scottish Context and Mapping

Scotland has not approved its own National Roma Integration Strategy, causing an inherent weakness in implementing Roma Inclusion priorities. However, the Scottish ‘Roadmap’ underlines the Scottish Government’s commitment to eliminating racial discrimination and recognises that Roma communities are amongst the most discriminated against in Scotland.
In September 2013 a report on ‘Mapping of the Roma Community’ was produced, based on consultation with the 32 Scottish Local Authorities, to provide an evidence base to implement Roma inclusion policies. The majority of councils provided little data, partly due to low numbers and minimal contact with Roma communities, but this study remains the only official scoping of the extent and location of Roma communities. It was estimated that there are between 4,000 and 5,000 Roma people living in Scotland. Grouped by Council area the midpoint of these estimates breaks down as: Glasgow (3,500), Edinburgh (158), Fife (60), North Lanarkshire (45), Aberdeen (50), Falkirk (20) and the other 26 councils combined (543). In terms of council responses, many are not prepared to support the cost of additional or tailored services where Roma communities are small in number. The report suggests that for most Roma people in Scotland the main concerns are the daily survival of the members of the whole extended family.

5. Govanhill
The Roma population in Glasgow is predominantly Slovakian and Romanian in origin but there are also small numbers of other nationalities and they live mainly within the Govanhill area to the South East of the city centre. Govanhill has a long history of migration to the area and is the most ethnically diverse area in Scotland with 53 languages spoken within 13 blocks of housing. The area has the highest population density in Scotland with commensurate pressures on public services and the environment. Settlement issues for Roma migrants were compounded by the inadequate response and discrimination of authorities such as HMRC, DWP and local government departments, contravening Roma rights under EU law. The Roma population comprises approximately 20% of local residents and anecdotal evidence suggests that since the 2013 Mapping Report there has been a decline in the Slovakian Roma population and a rise in the numbers of Romanian Roma. This has had an impact on the ability to deliver appropriate services in terms of bi-lingual staff and interpretation services to meet the needs of the communities.

6. Barriers to Roma Inclusion
Roma people have a long history of exclusion leading to the twin barriers of poverty and lack of access to services, compounded by a mistrust of officials and organisations based on their experience of marginalisation.

Housing: Roma people are vulnerable to private sector dependency due to their employment situation and experience high rents, sub-standard conditions and in some cases no tenancy agreements. There are in excess of 2,000 registered private landlords owning property in Govanhill accounting for 93% of the rental stock. This contributes to overcrowding with families forced to pool resources to make accommodation affordable. The incidence of overcrowded households in Govanhill is 55% above the average for Glasgow City. Poor regulation of private housing enables exploitation to go unchecked with instances of illegal eviction. Roma communities are unsure about their entitlement to support with housing costs or engagement with support agencies. Roma families traditionally socialise outdoors which becomes more of a necessity in overcrowded living conditions and such gatherings can be construed as threatening by others and tensions can escalate.

Employment: Gaining access to the labour market is particularly difficult and similar to most migrant groups there is a concentration of working age people amongst Scottish Roma. Literacy levels and language skills are challenges but can lead to the perception by employers that this is a barrier to all work. Access to employment for
the majority of Roma people means unskilled, low-paid jobs, poor working conditions and pay as low as £2 per hour. In 2013 Romanian Roma who did not have the right to take up employment due to A2 restrictions were mainly surviving at subsistence level in precarious self-employment such as dealing in scrap metal or used clothing. At that time Romanian Roma constituted 50% of The Big Issue sellers, described as vulnerable, homeless or living in multiple occupancy housing.

**Education:** Approximately 85% of Roma migrant children in the UK have previously been educated in special schools in their country of origin, but only 2-4% of pupils were assessed as requiring additional support in the UK (2011). Main barriers to involvement in education were apprehension that children would be placed in special education, parent’s literacy levels, low expectations that children could achieve or that schools would encourage them, distrust about children attending pre-school education, bullying (particularly at Secondary School level) and absenteeism in bad weather due to lack of outerwear.

**Health and Social Care:** Poor housing and poverty are major contributors to reduced health outcomes for Roma people. Considerable language and cultural barriers to accessing health services impact on the ability to register with health and social services and on their understanding of services provided and associated protocols. Cases of malnutrition, overcrowding and infestation have been reported and the Glasgow City Council Roma Children and Families Team estimate that 80% of referrals made to their service are due to the effects of poverty. In particular women’s health is an area of concern due to cultural difficulties in discussing sexual health, contraception and maternity care.

**Inclusion:** It is difficult for Roma communities to contemplate integration when the discourse is dominated by stigmatisation and there is little evidence of acceptance. Some grass-roots community workers feel that Roma people are excluded from involvement in creating, developing and delivering integration strategies and that while resources are being directed towards the community, access to resources and decision-making are not in their hands. The lack of community development approach perpetuates marginalisation. Additional resources are directed at Govanhill due to the number of Roma present while smaller communities go unnoticed and isolated, their needs overlooked and unfunded.

