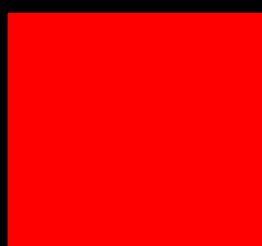
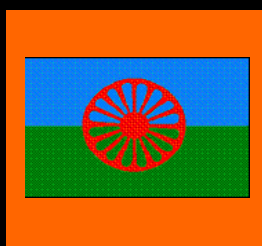
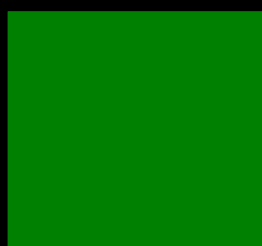
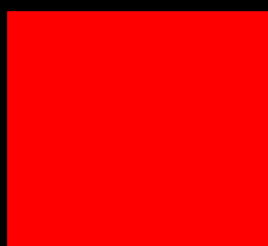


The movement of Roma from new EU Member States:

A mapping survey of A2 and A8 Roma in England
Patterns of settlement and current situation of the new Roma
communities



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A report prepared for DCSF

European Dialogue

August 2009

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official stance of the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

About European Dialogue

European Dialogue is a British-based, not for profit organisation, which works with local, national and international partners. European Dialogue strives to be a catalyst between local, national and international governing bodies and excluded communities and vulnerable minorities by engaging and supporting them in combating discrimination, racism and intolerance, and in promoting democracy, human rights, equality, social cohesion and safe communities, and by enhancing their effective participation. European Dialogue pilots innovative models of good practice, working with local, national and international experience and participation, on the implementation of national social inclusion policies at local level. European Dialogue has also undertaken a Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)/European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) study into the movement of A2 and A8 Roma to the UK in relation to the right to free movement within the EU, part of a comparative study conducted also in Spain, Italy, Finland, and France.

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Executive Summary

The present study dwells on some of the most significant challenges in the areas of education and other service provision to A2 and A8 Roma children and families in England, which have increased with the new movement of A2 and A8 Roma communities to England. The research focused on how these challenges have been responded to across a range of sectoral fields in an attempt to delineate the policy areas that either betray good practice or policy deficiencies, in the interests of allowing policy implications to be seen within the Every Child Matters agenda.

The research for this study was conducted over a period of 16 months. During this time, information was gathered by way of interviewing Roma; qualitative and quantitative data on Roma was also collected in a nationwide survey of local authorities in England. In total, 104 local authorities completed the survey; 104 A2 and A8 Roma respondents were interviewed in ten locations of England.

The case of the Roma is a very specific one: often coming from most adverse historical, as well as contemporary backgrounds characterised by high levels of discrimination, the vast majority of A2 and A8 Roma interviewees reported arriving in England in search of equal opportunities, a society free of anti-Roma attitudes, and a better economic, social and political future for them and their children.

The research findings for this study show that many A2 and A8 Roma, alongside their pre-Accession predecessors who sought asylum in the UK, believe England to represent precisely such a place: a country with a long tradition of multiculturalism which makes it possible for Roma to 'blend in' and live lives free of discrimination against Roma.

There is no doubt that Roma have been moving to this country because of their experience of relatively low levels of discrimination. Some Roma respondents said that in England they felt proud of their Roma ethnicity for the first time in their lives and they were able to confidently declare themselves Roma publicly.

They also maintained that such a celebration of one's ethnic origin, encountered not just at home, but also at school, in the workplace or among non-Roma friends, would not have been possible in their country of origin, where to date, Roma have remained "second-class citizens" for most of their non-Roma counterparts and peers. They also claimed that this inherent, deeply ingrained racism, had been 'institutionalised'. In a situation where the key gatekeepers, such as labour office staff or teachers, have racist attitudes and beliefs towards Roma, the Roma will never be given an equal opportunity to participate on the labour market and in education with equality.

In terms of the push factors behind the recent movement of Roma to England, the most frequent answers given by the Roma respondents to the question why they had come to live in England were as follows:

- 58.7% of the respondents said that their primary motivation was work;
- 22.1% of the respondents stated they had come to England in search of a better life for their children;
- 15.4% of the respondents listed discrimination in the country of origin as the third most important factor.

It is important to note that 97.1% of all the Roma respondents claimed that their life had improved since they moved to England.

The research presented a challenge in terms of dissecting these seemingly positive perceptions. As a result of the Roma's exposure to and sometimes learnt tolerance of racism and discrimination in their country of origin, these positive perceptions may be at times shaped by low expectations and ambitions, and accepting anything that is *better* than what they experienced back in their country of origin. However, does that mean that it is *really better*? This study thus tries to assess the reality of the Roma's situation in England in comparison with other EU and/or UK citizens.

In terms of general perceptions and the level of acceptance by the British, the most negative stereotyping attitude listed by the respondents was not towards their Roma ethnicity, but their East European migrant origin. The Roma respondents who reported they had been exposed to such negative stereotypes in

England maintained that they had experienced them in the workplace and/or that their children had been subjected to them in the school setting. Only in a small number of cases did the respondents say they and/or their children had faced initial hostility from their colleagues/peers/neighbours after they had ascribed as Roma/European Gypsies in the respective environments (the workplace, school, the neighbourhood), and/or after their colleagues/peers/neighbours had found out about their ethnic origin. These cases, however, generally tended to be reported in situations where complex cultural differences, whether real or perceived, had entered into play. These multiple cultural differences were not just Roma-specific, but also Central/Eastern Europe-specific. They tended to concern some Romanian and Slovak Roma who had come to England from areas of Romania and Slovakia where, due to high levels of discrimination, these communities had been almost 100% excluded from virtually all spheres of public life. However, in the current political and economic climate, these negative perceptions on the side of the British tended to be further fuelled by negative portrayals of “East European migrants flooding Britain to work here”, presented by the media and some extremist, ultra rightwing political parties and movements.

The case of Bulgarian and Romanian Roma is further aggravated by the employment restrictions imposed on A2 nationals, which effectively bar them from entering formal employment in the UK. That means that in extreme cases, their survival strategies may depend on semi-legal and/or illegal activities such as begging and/or stealing in order to sustain their families. In certain areas of England with sizeable Romanian/Slovak Roma communities, this has created an atmosphere of very tense community and race relations.

All of these factors intrinsically relate to the child’s familial, social and cultural background, which interact in the school setting and shape their wellbeing. The research findings indicate that education in many areas of England has played a central role in the social inclusion and wellbeing of A2 and A8 Roma children and families. Often with limited resources, knowledgeable and dedicated practitioners in the area of education (and healthcare in a number of locations) have come to recognise that these communities of new EU citizens have come to England to stay.

The research findings show that this welcoming approach manifested in the school setting is perhaps the most significant factor appreciated by the Roma. The vast majority of the Roma respondents were satisfied with positive attitudes on the part of the school staff, equal opportunities and no racial segregation. The absence of racial discrimination against Roma was also noted in other areas of service provision, such as healthcare, housing, employment and social welfare benefits.

The recognition of the presence of new Roma communities in England by local authorities is the first of a series of vital steps that need to be taken to tailor services to the specific needs of this group of EU citizens, which are now 'resident' in England. The example of Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) may be used as a model of good practice that should be disseminated in other local authority areas without such services. At the same time, it is necessary to publicise and promote those models of good practice, which have been successfully applied by education and other services in their work with A2 and A8 Roma communities in order to show the positive effects and importance of such statutory initiatives.

In the course of the research for this study, the research team has come to learn about the unique work done by education services in a number of local authorities benefiting members of the local Roma communities, as well as society at large. Such concerted efforts and professional working have tended to involve a multi-agency approach, cutting across all spheres of service provision (healthcare, social services, adult services, neighbourhood teams, youth offending teams, the police etc.) and engaging as many service providers and agencies working with Roma as possible. In the vast majority of cases, the invaluable work done by education officers and schools with Roma pupils and their families served as a "springboard" for other agencies to try and reach out to these communities. The greater the cooperation among the individual agencies was, the greater the success.

In terms of the overall research findings in relation to education, it is to be noted that the Roma children and young people from mainland Europe experience very similar circumstances and barriers as their peers traditionally living in Gypsy and

Traveller communities in England. Issues of ascription, access, attendance, low levels of achievement and early dropout from school, are prominent among those features of policy and provision which impact negatively on their happiness and life chances.

The Pupil Level Annual School Census presents local authorities with a unique instrument of effectively collecting data on Roma disaggregated by ethnicity. The outcomes of the research show that where local authorities have a good idea of the size of their Roma communities, they are able to tailor services which are responsive to their assessed needs. The findings of the research also show, however, that this potential is not realised fully: data on Roma is not collected efficiently even by those local authorities whose work can serve as a model of good practice. The collection of high-quality data on Roma would enable local authorities to *really know* the actual size of their Roma communities, and devise and implement programmes which respond to their assessed needs.

There is another role that public authorities such as local authorities and schools can and, in fact, must perform. By fulfilling their positive obligation under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote racial equality and eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and inequality where it occurs, they serve as an example, showing that racism and discrimination are impermissible in British society. In the public domain, cases of unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic origin must be subject to the strongest legal and professional sanctions. Over the past 16 months, it has been brought to the attention of the research team that there are certain schools and head teachers who refuse school places to Roma pupils on the grounds of their ethnicity: they believe that these pupils damage the school's "reputation" by what is perceived as poor attendance and low attainment. Some of the local authority representatives interviewed during the research confirmed these practices unofficially. What is necessary is to ensure that existing equalities structures operate effectively so that such cases are brought to public attention, that institutions and people are held to account, and that sanctions/prosecutions are exercised in accordance with the rule of law.

The research findings also indicate that in certain local authority areas, the Roma have been made into a political issue by the local senior officials, DCS and

elected representatives. This seems to be particularly the case of those local authorities with sizeable Romanian Roma populations. The research has shown that the failure to acknowledge the presence of this group of EU citizens, together with cooperation with law enforcement and other agencies, many of whom tend to know little or nothing about Roma, and the denial of EU citizens' rights and access to services and 'simple' inaction by local authorities, causes community and race relations to deteriorate. They also send a clear signal to the Roma, as well as the local community at large: "Roma, you are not welcome in this local authority area".

Such racist and unlawful attitudes and actions by local authorities, whether by employed staff or elected representatives, must be taken action against by the appropriate authorities; they do not have a place in a democratic society traditionally founded on the principle of equality.

1. Foreword

“A child's educational achievements are still too strongly linked to their parents' social and economic background: a key barrier to social mobility.”¹

Education is a key point of every child's entry into society. Education plays a crucial role in the social inclusion of the child, whether this relates to school provision in the country of origin or in the target country, which is in this case England.

Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) and Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) teams represent a central point of contact, ensuring A2 and A8 Roma² children's access to education, watching over their wellbeing and attainment in schools in England and often facilitating their access to other services.

As TESS and EMAS staff members admit, however, the child's successful education goes hand in hand with their parents or carer's access to employment and other services. Since A2 and A8 Roma's access to the labour market has been restricted for a range of reasons, this has had an adverse impact on the overall situation of A2 and A8 Roma families, their children and their survival strategies.

This report is an outcome of a 16-month nationwide mapping survey of patterns of settlement of A2 and A8 Roma moving to England, commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and conducted by European Dialogue.

Contact with local authorities and the use of ethnically disaggregated data recorded in the Pupil Level Annual School Census turned out to be instrumental in enabling the mapping of the populations of A2 and A8 Roma children and their

¹ This White Paper: Higher Standards, Better Schools For All (More choice for parents and pupils), DfES, 2005, p. 9.
<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=Cm%205206677>

² The term 'Roma' is used in this report to encompass many different groups which may have familial/geographical/territorial associations: Vlach Rom, Rumungro Rom, Kalderash, Sinti, Lavari, Manouche, Tattare, Kaale, Cale, Ursari, Luri and many more.

needs throughout the country, as well as those of the adult A2 and A8 Roma population and families.

The case of England/ the United Kingdom (UK) collecting ethnically disaggregated data on Roma is unique in the European Union (EU): it clearly shows the advantages of being able to allocate resources in order to tailor services to the particular needs of a specific segment of British society in the field of education.

2. Introduction

“Migration to the UK from the countries that have recently joined the European Union (EU) (the so-called A8 and A2 countries) is one of the most important social and economic phenomena shaping the UK today.”³

The Roma are believed to be the most sizeable, vulnerable, socially disadvantaged and discriminated against ethnic minority in the European Union (EU), as well as in the Council of Europe (CoE) and Organisation for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) areas.

Although the movement of Roma within Europe is not an entirely new phenomenon, the movement of Central and East European Roma to England throughout the 20th century intensified across the former Soviet block soon after the 1989 collapse of Communism to an unprecedented degree. Central and Eastern Europe Roma started coming into England in the 1990s as asylum seekers, escaping increasing racist persecution in their countries of origin. Migration movements intensified to an unprecedented extent within the EU following the 2004 and 2007 EU enlargements. It is in this socio-political and historical context that Roma from the new EU Member States (MS), so-called A2⁴ and A8⁵ countries have been moving to England.

To the researchers’ knowledge this recent phenomenon has not been fully mapped and described to date. With the exception of the present report and the Glasgow South East Community Health Care Partnership and Oxfam’s 2008 Report on the situation of the Roma community in Govanhill, Glasgow, no other research recently published in England and/or the UK has examined the situation of A2 and A8 Roma settling in this country.

Most Roma tend to settle in areas to which they have been previously as asylum seekers, or where they have contacts, and on occasion family members. The major concentrations of A2 and A8 Roma populations are now found in the North of England, the East Midlands, Kent and in north and east London. The most

³ Floodgates or Turnstiles? Post-EU enlargement migration flows to (and from) the UK, Institute for Public Policy Research, p.7

⁴ Romania and Bulgaria acceded to the EU in 2007

⁵ Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia and Slovakia acceded to the EU in 2004

numerous of these national groups are the Slovak, Czech and Romanian Roma communities. The arrival of new communities, including A2 and A8 Roma, has presented both statutory and non-statutory service providers with new challenges. This pertains to services provided to Roma children as well as adults in England. The ability to fully access services is fundamental to the social inclusion of everyone, including the Roma. This is especially the case in the area of education: Roma, alongside Gypsy and Traveller children, represent one of the lowest achieving groups.⁶ The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) has reported that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils have the lowest results of any ethnic minority group and are the pupils most at risk in the education system. These assessments have been confirmed by data coming from the School Census since 2003.⁷

Purpose of the report

The primary focus of the research and the present report is to explore school provision for A2 and A8 Roma children in England from the perspective of local authorities, statutory and non-statutory practitioners and the Roma themselves.

At the same time, the education of children, including that of A2 and A8 Roma, happens in relation to a number of areas of social service provision. This is why the report also looks at what strategies there are in place both at the local and national level to foster community cohesion and the successful social inclusion of A8 and A2 citizens of Roma origin settling in England.

This report presents qualitative and quantitative data, which is the result of a DCSF commissioned nationwide survey of all local authorities in England in relation to school and services provision. It also presents qualitative data obtained during personal interviews and focus groups with A2 and A8 Roma, which took place between July 2008 and April 2009. The views of local authority representatives and Roma respondents are accompanied by views of non-statutory and other practitioners working with Roma communities in England.

⁶ For a range of complex reasons many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are amongst the lowest achieving in our schools and the situation is not improving. *The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People*. DCSF, 2008, p.5

⁷ *The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People*. DCSF, 2008, p.7

3. Methodology

The present report contains both qualitative and quantitative data gathered in the course of the research. The following methods were used:

- Interviews with key informants inside and outside the Roma community, including statutory and non-statutory practitioners working with Roma;
- Personal interviews with a cross-section of individuals (gender/age/country of origin)
- Focus group discussions.

3.1 Phase One

In the course of Phase 1 of the research, desk research was conducted in order to collect background information. An extensive literature review was carried out, covering legislative frameworks relating to Roma (both A8 and A2 nationals) in England, policy frameworks relating to Roma (both A8 and A2 nationals) in England and the conclusions and recommendations of other relevant reports into Roma in England.

Initial information was also gathered through secondary sources across England, mainly including voluntary sector organisations and non-statutory practitioners working with Roma.

Two questionnaires were drafted by the project team: the first one for local authorities which was subsequently assessed and approved by the DCSF; the second one for Roma respondents.

The Roma questionnaire was first tested on an initial case study in north and east London, areas with some of the highest populations of A2 and A8 Roma. This qualitative research was carried out to provide a thorough insight into the needs and experiences of A2 and A8 Roma.

A number of Czech Roma were also interviewed in Southend-on-Sea. It is a town with a considerably sizeable population of predominantly Czech Roma, some of whom commute to London to work. This allowed the research team to test the questions and adjust them, depending on the initial outcomes.

Spin-off case studies subsequently took place in other locations across England between August 2008 and June 2009: London Walthamstow and Edmonton, Peterborough, Newcastle, Manchester, Bolton, Sheffield, Rotherham, Doncaster and Bradford.

3.2 Phase Two

Following approval by the DCSF, in early November the questionnaire was sent to all the 151 Directors of Children's Services in England. In most cases, the questionnaire was passed on to practitioners within educational services working with A2 and A8 Roma: these tended to be Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) and/or Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) teams for the most part. The questionnaires asked for both quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a national overview of Roma in England, noting numbers, distribution and country of origin.

Parallel to the ongoing field research and interviews with A2 and A8 Roma respondents, which were arranged either through personal networks among Roma or good working relationships with the statutory and non-statutory sectors, and also based upon the initial findings of the nationwide survey of local authorities, additional geographical areas in England with significant Roma populations were selected for further qualitative research. This research included face-to-face interviews and focus groups with Roma representatives, as well as statutory and non-statutory practitioners working with Roma.

3.3. Phase Three

During Phase 3 of the research, qualitative data gathered in the course of the field research, and quantitative and qualitative data coming from the local authority survey, was amalgamated to produce the main outputs of the research:

- Two booklets for practitioners working with Roma: one containing basic information on the settlement of A2 and A8 Roma in England; the other being a strategic booklet for TESS/EMAS/inclusion workers to support them in their dealings with middle and senior management at the local level;

- The final project report for the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

An additional component of the study was added towards the end of the project due to requests for a joint event coming from both statutory and non-statutory practitioners working with Roma communities, on the one hand, and members of Roma communities across the country, on the other. The vast majority of the local authorities, which completed the survey, welcomed the opportunity to meet their colleagues from other areas of England in order to exchange experience and expertise acquired at the local level. The meeting, which brought together over 40 representatives of local authorities, non-governmental organisations working with Roma, and representatives of Roma communities living in England, took place in York on 28 July 2009.

4. Social and political background

4.1 The context of the movement of Roma to England

The Roma represent Europe's largest ethnic minority.⁸ The 2004 report entitled "The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union" commissioned by the Director General for Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission; suggests that upon the 2004 EU enlargement, "Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities became the largest ethnic minority within the EU". With Bulgaria and Romania joining the EU in January 2007, the number of EU citizens of Roma origin is reported to have increased by approximately 3 million. The total of the EU's Roma population is now estimated to be between 10 and 12 million, making it the largest ethnic minority group in the EU.⁹

Many Roma do not declare their ethnicity for fear of discrimination: it is therefore virtually impossible to say how many persons of Roma origin live on the territory of the individual states.¹⁰ Nonetheless, some qualified estimates suggest the following figures for Central and Eastern Europe:

State	Minimum number of Roma	Maximum number of Roma	Total population	Minimum % of Roma population	Maximum % of Roma population
Albania	90,000	100,000	3,490,435	2,58 %	2,86 %
Bulgaria	700,000	800,000	7,796,694	8,98 %	10,26 %
Czech Republic	250,000	300,000	10,272,179	2,43 %	2,92 %
Hungary	550,000	600,000	10,138,844	5,42 %	5,92 %
FYR Macedonia	220,000	260,000	2,041,467	10,78 %	12,74 %
Moldova	20,000	25,000	4,430,654	0,45 %	0,56 %
Poland	50,000	60,000	38,646,023	0,13 %	0,16 %
Romania	1,800,000	2,500,000	22,411,121	8,03 %	11,16 %
Slovakia	480,000	520,000	5,407,956	8,88%	9,62 %
Total	4,160,000	5,165,000	104,635,373	3,98 %	4,94 %

Source: Gypsy Research Centre, René Descartes University, Paris, 1994

⁸ In the European Parliament's resolution on the situation of the Roma in the European Union of 28th April 2005, it was recognised that "the 12-15 million Roma living in Europe, 7-9 million of whom live in the European Union, suffer racial discrimination and in many cases are subject to severe structural discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, as well as multiple discrimination on the basis of gender, age, disability and sexual orientation".

⁹ Estimated population figure in: Focus Consultancy/ERRC/ERIO, The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union (2004), p. 9; C. Gillcaster et al. (ed.s), Roma in an Expanding Europe (2003), p. 8.

¹⁰ During the latest census in 2001, some 11,000 Czech citizens declared Romani nationality in the 10-million Czech Republic, while the total number of Roma has been put at 250,000 or even 300,000

Central and Eastern Europeans, including the Roma, have been moving to Western European states, including the UK, throughout the 20th century. The most recent of these movements has been over the past two decades. Political changes associated with the 1989 collapse of the Communist regimes saw the borders of the former Communist states open: in the 1990s, the Roma came to the UK mainly as asylum seekers. In 1998, the Home Office “(...) recorded 515 asylum applications from Czech nationals, 835 from Slovakian nationals, and 1015 from Romanian nationals. Almost all these applications were made by Romani people.”¹¹ As very few of them succeeded in their attempts to gain refugee status in England, they were ultimately deported. Since the 2004 and 2007 EU enlargements, the movement of A2 and A8 citizens, including the Roma, has become much more substantial. They have been able to exercise freedom of movement, in line with Directive 2004/38 on the right of citizens of the European Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the EU.¹²

The movement of A2 and A8 Roma citizens has been encouraged by the practical consequences of the 2004 and 2007 EU accession. At the same time, it has been primarily motivated by factors other than those of a purely economic nature.

Historically, the Roma of Central and Eastern Europe have been subjected to systemic racial persecution and social exclusion. During WWII, Roma and Sinti were systematically liquidated in Nazi concentration camps or summarily murdered by their own fellow citizens in German occupied territories. Anti-Roma sentiments have survived until the present day: far-right political parties and extremist movements have targeted them, using verbal abuse and advocating (and many a time resorting to) physical violence against the Roma. Brutal attacks, which have left many Roma seriously injured, even killed, have been occurring recently across Central and East Europe: another major factor, which has, and continues to contribute to the movement of Roma to the UK.

Few effective measures have been implemented by national governments in order to stop the rise of far-right political parties and neo-Nazi movements. This in turn,

¹¹ Unwanted Journey, Refugee Council, March 1999, p7

¹² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:158:0077:0123:EN:PDF>

has fuelled much anti-Roma sentiment and shaped negative attitudes by mainstream society and politicians in the Roma's home countries. The confluence of these negative factors has led to many Roma leaving for Western EU states, including England, as well as for non-EU countries such as Canada.¹³

The outcome of the recent European Parliament elections show that the overall political atmosphere in the EU is increasingly unfavourable; examples of alarming social and political developments is the success in the elections of the extreme right wing British National Party and of Jobbik, the Hungarian fascist anti-Roma 'Movement for a Better Hungary'.¹⁴

4.2 Push and pull factors of the movement of Roma to England

Hostile attitudes towards Roma by mainstream society and institutional racism in the Roma's countries of origin tend to be deeply ingrained, making it virtually impossible for Roma to access key public services such as employment¹⁵, housing, education, healthcare or social services. This means that Roma across Central and Eastern Europe are effectively barred from participating in the social, economic, public and political life of their home countries. Roma adults have been pushed out of the workplace and of mainstream housing into the margins of majority society. Roma children have been segregated into special remedial schools. These factors, alongside the absence of any effective political strategies on Roma issues, and real equal opportunities for Roma, are some of the most significant forces contributing to a mass exodus of Roma who have been leaving for countries inside, as well as outside the EU.¹⁶

The lack of practical measures to protect Roma from racial discrimination in most Central and East European states is one of the reasons why Roma have been

¹³ The increased number of Czech Roma claiming asylum in Canada has recently led to the very disputable, much discussed and heavily criticised reintroduction of visas for Czech citizens. <http://aktualne.centrum.cz/czechnews/clanek.phtml?id=642771>

¹⁴ Hungarian anti-Roma party will have three MEPs http://www.romea.cz/english/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_1237

¹⁵ "64% of all Roma surveyed believe that they have personally suffered discrimination on the labour market", The Glass Box: Exclusion of Roma From Employment, European Roma Rights Centre, February 2007

¹⁶ Canada flooded with Czech Roma refugee claims; 2008 saw 993% increase from year before www.canada.com/news/Canada+flooded+with+Czech+Roma+refugee+claims/1499804/story.html
<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Czech+refugee+claims+flood+Canada/1500573/story.html>

leaving their homelands (territory of Central and East Europe).¹⁷ Most Central and East European governments have failed to implement their national policies on Roma to a level, which had they done so, would have resulted in a significant improvement of the socioeconomic position of Roma. The adoption of anti-discrimination legislation by the new EU MS has thus far not resulted in the Roma being given any protection against discrimination.

As victims of racist persecution in their countries of origin, the status of 'voluntary migrants'¹⁸ may not necessarily apply to a high proportion of A2 and A8 Roma coming into the UK, unlike in the case of other EU citizens who are non-Roma. The Roma's 'visible' status as EU citizens, (which tends to be perceived by the British as meaning immigrants from Eastern Europe), and their 'invisible' status as Roma, (coming from societies where racism and anti-Roma sentiments are deeply rooted), combine to make it very challenging for Roma in their attempts to become part of society, and for them to fully participate in public, social and economic life in the UK .

The current financial crisis and severe economic recession in the UK have seen the unemployment rate rise. 'The unemployment rate was 7.1 per cent for the three months to March 2009, up 0.8 over the previous quarter and up 1.8 over the year. The number of unemployed people increased by 244,000 over the quarter and by 592,000 over the year, to reach 2.22 million. These are the largest quarterly increases in the unemployment level and rate since 1981.'¹⁹ As in other EU countries, this seems to have fuelled social tension and animosity towards all EU citizens moving into the UK, including the Roma. The increased unemployment rate has also resulted in fewer job vacancies, reducing the chances for citizens of New European Member States, including the Roma, to find work in the UK.

¹⁷ Ninety per cent of Roma interviewed in Hungary in a recent EU survey said discrimination due to ethnic origin was widespread, followed by 83% in the Czech Republic and 81% in Slovakia. The report, by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, finds "high levels of discrimination and victimisation among the Roma in the seven member states surveyed." Data in Focus Report: The Roma, European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2009, p. 7

¹⁸ 'In the context of EU enlargement eastwards, it is perhaps rather easy to assume that Slovak Roma, like other A8 migrants, are now 'voluntary migrants' in the traditional sense and that, should they not find the opportunities or quality of life improvements they hoped for, are free to go back and work in their 'home' country. ' Report on the situation of the Roma community in Govanhill, Glasgow, Lynne Poole and Kevin Adamson, School of Social Sciences, University of the West of Scotland, Oxfam, Glasgow CHCP, 2008, p. 3

¹⁹ <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?ID=12>

4.3 Employment restrictions imposed on A2 and A8 Roma

A2 and A8 citizens, including the Roma, are able to exercise their right to free movement within all the European Union Member States. However, upon the 2004/2007 EU enlargement a series of employment restrictions was imposed by the British government on citizens from A2 and A8 countries coming to the UK, including Roma.

4.3.1 A8 citizens: Worker Registration Scheme (WRS)

Since May 2004, A8 nationals have been able to work legally in the UK after registering with the Home Office within 30 days of beginning their UK employment. This takes place within the scope of the ‘Worker Registration Scheme’ (hereafter WRS)²⁰. Registration with the WRS is compulsory for all A8 nationals who settled in the UK following the 2004 EU enlargement. This does not apply to self-employed people and those granted status as asylum seekers.²¹

A8 citizens, including the Roma, are entitled to some basic social assistance, such as Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Tax Credits, whilst they are working, provided they are registered and qualify for the benefits in question.

Only after an A8 citizen has been working legally for at least a 12-month period, without taking a break of more than 30 consecutive days, can they claim social security benefits. These include job seekers’ allowance and income support.

4.3.2 A2 citizens: Types of work permits issued²²

Romanians and Bulgarians, including Roma, can move and live freely in the UK. However, they can only remain in the UK legally without work for the first 3 months. Then, in order to work legally in the UK, A2 citizens need to apply for an

²⁰ It covers immigrant workers from Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia and Slovakia, among 10 countries which joined the EU in May 2004.

²¹ A8 citizens are not required to register if they are self-employed; if they have been working legally in the United Kingdom for 12 months without a break in employment; if they are providing services in the United Kingdom on behalf of an employer who is not established in this country; if they have dual citizenship of the United Kingdom, another country within the European Economic Area (EEA) that is not listed above, or Switzerland; if they are the family member of a Swiss or EEA citizen (except the countries listed above) and that person is working in the United Kingdom; or if they are the family member of a Swiss or EEA citizen who is living in the United Kingdom as a student, or a retired or self-sufficient person.

²² The following categories have been cited using the following source: Guidance for nationals of Bulgaria and Romania on obtaining permission to work in the UK, UK Border Agency, Nov 2008
<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/bulgariaromania/guidanceforbulgariaromania0408>

accession worker card²³, unless exempted under special conditions.²⁴ Most categories of employment require the employer to obtain a work permit for the employee before applying for an accession worker card, (known as the Purple work card). However, in certain permit-free categories it is necessary for the A2 citizen to apply for an accession worker card, in these cases the employer need not apply for a permit.²⁵ If employment begins without having obtained correct authorisation, the employee and the employer are both considered to be committing a criminal offence.