**Language:** access to services and employment is dependent on English language and literacy skills and this has proved to be a major barrier to Roma communities in Scotland, particularly for those not literate in their mother tongue. All systems for accessing public services, applying for tax and National Insurance registration etc are based on completing forms. This severely limits access and opportunities available for Roma adults and the range of experiences they can offer their children.

**Media Portrayal:** Key challenges highlighted which face Roma communities and their areas of settlement are complex and inter-connected. The impact of these issues can result in negative stereotypes of Roma people in public opinion and in local and national media. The result is a vicious circle which perpetuates discrimination and the cycle of poverty.
7. Response to challenges

Due to the demographics of Roma settlement in Scotland, the vast majority of policy response and service provision has been concentrated in Glasgow leaving smaller Roma communities isolated. In 2009 Glasgow was one of nine European cities which formed the Roma-NeT partnership to improve social inclusion and a local support group of key services was established to implement a Local Action Plan (2012 to 2013) to achieve this. There had been no update or review of progress at the time of writing this report for the Scottish Churches Racial Justice Group but the key action points are:

Education: *Improved access to translation services in schools * employment of Roma mediators throughout the school system * intensive English induction for new arrivals * increased nursery provision * increased attendance at Primary School level* increased provision of community ESOL classes appropriate to people with low literacy levels

Current Situation: Roma parents’ attitudes to education are positive despite barriers and there are high levels of satisfaction, particularly with primary schools. Many parents trust the schools and teaching staff and have begun to have hope that their children will be treated fairly and will get the chance to achieve academically. This is not necessarily the case in smaller Roma communities where children feel more isolated and parents more reluctant to report bullying and discrimination. Attendance rates have improved but are still 7.5% lower than the average attendance at primary level and 22% lower at secondary level. Concerns persist as Roma children have the lowest levels of attainment with only 37.5% of all Roma S4 pupils attaining English and Maths at SCQF Level 3 or higher in Glasgow compared to 94% of the general school population.

With regard to Early Years Education, Govanhill and Cuthbertson Primary Nurseries report that targeted interventions for children who have English as an additional language are having an impact and organisations such as Crossreach have been active in providing supplementary services for Roma children and families through the Daisy Chain Project. A network of ESOL community classes for adults has been developed with a range of venues and levels, and The Big Issue introduced compulsory attendance at English classes for vendors to help them carry out their job effectively. However community workers report that translation and interpreting services are inadequate to meet the demand and public services frequently do not fulfil their obligation to provide interpreters for Roma clients when required.

Employment: *Provide interpreting services for small community services with no bilingual staff * create a training and employment programme to work as intermediaries * active English language tuition for Roma adults * Skills development and job-seeking seminars * encourage young people to remain at secondary school to gain qualifications

Current Situation: The Roma Employability Project (2011 to 2013) led by Jobs and Business Glasgow (JBG) provided advice and employability support to access mainstream support, training and employment. JBG adapted the service due to English and literacy skills and concentrated on ‘hands-on’ training through volunteering and work placements to demonstrate skills to potential employers. In 2010 the Scottish Government announced that it would invest £1 million in a Backcourt Improvement and Employability Initiative which trained 60 local people to increase employability: a third of the places were allocated to local Roma residents.
The Green Clean Team (GTC) was set up with Romano Lav as lead organisation to bridge skills development areas before people took up their place in the Backcourt initiative which provided 10-12 weeks of intensive skills development.

The West of Scotland Regional Equality Council has set up a Minority Ethnic Employment and Training Support initiative (MEETS) to provide support to individuals facing significant barriers to employment. The Roma community is one of the target communities for this initiative and Romanian, Slovakian and Czech speaking advisers are employed to provide practical support and advice.

Health and Social Services: Consider advantages of Roma mediators in the health service * consolidate and support community services that provide bi-lingual advocacy and support services to Roma * Ensuring adequate funding is in place to sustain key community based services that provide crisis support to Roma

Current situation: Roma communities are growing in confidence in accessing health services via the GP practices. Access to health services and preventative care as well as lack of understanding of maternity services were identified as major issues in South Lanarkshire and NHS Lanarkshire set up a one-stop health clinic to increase awareness and promote preventative measures. Glasgow City Council has established a Roma Children and Families Team which works with Romanian and Slovakian citizens at risk, using a blend of casework and community development to support families and avoid statutory measures. They were aware that only about 25% of the local primary school children were in receipt of free school meals and clothing grants compared with the Glasgow average of 36%. A free school meal and a benefits check offered to all parents, janitors, and cleaners resulted in 56 more children are entitled to free school meals, over 100 receive a clothing grant and the area as a whole has become more of a funding priority in terms of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. This will act as a lever to securing more resources and funding for the whole ward.

Housing: *Encourage Glasgow City Council to enforce private landlords to improve properties * encourage wider debate about Roma access to social housing * take steps to discuss potential re-housing and wider integration with Glasgow City Council and Housing Associations

Current situation: Govanhill Law Centre continues to assist with cases of general disrepair, illegal eviction and homelessness of Roma tenants. There are many barriers to securing emergency accommodation leaving vulnerable people open to further exploitation. This situation is compounded by the attitude of some frontline staff and interpreters. A recent initiative has been launched, the South West Govanhill Property Acquisition and Repair Programme, to run from 2015 - 2017 through Scottish Government grant provision of £4.3 million and £5million from Glasgow City Council for Govanhill Housing Association to purchase and improve properties for social letting with the aim of providing better living conditions, reducing overcrowding and improving property management and maintenance.

8. Community Development and Capacity Building
Third Sector organisations consulted were concerned with building community capacity to effect long-term solutions. Faith groups in particular emphasised the need to build relationships and trust, sometimes difficult given the effects of poverty and additional struggles it causes. Roma communities come from nations where the culture of civic involvement and volunteering is less developed but community
activities have been increasing over recent years with the emergence of organisations such as Romano Lav (Roma Voice) which aims to raise awareness of Roma culture, promote involvement in community life and improve environmental and living standards. More recently, The Roma Society of Scotland was established to assist in the field of employment and education. Many of the local agencies and organisations in Govanhill have a community development approach aiming to achieve the Roma Inclusion Principle of explicit but not exclusive targeting of Roma people. This has proved difficult at times due to the extent of discrimination faced by Roma communities, multiple barriers to involvement and wider community tensions.

9. Role of Third Sector Organisations
A variety of Third Sector organisations operating in Govanhill tailor services to the needs of the Roma communities seeking to encourage community development and support Roma people acting as intermediaries. The relatively rapid growth of the Romanian Roma community and the decline in the Slovakian Roma community has resulted in a mismatch between the worker profile in the area and the community profile leading to a huge demand on the small Romanian-speaking workforce. Even Romanian speaking workers face barriers to communication with the Romanian Roma community whose first language is Romanes. Third Sector organisations include:

**Govanhill Development Trust:** The Trust has developed a Peer Education Project which has trained eight Roma people to run ‘peer to peer’ sessions about NHS services available locally. It provides network co-ordination of ESOL provision across Govanhill and with local partners has been responsible for development of an ESOL Café which runs twice weekly with the support of an Integration Worker as well as paid ESOL tutors. It also organises two other weekly ESOL classes and a programme of trips using public transport to help with knowledge of public facilities and understanding of functional English. The Trust supports individuals and the Romanian speaking Development Worker interviewed had a caseload of 140 people as of April 2016, requiring support with issues such as employment, housing, healthcare, school placement, bill payment and welfare benefits.

**Crossroads Youth and Community Association:** CYCA has a dedicated Govanhill Team, including three Slovak-speaking members of staff and a community work post to undertake work predominantly with Slovak and Czech Roma. They have a long history of working with the Roma community through running a settlement advice service for six years and, recognising the need for Romanian speaking workers, they work in partnership with other organisations to address this issue. They describe their work as operating within a neighbourhood where there are ethnic tensions and acknowledge difficulties in involving Roma people in activities which are not exclusively targeted at their communities. Targeted approaches have included a Roma Baking Group, The Bothy or Koki Koki Group run in conjunction with other local organisations. Their Roma Street Work initiative proved effective in reaching ‘hard to engage’ members of the communities, supported people into volunteering and helped to resolve complex welfare situations. Crossroads also provides individual support for 25-30 people identified through group work who face significant barriers and for whom signposting to services alone would not be sufficient.

**Govanhill Law Centre:** The Law Centre has established a reputation with Roma communities as an independent and trusted organisation which works on their behalf to address inequalities. Their caseload includes Welfare Reform support, prevention
of homelessness, eviction issues and matters relating to tenants’ rights, private landlords and housing benefit as well as disability and employment discrimination issues. In terms of housing issues related to the Roma population they deal with General Disrepair which includes dampness, no heating/ hot water, unreliable or unsafe gas and electricity supply. Homelessness and Illegal Eviction Issues are another major area of work, securing emergency accommodation and seeking Urgent Judicial Review for public authorities failing to meet statutory duties regarding housing provision. In terms of Welfare Rights, there is a huge demand for the service of the part-time Slovak speaking worker who supports client applications, appeals for benefits and provides representation at tribunals. Employment Law is also a major area of work with Roma communities but exploitation in terms of wages and conditions often goes unchallenged due to the fears of employees that they will be sacked; therefore it is often a case of advising people of their rights, or helping them secure entitlements before raising an action.