The ban on employment applies to all A2 citizens who came to live in the UK following the 2007 EU enlargement with the aforementioned exceptions. This does not apply to self-employed people or those granted status as asylum seekers.

Romanian and Bulgarian citizens aged between 18 and 30 can also work in the UK under the Sectors Based Scheme (hereafter SBS). The SBS allows UK based employers to recruit low skilled workers from Bulgaria and Romania to vacancies in the food manufacturing sector that cannot be filled by resident workers.²⁶

²³ Blue Registration Certificates indicate that the holder can work in the UK without restrictions. They are issued to Romanian and Bulgarian nationals who are considered highly skilled or who are exempt from the requirement to obtain an accession worker card. Yellow Registration Certificates are issued to Romanians and Bulgarians exercising rights in the scope of The European Treaty of Accession²³ as self-employed persons, self-sufficient persons or students. The certificate will state whether the holder is self-employed, self-sufficient or a student and explain if the holder can legally work in the UK.

²⁴ Romanian and Bulgarian citizens are exempt from the requirement to obtain authorisation to work in the United Kingdom if they have leave to enter under the Immigration Act 1971 and that leave does not place any restrictions on taking employment in the United Kingdom, for example, they have been given leave to remain as the spouse of a British citizen or as the dependant of a work permit holder; or they have been working with permission, and without interruption, in the United Kingdom for a period of 12 months ending on or after 31 December 2006. For example, they are already present in the United Kingdom as a work permit holder or in some other category that confers permission to take employment (for example as a student and they have been in part-time employment continuously for 12 months); or they are providing services in the United Kingdom on behalf of an employer established elsewhere in the EEA; or they are also a citizen of the United Kingdom or another EEA state, other than Bulgaria or Romania, or Switzerland; or they are the family member of an EEA national exercising a Treaty right in the United Kingdom (except if they are the family member of a Bulgarian or Romanian national who is subject to work authorisation requirements or who is exempt from those requirements, but only by virtue of being a self-employed person, a self-sufficient person or a student) or the spouse or civil partner of a British citizen or person settled in the United Kingdom; or they are the family member of a Bulgarian or Romanian national who is self-employed, self-sufficient or a student. They will remain exempt provided that their sponsor remains a student, self-sufficient person or self-employed; or they are a member of a diplomatic mission, the family member of a diplomat or the family member of anyone who is entitled to diplomatic immunity.

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/eea/bulgariaromania/liveworkuk/>

²⁵ These categories include: airport based operational ground staff of an overseas airline; and au pair placements; and domestic workers in a private household; and ministers of religion, missionaries or members of a religious order; and overseas government employment; and postgraduate doctors, dentists and trainee general practitioners; and private servants in a diplomatic household; and representatives of an overseas newspaper; news agency or broadcasting agency; and sole representatives; and teachers or language assistants on an approved exchange scheme; and overseas qualified nurses coming for a period of supervised practice.

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/eea/bulgariaromania/liveworkuk/>

²⁶ If the potential employee will not be working within this sector he/she will not qualify under the SBS. Applications under the SBS must be made for a specific individual to be employed in a specific role. If the application is successful, the employee will only be able to take up the role the letter of approval was issued for, he/she will not be able to take a different job or work for a different employer. The basic requirements for employment under the SBS are:

Work authorisation for A2 citizens is already considered to be in place in the following cases: if the person has been given leave to enter or remain in the UK before 1 January 2007;²⁷ or if the person has come to the UK as part of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) and holds a valid work card issued by a SAWS operator.

4.3.2.1 The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS)

The SAWS is designed to allow farmers and growers in the UK to recruit low-skilled overseas workers from Romania and Bulgaria to undertake short-term agricultural work up to six months. The scheme works on the basis of a quota. In 2008, the quota was 16,250 places. In 2009 the quota is 21,250 places. The scheme is managed by nine approved operators.

The workers enrolled in the SAWS carry out low-skilled work such as planting and gathering crops, on-farm processing and packing of crops and handling livestock. Workers must be paid at least the Agricultural Minimum Wage and provided with accommodation by the farmer or grower employing them. The SAWS is a short-term immigration category. Thus, it is impossible for workers enrolled in the SAWS to claim any benefits.

4.3.3 Political controversy surrounding the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS)

Towards the end of 2008 and in spring 2009, the Home Office's Migration Advisory Committee was considering scrapping the employment restrictions imposed on A8 nationals.²⁸ Statistics recently published by the Home Office show that the overall number of eastern Europeans moving to the UK for work has fallen. In the three months prior to December 2008, there were 29,000 applications from workers from the A8 countries - down from 53,000 in the same

the individual will be aged between 18 and 30 at the time the application is made; and
the individual is a Bulgarian or Romanian national; and
the post on offer is within the food manufacturing sector; and
the quota for the work you are recruiting for has not been exhausted; and
the post on offer is covered by the SBS; and
the individual will be working full-time (at least 30 hours per week).

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/eea/sbs/bulgariaromania/eligibility/>

²⁷ The person's passport has been endorsed with a condition allowing them to work legally for a particular employer or in a particular job. If this leave to enter or remain expires, or the person at issue wishes to change jobs before they have worked legally in the UK for 12 months, they may need to obtain an Accession worker card

²⁸ <http://press.homeoffice.gov.uk/press-releases/Work-restrict-Eastern-European>

period in 2007.²⁹ ‘Measured stocks of A8 immigrants in the UK have grown considerably and steadily since accession, from around 50,000 in 2004 to just over 700,000 in 2008. Limited data mean these figures are probably underestimates. [...] A8 immigrants to the UK have tended to be young, relatively educated, and in employment. But, in spite of their level of education, a large proportion of A8 immigrants have been employed in the lower skilled occupations.’³⁰

In April 2009, the Home Office extended the restrictions for two more years.³¹ ‘We conclude that disbanding the WRS would not have large labour market impacts. On balance, however, we recommend maintaining the WRS on economic grounds. This is because, if the WRS were to be ended, the labour inflow from the A8 countries would probably be a little larger than otherwise. In these disturbed times, some of the inflow of A8 workers may displace UK workers. The WRS also provides useful data for monitoring immigration which would be lost.’³²

‘According to Trades Union Congress general secretary Brendan Barber, “keeping it will make no difference to their numbers.” Workers who did not register were denied employment rights leaving them open to abuse by unscrupulous employers, he added, and “this in turn threatens the pay and conditions of other workers. It would have been more sensible to allow this unhelpful scheme to expire.”’³³

²⁹ <http://press.homeoffice.gov.uk/press-releases/Work-restrict-Eastern-European>

³⁰ The labour market impact of relaxing restrictions on employment in the UK of nationals of Bulgarian and Romanian EU member states, Migration Advisory Committee Report, December 2008, p. 8

³¹ <http://press.homeoffice.gov.uk/press-releases/Work-restrict-Eastern-European>

³² Review of the UK’s transitional measures for nationals of member states that acceded to the European Union in 2004, Migration Advisory Committee Report April 2009, p. 4

³³ East Europe worker 'curbs' kept, The Guardian 17:08 GMT, Wednesday, 8 April 2009 18:08 UK: The Conservatives said that “no one who claims to be self-employed has to register under this scheme, so it serves no useful purpose in limiting the numbers of those coming here.” UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage argued “the registration scheme was voluntary and offered no protection to UK workers”.

5. Legal background

Local authorities in England have statutory duties to Roma³⁴ under race legislation (see below). They also have an obligation to improve outcomes for all children; including Roma children, under the Every Child Matters agenda. This encompasses the universal services to which every child has access, and more specialised and targeted services for those children with additional needs.

5.1 The Race Relations (Amendment) Act

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000³⁵ places a duty on most public authorities³⁶ to eliminate race discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and good relations between all racial groups. Named public authorities³⁷ are required to review their policies and procedures; to remove discrimination and the possibility of discrimination; and to actively promote race equality. It amends the Race Relations Act 1976, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on grounds of race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), and ethnic or national origin. Nothing is taken away from the 1976 Act, but the amended rules are more enforceable and include a positive duty to promote racial equality. Public authorities are required not only to address unlawful discrimination where it occurs, but also to be pro-active in preventing it from occurring.

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 also places a duty on schools to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations when carrying out their functions. Gypsies, Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage are identified as racial groups and are therefore covered by the Race Relations Act, as legitimate ethnic minority communities.

³⁴ Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

³⁵ For full text, go to http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000034_en_1

³⁶ On 2 April 2001, amendments to the Race Relations Act came into force which covers public authorities that had previously been exempt. This means that around 45,000 public authorities in the UK are now required to meet the general duty to promote race equality. A few public authorities are exempt, such as the Security Service.

³⁷ Ministries and central government departments, Local Authorities, regional development agencies and enterprise networks, Police authorities, Health authorities, health boards, NHS Trusts and primary care trusts, Education authorities, grant aided and self governing schools, Colleges and universities, Communities Scotland, Professional bodies, Libraries, museums and galleries.

5.2 Domestic legislation regulating employment agencies

Employment agencies in England, Scotland and Wales must comply with the Employment Agencies Act 1973 and regulations. The 1973 Employment Agencies Act³⁸ and the 2004 Gangmasters (Licensing) Act³⁹ regulate their work. The Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate (EAS)⁴⁰ is part of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR). The EAS carries out routine inspections of agencies and investigates complaints about agency conduct.⁴¹

“In particular, the Government expects employment agencies and employment businesses, and hirers, to follow high standards as regards equality of opportunity. It is unlawful to refuse to hire or to treat a work-seeker less fairly - e.g. in pay or conditions - because of their race or nationality, sex, sexual orientation, religion, beliefs or disability (noting that reasonable adjustments must be considered for disability). The Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003, apply to employment agencies, employment businesses and hirers.”⁴²

³⁸ http://www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1973/cukpga_19730035_en_1

³⁹ The Gangmasters Licensing Authority

- (1) There shall be a body known as the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (in this Act referred to as “the Authority”).
- (2) The functions of the Authority shall be—
 - (a) to carry out the functions relating to licensing that are conferred on it by this Act,
 - (b) to ensure the carrying out of such inspections as it considers necessary of persons holding licences under this Act,
 - (c) to keep under review generally the activities of persons acting as gangmasters,
 - (d) to supply information held by it to specified persons in accordance with the provisions of this Act,
 - (e) to keep under review the operation of this Act, and
 - (f) such other functions as may be prescribed in regulations made by the Secretary of State.
- (3) The Authority may do anything that it considers is calculated to facilitate, or is incidental or conducive to, the carrying out of any of its functions.
- (4) The Authority shall not be regarded—
 - (a) as the servant or agent of the Crown, or
 - (b) as enjoying any status, immunity or privilege of the Crown,and the property of the Authority shall not be regarded as property of, or property held on behalf of, the Crown.
- (5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision as to—
 - (a) the status and constitution of the Authority,
 - (b) the appointment of its members,
 - (c) the payment of remuneration and allowances to its members, and
 - (d) such other matters in connection with its establishment and operation as he thinks fit.
- (6) Schedule 1 amends certain enactments in consequence of the establishment of the Authority.

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/ukpga_20040011_en_1

⁴⁰ <http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/employment/employment-agencies/index.html>

⁴¹ <http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/employment/employment-agencies/index.html>

⁴² <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file24248.pdf>

5.3 EU legislation governing freedom of movement and non-discrimination

Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely (Freedom of movement for workers) within the territory of the Member States⁴³ defines the right of free movement for citizens of the European Economic Area (EEA), which includes the European Union (EU) and the three European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members.

Article 18 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC) is key to the right of free movement as it lays down the principles of citizenship of the Union.⁴⁴

Article 39 provides the right of free movement of workers. ‘Anyone who is exercising an economic activity subordinate to another person and who receives remuneration for that activity over a period of time is a worker under EU law. Anyone who is seeking work or taking up work has the right to cross EU borders for the purpose of doing so.’⁴⁵

Article 12 provides a right to non-discrimination on the basis of nationality.⁴⁶

Article 13 TEC sets out a right to non-discrimination on more traditional grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

⁴³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:158:0077:0123:EN:PDF>

⁴⁴ ‘The concept of citizenship of the EU is somewhat different from the idea of citizenship derived from international human rights law. All nationals of the Member States are citizens of the Union. The key right is the right to move and reside anywhere in the EU (i.e. on the territory of the 27 Member States). Thus, while a citizen has the right to enter, move and reside in his or her state of nationality as a result of international human rights law, in the EU, he or she has – as a citizenship right – the right to leave his or her state of nationality and to cross an international border, enter another EU state and reside there. Thus, EU law provides rights to the migrant in the guise of a citizen.’ Recent Migration of Roma in Europe (A study by Mr. Claude Cahn and Professor Elspeth Guild), OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, 2008, p. 17

⁴⁵ ‘The activity must not be marginal or ancillary to another purpose. For nationals of eight Central and Eastern European Member States, the right to free movement as workers was delayed for up to five years as of 1 May 2004 (with the exceptional option for an extension of a further two years). In fact, all Member States have lifted the restriction on free movement of workers, completely or almost so, except Austria, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg. The same limitation applies for Bulgaria and Romania, as of 1 January 2007. While all the 2004 Member States did not apply any restriction on free movement of workers among the pre-2004 Member States, among the pre-2004 Member States themselves, only Sweden and Finland immediately allowed free movement of workers to citizens of the 2004 group.’ Recent Migration of Roma in Europe (A study by Mr. Claude Cahn and Professor Elspeth Guild), OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, 2008, p. 17

⁴⁶ The ground is unusual in international law, as border controls depend on the right of officials to discriminate on the basis of nationality.

The protection of the rights of Roma is a legal requirement placed on all EU MS due to the legally binding Race Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) and Employment Equality Directive (2000/79/EC). Alongside the European Convention on Human Rights, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the Charter of Fundamental Rights associated with the 2007 Treaty of Lisbon, they form the legal basis for the protection of rights in employment and for combating exclusion and persecution on the grounds of race and ethnicity.

5.4 Transposition of Directive 2004/38/EC

As a direct result of the accession process, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia (as well as Malta and Cyprus) acceded to the European Union in May 2004. Subsequently, Romania and Bulgaria became EU Member States in January 2007. With most of the border controls lifted, all EU citizens were able to start exercising their right to freedom of movement and residence within the EU in line with Directive 2004/38.

In April 2004, the Commission introduced a directive requiring EU MS to transpose the right to free movement into domestic legislation. Certain restrictions on free movement remain for A8 and A2 nationals, countries which became EU member states in 2004 (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia) and in 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania) respectively.

6. Local authorities, Traveller Education Support Service and their work with A2 and A8 Roma

*“Any school, anywhere, may have Gypsy, Roma or Traveller pupils on roll. Raising the achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children is the responsibility of everyone within the education system and a significant measure of the effectiveness of policies to combat educational and social exclusion.”*⁴⁷

The Association of Directors of Children’s Services lists 151 Directors of Children’s Services (hereafter DCS) in 151 local authorities in England.⁴⁸ The official database, which is available online (www.adcs.org.uk), served as the primary source of contacting local authorities.

Within the hierarchy of the Children’s Services,⁴⁹ the primary local authority service working with A2 and A8 Roma children and families is the Traveller Education Support Services (TESS) and/or the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS).⁵⁰ However, not every local authority area has a specifically designated unit to work with GRT pupils.

6.1 Traveller Education Support Service

“Despite the considerable challenges presented by disrupted education, uncertainty of lifestyle and hostility shown by some sections of society, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people have an entitlement to a full education.”

“Within the context of Every Child Matters it is the responsibility of the local authority to promote the fulfilment of every child’s potential, including Gypsy,

⁴⁷ The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People, DCSF, 2008, p.7

⁴⁸ <http://www.adcs.org.uk/>

⁴⁹ Each children’s services authority in England must make arrangements to promote co-operation between: (a) the authority; (b) each of the authority’s relevant partners; and (c) such other persons or bodies as the authority consider appropriate, being persons or bodies of any nature who exercise functions or are engaged in activities in relation to children in the authority’s area.

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/ukpga_20040031_en_3.

⁵⁰ Traveller Education Service in London (Newham), Ethnic Minority Achievement team in Peterborough, International New Arrivals, Travellers & Supplementary Schools Manchester, The Sheffield Ethnic Minority & Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS), Bolton Community Cohesion & Traveller Education.

*Roma and Traveller children and young people.*⁵¹

The principle function of the Traveller Education Service is to promote unhindered access and full inclusion in mainstream education.

Through the involvement of TESS/EMAS with school-age children, representatives of education services are central in liaising with other family members of various ages such as parents, adult children, children under five, as well as school age children out of school. The TESS or EMAS representatives were instrumental in providing the research team with information on A2 and A8 Roma families and facilitating contact with the Roma respondents; in some areas, TESS/EMAS staff also helped facilitate contact with local NGOs working with Roma. They were able to do so thanks to their contact with them, as well as the local authorities' monitoring of pupils' ethnicity within the Pupil Level Annual School Census.

The Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) implemented in January 2003 collects data on new standardised categories of ethnicity which includes Gypsies/Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage. Schools are required to assess the impact of their policies on the inclusion of these groups.

6.2 Surveying local authorities: Obtaining data

The first stage of the research involved drafting a questionnaire for local authorities with a view of obtaining qualitative and quantitative data on Roma in all the local authority areas in England.

The questionnaire was first sent out in November 2008 after it had been approved by the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF). It went to all the 151 DCS in England; they were asked to pass on the questionnaire to the person primarily responsible for Roma-related children issues in their local authority area. Out of the total of 151 local authority areas, 104 returned the questionnaire. Since there was a joint return for Bath, Avon and North Somerset, the total

⁵¹ The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Achievement Programme: Information for Local Authorities and Schools, July 2008, p. 17

number of returned questionnaires was **103**. The remaining 47 local authorities⁵² did not respond to the questionnaire.

In spite of the seemingly high return rate (68.9%) and a general willingness to participate in the research by those local authorities and TESS/EMAS staff who had done substantial work with A2 and A8 Roma, or who were interested in improving their work, the process of getting responses from the individual local authorities posed a major logistical challenge.

In many cases, not only did the process involve tracing the email and the questionnaire directly with the office of DCS, but also tracing the person who had been nominated to complete the questionnaire. On a number of occasions, the questionnaire “got lost” on the way between the person nominated to complete it and the DCS. There also seemed to be considerable confusion across the country as to which department is responsible for working with A2 and A8 Roma, who holds the information and knowledge base and who should be funded as the designated service.

In a number of cases, the DCS replied saying this was too much, given the already high volume of their workload⁵³. In others, the addressees ignored the request altogether, despite several attempts and phone calls to the DCS, their personal assistants, and/or phone calls made directly to TESS or EMAS coordinators and other members of staff. Some of them completed the questionnaire, saying no one from the DCS’s office had nominated anyone to fill it in. Others failed to complete it at all.⁵⁴

6.3 Survey: Accuracy of data recorded by local authorities

“It is a priority to improve the level and accuracy of reporting by Travellers of

⁵²Enfield, Leicestershire, Sandwell, Southend-on-Sea, Bexley, Blackburn, Brent, Bromley, Croydon, Dudley, Ealing, East Sussex, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Islington, Kirklees, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Liverpool City, Middlesbrough, Portsmouth, Reading, Rochdale, Slough, Solihull, Somerset, South Tyneside, Stoke-on-Trent, Suffolk, Surrey, Torbay, Trafford, Warrington, West Sussex, Windsor & Maidenhead, Wokingham, Wolverhampton, Warwickshire, Rutland, Plymouth, Isles of Scilly.

⁵³ “I have received the previous emails, but not acted on them - as my point is that the Department knows full well that such surveys add to the bureaucratic burden on Councils and that there is - to put it rather simplistically - a “one in, one out” arrangement. Also, agreement is usually sought with ADCS on matters where the issue is of such significance that this one in, one out should be over-ridden.”

⁵⁴ Slough is an example, illustrating the failure of both the DCS’s office and the local Raising Achievement Team to complete the survey despite a series of phone calls and emails.

their ethnicity so that more realistic and precise data are available.”⁵⁵

Out of the 103 returned questionnaires, 53 were completed and 50 were nil or almost nil returns. Based on the researchers’ personal contacts with non-statutory and other practitioners and Roma communities, in 45 cases, the figures provided by the local authority raised serious concerns about accuracy of the data provided.⁵⁶

Newcastle may serve as a good example of the discrepancy between the data on Roma provided by the local authority and the reality of the life of the local Roma community as depicted in the course of the research. The first time the research team visited Newcastle, important contacts were made with the local Primary Care Trust’s health visitors based in Cruddas Park, as well as the local Czech Roma community. Although the health visitors and other PCT staff admitted they had limited information on the size of the Roma population in Newcastle, they were aware of sizeable communities of Czech, Slovak and Romanian Roma. They also maintained that the number of Romanian Roma may exceed the number of Czech and Slovak Roma. Many of them first came to England in the 1990s and were consequently sent to Newcastle, which was then one of the dispersal areas.

Following the meeting with the PCT staff, the research team met with three representatives of the local Czech Roma community: according to them, there were about 400 predominantly Czech and Slovak Roma families (approximately 1,200 adults and children) living in the near proximity of the PCT. They claimed that they were aware of many more Roma, including Romanians, living in other parts of Newcastle. The claim about the number of Czech and Slovak Roma living in Newcastle was confirmed at a Roma health conference organised by the local Czech Roma in partnership with the local PCT on 16 May 2009. Approximately 300-400 Roma adults and children, predominantly from the Czech Roma community from a very small geographic area, attended the event.

However, the return for Newcastle referred to only 15 primary school and 8 secondary school Roma children which is a severe underestimate. Data on adults

⁵⁵ “Education for All – The Quality Imperative”, UNESCO, Paris 2004

⁵⁶ This is particularly the case of Essex, Newham, Haringey, Staffordshire, Newcastle, Manchester and Sunderland.

was not recorded.

Haringey represents a similar case. In their response, the local Traveller, Gypsy Roma Education Team reported 116 Roma pupils in primary schools, 52 in secondary schools and 91 Roma adults. However, at a personal meeting⁵⁷ with two members of the TESS staff, they referred to approximately 300 Roma children enrolled in schools in the area, 200 of them in primary and 100 in secondary schooling. Moreover, based on personal contact with approximately 1700 Romanian Roma⁵⁸, this figure again seems to be severely underestimated.

Another example is that of the local authority in Manchester, which quoted an overall figure of 643-743 A2 and A8 Roma living in Manchester. However, during a field trip to Manchester, the researchers met the director of a Manchester-based NGO called Helping the Poor and Needy (H-PAN). In their Romanian Roma Community Project, they work with Romanian Roma clients living in the areas of Gorton, Longsight and Levenshulme. The number of their clients exceeds 3,000.⁵⁹

Sheffield reported 997 A2 and A8 Roma. However, during a visit to Sheffield, researchers interviewed a group of Slovak Roma who claimed that the population of Slovak and Czech Roma in Sheffield numbers between 3,000 and 4,000.⁶⁰

During personal encounters, representatives of the four local authorities admitted that their data on Roma was severely underestimated and may be twice or three times as high.

6.4 Local authorities: Collection of data on Roma

“Educational authorities should collect systematically ethnically differentiated statistical data on the educational fortunes of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers which

⁵⁷ Tuesday 16th September 2008

⁵⁸ Figure provided by Heather Ureche who maintains personal contact with the local Romanian Roma community in Wood Green and Tottenham (Haringey)

⁵⁹ H-PAN has registered a great number of Romanian Roma seeking its services. From the 75 families in 2004, we now have about 475 families with an average of 5 to 7 children per family. This means we are dealing with about 3,000 Romanian Roma.

⁶⁰ Focus group held on 2 April 2009, Sheffield.

also gauge the impact of policies and measures.”⁶¹

The DCSF has been committed to raising the attendance and achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. In March 2003, the Department published *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Minority Ethnic Pupils*, and *Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Gypsy Traveller pupils: A Guide to Good Practice*⁶² in July 2003. The later document is aimed at all local authority and staff in the school setting. It provides also guidance, which contributes to ensuring the wellbeing of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in terms of their health, safety, as well as their achievement at school and their positive contribution to school life in line with the Every Child Matters agenda,⁶³ the 2005 White Paper and the Children’s Plan.⁶⁴

In view of the fact that the DCSF has recognised that “GRT pupils are achieving in the education system well below all other ethnic groups and are disproportionately over-represented within the cohorts of SEN, poor attendance and high exclusions”,⁶⁵ local authorities in England have been required to collect ethnically disaggregated data on Roma.

Inaccurate data kept by local authorities, compounded by low levels of ethnicity self-ascription are some of the main reasons for the insufficiency of information currently available about the real size of the A2 and A8 Roma populations across the country. Another reason is the fact that some local authorities do not keep data on Roma at all. Out of the 104 local authorities which returned the questionnaire, 53 local authorities (51%) kept data on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers.

Thirty-two local authorities (30.8%) reported holding separate data on Roma and

⁶¹ Roma and Travellers in Public Education – An overview of the situation in the EU Member States, May 2006, European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, Vienna, 2006, p.13

⁶² Provision and Support for Traveller Pupils, Ofsted, 2003

⁶³ ‘Every Child Matters states that every child, whatever their background or circumstances, should have the support they need to: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic wellbeing. These five outcomes need to be at the heart of everything a school does and reinforced through every aspect of its curriculum - lessons, events, routines, the environment in which children learn and what they do out of school.’ <http://www.qcda.gov.uk/15299.aspx>

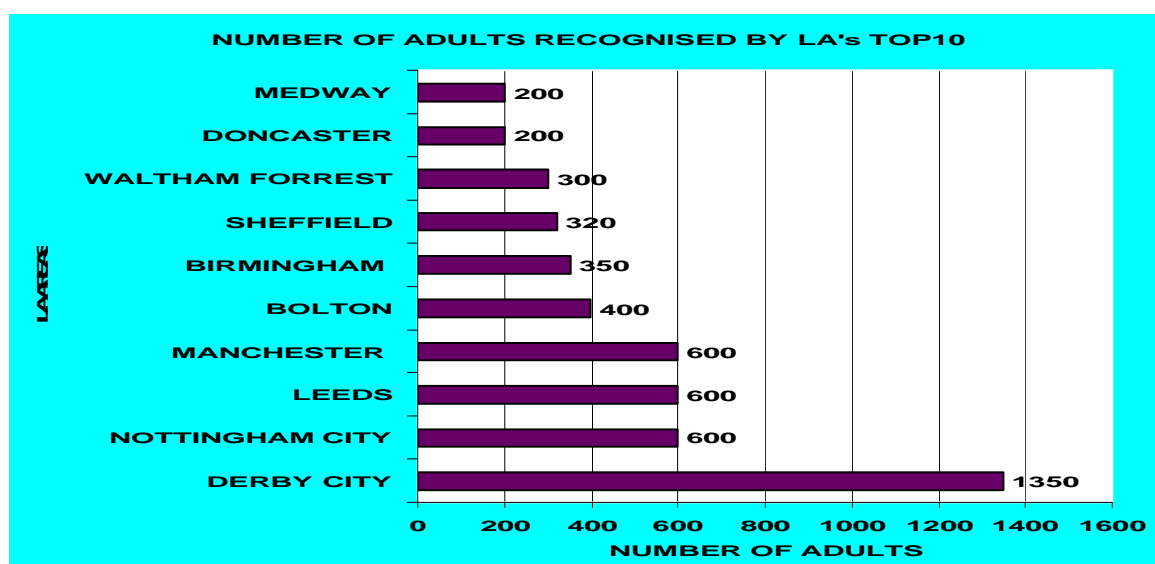
⁶⁴ ‘Moreover, some children and young people, often from disadvantaged backgrounds, are still underachieving. While many of our teachers and schools are among the very best in the world, there is still too much variation in quality, and as a result children are not achieving all of which they are capable.’ The Children’s Plan: Building brighter futures – Summary, Department for Children, Schools and Families, December 2007, p. 4

⁶⁵ Proposals for changes to the ethnic self-ascription of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities – January 2009, p.2

16 local authorities (15.4%) said they held joint data on Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. The remaining five local authorities reported that their databases were being developed. (Manchester and Leicester reported respectively that they are using the school central data system or that the decision to collect separate data on Roma depends on each of the schools.) Fifty-three of the 104 local authorities (51%), which returned the survey, collected data on the numbers of Roma adults and children, 32 local authorities (30.8%) collected data on Roma adults. Nineteen local authorities (17.3%) quoted data from the Pupil Level Annual School Census and/or related databases; seven local authorities (6.7%) used data recorded in their TESS database and eight local authorities (7.7%) used data on Roma in their local authority area from more than two sources.

6.5 Data analysis: Roma populations in England

Although there are substantial A2 and A8 Roma populations living in the South and Southeast of England (Kent, Southend-on-Sea,⁶⁶ London, Slough), the largest populations of A2 and A8 Roma are based in cities across Northern England. The major concentrations of A2 and A8 Roma populations are now found in the North of England, the East Midlands, Kent and in north and east London. The most numerous of these national groups are the Slovak, Czech and Romanian Roma communities.

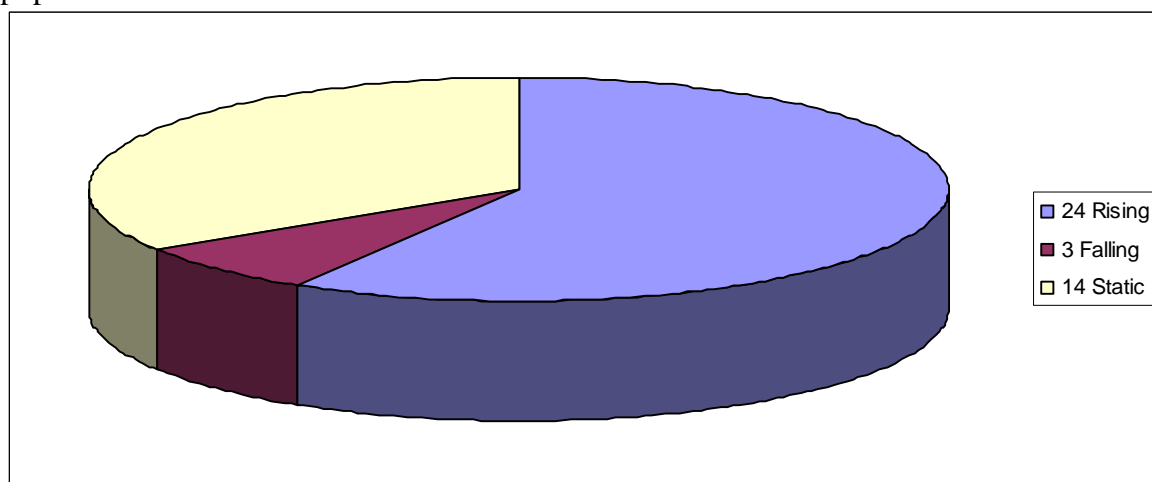


Graph 1: Top ten cities where most Roma live as reported by local authorities

In 24 local authority areas, A2 and A8 Roma populations were reported as rising.

⁶⁶ Although Southend-on-Sea did not complete the questionnaire, a Roma respondent reported a population of Czech Roma in excess of 1,000 people.

Thirteen local authorities reported their Roma populations were static, and three local authorities reported their Roma population to be falling. Fourteen local authorities did not record demographic trends in their A2 and A8 Roma populations.



Graph 2: Demographic trends in the size of A2 and A8 Roma populations in 53 LA areas

Across England, local authorities have reported 28 Slovak Roma populations, 25 Czech Roma populations, 21 Romanian Roma populations, 20 Polish Roma populations, 7 Lithuanian Roma populations, 5 Latvian Roma populations, 3 Hungarian Roma populations and 2 Bulgarian Roma populations.

As for non-EU MS Roma populations, across England, local authorities have reported 4 Kosovan Roma populations, 3 Serbian Roma populations, 3 Bosnian Roma populations, 2 Russian Roma populations, 1 Belarusian Roma population and one population from other Former Yugoslav states.

6.6 Data analysis: Structure of Roma populations in England

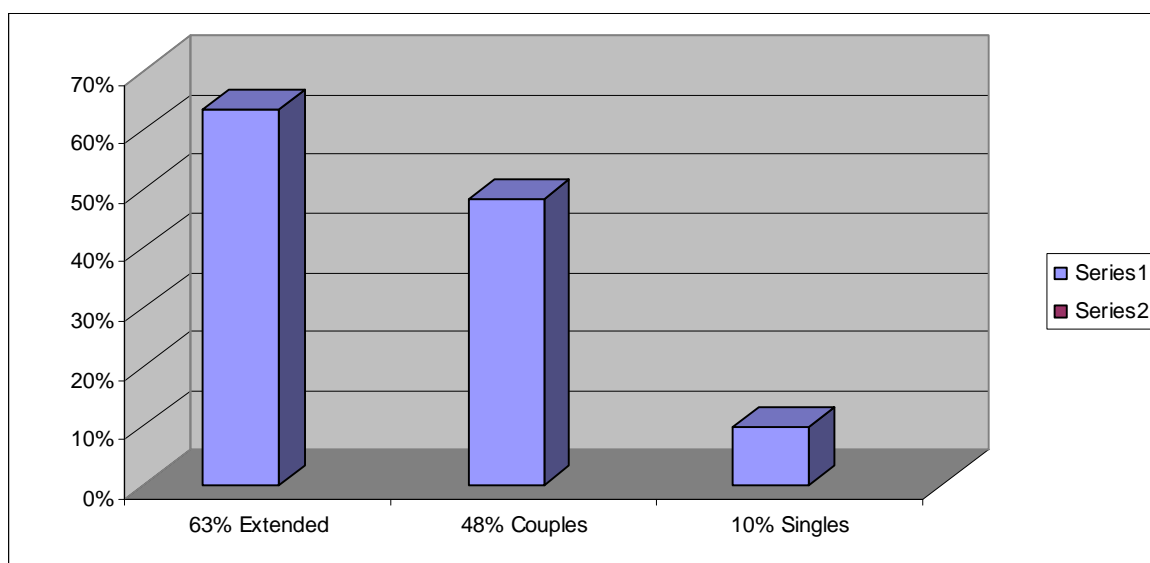
Those local authorities that recorded the numbers of adult Roma males in their area reported 3,163 Roma males. Twenty-four local authorities did not record the numbers of adult Roma males in their area.

Those local authorities that recorded the numbers of adult Roma females in their area reported 2,856 Roma females. Twenty-four local authorities did not record the numbers of adult Roma females in their area.

Other local authorities claim that A2 and A8 Roma are hidden in their data.

This figure, however, needs to be compounded by cohort figures such as those provided by Bradford or Kent: Bradford provided an overall figure of 4,000 Roma that comprises Czech, Slovak and Polish Roma adults and children; Kent provided an overall figure of 2000. This figure, however, pertains to Roma school pupils only.

The average figures provided by the 34 local authorities that completed the questionnaire and recorded demographic trends indicate that the composition of A2 and A8 Roma families settled in England is as follows:

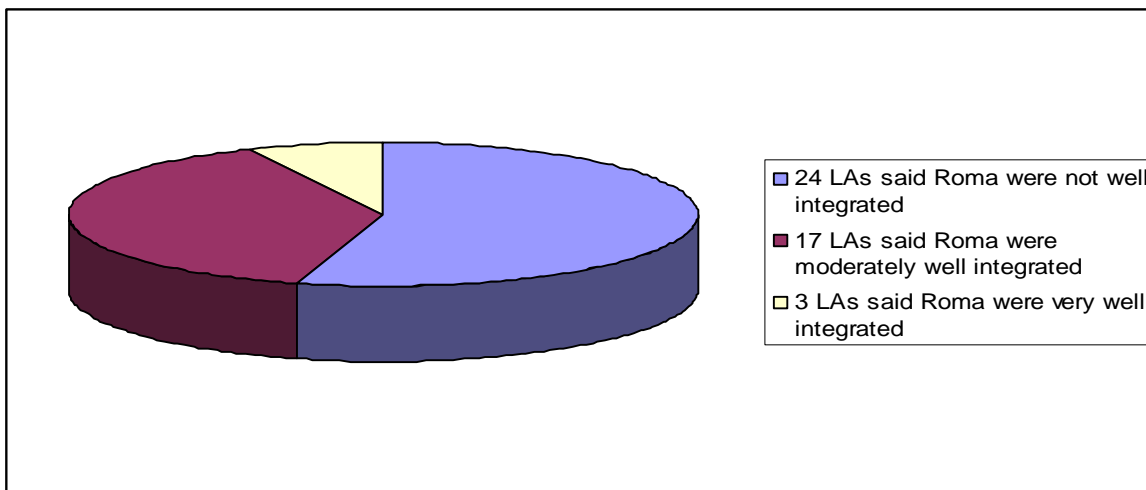


Graph 3: Structure of A2 and A8 Roma families in 34 local authority areas

Twenty-four local authorities felt that Roma in their area were **socially isolated**: one local authority cited Slovak Roma specifically as being socially isolated, another local authority cited adult Roma as being socially isolated.

Seventeen local authorities felt that Roma in their area were **slightly integrated**: one local authority cited Hungarian and Czech Roma specifically, another local authority cited Roma children in particular.

Three local authorities felt that Roma in their area were **well integrated**, one cited Polish Roma, and one cited Roma children in particular.



Graph 4: Degree of social inclusion

Thirty-one local authorities said that Roma in the area **mixed mostly** with other Roma, while two local authorities said that Roma in their area **mixed with other non-Roma**. Seven local authorities said that Roma in their area **mixed with no one outside their family**; five local authorities said that Roma in their area **mixed with other ethnic groups** and four local authorities said that Roma in their area **mixed with other Gypsies and Travellers**, usually through church groups.

27.7 % of local authorities recorded that 75 % or more of Roma males in their area worked for 16 hours or more per week.

33.3 % of local authorities recorded that 50 to 75 % of Roma males in their area worked for 16 hours or more per week.

11.1 % of local authorities recorded that 25 to 50 % of Roma males in their area worked for 16 hours or more per week.

27.7 % of local authorities recorded that fewer than 25 % of Roma males in their area worked for 16 hours or more per week.

5.5 % of local authorities recorded that 75 % or more of Roma females in their area worked for 16 hours or more per week.

16.6 % of local authorities recorded that 25 to 50 % of Roma females in their area worked for 16 hours or more per week.

77.7 % of local authorities recorded that fewer than 25 % of Roma females in their area worked for 16 hours or more per week.

The average length of stay reported by local authorities was 25.1 months for both

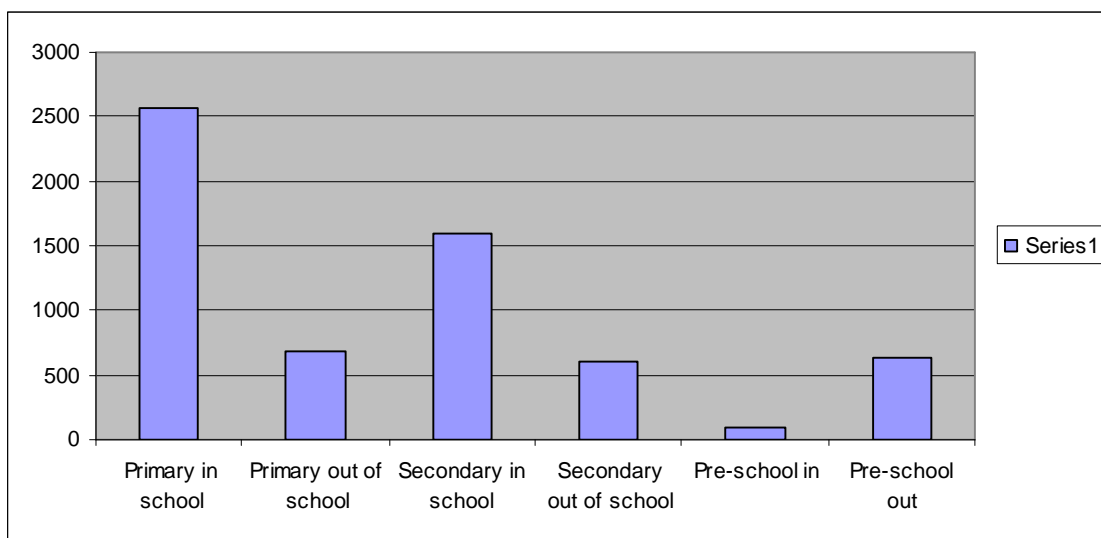
Roma adult males and females.

The average length of stay of primary school Roma children reported by local authorities was 26.7 months.

The average length of stay reported by local authorities was 27.4 months. Of the 25 local authorities that recorded length of stay, seven reported that members of their Roma communities had been resident for 3 years or longer.

6.7 Data analysis: Roma children, pre-school provision, primary and secondary education in England

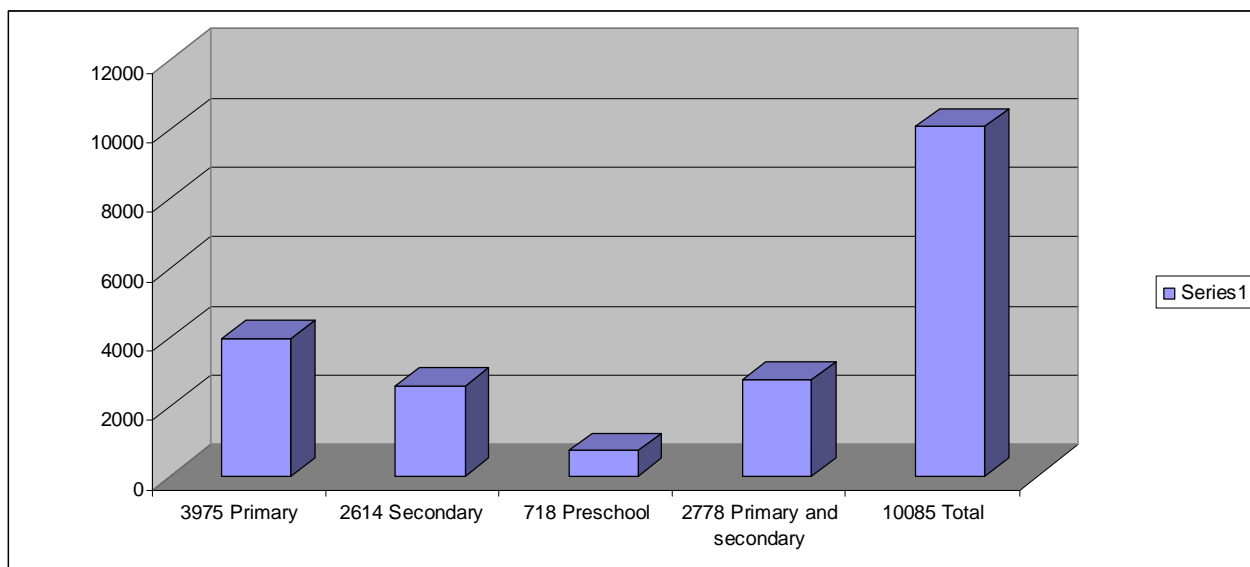
The 50 local authorities that recorded the number of Roma children between the age of 0 and 11 reported 3,975 Roma children. The number of Roma children between the age of 0 and 11 in school reported by local authorities was 2,564. Three local authorities did not record the numbers of Roma children enrolled in primary schools and 31 local authorities did not record the numbers of unregistered Roma children. Six hundred and seventy-five Roma children were recorded as not enrolled.



Graph 5: Number of A2 and A8 children in and out of education

The 50 local authorities that recorded the number of Roma children between the age of 11 and 18 reported 2614 Roma children. The number of Roma children between the age of 11 and 18 in school reported by local authorities was 1,592. Four local authorities did not record the numbers of Roma children in secondary

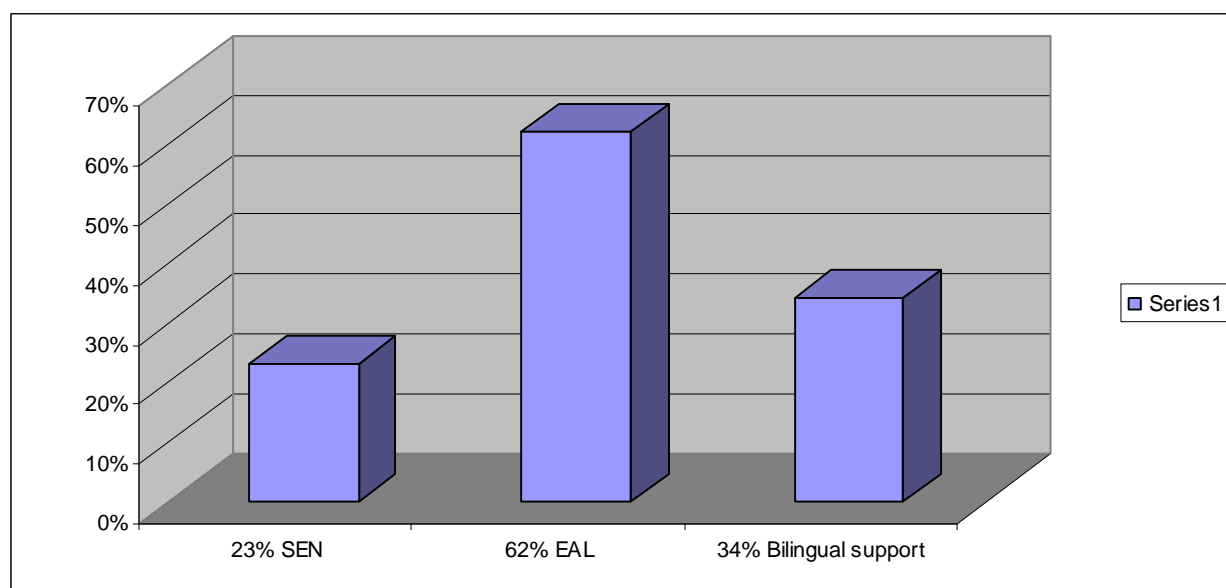
schools and 27 local authorities did not record the numbers of unregistered Roma children. Six hundred and ten Roma children were recorded as not enrolled. Eighty-nine Roma children were reported to attend preschool facilities and 629 were recorded as not enrolled into any kind of preschool provision.



Graph 6: A2 and A8 Roma pupils in preschool, primary and secondary schools

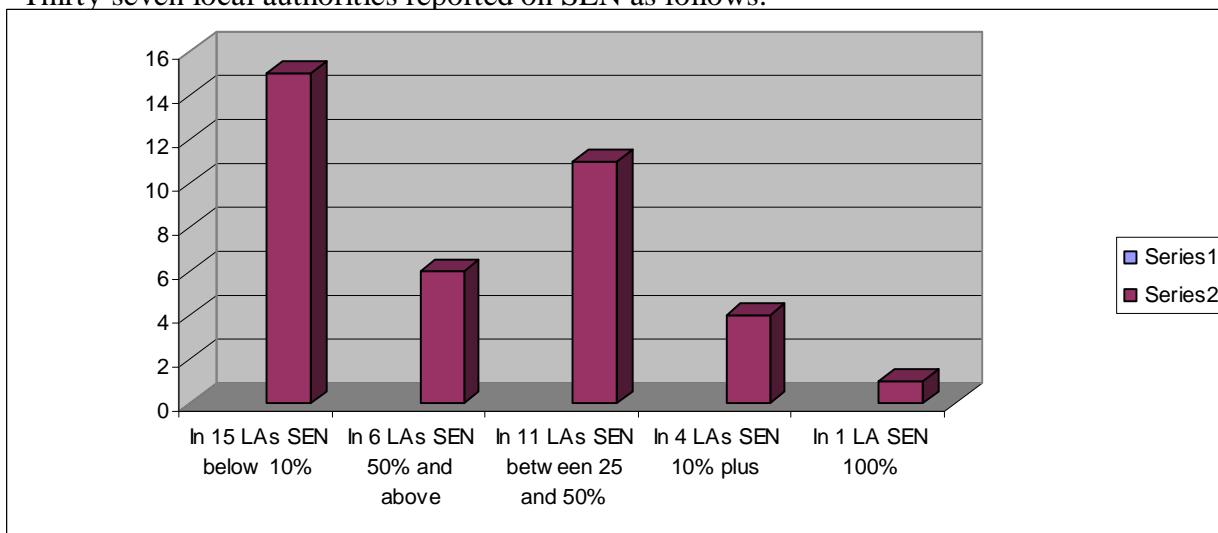
6.8 English as an additional language (EAL), special educational needs (SEN) and bilingual support

Fifty-one local authorities reported on SEN, EAL and bilingual support provision in the following way:



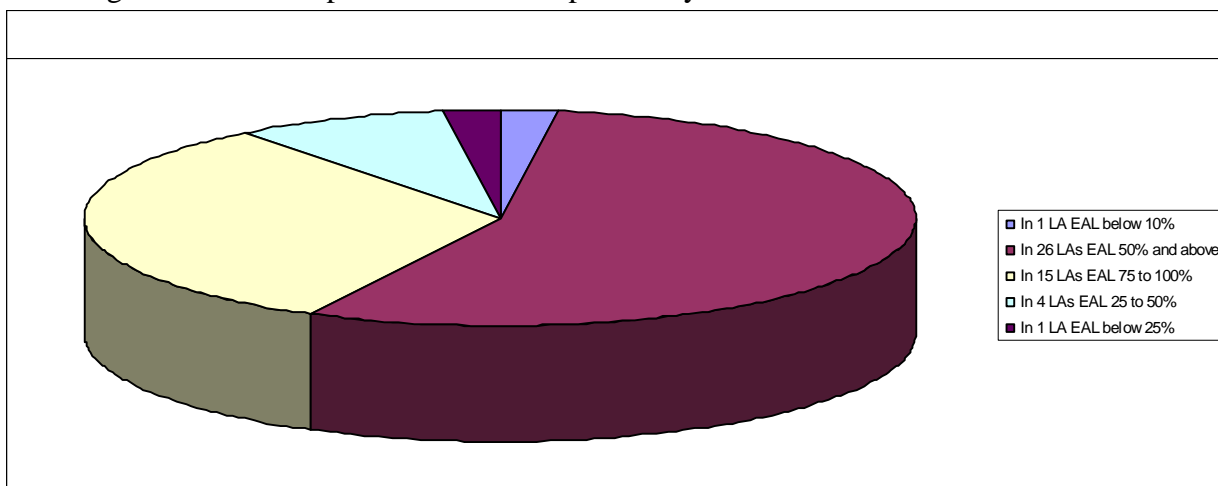
Graph 7: SEN, EAL and bilingual support (on average) to A2 and A8 Roma pupils in 50 local authority areas of England

Thirty-seven local authorities reported on SEN as follows:



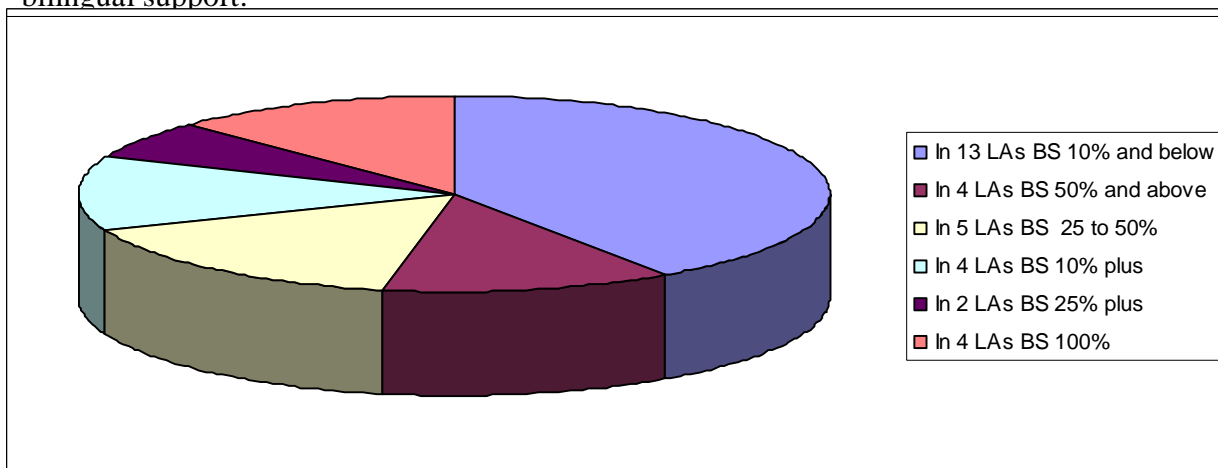
Graph 8: Special educational needs (SEN) of A2 and A8 Roma pupils

The figures for EAL provision were reported by 47 local authorities in the



Graph 9: English as an additional language (EAL) provision to A2 and A8 Roma pupils

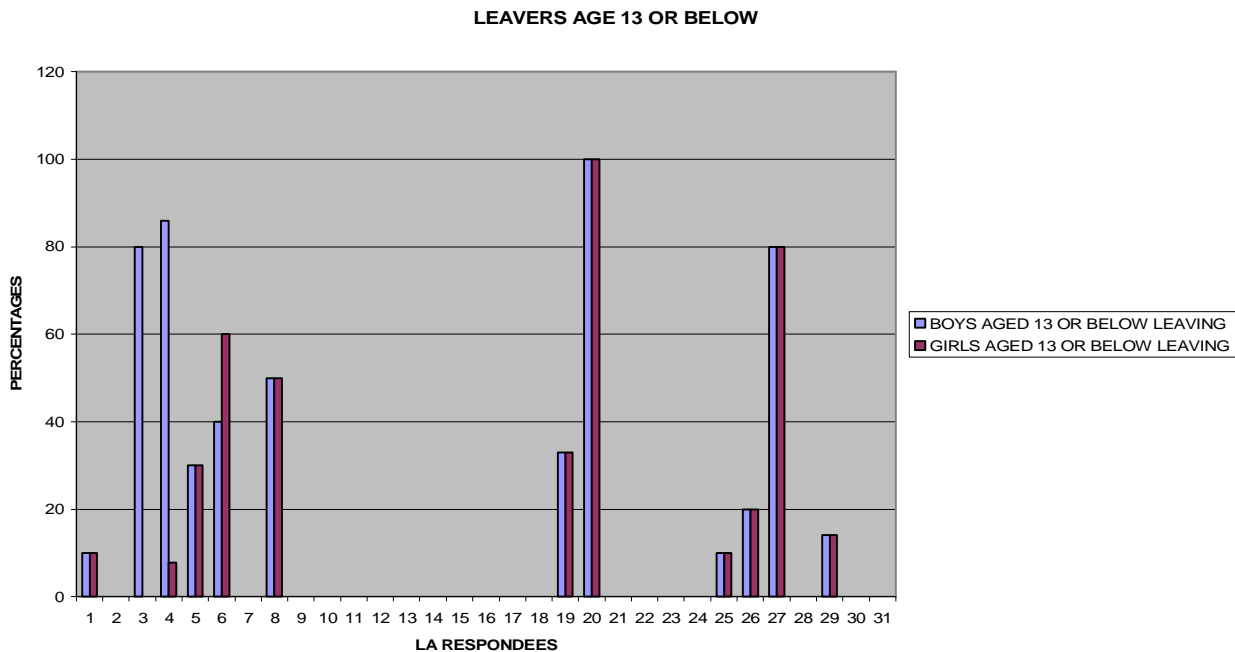
Thirty-two local authorities reported the following figures relating to provision of bilingual support:



Graph 10: Bilingual support provision to A2 and A8 Roma pupils

6.9 A2 and A8 Roma pupils and leaving school

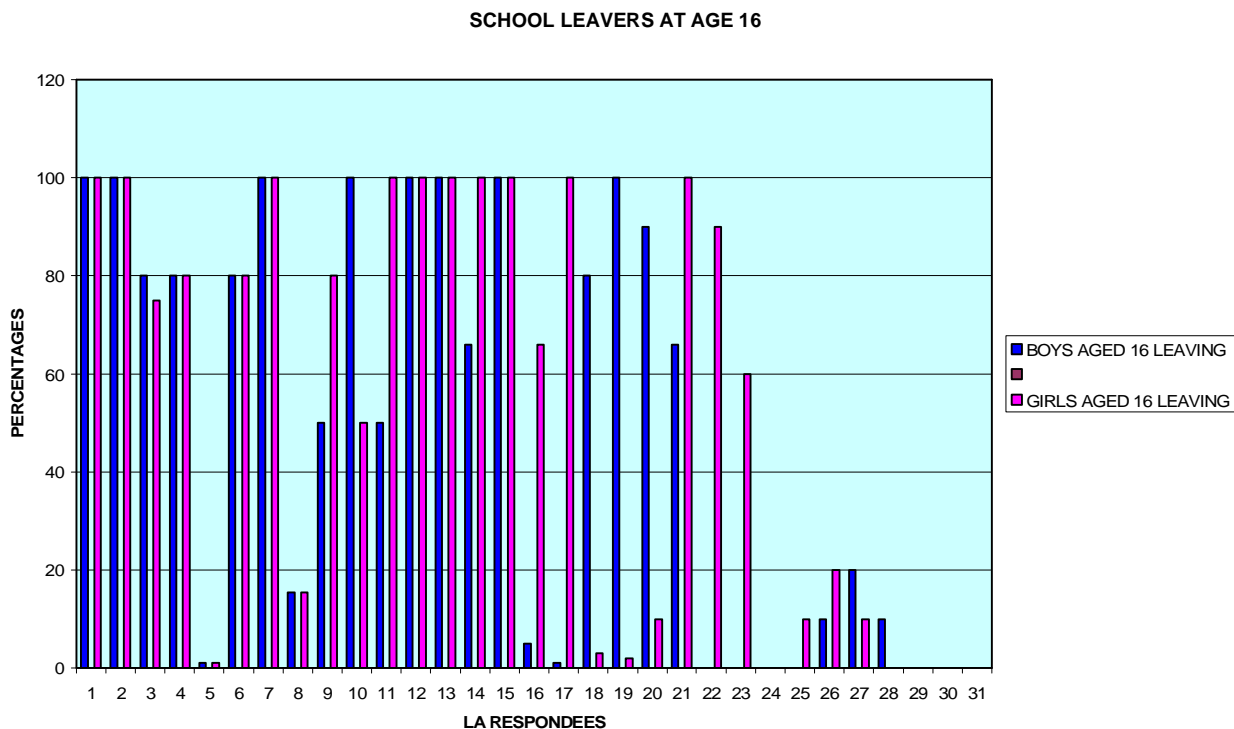
As regards A2 and A8 Roma pupils and the age at which they leave school, those local authorities that provided data on the different age groups reported in the following way:



Graph 11



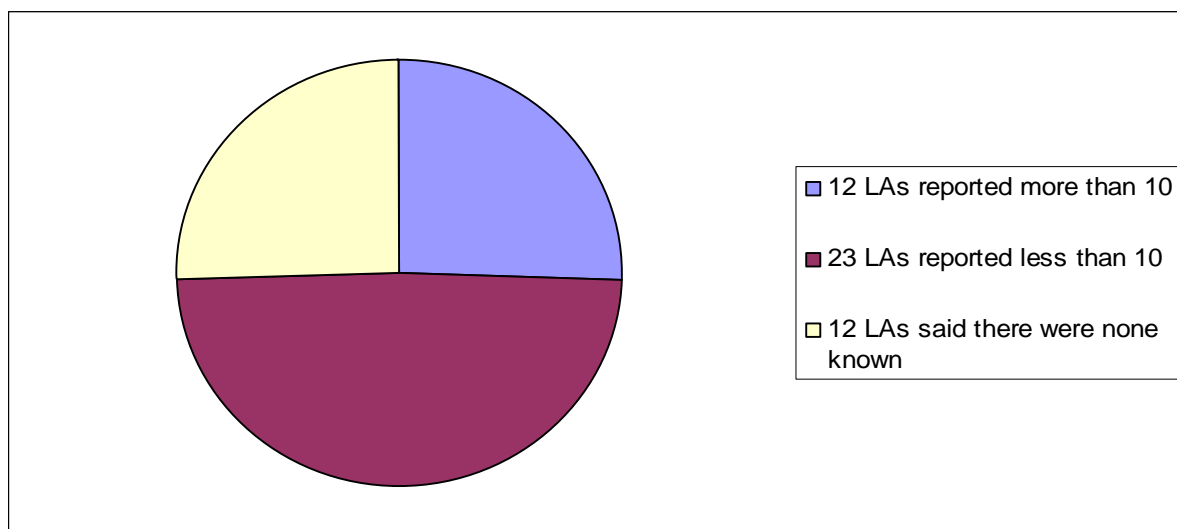
Graph 12



Graph 13

6.10 Incidents of racial harassment and bullying targeting A2 and A8 Roma pupils

Forty-seven local authorities reported on incidents involving racial harassment and/or bullying in the following way:



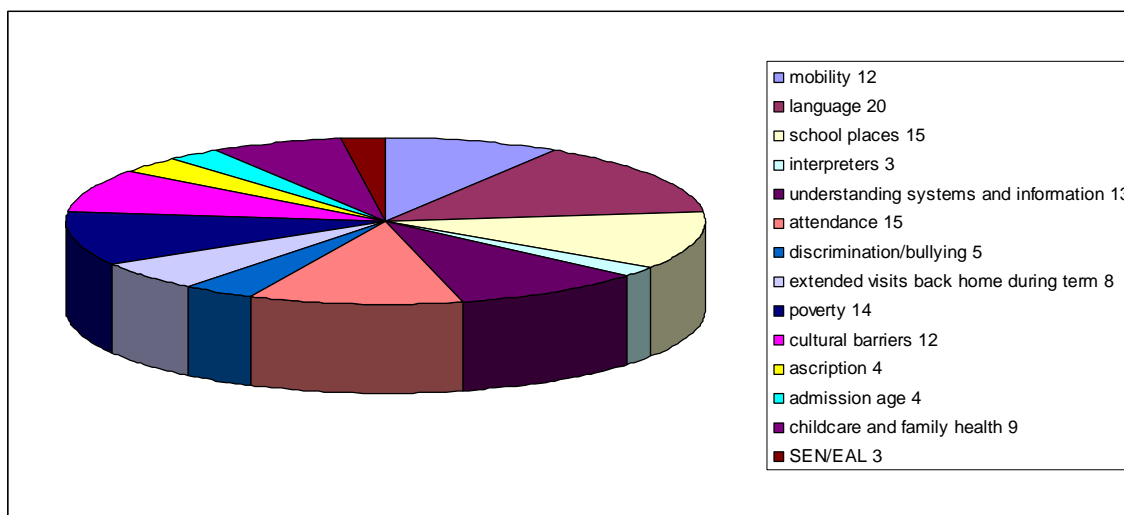
Graph 14: Reported incidents of racial harassment and bullying targeting Roma

However, when listing some of the barriers to A2 and A8 Roma pupils' successful attendance, racial harassment and bullying were mentioned by five local authorities as primary barriers (see below).