10. Role of the Churches
The majority of Roma living in the UK are Christian, belonging to Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal and Evangelical churches. Roma communities in Govanhill, particularly the women, reported that religion was an important aspect of their lives in giving support and direction. Churches and faith organisations in Govanhill coordinate well in working with Roma communities, maximising resources and ensuring better service coverage to all sections of the community. They provide venues for Roma groups and events, deliver services and help overcome barriers to social, economic and civic inclusion. Church workers stressed the importance of taking the time to build relationships and trust. Church and faith provision in Govanhill includes:

- **The Well**: Advice and Information service with approximately 21% of their clients from a Roma background seeking help with employment and benefits issues
- **The Space**: Provides a Community Drop-In providing support for people who are destitute by offering sanctuary and access to practical resources, Community Integration service to broker relationships with services and Building Better Futures which encourages school attendance and positive parenting
- **Elim Church Food Bank**: For the year April 2015 to March 2016, 33% of all referrals to the service were people from a Roma background: 727 of 2,400 referrals representing 60 families per month benefitting from the Food Bank
- **Crossreach: The Daisy Chain Early Years Project**: Uses play-based interventions to promote attachment between parents and children through play and literacy activities. Loca de Juaca is a parent and toddler group specifically aimed at Roma families to encourage parents to communicate through play. A Romanian–speaking worker is available to help parents with correspondence regarding appointments, bills etc and follows this up with accompanying people to appointments.
- **The Govanhill Free Church of Scotland**: Employs two Slovakian-speaking Outreach workers who provide practical, social and emotional support mainly to the Slovakian Roma communities. In conjunction with other local services they organise a weekly evening group for Roma families (Koki Koki Group) to provide social support and advice, run two English classes a week in conjunction with The Well and their Saturday evening church service is conducted in Slovak and Romanes.
- **The Joy Ministries**: has a congregation of approximately 80 Romanian Roma and aims to operate as a family, providing social support and pastoral care. The church provides a safe place to gather and the Pastor feels the church has a role in raising awareness of the importance of the role of education and can help people to understand their rights and responsibilities. They are particularly concerned with the
lack of employment for Roma and the need for equality and justice for Roma communities in how they are treated under the law and by enforcement agencies.

11. Reaching out to Isolated Roma Communities
The churches in Govanhill play a vital role in providing services and support for Roma communities. In particular they support people in time of crisis and are flexible and quick in their response to bridging gaps in public and third sector services as they have the freedom to set their own priorities. Their expertise in running community-based groups and in many cases their excellent facilities make a significant contribution to community development. They have a major asset in this work as they have the trust of the Roma communities based on a shared Christian faith and have a welcoming, non-judgmental ethos which is non-threatening. Irrespective of the size or, in some cases, the presence of Roma communities there are ways that Scottish Churches and the Scottish Churches Racial Justice Group can contribute to inclusion and wellbeing. The Report suggests ways in which Scottish Churches Racial Justice Group could raise awareness of discrimination against Roma people and support the development of civic institutions and community development. It also suggests ways that local churches could support isolated Roma communities and support church organisations dependent on raising donations, working with Roma communities in Govanhill.

12. Current Situation of EU nationals
At the time of compiling this report (July 2016) there has been no change to the rights and status of EU nationals in the UK as a result of the referendum decision to exit the European Union. The UK Government website states, ‘We fully expect that the legal status of EU nationals living in the UK will be properly protected’ and the latest advice is that EU nationals who have lived continuously and lawfully in the UK for at least 5 years automatically have permanent right to reside, those who have lived in the UK for 6 years are eligible to apply for British Citizenship and those who have lived less than 5 years in the UK continue to have a right to reside.

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Commissioned by Scottish Churches Racial Justice Group

http://www.acts-scotland.org/activities/racial-justice#

Researching and reporting carried out by
Diane Risbey for Community InfoSource.

Office: 0141 258 2773
CIC no. SC291462
Website: www.infosource.org.uk
A profit sharing, community interest company
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- Crossroads Youth and Community Association Annual Report 2015
Appendix B: Organisations consulted and groups visited

1. Crossroads Youth and Community Association
2. Crossreach: Daisy Chain Early Years Project
3. Elim Church Food Bank
4. Glasgow City Council Roma Development Officer
5. Glasgow City Council, Social Work Department, Roma Children and Families Team Presentation
6. Govanhill Law Centre
7. Govanhill Community Development Association
8. Govanhill Free Church of Scotland
9. International Roma Day: Dance Night
10. International Roma Day: Film Night
11. International Roma Day Photographic Exhibition
12. Loc de Juaca Parent and Toddler Group
13. Romane Cierhenia
14. Romano Lav
15. The ESOL Café
16. The Joy Ministries
17. The Koki Koki Group / The Bothy
18. The Roma Society of Scotland
19. The Space
20. The Well