6.11 Difficulties and barriers hampering attendance by A2 and A8 Roma pupils

Language, the number of school places and understanding the local systems and information were considered the most significant barriers hampering attendance by A2 and A8 Roma pupils in English schools.

The chart below depicts the most frequent barriers as reported by local authorities:



Graph 15: Barriers to attending schools as listed by local authorities

Nineteen local authorities reported issues relating to language difficulties and literacy. Fourteen local authorities reported the lack of school places near home; in one case, reluctance by schools to take Roma pupils was mentioned (Salford). Fourteen local authorities reported issues related to attendance, both at primary and secondary level.

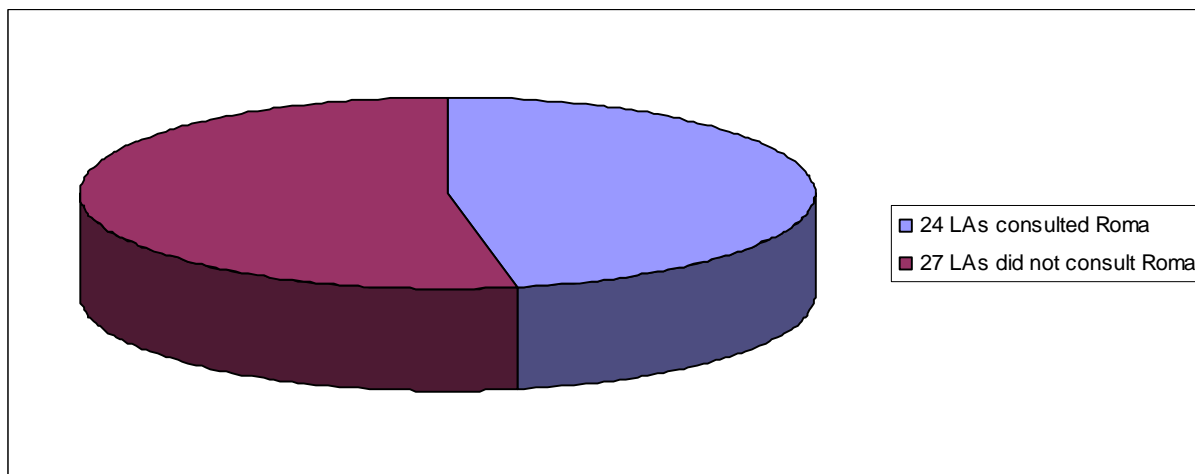
Thirteen local authorities reported issues relating to poverty, the cost of uniforms, transport and meals. Twelve local authorities reported poor understanding of local systems in England by Roma parents. Twelve local authorities mentioned issues concerning mobility. Twelve local authorities also referred to cultural issues and different attitudes to schooling at Key Stages 3 and 4. Nine local authorities were concerned with childcare and family health in connection with overcrowding and high stress levels relating to material and financial insecurity. Eight local authorities said there were problems with Roma pupils being taken on extended holidays back to their country of origin during the term. Five local authorities mentioned racism, discrimination and bullying as barriers, four local authorities

said that self ascription was an issue, four local authorities were concerned with issues relating to admission age (which tends to be six in most A2 and A8 Roma’s countries of origin) and three local authorities referred to barriers relating to SEN and EAL. In one case (Sheffield), the local authority said Roma pupils had no access to free school meals (FSM) and uniforms.

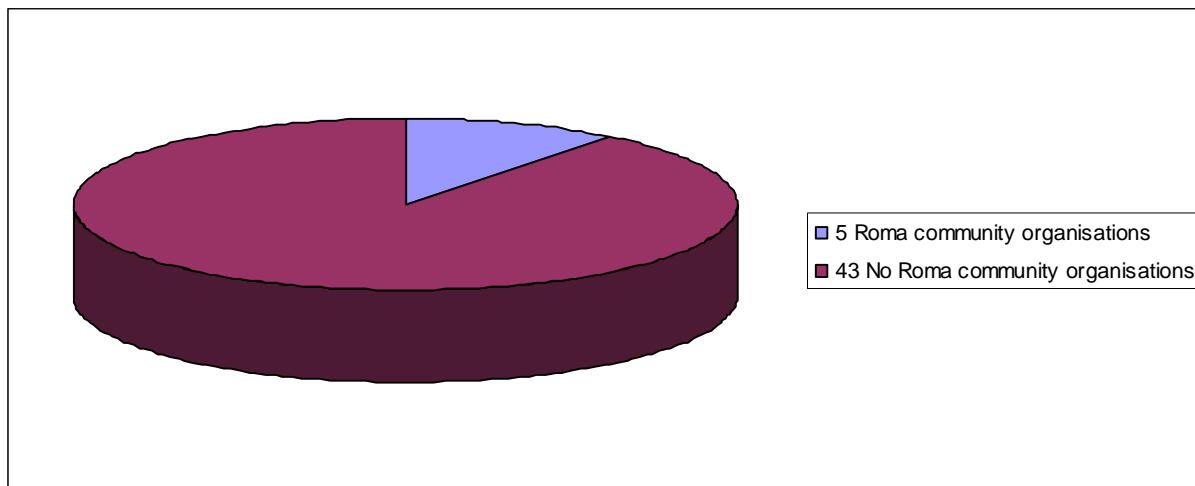
6.12 Consultation with Roma communities

The fact that there are a number of barriers hampering the successful school attendance by A2 and A8 Roma children may be influenced by the low levels of consultation with Roma communities reported by local authorities.

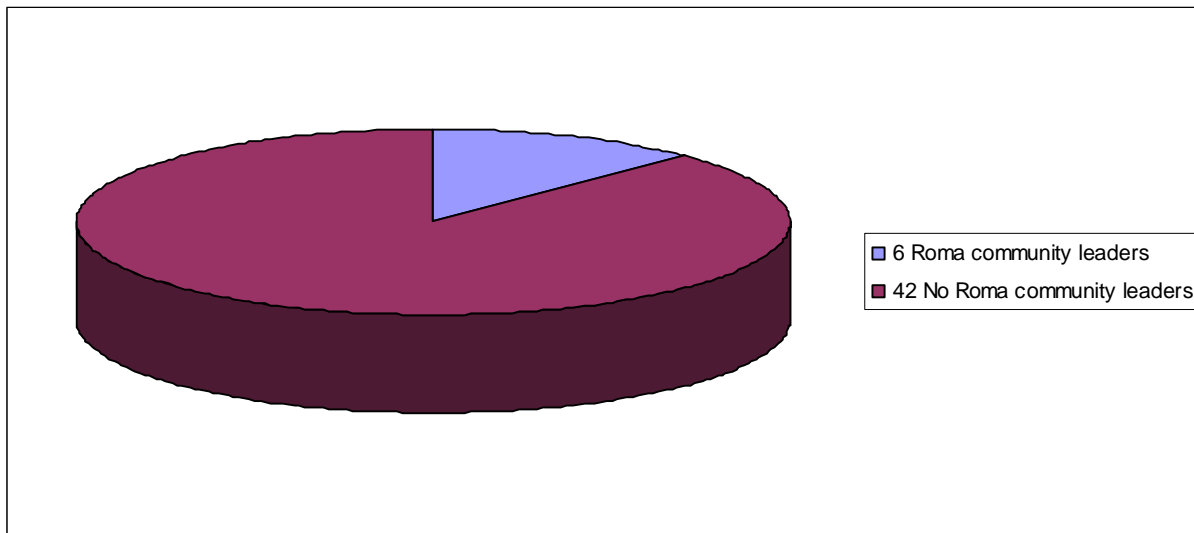
The following graphs illustrate how local authorities reported on how they consulted their Roma communities, and what other initiatives they were aware of relating to local community work with Roma.



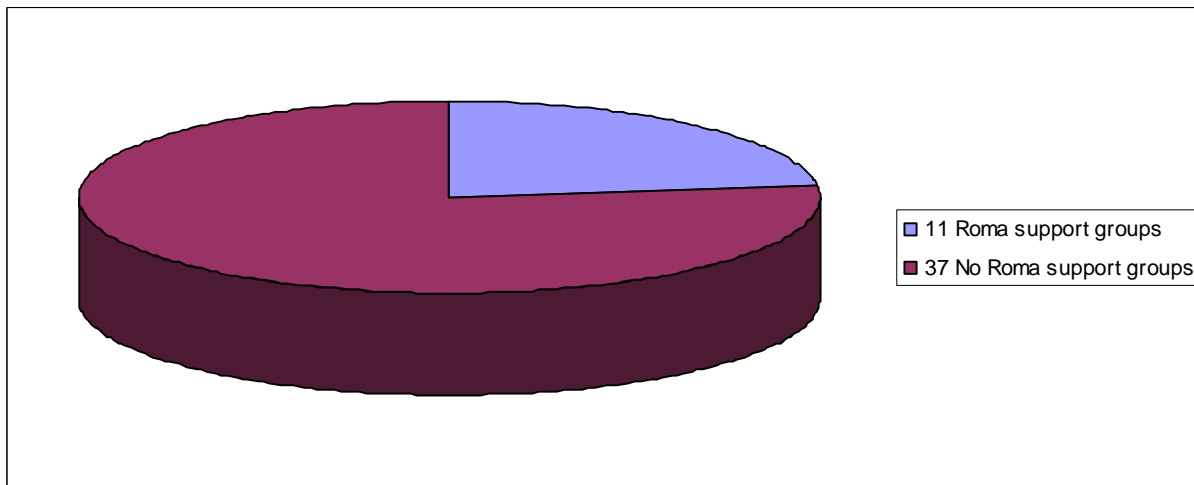
Graph 16: Levels of consultation with Roma



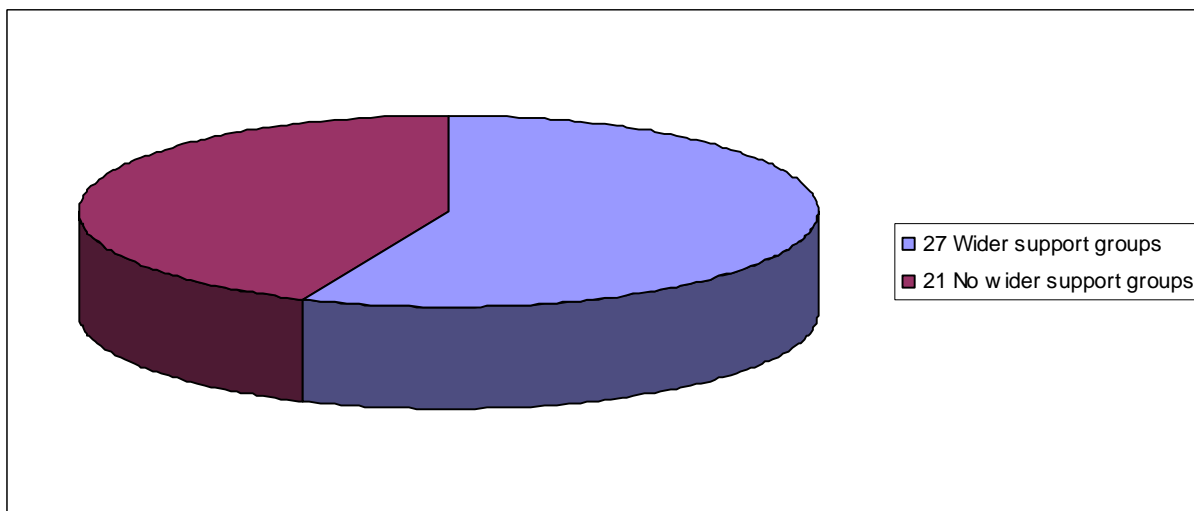
Graph 17: Number of Roma organisation reported by 48 local authorities



Graph 18: The presence of Roma community leaders



Graph 19: Roma support groups



Graph 20: Wider support groups working with Roma

Key findings in Section 6:

- 51% of the 104 local authorities that returned the questionnaire kept data on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers.
- 30.8% of local authorities reported holding separate data on Roma.
- 51% of local authorities collected data on the numbers of Roma adults and children, 30.8% of local authorities collected data on Roma adults.
- 17.3% of local authorities quoted data from the Pupil Level Annual School Census and/or related databases.
- 6.7% of local authorities used data recorded in their TESS database; 7.7% used data on Roma in their local authority area from more than two sources.
- Major concentrations of A2 and A8 Roma populations were found in the North of England, the East Midlands, Kent and in north and east London.
- The most numerous national groups were the Slovak, Czech and Romanian Roma.
- On average, 63% of Roma families were extended.
- 48% of Roma families were nuclear.
- 10% of Roma were single.

In the 53 local authority areas, there were:

- 28 Slovak Roma populations
- 25 Czech Roma populations
- 21 Romanian Roma populations
- 20 Polish Roma populations
- 7 Lithuanian Roma populations
- 5 Latvian Roma populations
- 3 Hungarian Roma populations
- 2 Bulgarian Roma populations.
- In 24 local authority areas, A2 and A8 Roma populations were rising
- In 13 local authority areas, Roma populations were static
- In 3 local authority areas, Roma population were falling
- In 24 local authority areas, Roma were socially isolated
- In 17 local authority areas, Roma were slightly integrated.
- In 3 local authority areas, Roma were well integrated.
- In 27.7 % of local authority areas, 75 % or more of Roma males worked for 16 hours or more per week. In 5.5 % of local authority areas, 75 % or more of Roma females worked for 16 hours or more per week.

In the 50 local authorities that recorded the number of Roma children, there were:

- 3,975 Roma children between the age of 0 and 11.
- 2,564 Roma children between the age of 0 and 11 were in school. 675 Roma children were not enrolled.
- 2,614 Roma children between the age of 11 and 18.
- 1,592 Roma children between the age of 11 and 18 were in school. 610 Roma children were not enrolled.
- 89 Roma children attended preschool facilities and 629 were not enrolled into any kind of preschool provision.
- The average length of stay for both Roma adult males and females was 25.1 months.
- The average length of stay of primary school Roma children was 26.7 months.
- 25 local authorities that recorded length of stay, seven reported that members of their Roma communities had been resident for 3 years or longer.
- Language difficulties, literacy, lack of school places (and reluctance by schools to take Roma pupils), poverty, the cost of uniforms, transport and meals, poor understanding of local systems, cultural issues, overcrowding, mobility and racist bullying were amongst the most frequent barriers hampering the school attendance of Roma pupils at primary and secondary level.

On average:

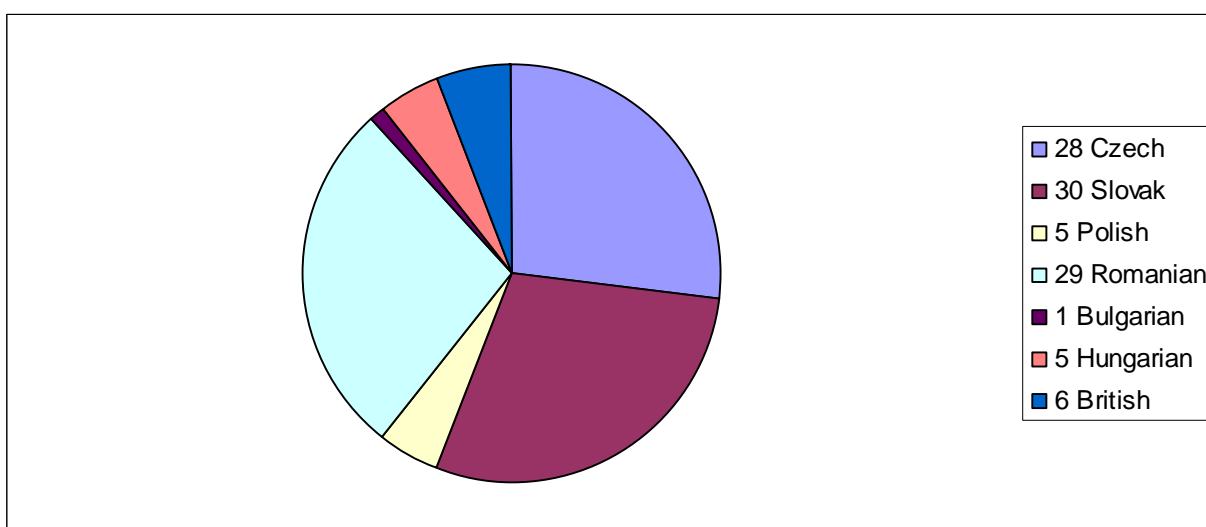
- 23% of Roma pupils had special educational needs (SEN);
- 62% of Roma pupils received English as an Additional Language (EAL);
- 34% of Roma pupils received Bilingual support (BS).

Of the 37 local authorities that recorded SEN provision to Roma pupils:

- 15 (40.5%) said SEN provision was below 10%;
 - 11 (29.7%) said SEN provision was between 25% and 50%;
 - 6 (16.2%) said SEN provision was 50% and above;
 - 4 (10.8%) said SEN provision was above 10%;
 - 1 (2.7%) said SEN provision was 100%.
-
- In 26 local authority areas, EAL provision to Roma pupils was 50% and above.
 - In 13 local authority areas, BS provision to Roma pupils was 10% and below.
-
- 12 local authorities reported more than 10 incidents of racial harassment/bullying.
 - 23 local authorities reported less than 10 incidents of racial harassment/bullying.
 - 12 local authorities said there were no known incidents of racial harassment/bullying.

7. A2 and A8 Roma communities in England: The perspective of Roma

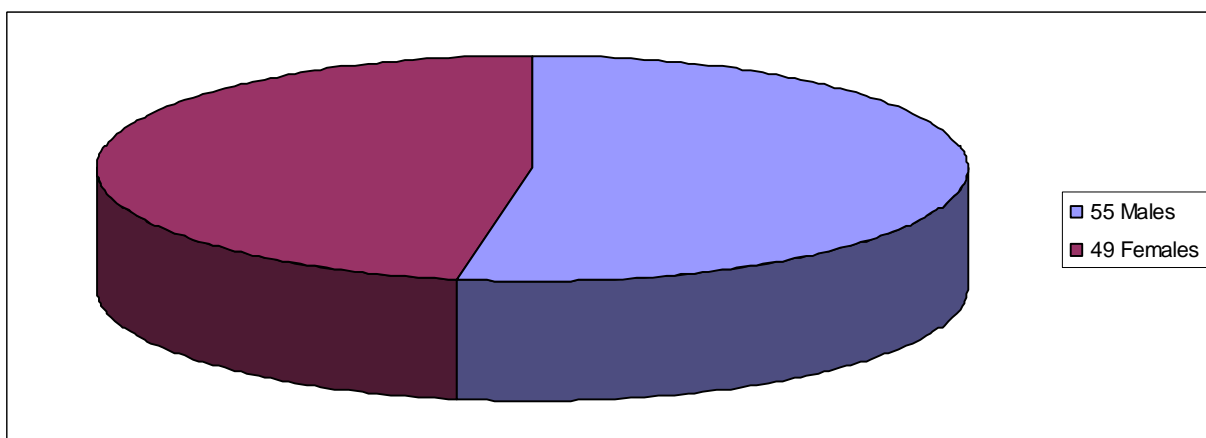
In the course of the field research, face-to-face interviews and focus groups were conducted with a total of 104 Roma: 28 Czech Roma, 30 Slovak Roma, 29 Romanian Roma, 5 Polish Roma, 5 Hungarian Roma, 1 Bulgarian Roma and 6 Romanian Roma with British citizenship.



Graph 21: Breakdown by the respondents' nationalities

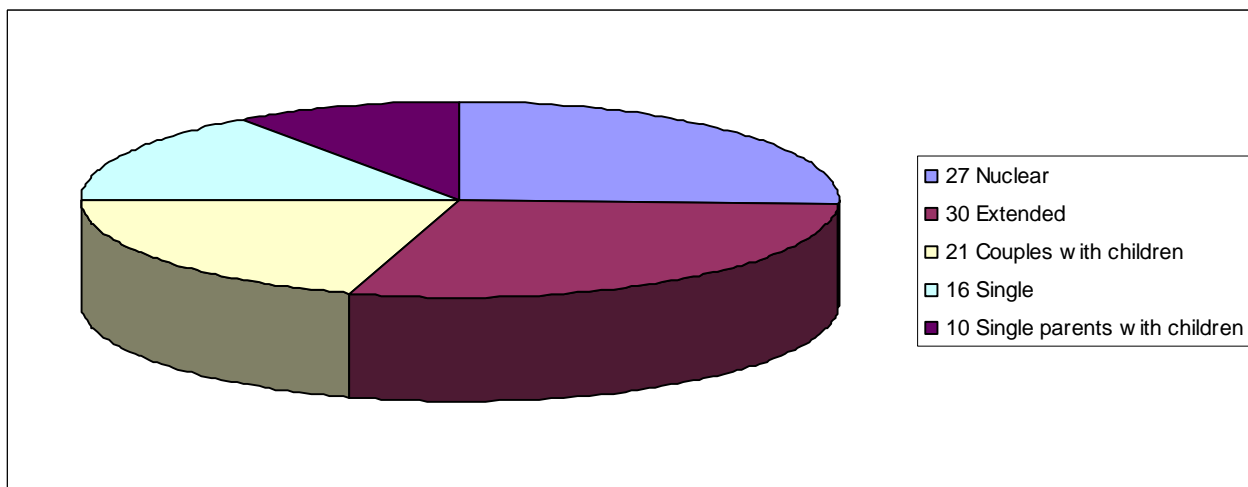
The Roma were from London (Newham, Haringey, Walthamstow, Tottenham, Edmonton, Croydon), Southend-on-Sea, Gravesend, Peterborough, Sheffield, Manchester, Bolton, Bradford, Nottingham, Derby, Leeds, Doncaster and Newcastle.

Fifty-five of the respondents were men and 49 were women.



Graph 22: Gender composition of the respondents

In terms of family composition, the respondents came from the following backgrounds:

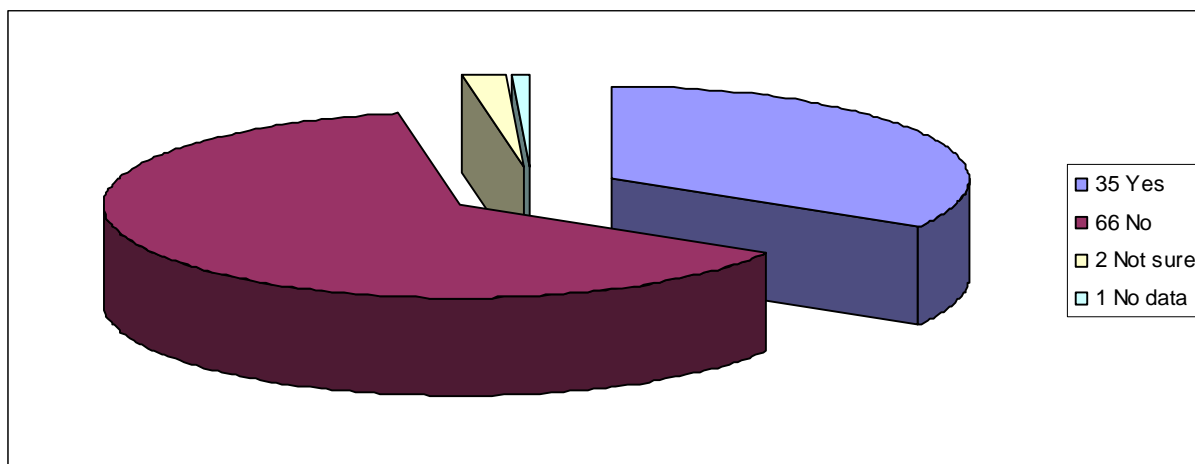


Graph 23: Family composition of A2 and A8 Roma families as reported by the respondents

On average, there were 1.97 school-age children and 1.08 pre-school children living in one household.

The average number of people living in a household was 5.92. However, if broken down by nationalities, the picture is very different. On average, 9.48 people lived in Romanian and Bulgarian Roma households, as opposed to Czech, Slovak, Polish and Hungarian households with an average of 3.72 people.

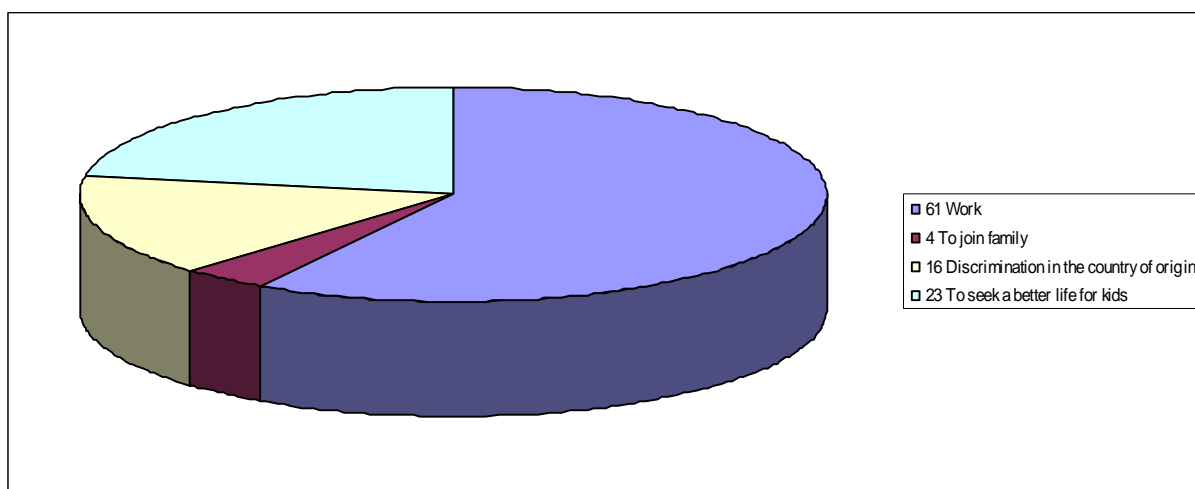
This was also reflected in the level of social interactions with other ethnic groups. When asked whether they preferred to socialise with Roma only, 66 respondents answered they preferred to mix with various different groups, including the Roma.



Graph 24: Preference in terms of interacting with Roma only

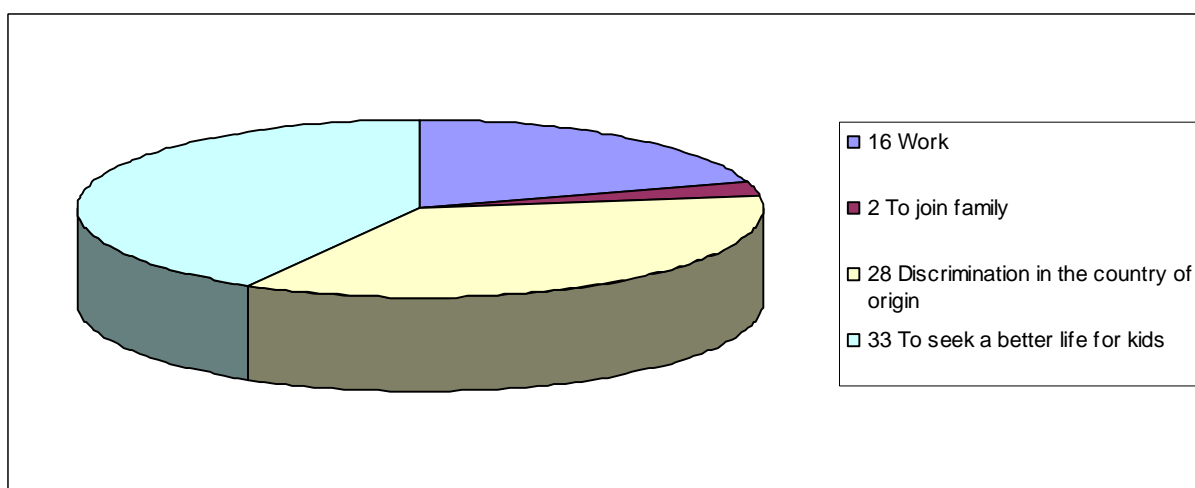
However, out of the 35 people who responded that they socialised with Roma only or were not sure (2), all were Romanians and Bulgarians.

Work a better life for their children and discrimination in the Roma’s home countries were the most frequently cited reasons for their decision to move to England. Most of the respondents participating in the research admitted that the economic reasons for their decision to move to England were in fact motivated by the high levels of discrimination they had faced on the labour market in their home countries, effectively barring them from accessing employment.



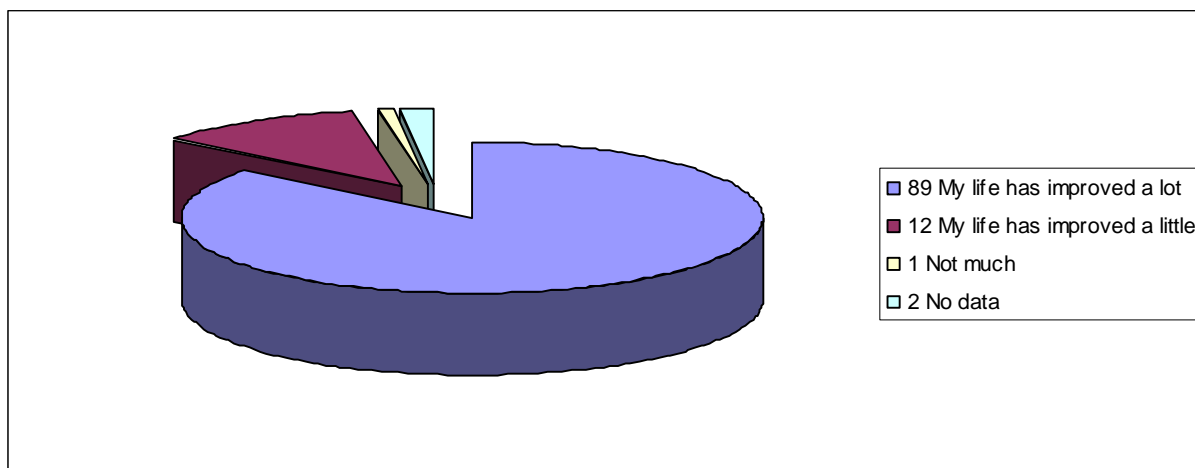
Graph 25: Reasons for moving to England 1

Those respondents who provided two reasons for their decision to move to England answered in the following way:



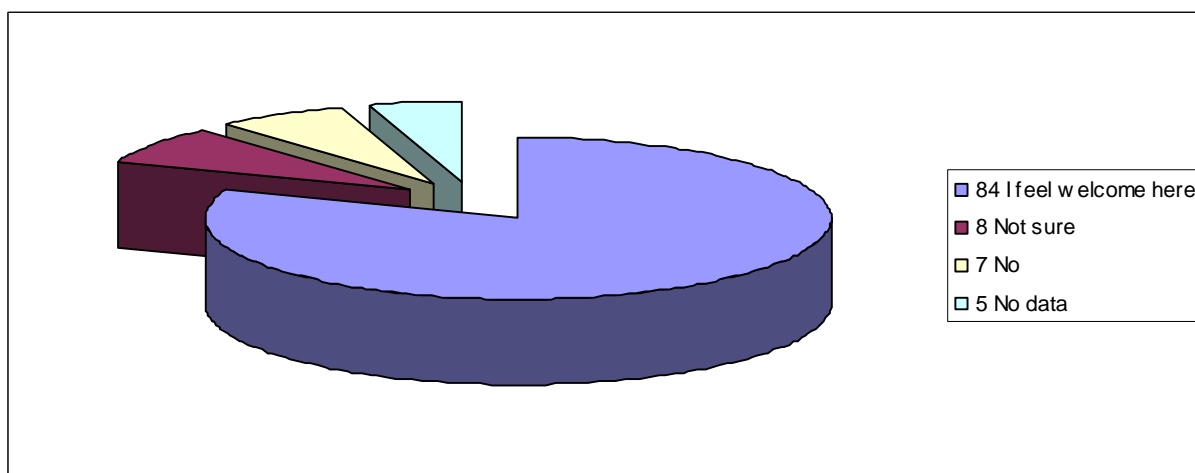
Graph 26: Reasons for moving to England 2

When asked whether their life had improved after they settled in England, the respondents provided the following answers:



Graph 27: Improvement of life after moving to England

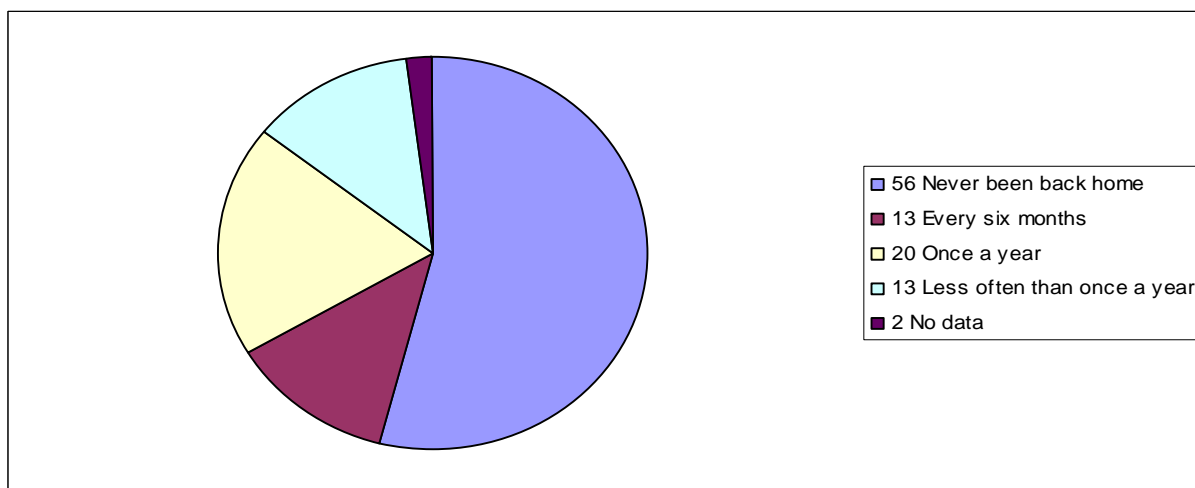
The vast majority of responses provided across the various nationality and age groups indicate significant improvements in the respondents' overall wellbeing, which manifest themselves in the areas of financial and economic security and social status. According to the respondents, their status is not determined by their Roma origin. This was also reflected in a sense of being welcome felt by the overwhelming majority of the respondents.



Graph 28: Sense of feeling welcome in England

The average length of stay reported by the A2 and A8 Roma respondents was 5 years.

As for the frequency of the respondents' visits to their home countries, the answers were as follows:

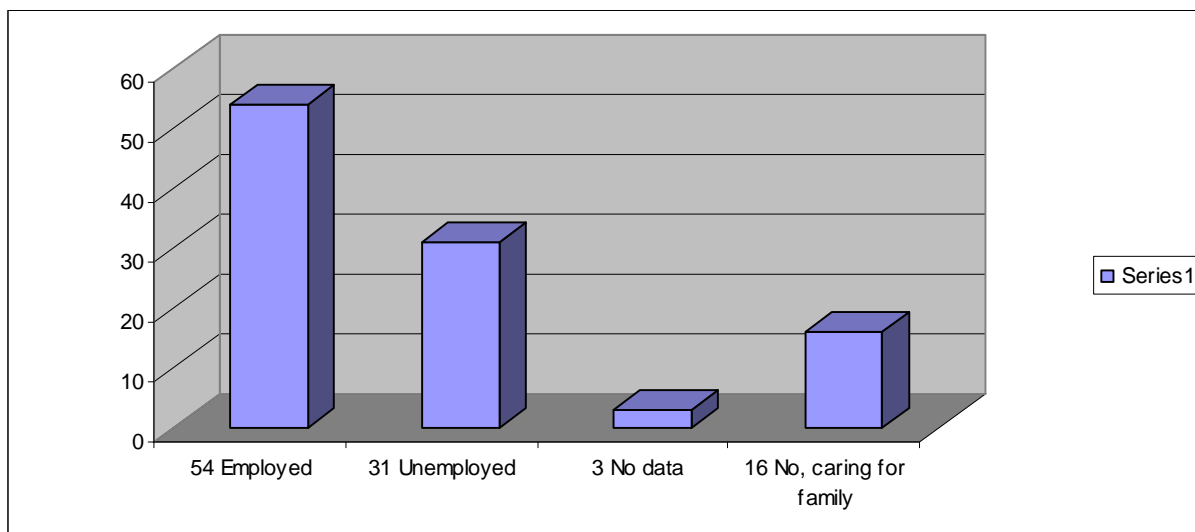


Graph 29: Frequency of trips back to the country of origin

The most frequent reasons for not going back were lack of money to be able to pay for the trip, and/or fear of discrimination or racially motivated attacks. Some of the respondents gave other reasons for not going back by referring to ‘trivial’ types of the discrimination against Roma in their countries of origin, such as being followed by security guards in shops as potential shoplifters, or being mistreated at school or by social workers.

7.1 Employment

As detailed in Section 4.3: *Employment restrictions imposed on A2 and A8 Roma*, different employment restrictions apply to A2 and A8 nationals, including Roma. These, combined with the Roma’s little or no previous work experience due to high levels of discrimination against Roma in their countries of origin, impact adversely on the Roma’s patterns of employment in England.



Graph 30: Patterns of employment as reported by the respondents

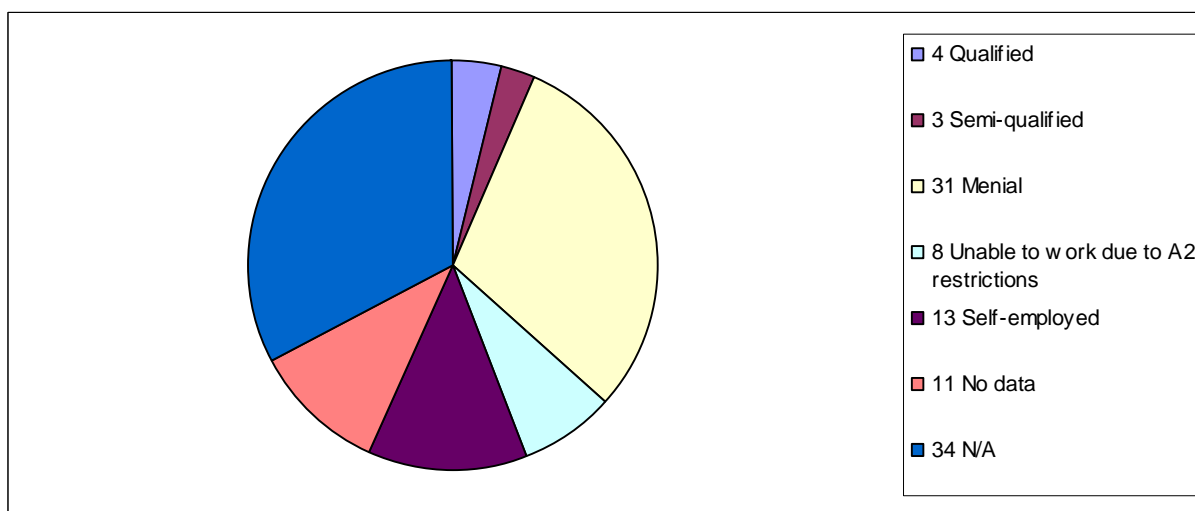
Fifty-four Roma respondents (51.9%) reported they were employed. Most respondents thought employment a crucial point of entry into British society. In fact, as previously shown in Graph 18: *Reasons for moving to England 1*, employment was reported by the vast majority of respondents as the key reason for their decision to come and live in England; employment was also thought to be the only means of being able to provide a future for the respondents' children.

In Graph 19: *Reasons for moving to England 2*, seeking a better life for children and discrimination in the countries of origin were most frequently mentioned. Although there were several individuals who maintained they had never experienced discrimination themselves, a high proportion of the respondents came from societies in which it had been impossible for them to access the labour market. As a result, most Roma families coming to England tend to start with very little or nothing, which, in turn, impacts on the family's overall financial and material situation. However, many respondents maintained the Roma were able to move to England due to close family links, which make it possible to overcome initial obstacles such as lack of finance and knowledge of the local systems. This is why, in their view, it is essential to take into account the situation and needs of the whole family.

The findings indicate that in families consisting of two parents, the father tended to work, doing whatever jobs there were available: usually menial, low skilled jobs with short-term contracts. The mother would look after the children and the household.

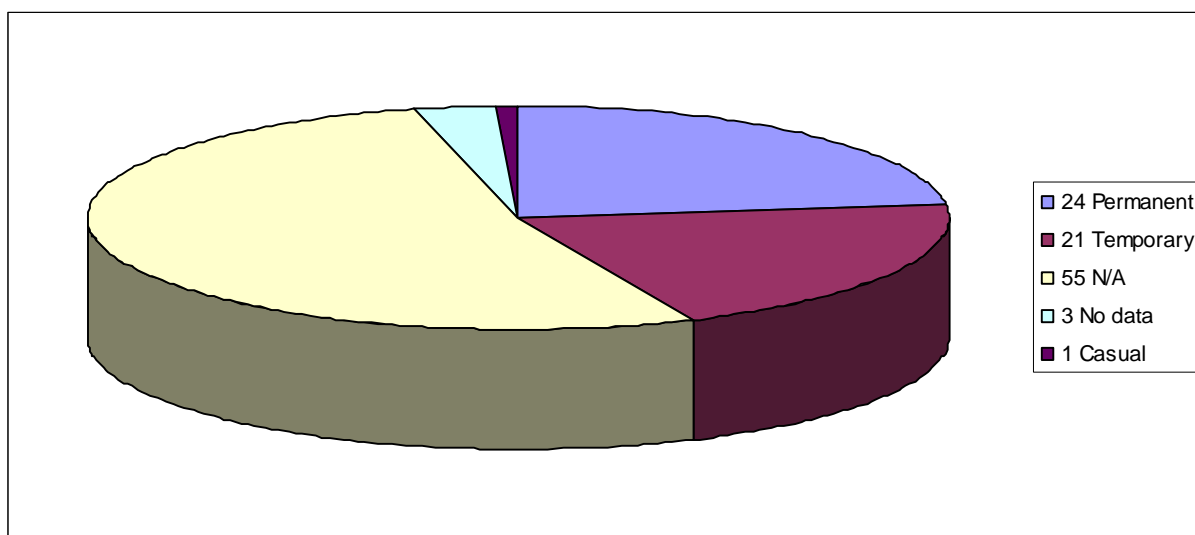
In single-parent families (with usually the mother looking after the children on her own), the mother would work as well as look after the children. In the course of the research, the research team came across two cases of single fathers looking after their children.

The aforementioned patterns of work in the family were more typical of A8 Roma who, unlike A2 Roma, are not practically barred from employment in England (and the whole of the UK).



Graph 31: Types of jobs performed by A2 and A8 Roma

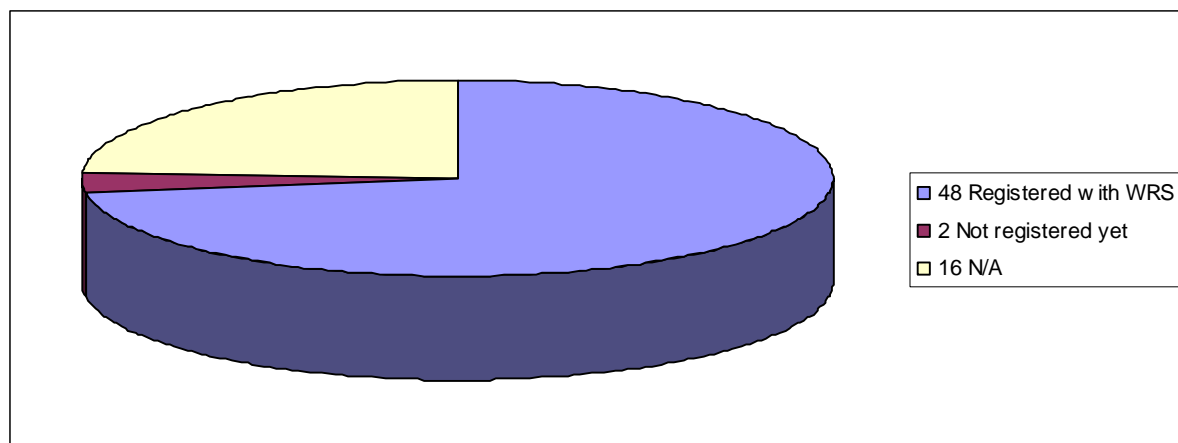
The chart above shows further patterns of employment of A2 and A8 Roma. Most of the 31 Roma who reported working in a menial job were A8 nationals. Only four people worked in qualified and three in semi-qualified jobs. Of the 13 people who reported working as self-employed, only two were A8 nationals: the rest were A2 nationals for whom self-employment is the only way of being able to work in the UK. Eight A2 Roma reported not being able to work due to the employment restrictions imposed on A2 nationals.



Graph 32: Types of work contracts/jobs

All the A8 Roma respondents who reported they were employed had been registered with the WRS. Those who were not registered included two people who had not yet registered and the 16 people who had refugee status reported and/or looking after children. These tended to be women on maternity leave

(usually unpaid), women looking after disabled children, or disabled/chronically ill people.



Graph 33: A8 registrations with WRS

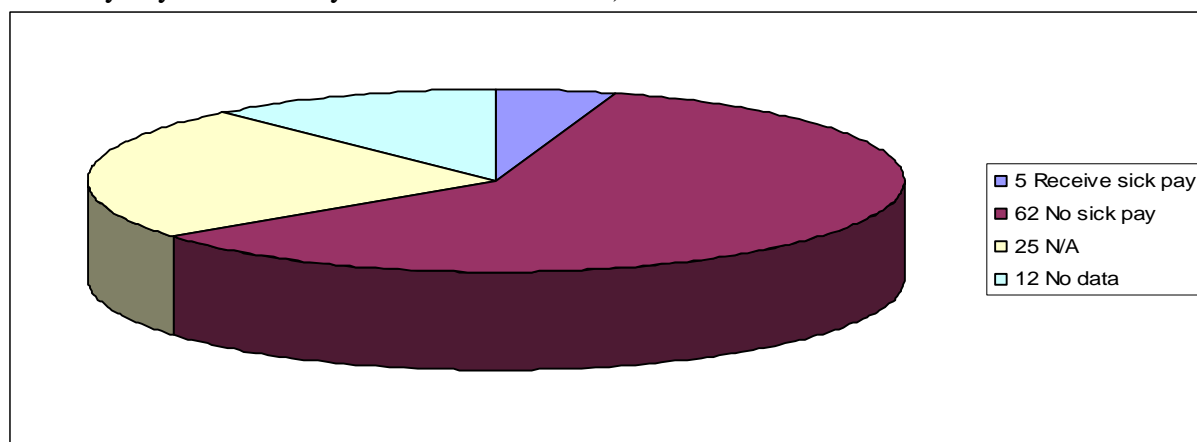
When discussing the issue of the WRS, very few interviewees actually questioned the nature of the restrictions. While talking about it in a focus group of five Roma males in Sheffield, they referred to the registration process as a prerequisite to being able to work. Therefore, paying the WRS registration fee of £90 was an automatic step they did not question:

The vast majority of A8 Roma were employed through private employment agencies (in some cases, they were formally registered with an employment agency but were unemployed while they waited for a vacancy). Very often, they offer very low wages in menial jobs, which, unfortunately, A8 citizens, including the Roma, are forced to take up due to an increasing shortage of vacancies. A Slovak Roma man living in East London commented on the problematic practice by employment agencies: 'I work through an employment agency. I'm required to work continuously for eight months. After they elapse, I have to sign a new contract with the same employment agency and the same employer. Repeatedly, I've asked both the agency and the employer to give me a permanent contract. They told me they wouldn't do so since they employed only very few people full-time.'⁶⁷

Temporary contracts seem to vary from one agency to another as reported by the respondents when asked about the contracts: some were entitled to sick pay and others were not. Although all the employed people reported paying national

⁶⁷ Interview with Mr M, London, 23 March 2009

insurance contributions and income tax, the vast majority employed through employment agencies said they had not previously considered their sick pay at all as they did not have to resort to it (i.e. not being ill and if feeling ill, they would work anyway because they needed their income).



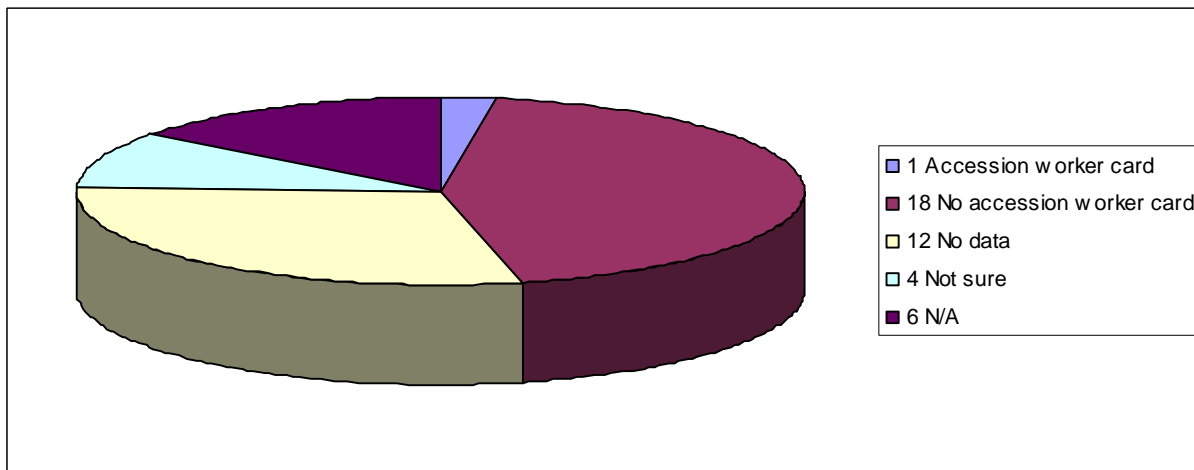
Graph 34: Sick pay

The findings indicate that A2 Roma's survival strategies are impacted by the employment restrictions imposed on A2 citizens.⁶⁸

Self-employment appears to be the most frequent type of employment taken by Romanian Roma in order to be able to stay in the UK after the first three months. It was noted that self-employment effectively comes to mean more a means of legally staying in the UK than a category of labour. A high number of self-employed Romanian Roma reportedly sell the *Big Issue*. A2 Roma, especially Romanians, also reportedly work on construction sites or as house painters, decorators or cleaners.

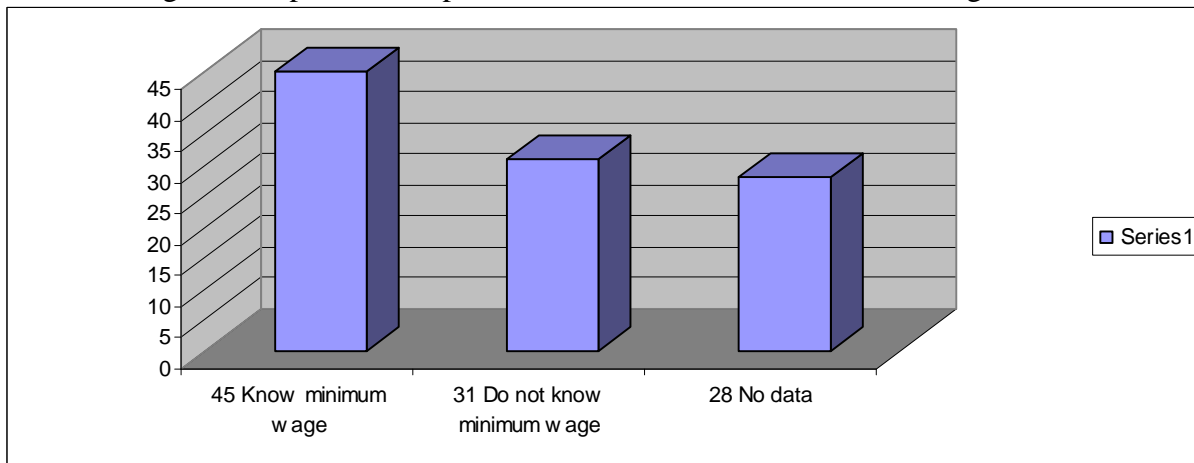
The following figures were reported by A2 Roma respondents (Bulgarians and Romanians):

⁶⁸ This is confirmed by a recent study carried out by the Migrants' Rights Network: 'Nationals from A2 countries (Romania and Bulgaria) emerged as adversely affected by the complexity of UKBA regulations around their employment in the UK. The accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the European Union in January 2007 conferred their citizens the freedom of movement within the EEA. In the UK, they have no automatic right to work except in certain circumstances – for instance, if they are self-employed.' Papers, please: The Impact of the Civil Penalty Regime on the Employment Rights of Migrants in the UK, Migrants' Rights Network, p. 16 http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/policy_reports.php



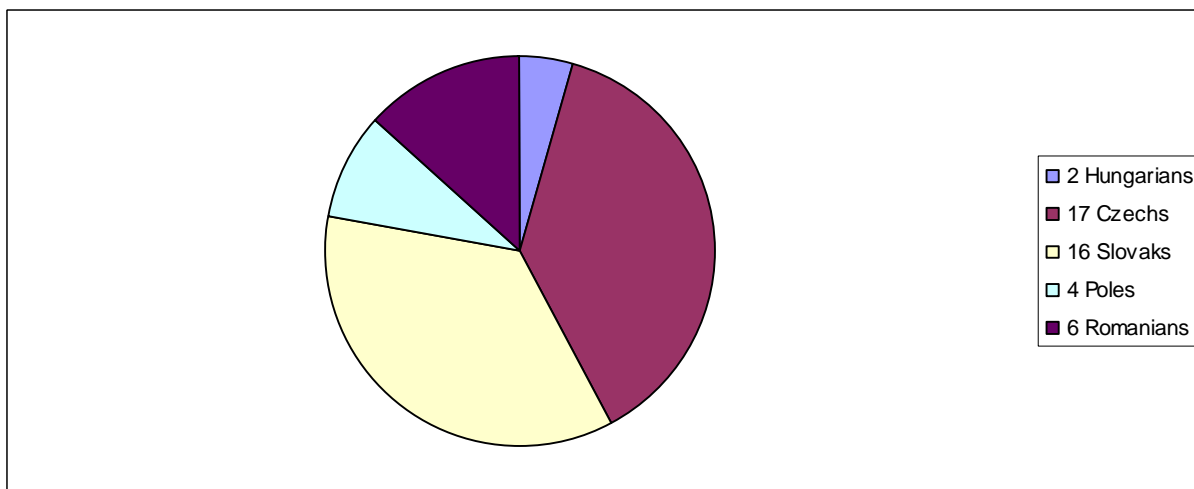
Graph 35: Accession worker card registrations (A2 Roma)

The following chart depicts the respondents’ awareness of the minimum wage:



Graph 36: Awareness of minimum wage

However, of the 45 respondents who knew what the minimum wage was, the level of awareness was generally higher among A8 Roma.



Graph 37: Awareness of minimum wage (breakdown by nationality)

Many Roma interviewees commented that they had experienced problems using Job Centre services, partly because of language difficulties, but mostly because they found the system too complicated, the staff unhelpful; also they reported that advisors were not always clear about the status of A2 and A8 citizens.

7.1.1 Discrimination in employment in England

Although those respondents who were working or were seeking employment reported that, in general, their Roma ethnicity was not an issue on the labour market in England, and in the course of the recruitment process, they believed that their East European origin was perceived quite negatively. Those respondents who believed their knowledge of English was poor also maintained that they were facing immense linguistic barriers.

In one case in Sheffield, a group of five Roma men from Slovakia reported that in one of the local employment agencies, insufficient knowledge of English was considered a key criterion for not hiring workers. However, they also maintained that this practice was applied by Slovak non-Roma staff members who had recently joined the employment agency. The informants maintained that in the past, they had been employed by the same employment agency but after the non-Roma staff members came to work in the agency, the Roma lost their jobs or would not be rehired. They said they believed this was happening because of the Slovak non-Roma staff member's racist attitudes towards their Roma ethnicity.

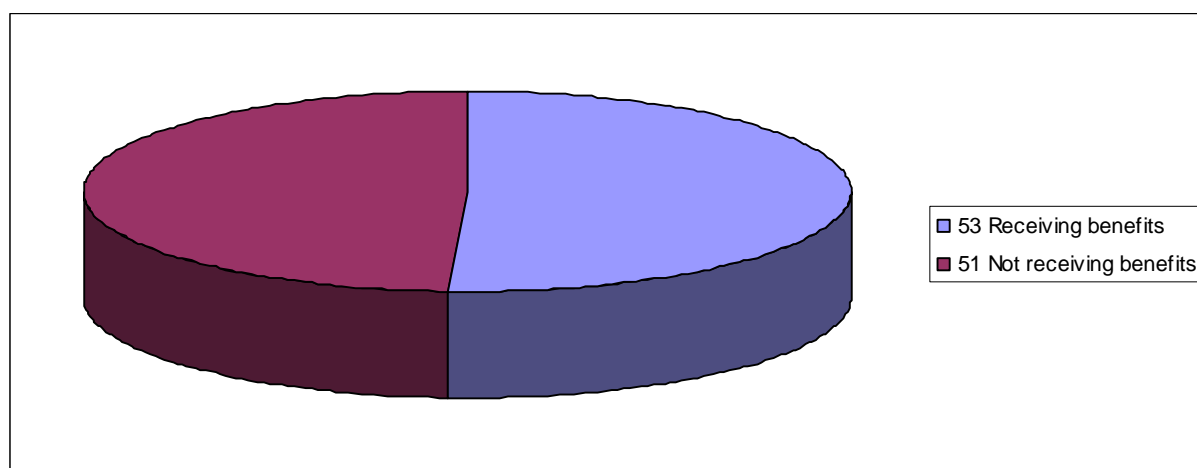
Despite some of the difficulties relating to finding work in the UK, the vast majority of Roma respondents reported the fact that they had not encountered the form of discrimination on the grounds of their Roma ethnicity, which they were used to in their home countries.

7.2 Social Welfare Benefits

Social welfare benefits represent an area where complex factors interact: the overall social, material and financial situation of a single person, single parent or a family is determined both by their employment current status in England (i.e. working, unemployed, unable to work), as well as their political status (i.e. A2 and A8 nationals).

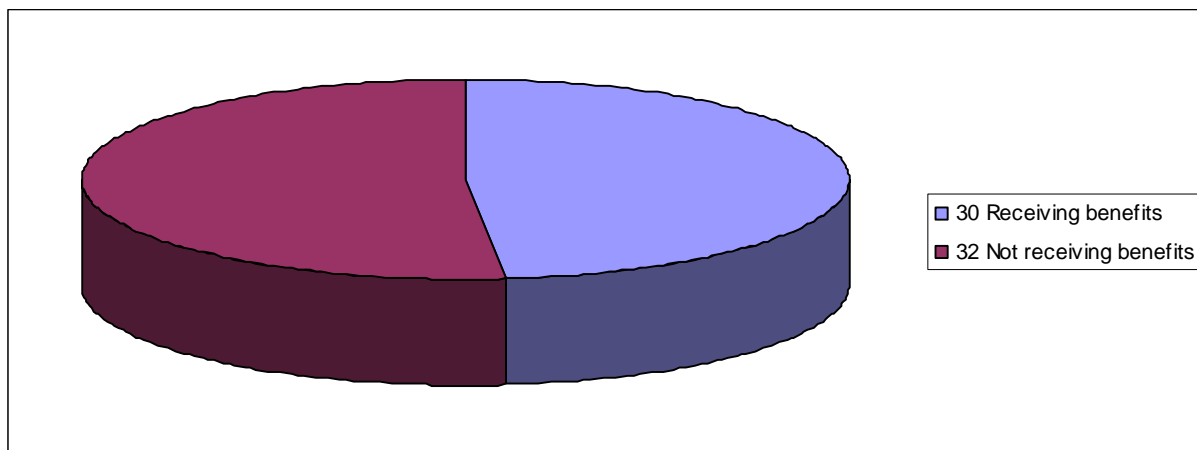
As detailed in section 7.1: *Employment*, due to complex reasons, employment, or more precisely the lack of employment for Roma due to high levels of discrimination in their home countries, was the most important driving force reported by the respondents. However, those people, who managed to secure employment in England, tended to work in menial jobs, earning very modest incomes, which had to sustain many family members.

The chart below shows the proportion of those receiving and not receiving benefits:



Graph 38: Social welfare benefits

Among the 53 people who reported receiving benefits were 13 people who had come to England before Accession and were granted refugee status. As a result, they enjoyed more extended rights and entitlements, such as income support, jobseeker's allowance or disability pension: those benefits that are otherwise inaccessible for A8 nationals, including Roma, who have not been in continuous employment for 12 months, and are inaccessible to A2 nationals (see section 4.3: *Employment restrictions imposed on A2 and A8 Roma*).



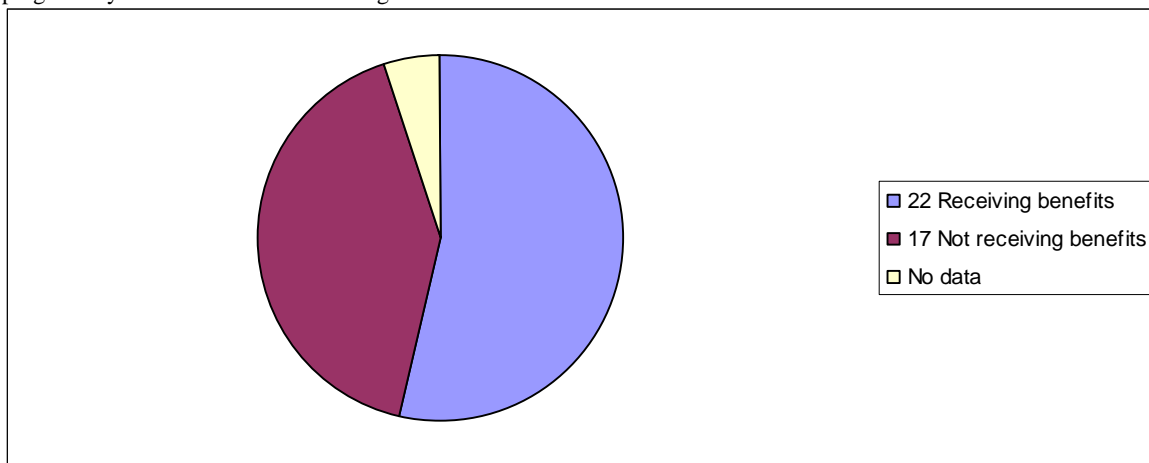
Graph 39: A8 nationals and their access to social welfare benefits

Of the 62 Slovak, Czech, Polish and Hungarian Roma, seven were drawing welfare benefits such as jobseeker's allowance, income support, incapacity or disability allowance, because they had been granted refugee status.

Those A8 respondents, who did not have refugee status and/or came after Accession and worked through employment agencies on a temporary basis, maintained it was virtually impossible to draw social welfare other than in-work benefits such as tax credit, child tax credit, council tax credit, and housing benefit, due to the temporary nature of most jobs. This was of particular concern in several cases where the respondents had just lost their jobs but were unable to draw jobseeker's allowance.

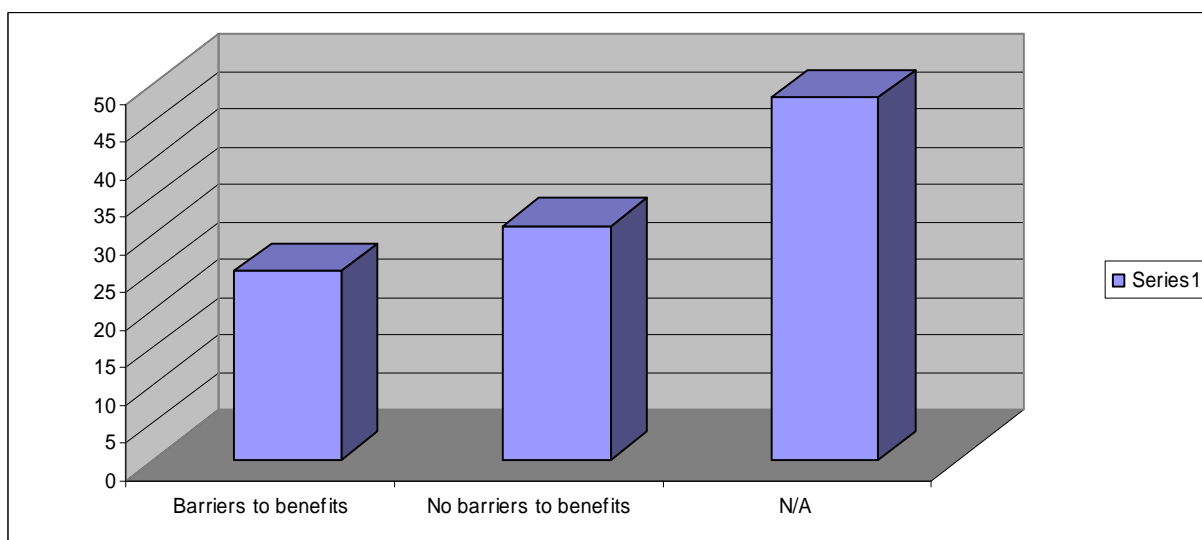
Some respondents also mentioned cases of their Roma friends who were unable to draw social welfare as a direct result of exploitative employment agencies taking the WRS fee but not registering them with the Home Office. Others mentioned cases of employment agencies not giving people employment contracts or pay slips: hence the absence of proof of steady, continuous employment.

The position of A2 Roma was much more difficult. With the exception of the respondents who had obtained refugee status and/or British citizenship (6) and/or the vast majority of those who reported being employed or self-employed (25), unemployed A2 Roma were not receiving benefits.



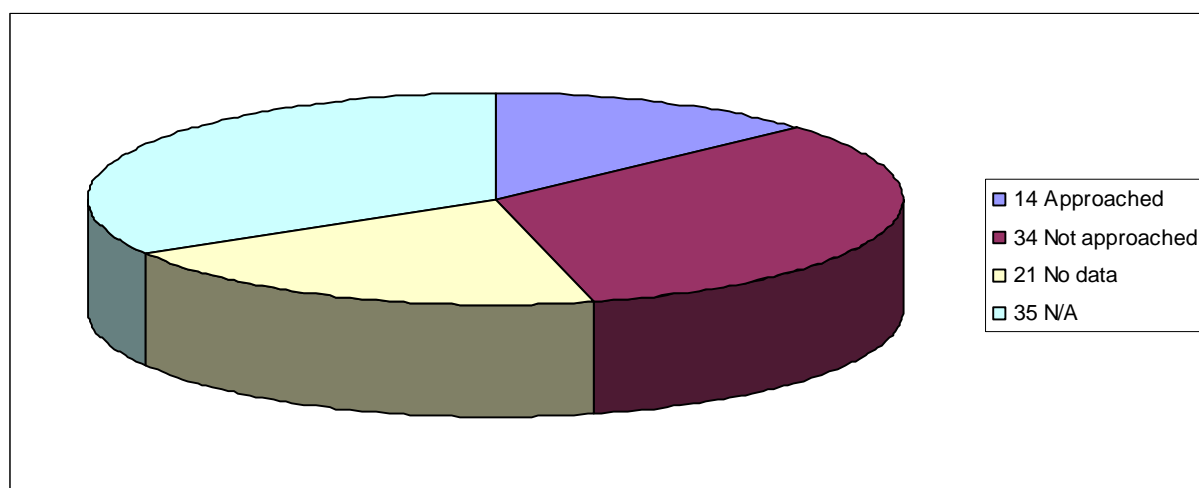
Graph 40: A2 nationals and their access to social welfare benefits

The majority of the respondents recognised that Roma living in England who were granted refugee status before the 2004/2007 EU enlargements, were self-employed and/or worked continuously for 12 months (and could prove this) after accession, could easily access their social welfare entitlements as taxpayers. The respondents also believed there was no racial discrimination against Roma in terms of accessing social welfare.



Graph 41: Barriers to accessing social welfare benefits

In terms of difficulties faced while applying for social welfare benefits, 25 respondents felt there were barriers to accessing their entitlements. Most frequently cited ones were language, difficulties relating to navigating the system and very little or no signposting by local authorities and other agencies such as the Job Centre Plus.



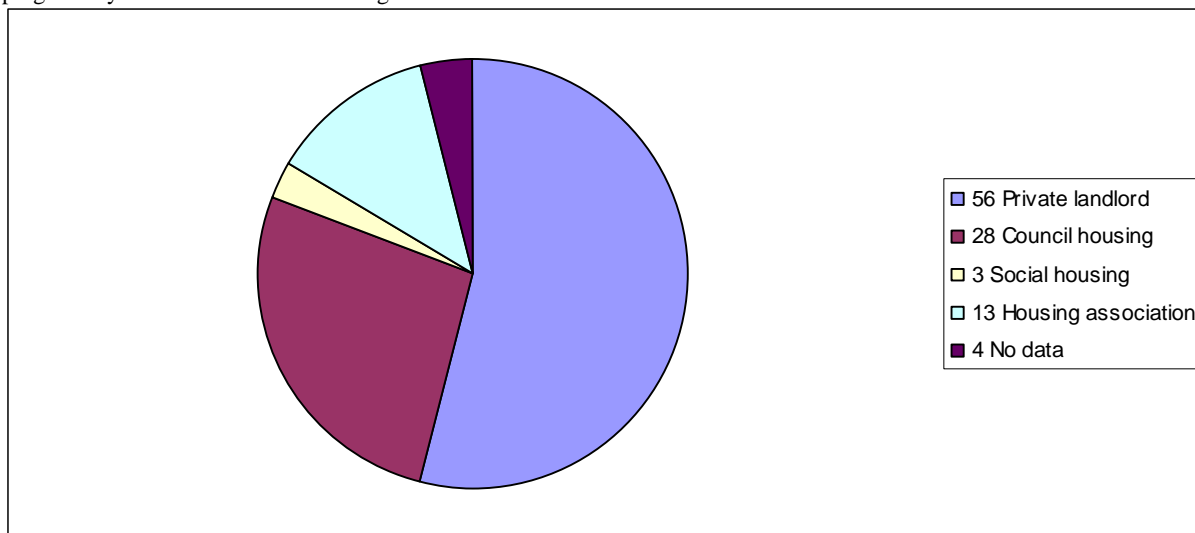
Graph 42: Initiatives by local authorities and other agents in terms of approaching people about their entitlements

The respondents were generally unhappy with the length of time HM Revenue & Customs takes to assess individual applications for in-work tax credits, which, according to some, may range from 4 months to over a year. Another source of dissatisfaction was the process of sharing sensitive personal data over the phone or sending it via ordinary post. Communication in English and filling in application forms in English are particularly burdensome for those Roma with poor English and/or lower levels of literacy: usually the direct result of the substandard and segregated schooling into which the Roma had been enrolled in their countries of origin.

A number of the respondents were pleased with the fact that some local authorities had started hiring workers, some of them Roma, who could speak Romani or at least the language of their home country. This was believed to be a major positive development as it had decreased their vulnerability to exploitation. According to some of the respondents, in the past, they had been asked by private individuals to pay a fee for receiving help with filling in application forms.

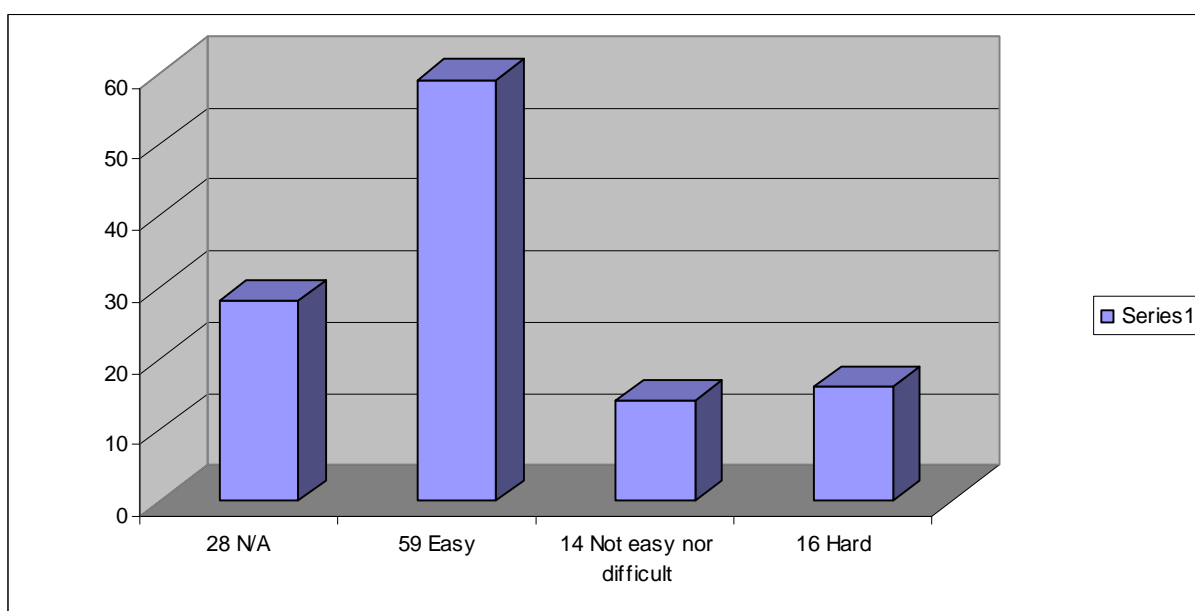
7.3 Housing

The majority of the Roma respondents lived in temporary rental accommodation. Twenty-eight respondents reported living in council housing.



Graph 43: Types of tenancy

The respondents thought the field of housing was problematic: most accommodation is offered and provided by private landlords. Although the respondents were generally satisfied with their housing situation, they often claimed the conditions were unsatisfactory in terms of hygiene, dampness, and the overall condition of the property. Also, rents and deposits were thought to be very high, unaffordable at times.



Graph 44: Is it easy to get repairs done?

Many respondents stated, however, that although there were problems with their housing, it was preferable to what they had experienced in their countries of origin. Where frequently, as a result of being unemployed and unable to afford to pay rent, they would be forcibly moved to segregated Roma neighbourhoods. In England, many respondents believed that for the first time they actually had a

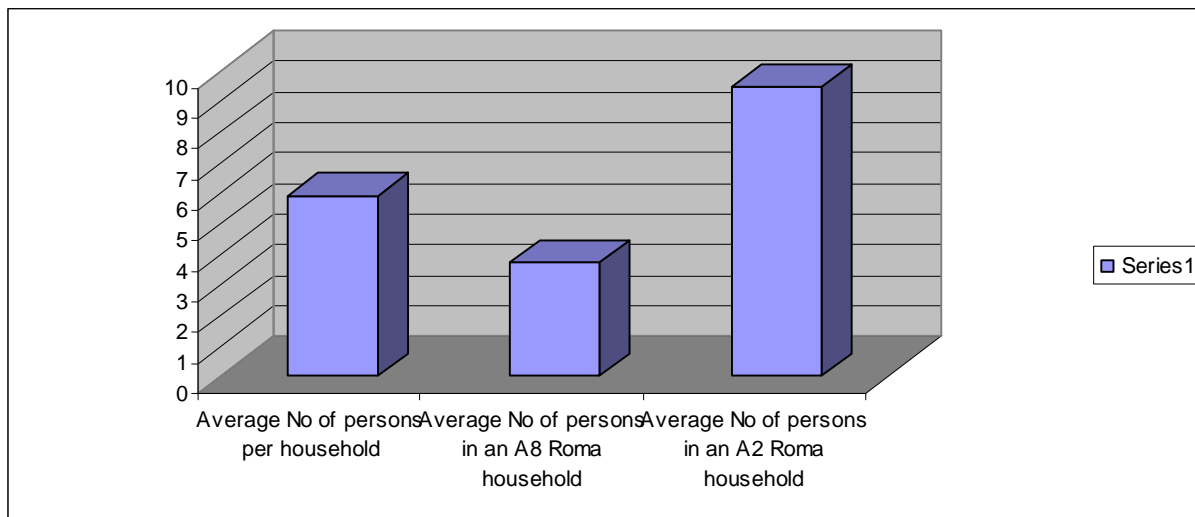
choice in terms of where they lived.

The respondents cited cases where there had been informal agreements, without contracts, between private landlords and the tenants, which leave families vulnerable to the landlord's discretion. A case was reported by one of the participants from Newcastle of a Roma family, who, not entering into any form of contract with the landlord: instead, promised to make repairs to the place, and to repaint it. Once the family had completed the renovation, the landlord ordered the family to leave.

Overcrowding was another very serious issue, especially in the poorer households of A2 and some Slovak Roma who often live in shared accommodation. As detailed in Section 7: *A2 and A8 Roma communities in England: The perspective of Roma*, the average number of people living in a household was 5.92. However, if broken down by nationalities, on average, 9.48 people lived in Romanian and Bulgarian Roma households, as opposed to the Czech, Slovak, Polish and Hungarian Roma homes which have an average of 3.72 people per household.

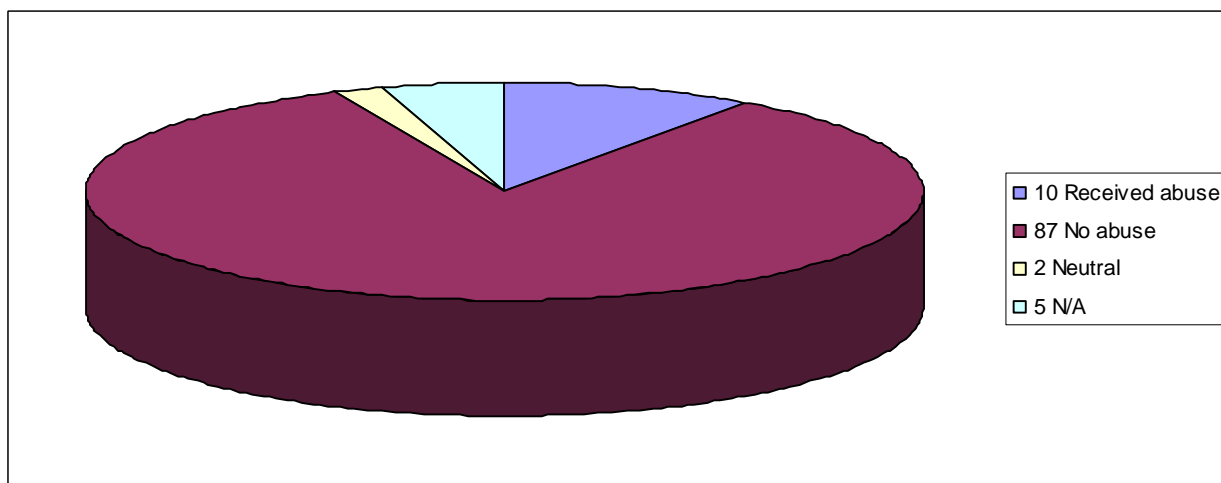
One Romanian Roma respondent said there were 27 people sharing accommodation in the same house, other Romanian Roma respondents reported 17, 16, 14 and 13 people per household respectively. In practice, this can mean at times that people, including small babies, infants; toddlers and school-age children sleep in kitchens, bathrooms, halls and elsewhere.

Similarly, Romanian Roma respondents from Manchester reported about 90 Romanian Roma families living in one street in Manchester (Longsight district) whom they knew in person. Other respondents were claiming that between 200 and 300 Romanian Roma families live in their immediate neighbourhoods (Manchester Gorton, Levenshulme, and Longsight).



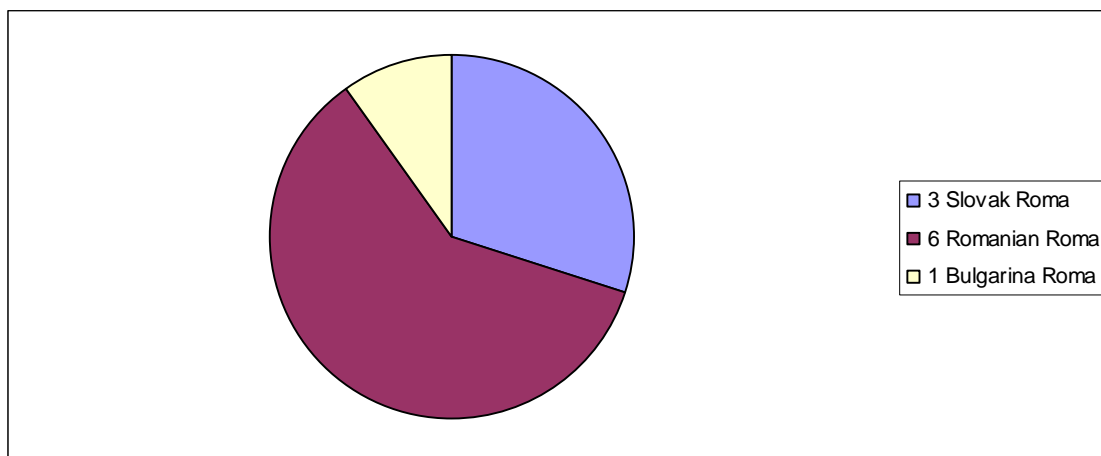
Graph 45: Average number of people living in a household

A high proportion of the respondents said relations with their neighbours were good. The vast majority reported not having received any abuse.



Graph 46: Did you receive racial abuse by your neighbours?

Of the ten Roma who reported receiving racist abuse from their neighbours, six were Romanian Roma, one was a Bulgarian Roma and three were Slovak Roma. This suggests that Roma, whether they are A2 or A8 nationals, who originally come from areas of high poverty, social exclusion and who have experienced high levels of anti Roma discrimination, are more likely to have this experience in England.



Graph 47: Breakdown by nationality of the ten respondents who reported racist abuse

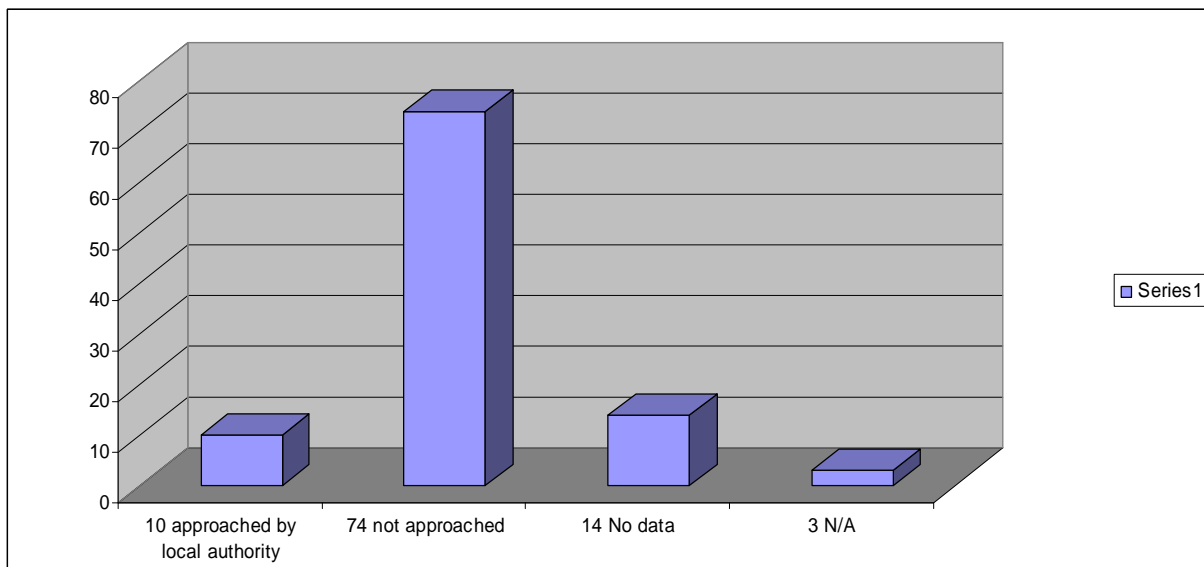
Several respondents commented on long-term community tension and very fragile relations, especially in areas traditionally inhabited by mixed minority communities, Asian/Pakistani communities in particular. Some respondents reported that they had to go and pick up their children from school as older Asian boys would bully their children, either physically assaulting them or stealing their mobiles and other possessions. A number of respondents also referred to animosity by British non-GRT children from the neighbourhood, swearing at their children because of their perceived East European migrant origin.

Respondents in areas such as Peterborough, Bradford, Newcastle and Manchester also reported issues with private landlords, arising because of their poor knowledge of English. They pointed out that language barriers may be taken advantage of by the landlord in situations where the tenants do not understand their rights.

The area of accommodation has been reported as one of the main fields of exploitation by landlords. As is the case with employment agencies which are private and usually the only ones hiring A2 and A8 workers, private landlords are in turn the only entities providing accommodation for newly arrived individuals and families trying to start a new life. As they are the only ones prepared to rent without the normal proofs of income and so forth, many private property owners tend to capitalise on this by charging very high, sometimes exorbitant rates.

However, in spite of all these issues and challenges, only ten respondents reported

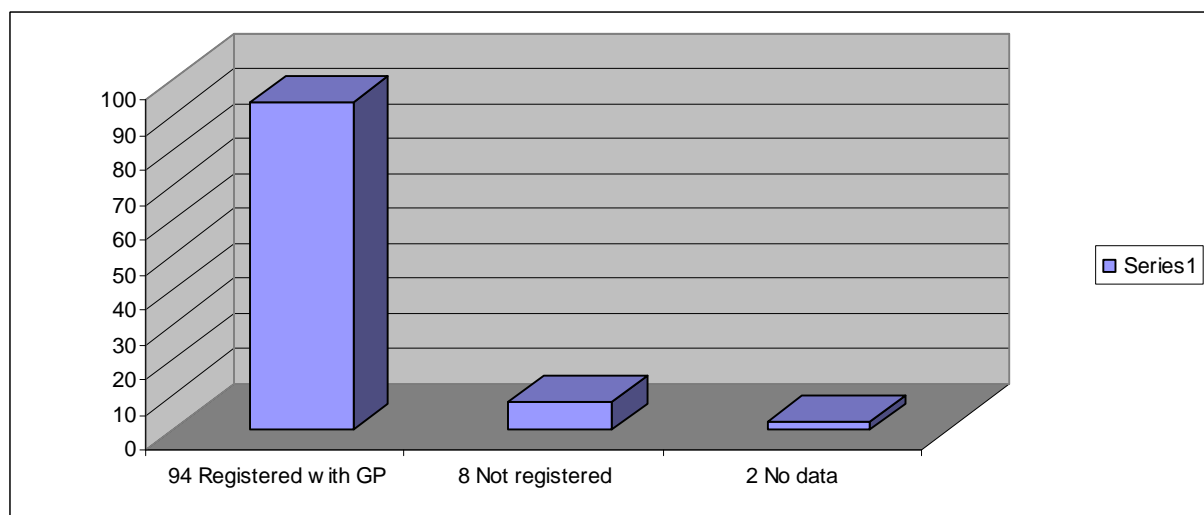
being approached by local authorities regarding housing. In the remaining 18 cases of the respondents living in council housing, the contact had been facilitated by NGOs and other non-statutory practitioners.



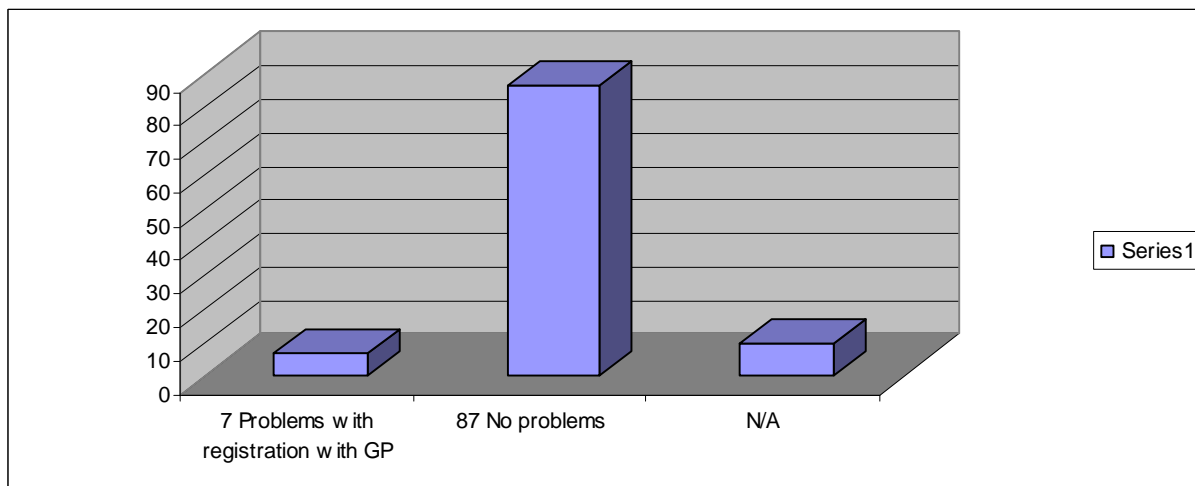
Graph 48: Have you been approached by local authorities?

7.4 Healthcare

The vast majority of the respondents participating in the survey reported that they and their children were registered with a local GP.

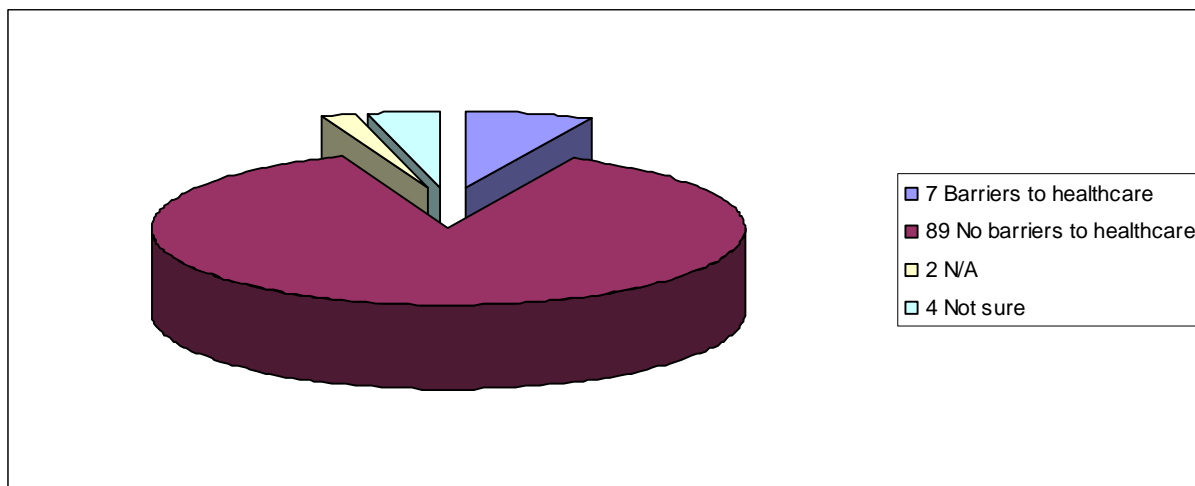


Graph 49: Registration with GPs



Graph 50: Problems with registration with GPs

Of the eight Roma respondents who were not registered with a GP, three were A8 nationals and five A2 nationals. A Czech Roma woman and a Slovak Roma man said they had just arrived and had not had time to register yet. One Czech Roma woman claimed she decided not to access healthcare in England because of poor standards.



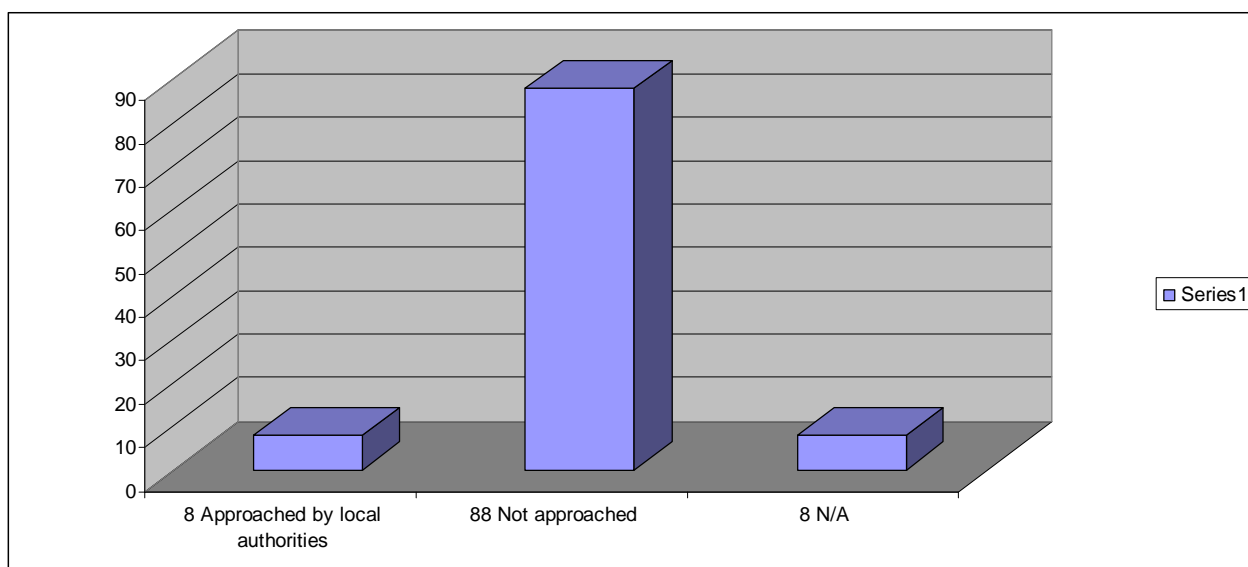
Graph 51: Barriers to healthcare in England as reported by the respondents

Lower standards of healthcare perceived among most Czech and some Slovak respondents, and a lack of preventative care, were cited by a number of respondents as barriers to accessing healthcare in England. For these reasons, some of the respondents said they preferred to travel back to their home countries to access the local healthcare systems, which they believed were of a higher standard. Also, they said they were used to having one GP only, unlike in England where their GPs kept changing. The areas of gynaecology, cancer treatment and hospital care were mentioned as the most frequent reasons for returning home for

treatment. Long waiting periods for appointments, inadequate quality of services and language barriers were referred to as the most serious problems associated with healthcare provision in England.

At the same time, the vast majority of the Roma respondents maintained that they were generally happy with healthcare, mainly because they had not been subjected to discriminatory treatment on the grounds of their Roma ethnicity. Some of them had been declined healthcare provision in their countries of origin, which, according to them, had never happened to them in England. In the course of the research, a number of mothers with newborn babies and/or mothers who had the experience of giving birth both in their countries of origin and in England were interviewed. They maintained they were much happier with the medical staff's approach to them in England than in their home countries, where the staff would treat them as "Gypsies only".

The chart below shows that only eight of the 104 respondents were approached by local authorities and/or other agencies.

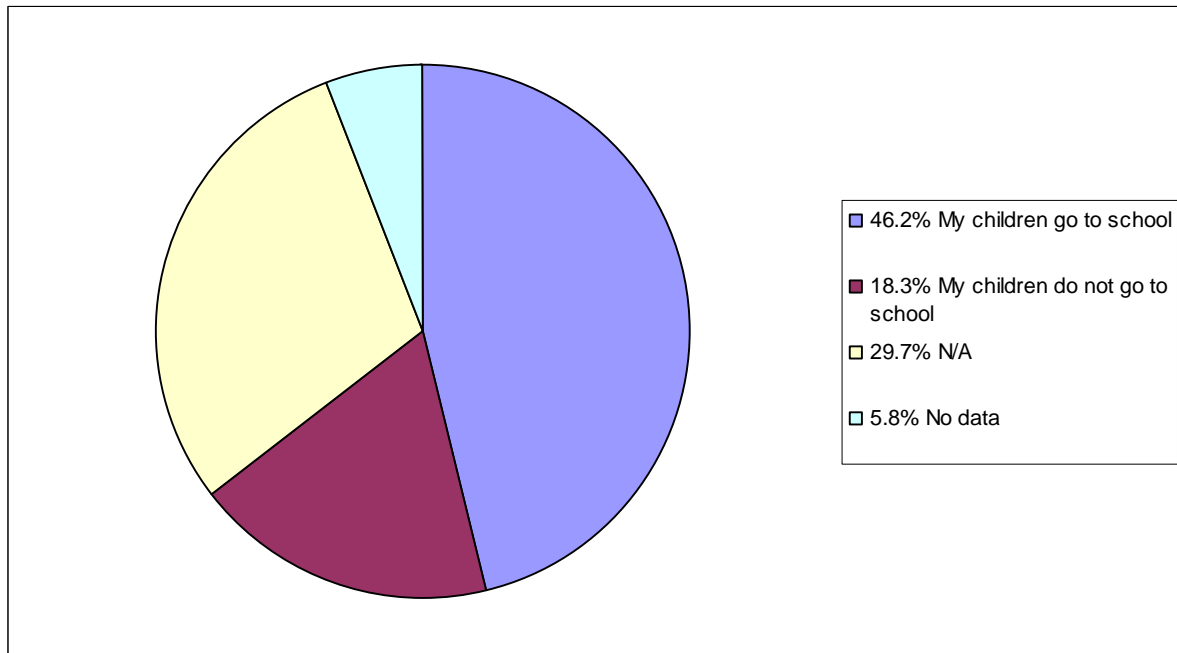


Graph 52: Have you been approached by local authorities about healthcare?

The vast majority of the respondents said that family members, friends and NGOs were instrumental in providing them with basic information about healthcare in England and signposting them.

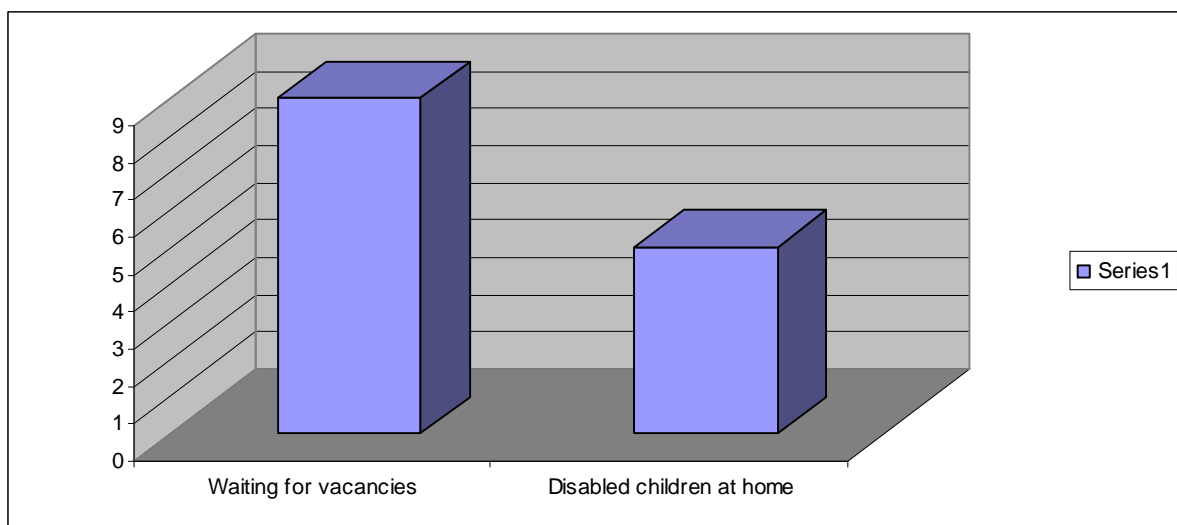
7.5 Education

The respondents were generally satisfied with the standards of education in England. Positive attitudes on the side of the school staff, equal opportunities and no racial segregation were among the many advantages of the local education system as perceived by the respondents.



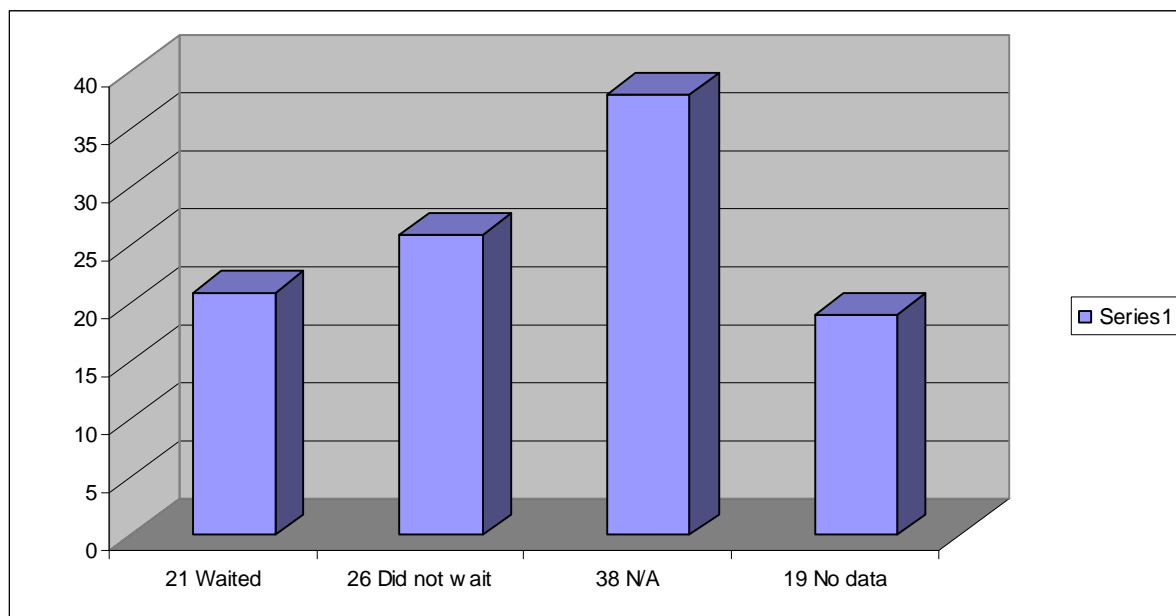
Graph 53: Children (not) attending school

Out of the 19 respondents who reported their children were not going to school, nine (47.4%) were waiting for vacancies at schools for their children. In five cases, the respondents were looking after a disabled child/children at home.



Graph 54: Children whose parents reported they are waiting for vacancies/disabled children at home

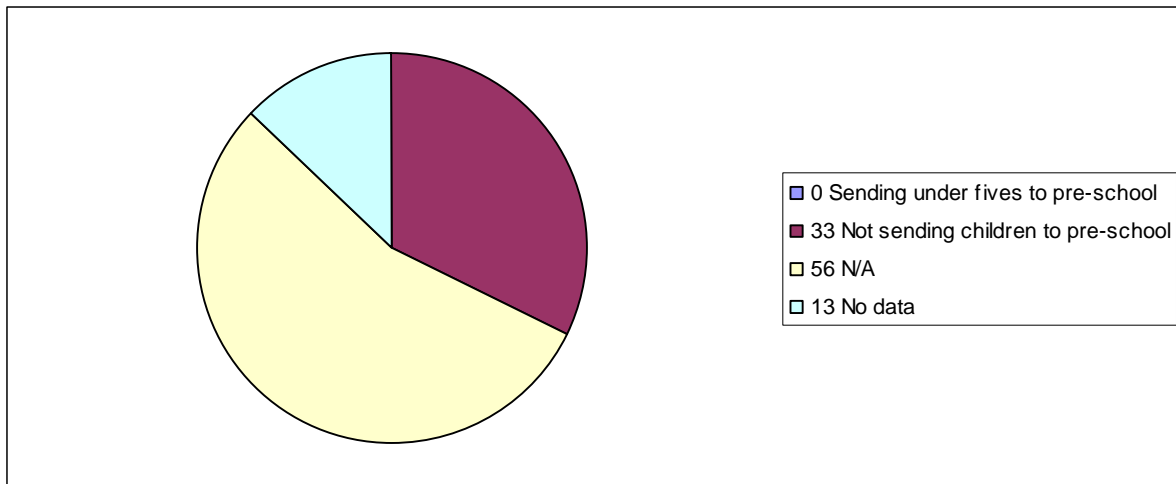
Of the 48 respondents who reported sending children to school, 21 (43.8%) reported that their children had been waiting for school vacancies and 26 (54.2%) said that their children had been admitted immediately. The length of waiting periods for school places reported by the respondents ranged from 2 to 6 weeks.



Graph 55: Waiting for school vacancies

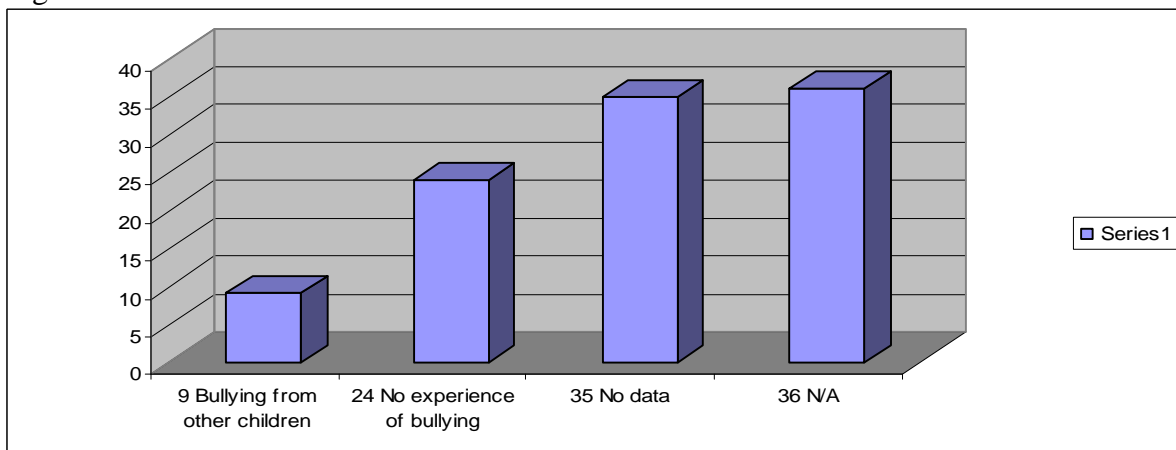
The most frequent reason given by A8 Roma parents for not sending children to school was illness; A2 Roma respondents cited lack of money for clothes and school meals or high mobility caused by making frequent trips to other places in England, and occasionally to their country of origin. A number of A2 Romanian Roma respondents hinted at the cultural differences relating to age: boys and girls aged 13 and onwards were often considered and thought of themselves as being already adult. The girls were being protected and prepared for marriage by being kept at home with mother and the other women. Boys aged 16 might well be working and contributing to the family's income. Most A2 Roma young people would be married during their late teens.

As for early childhood education, **none** of the A2 and A8 Roma respondents were sending their under fives to pre-school:

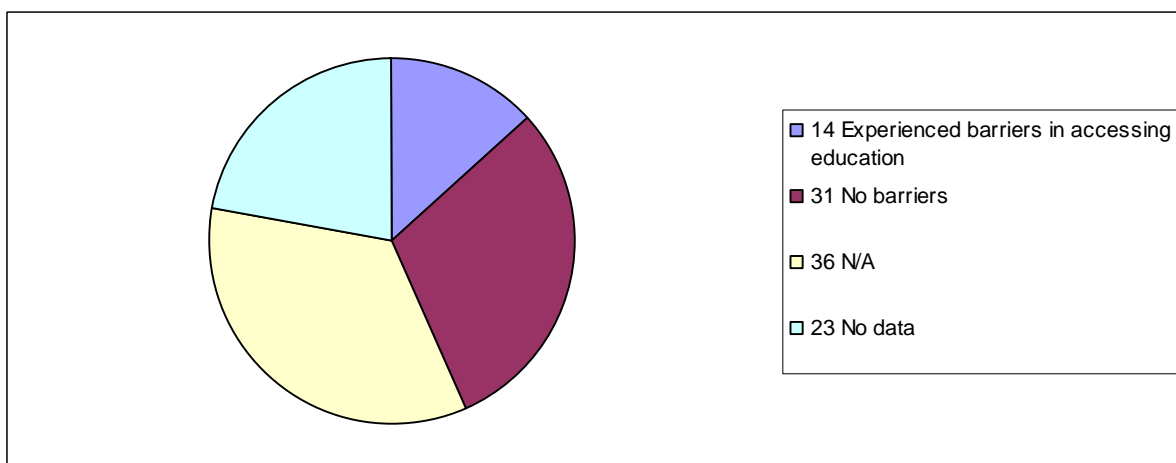


Graph 56: Early childhood education as reported by the respondents

A number of respondents reported instances of racial bullying at school from other children: they claimed that this was usually due to the perceived East European migrant origin. However, according to two respondents, their children faced initial hostility from their school peers after they had ascribed as Roma/European Gypsies, or after their peers had found out about their ethnic origin.

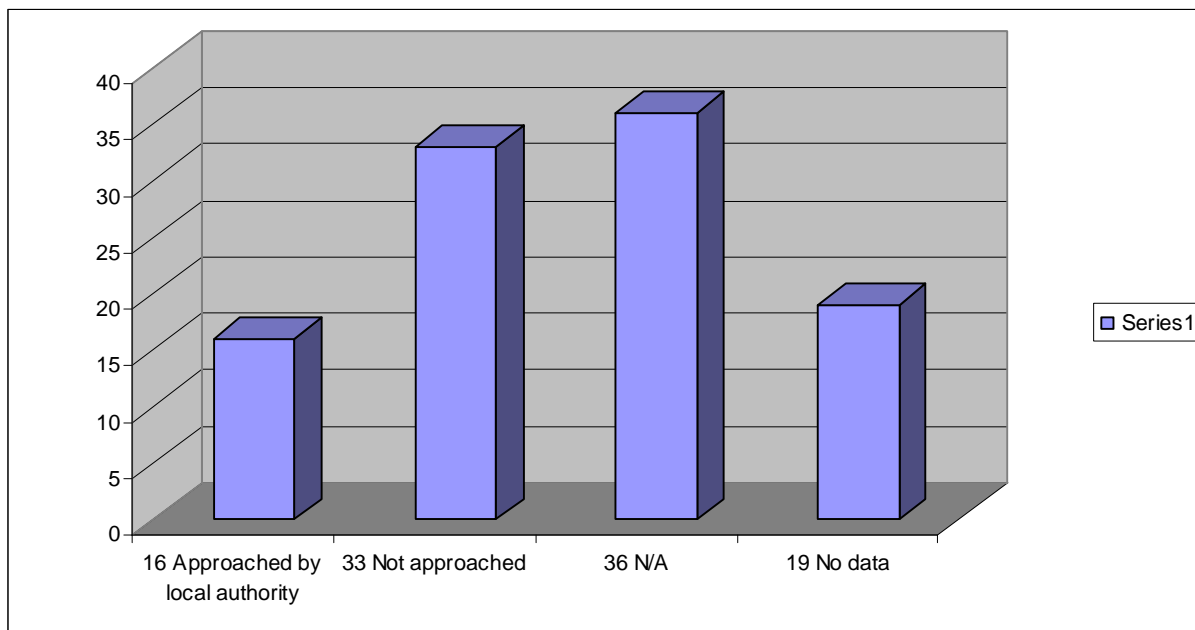


Graph 57: Incidents of racist bullying targeting Roma/East Europeans



Graph 58: Barriers in accessing education

The most frequent barriers in accessing education reported by the respondents were a lack of finance to pay for uniforms, school meals, trips and clothes, difficulties relating to language, communication and understanding the different education system, lack of school places, different cultural patterns and attitudes and a lack of contacts with local authorities and other agencies.



Graph 59: Have you been approached by local authorities?

However, in comparison with the other areas of employment, social welfare benefits and housing, the figures in the chart above suggest that education officers have been the most active service providers in terms of approaching A2 and A8 Roma communities.

Key findings in Section 7:

- On average, there were 1.97 school-age children and 1.08 pre-school children per household.
- On average, there were 5.92 people per household.
- On average, there were 9.48 people per Romanian and Bulgarian Roma household.
- On average, there were 3.72 people per Czech, Slovak, Polish and Hungarian Roma household.
- 63.5% of the respondents preferred to mix with various different groups.
- 53.8% of the respondents had never been back to their country of origin.
- The average length of stay reported by the A2 and A8 Roma respondents was 5 years.
- 51.9% of the respondents were employed, the vast majority in menial jobs (57.4%).
- 51% of the respondents were receiving in-work social welfare benefits; however, only 12.5% were receiving full social welfare (such as jobseeker's allowance) like other EU/UK citizens.
- 53.8% of the respondents lived in private rental accommodation and 26.9% lived in council housing.
- 90.4% of the respondents were registered with a GP.

- 46.2% of the respondents' children went to school
- 18.3% of the respondents' children did not go to school
- Of the 19 respondents whose children did not go to school, 47.4% were waiting for school places.
- 43.8% of the respondents' children had waited for school vacancies and 54.2% had been admitted immediately.
- The length of waiting periods for school places ranged from 2 to 6 weeks. In a number of cases, the children had been waiting for school places for over 2 months.
- None of the respondents were sending their under fives to pre-school.
- Illness, lack of money for clothes and school meals, high mobility and cultural differences relating to perceived adulthood were among the most frequent reasons for not sending children to school.
- 8.7% of the respondents reported that their children had been bullied by their peers because of their East European origin.
- 1.9% of the respondents said their children had faced initial hostility from their school peers after they had ascribed as Roma/European Gypsies, or after their peers had found out about their ethnic origin.

8. Comparing “official estimates” and “unofficial data”

“Schools and local authorities cannot satisfactorily comply with their duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, unless they are aware of the ethnicity and cultural diversity of their school population.”⁶⁹

From very early on in the research, the issue of data collection presented a major challenge. In trying to determine precisely what the number of members of a particular group is, it is essential to have access to good quality and reliable ethnically disaggregated data in order to be able to tailor services to their needs. Although local authorities in England have at their disposal a unique tool when recording high quality data (the Pupil Level Annual School Census), most of the data given to the research team in the course of the research by approximately one third of all the local authorities, **were estimated**.

The scope of the research and the resources available did not allow the research team to undertake a more in-dept analysis. Such an analysis would have made it possible to survey all the local authority areas with Roma populations (i.e. Slough, Liverpool, Warwickshire, etc)⁷⁰ which failed to participate in the research; it would have been also possible to explore those local authorities, who have argued that they do not have any Roma in spite of evidence suggesting the opposite. In both cases, it is impossible to get firm data relating to information that is readily available from “unofficial” sources; the failure to record such data puts disadvantaged and socially marginalised groups of people at an even greater disadvantage, despite the positive duty put on public authorities to promote race equality under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

In order to produce as precise a picture as possible of the numbers and needs of Roma settled in England, the research team have collated data from three primary sources: i/ the data made available by those local authority areas which participated in the survey; ii/ evidence obtained in the course of the field research from non-statutory practitioners working locally with Roma communities; and iii/

⁶⁹ The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People, DCSF, 2008, p.23

⁷⁰ Enfield, Sandwell, Southend-on-Sea, Blackburn, Brent, Croydon, Dudley, Ealing, Gateshead, Islington, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Middlesbrough, Slough, Solihull, Stoke-on-Trent, Trafford, Windsor & Maidenhead, Wolverhampton

information from Roma respondents.

Given that 53 of the 104 local authorities (51%) that returned the survey collected data on the numbers of both Roma adults and children (only 32 local authorities (30.8%) collected data on Roma adults), the research team was able to refer to only these limited figures made officially available.

The total number of A2 and A8 Roma adults and children reported by the 50 local authorities that recorded this type of ethnically disaggregated numerical data on Roma was 24,104. This, however, is a most conservative, or more precisely unrealistic figure, something which a *high proportion* of local authorities admitted themselves. As one representative of a local authority pointed out, “*figures above are taken from the DCSF School Census October 2008 and are probably a significant underestimate of the actual number of Roma heritage pupils in the local schools.*”

The example of several local authorities failing to recognise the real size, and hence needs of their Roma populations referred to in Section 6.4: *Survey: Accuracy of data recorded by local authorities*; is another illustration of the inadequacy with which data on Roma are being collected, recorded and used at both the local and national level.

The inadequacy of local authorities’ recording ethnically disaggregated data is clearly a major shortcoming in a situation where there is a group of people (both in England and the UK) who as EU citizens are entitled to access education and other services but are effectively barred from employment. Some local authorities referred in their answers to local figures from the WRS. However, for several reasons, the WRS is an inaccurate tool of measuring migration. The Home Office guidelines state that each application to the WRS represents one job, not one applicant. This suggests that the final figure represents the number of formal jobs taken by A8 citizens rather than the actual number of A8 citizens working in England.⁷¹ Moreover, the figure is even vaguer when considering that A8 workers must register more than once if employed by more than one employer

⁷¹http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/reports/accession_monitoring_report/report-19/may04-mar09?view=Binary.

concurrently. They must also re-register if they change their employer.

With the exception of data kept by some PCTs and other health authority units, to which the research team had no access, ethnically disaggregated data kept by schools are vitally important as it is in fact the **only** source of information on A2 and A8 Roma settling in England: no other statistical databases record ethnicity which is inclusive of GRT.

The findings of the survey and the Roma interviews clearly showed that education authorities and officers (and in some local authority areas, health visitors) effectively tend to be the first, and sometimes the only point of contact between A2/A8 Roma and their children with local authority service providers in England.

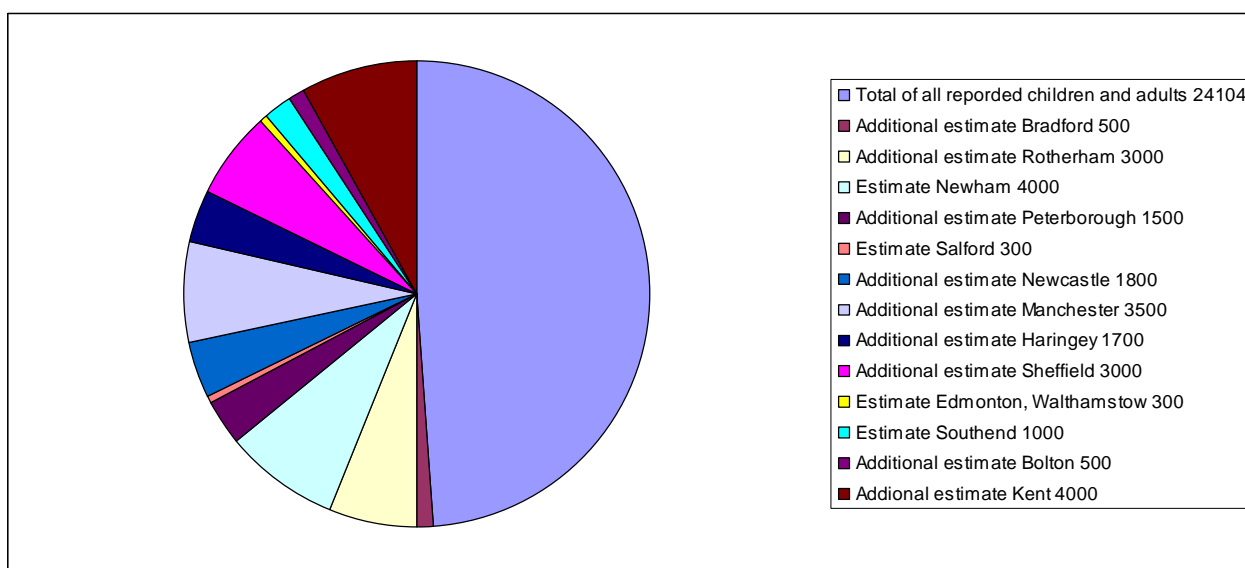
Early on in the survey, it was also recognised by front-line workers and practitioners working with A2 and A8 Roma communities in various areas of England, that there were possibly as many, if not more, Roma undetected as those registered with GPs, PCTs education and other services. Moreover, a number of local authorities acknowledged in their return that they were aware of more unregistered preschool and school-age Roma children than those registered. These unidentified groups comprised those Roma who had little or no contact with any services (or those who by choice did not ascribe as Roma), and therefore had not been recorded. The outcomes of personal interviews with Roma confirmed this as 34 of the 104 respondents (32.7%) had never been approached by, or been in contact with, local authority service providers in the area of social welfare benefits, 8 of the 104 respondents (7.7%) were approached by local authorities in the area of healthcare, ten respondents (9.6%) were approached by local authorities regarding housing and 16 (15.4%) were approached by local authorities regarding education.

During the course of the field research, the research team was able to collect additional data. This mainly involved areas where interviews with Roma respondents were held (London Haringey, Newham, Walthamstow and Edmonton; Southend-on-Sea, Peterborough, Newcastle, Manchester, Bolton, Sheffield, Rotherham, Bradford, Doncaster), and/or where personal interviews with statutory and non-statutory practitioners took place (London, Kent, Salford,

Peterborough, Newcastle, Manchester, Bolton, Sheffield, Rotherham, Bradford, Derby and Nottingham).

The local authorities themselves acknowledged that their figures were serious underestimates. In practice, this means that the total figure of 24,104 Roma children and adults in England reported by the 53 local authorities is an even more severe underestimation for the 104 local authorities, which returned the questionnaire, and also for all of the 151 local authorities to which the questionnaire was initially sent.

However, the figure increases substantially when additional estimates are included: these were provided by statutory practitioners working directly with Roma in those local authorities with which the research team was in personal contact. The figure increases even further when information and data provided by non-statutory practitioners and Roma respondents are included. The research team arrived at **a minimum figure of 49,204** after adding data obtained in the following 13 locations which were surveyed in greater detail: Bradford (500), Rotherham (3,000), Newham 4,000, Peterborough (1,500), Salford (300), Newcastle (1,800), Manchester (3,500), Haringey (1,700), Sheffield (3,000), Edmonton/Walthamstow (300), Southend-on-Sea (1,000), Bolton (500), Kent (4,000).



Graph 60: Total estimate of 49,204 A2 and A8 Roma children and adults in England is based on the official data provided by the 50 local authority areas, which recorded the number of either children only or children and adults, including additional estimates for 13 individual areas from local authorities and estimates gathered in the course of interviews and focus groups with practitioners and Roma took place

It is also interesting and important to compare the overall figure (which is based on data and estimates collated from the three aforementioned sources) with estimates provided by the Roma respondents in the course of interviews. The 104 Roma interviewees participating in the research believed that **on average, 2,329 Roma were living in their local areas**. Nationally, the Roma respondents reported that **the average estimate of the number of Roma living in England was 111,022**. These estimates were in the main referring to Roma from the same country of origin as the respondents. There were 2 Roma individuals who reported their families alone numbered well over 200 and 600 members respectively: all the family members had moved to and lived in England. There were also Romanian and Slovak Roma respondents who were able to count the number of all the people from their village, settlement and the neighbouring areas that they knew had left for England. Some of the Roma respondents who also knew Roma from other groups (i.e. Czech Roma socialising with Slovak, Polish, Romanian etc.) believed that **400,000 - 1,000,000 A2 and A8 Roma were living in England**. Some of the Roma respondents reported they had relatives in Scotland (Glasgow), Wales (Cardiff) and Northern Ireland (Belfast). However, in order to determine the actual size of Roma populations, it would be necessary to undertake a more in-depth UK wide research project.

An interesting point raised by most of the local authority respondents was that in the face of the current financial crisis, many non-Roma A2 and A8 nationals were returning to their home countries. This was not the case for the vast majority of Roma who clearly stated that they were intending to stay. They argued that if they did return, they would still effectively end up jobless due to high levels of discrimination against Roma in the labour market. This consideration was also reflected in their thinking about their children's future: access to mainstream education in England means that the children will have equal opportunities within the labour market in the future.

8.1 Ethnicity ascription and self-ascription

“Please note that all statistical answers are subject to significant under-reporting. The self-ascription of ethnicity as Gypsy Roma is sporadic in part due to admissions procedures but also due to individual choice.”

“The Service encourages families to ascribe their ethnicity and is currently carrying out research with families with a view to increasing ascription rates. Currently one hundred and thirteen children/young people are ascribed as Gypsy Roma (whose families are originally from Central and Eastern Europe).”

The issue of ethnicity ascription is intrinsically linked to the collection of ethnically disaggregated data: both go hand in hand and one cannot function without the other. This principle of mutual dependence and interconnectedness does not and cannot operate where there are high levels of ascription awareness among community members but there is a poor system of collecting/recording ethnically disaggregated data; or alternatively, where the system of collecting/recording ethnically disaggregated data is well developed but ethnicity ascription is not encouraged among community members.

Therefore, it is crucial that local authorities and schools undertake and effectively implement initiatives to encourage ethnic ascription by making Roma culture, history and identity part of mainstream school curricula and syllabi, as well as part of community life. Those local authorities who had hired Roma community members as home-school liaison workers and/or teaching assistants reported significant increases in the levels of ethnicity self-ascription by members of Roma community (see Section 9: *Good Practice*). The annual Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month provides an unique opportunity to present cultural information, positive images and raise the profile of both Roma and other GRT cultures and to demonstrate the outcomes of the local authorities and individual schools' work with GRT communities. At the same time, mainstream curricular and extracurricular initiatives should be implemented, monitored and evaluated on a continuous, ongoing basis, in line with the statutory duty placed on local authorities and schools to promote racial equality under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the subsequent duties to promote community cohesion.

“Funding streams and targeted support are frequently linked to particular groups of pupils who may feature as a priority in terms of educational funding programmes. Local authorities and schools that are not aware of the full range of pupils' backgrounds are ill placed to bid for and receive such additional funding.

More accurate ascription will attract increases in funding.”⁷²

Increased ethnic ascription can also benefit the local authorities and the schools, which are able to draw on ring-fenced funding for Roma (Gypsy and Traveller) pupils and this in turn further encourages ethnic ascription in ways demonstrated by a number of local authorities (see Section 10: *Good Practice*).

It is also extremely important that both local authorities and schools make effective and efficient use of the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census, improving their capacity to collect and record ethnically disaggregated data. To effectively facilitate this process, Roma community members, hired as community liaison workers by local authorities, are able to assist in a variety of ways, as reported by a number of local authorities (see Section 10: *Good Practice*).

In the course of the research, the positive impact of high quality collection of data and high ethnic ascription levels among Roma, and the interdependence of the two, were confirmed. This was clearly the case in those areas where the importance of ethnic ascription had been acknowledged and initiatives had been devised and implemented by schools and educational (and other) authorities.

⁷² The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People, DCSF, 2008, p.23

9. Challenges and needs relating to school and service provision to A2 and A8 Roma in England

Aside from asking the local authorities in England to provide data on Roma, the nationwide survey offered them a unique opportunity to share experience and voice some of the most significant needs and concerns by providing an insight into service provision to A2 and A8 Roma communities in their local authority areas.

9.1 Employment

Many practitioners recognised that particularly in the area of employment and income-based social welfare benefits, no visible effort had been made to accommodate A2 and A8 Roma and their dependents at either national or local level. Apart from the Gangmasters Licensing Authority and the Citizen Advice Bureau, two or three drop-in centres, a very limited number of NGOs, virtually no Roma led organisations or support groups and a few general welfare rights organisations, there was nowhere where Roma could obtain advice. It was also clear that for the majority of Roma, accessing even these services was difficult as signposting was not generally available.

9.1.1 Exploitation in the area of employment

Many statutory practitioners expressed their concerns about practices of exploitative employment agencies. Cases were reported of agencies taking advantage of their A2 and A8 employees, including Roma, whilst seemingly staying within the bounds of employment legislation. These agencies were said to often be charging large sums for completing paper work, arranging worker registration cards for A8 Roma, and even on occasions, finding or providing accommodation.

In extreme cases, the “clients” were reported to have been lodged in the agency’s premises; this meant staying with another family/person who acted as the owner of the agency, paying exorbitant rates for accommodation, or even being held captive. A number of cases were referred to where the client had been required to hand over all their personal documents, including ID and passport, enabling the

agency to set up a joint bank account. These individuals ended up working for the employment agency and yet were unable to receive their wages because there was no way that they could access this account.

It was also claimed that certain employers employed A8 citizens; including Roma, without contracts. Even in those cases where a contract had been signed between the employer and the employee, the employer would not uphold the basic commitments stemming from the contract, such as the amount the employee should be paid, holiday and sick pay, or would require people to work overtime without pay and dismiss them if they refused to work extended hours.

Numerous cases were reported of workers having paid agencies the fees associated with processing their WRS applications with the Home Office only to find out months, or in some cases years, later that their application had never been sent. This not only meant that the agency kept the fee; but more importantly, the authorities had not recorded an often-lengthy period of work. This period therefore would not count towards the workers' social welfare entitlements. It also meant that they had been working illegally without realising it.

Some practitioners also reported that even in cases where employment laws had actually been broken and serious exploitation had been taking place, the Roma workers at issue were reluctant to make an official complaint because they felt they would risk losing their jobs. In addition, it was believed that those who were prepared to complain tended to be uncertain of how to do so due to language difficulties, fear of further victimisation and the scarcity of advice centres, designated rights advisors or staff familiar with Roma issues. This seemed to be the case in the majority of local authority areas. On occasions, social workers said their office could not do anything since it was difficult to obtain testimonies from the victims of exploitation who feared further victimisation. Some of them also reported that the police had not been sensitised enough in this particular field.

9.2 Poverty and housing

'Roma have migrated to locations in Kent that already have high socio and economic deprivation (Gravesend, Shepway (Folkestone), Thanet and Dover). In these localities there is already pressure on access to public services. Roma are

living in short term private let accommodation and this is often of poor quality, there is overcrowding and significant mobility within the locality. Roma are in areas where there is pressure on school places and they are often expected to travel some distance to the school.”⁷³

“Some of the families have settled well but for a large number there are issues with accessing good and adequate accommodation with legal rents and rent agreements; families being moved every 6 months by the landlords so affecting work and school opportunities. Issues with receiving benefit they are entitled too, massive delays resulting in extreme poverty and critical food provision.”

“Many Roma families cannot claim free school meals (FSM) for their children even though their income levels can be far below income support levels. This not only has a potentially negative impact on the health and wellbeing of the children and young people but can also deprive a school of the extra funding allocated on the basis of levels of free school meals.”

“The main issue is the high levels of poverty for some Roma families. Ways to minimise these levels of poverty are needed if children and young people are not to suffer. The high rates of mobility of some Roma families provide additional challenges to schools. Additional funding to schools, with high numbers of Roma pupils and consequently high mobility, would assist in meeting these challenges.”

“In responding to these needs Cara actively tracks down and obtains tenancy agreements for families in rented accommodation. This gives more security for the whole family. Health visitors will routinely find doctors to register the family with.”

Housing was an area frequently mentioned by practitioners working with Roma. In the course of the research, it was often pointed out (and confirmed by the findings of the field research) that most A2 and A8 Roma lived in poor quality rental accommodation. Most of the Roma interviewees lived in areas previously inhabited by other BME communities, where other “new arrivals” had traditionally settled in the past. In general, these tended to be areas with lower

⁷³ Footnotes are not provided for direct quotes of local authorities’ responses in the survey

standards of housing. A number of local authority areas referred to attempts to “blend” all new arriving communities, including the Roma, with the semi- and well-established communities. In line with mainstream-type service provision, ultimately, since their arrival, the Roma have generally occupied the lowest position on the social ladder, this is particularly true in the area of housing.

Exploitation in housing, often linked to exploitation in employment, was an issue taken very seriously by practitioners working with Roma. The difficulty in tackling this issue lies in the fact that the situation of the majority of Central and Eastern European Roma tends to be much better in England if compared to their standard of living in their respective countries of origin. Even when they are being blatantly exploited here by landlords or employment agencies, their circumstances are better in relative terms. This results in Roma having very low expectations and also very high levels of tolerance of both exploitation and discrimination. The victims often do not take action as they fear losing their “better” life. Many of them have already lost much more.

The majority of practitioners were very aware of poverty being the major area of concern for the Roma. They reported the difficulties with which Roma obtained decent and adequate housing, and with the low incomes with which they were trying to cover the cost of essentials for their children at home and within the school setting, school uniforms and meals, transport costs to school etc. They also noted how difficult it was for many to find money to travel to and from work and to pay the fees to employment agencies. These practitioners were concerned because such heavy financial and social strains have implications for the whole family and also on their ability to comply with their statutory obligations. For example, it was argued that in cases where families were facing the greatest levels of poverty, the children were far less likely to attend school regularly, not only for the reasons cited above but also because the families immediate daily priorities lay elsewhere: mainly in securing their day-to-day livelihoods.

Free school meals (FSM) and subsidies for school uniforms were of major concern: they are granted to those pupils whose parents receive social assistance. Cases of A8 Roma where parents had just started work and applied for child benefit, tax credit and/or housing benefits, were among the topics most frequently

discussed by TESS staff. They were concerned that, whilst the parents were being assessed by the relevant authorities, their children were not entitled to financial support for FSM and school uniforms. In the case of A2 Roma, they had no eligibility to FSM or uniform grants. Some local authorities or individual schools were in a position to help these families, but not all and not in all cases.

The mobility of A2 and A8 Roma families was another major issue mentioned by practitioners. This type of mobility was believed to be related to the difficulty Roma experienced finding consistent employment and stable accommodation in England. In the most part, A8 Roma are reliant on temporary employment through agencies; a situation that on occasions as we have said previously, is very exploitative and in turn leads to them only being able to rent housing from unregistered landlords. This has left many families in a very vulnerable and exposed position, liable to eviction at any moment, paying unjustifiably high rents, living in sub-standard and often unsuitable houses, without any legal rental contracts. Often the houses are occupied by more than one family leading to severe overcrowding. There is anecdotal evidence of cases where family members have been so dependent on these landlords that young women were coerced into sexual relationships to prevent their families from being evicted; in other cases, families were asked to redecorate the whole house, after which the landlord evicted them.

Practitioners in various areas also claimed there were cultural differences between the new arriving Roma and other semi-established non-Roma communities which, at times, created tension locally. Behaviour, which may be perceived by some members of the Roma community as natural, may easily represent a threat to another community and vice versa. This was reportedly the case in Sheffield, Bradford, Peterborough and Manchester.

9.3 Community tensions and social isolation

“Initially there were issues between Roma children and their families and ethnic Polish children and families. The schools were excellent and supported all of the children and families to learn that we do not accept racial intolerance here. This has been very effective.”

“In one school an incident was noted where Roma parents/carers were subjected to anti-gypsy racist abuse by some other Eastern European parents when taking and collecting their children to and from school. This wasn’t noticed by school staff initially because of lack of knowledge of the home language. When this came to light the school intervened very promptly and decisively to end the problem.”

“Local teenage Roma boys tended to gather outside their houses to socialise, something the local Asian community had not been used to; teenage Roma girls would dress in clothes which were very different from how Asian girls tend to dress. As a result, teenage Asian boys started to approach the Roma girls which created a lot of community tension.”

The responses to the survey demonstrated that most local authorities thought Roma adults were generally isolated, mixing only with other Roma. Professionals stated that they were aware of heightened community tensions in some areas and some cases of racial harassment. In a number of locations, there were recorded incidents of anti-Roma behaviour in schools and amongst parents emanating from non-Roma coming from the same EU states. Cases were also reported of British non-GRT/BME pupils being hostile towards their “East European migrant classmates”.

The vast majority of practitioners thought that misunderstanding and prejudice stemmed from the Roma’s multiple cultural differences and usually tended to be the primary cause of many instances of community tensions. They believed these could be resolved by better communication and understanding between all the parties concerned.

In many areas, Roma were said to be witnessing not just animosity from individuals from the mainstream community; some also felt that there was sometimes prejudice and stereotypical expectations by some staff within both the statutory sector and other agencies and that this had also caused them some difficulties.

9.4 Cultural differences

“Prejudice, lack of recognition of ethnicity by schools, low school expectations, high parental expectations of the education system, lack of positive relationships between schools and parents resulting in poor communication may lie at the heart of some issues. Poor understanding of other educational systems/experiences by families and schools (e.g. children do not start school till 6/7 in home countries), may result in low academic experience, although that does not mean lack of commitment of the parent or involvement of the child.”

“Harassment occurs due to families trying to earn money in ways which are perceived by some as anti-social behaviour.”

“Schools also have a responsibility to treat a Roma application without fear and trepidation. The reputation of this group goes before them in terms of an expectation of poor attendance, poor behaviour and failure to ‘fit in’. This becomes a self fulfilling prophecy where expectations are negative from the start.”

The vast majority of professionals were concerned that the multifaceted cultural differences of most A2 and A8 Roma were often misunderstood not only by the wider society but also by some other practitioners who, on occasions, might be in contact with Roma communities. Not only were these cultural differences thought Roma-specific, but also Central/Eastern Europe-specific. The Romanian and Slovak Roma communities were frequently mentioned in connection with some of the complex barriers they were thought to be facing in England. Most practitioners tended to attribute these to the fact that members of such disadvantaged communities had come from areas of Romania and Slovakia where discrimination against Roma was so rampant that these communities were effectively 100% excluded from virtually all spheres of public life.

“It is very difficult to keep track of Romanian Roma who reside in Barking and Dagenham. They tend to live in private rented accommodation and do not contact the TES or other agency. They leave the area after a few months, often not accessing the services that have been arranged for them (e.g. school places). The families usually come to the attention of the Local Authority via health

services, crime or complaints from neighbours. The rented property soon becomes overcrowded and it is very difficult to know who is who. One difficulty in helping this group is that they are sometimes not entitled to benefits. They survive by selling scrap metal, selling the 'Big Issue' and cleaning windcreens at road junctions. A number of young mothers have been arrested for begging."

In one case in Manchester, the local Romanian Roma community was said to face a lot of animosity from both their British non-Roma neighbours who were accusing the Roma of "begging, stealing, and creating noise and rubbish" and also from the local social services and the police who perceived some of the Roma parents' behaviour as tantamount to child neglect. The local statutory and non-statutory practitioners familiar with the Romanian Roma community said it was necessary to explain to some of the less knowledgeable professionals that in some parts of Romania, it is usual that children run in the streets unattended and unaccompanied by their parents as they tend to be "raised by the community". They thought the same applied to leaving children at home on their own: in Romania, another adult would come in and make sure that the children are OK; in England, this tends to be seen as child neglect. The practitioners admitted that a lot of work needed to be done within the community to make them understand the local systems and their legal requirements and adhere to them in order not to risk prosecution. At the same time, they maintained that some of the actions that had been taken were unnecessarily ill-conceived, this included cases where children had been taken into care.

Cultural differences related to letting schools know that the children were ill: across Central and Eastern Europe, it is customary that when ill, children might be allowed to stay at home for a week or two and the parents might notify the school on the first day of absence. The practitioners argued that they had to make very clear to A2 and A8 Roma that if their children fell ill, they would have to notify the school on the first day and send a written explanation on the child's return to school, which should be as soon as he or she was well enough. Long periods or frequent bouts of absence due to illness would require a note from the child's GP. For parents who have low or non-existent levels of literacy, poor spoken English and no previous educational experience this has proved to be a major issue.

“EMTAS conducts initial language assessments of Roma children in first language (Romani) and English to ensure children are placed in class according to their ability. EMTAS enables teachers and teaching assistants to shadow EMTAS staff conducting assessments to build capacity in schools.”

A very significant cultural difference that was thought to be Roma specific was the fact that a high proportion of Roma children come from oral cultures and traditions (oracy). A considerable number of Roma children attending schools in England tend to be bi- or more often, trilingual: they are fluent in their mother tongue (Romani or the language spoken in their country of origin, as the case may be), the language spoken at home (the language spoken in their country of origin or Romani, as the case may be) and English. In some cases, where the family previously lived in, or near to the borders of, another European country (i.e. Germany, France, Hungary, Belgium, Spain, Italy), the child may speak additional languages. However, many practitioners believed such talented children may still face a number of obstacles at school as the focus is usually not on spoken languages. They thought their predominantly “oral/verbal knowledge” may be overshadowed by the English school system which lays a lot of emphasis on the written form. Also, a number of practitioners thought English instruction was focused on speaking/writing/counting in English: in some cases, a Roma child can count in other languages (i.e. Romani/Czech/Spanish or Romani/Hungarian/Romanian/German), but not in English.⁷⁴

“Schools would benefit from more bilingual staff in school – Romanian speakers sympathetic to Roma are an asset to schools.”

9.5 Multiagency working

“The Education Service for Travelling Children liaises with families, schools and Education Welfare to enter the children into school. There are regular meetings

⁷⁴ One Czech Roma adult interviewed in the course of the research two dialects of Romani, Hungarian, Romanian, Czech, Slovak, French and German. He had attended a segregated school from age 7 to 11 only and therefore he was only able to write in two of these eight languages. He was working in the Czech Republic as a TA in a Roma special school until he was hounded out for fighting openly for Roma rights. However, he has been unable to find a comparable post here due to his lack of written qualifications, in spite of the great need and his potential usefulness in the area in which he lives.

between the agencies concerned to transfer information and provide a more integrated service for the family concerned.”

“Greater interagency work is being promoted, particularly by the TES to encourage schools and other agencies that come in contact with families to refer children appropriately for education. Roma pupils are closely monitored and supported into and in education by the TES and many other agencies have come on board: as a result of in-service training, services are more responsive to the needs of Roma and aware of their vulnerability to social and educational exclusion.”

“We would like to establish a Roma project to work across education, health and other areas, which would also build the capacity of the Roma community to become more involved in these areas.”

“A schools Roma network needs to be established and developed by means of which key staff in schools and professionals from other agencies would share examples of good practice and to share ideas.’

Most of the practitioners who participated in the survey and/or took part in personal interviews were aware that in the main, provision tended to be patchy and needs were not being adequately met. At the same time, almost all the practitioners were working with hugely enlarged caseloads and most were frustrated that they, as education service employees were the only professionals with a more or less perceived remit to work with A2 and A8 Roma communities. Many of them claimed that they were effectively doing work that should be done by Social Services, Housing departments, Job Centre Plus etc. They were also concerned that where other agencies such as the police or youth offending teams had got involved, those professionals had very little or no knowledge about Roma communities or culture.

Whilst understanding and appreciating the importance of education to the successful settlement of A2 and A8 Roma families in England, in many areas, this is the only priority and no clear policy existed to service the needs of all members

of the communities and all age groups. It was recognised that there were some excellent and very knowledgeable practitioners in the areas of education and health working with Roma at the local level. However, a very high number of them reported that they felt that at the policy and strategic level, there was little recognition of the volume of work involved and the inadequacy of resources and capacity to meet even the most pressing needs of the Roma communities.

It was also of great concern that this service (TESS), at present the main service provider to the Roma community, was facing severe cuts in funding and a number of major staff reductions at a time when the need has never been as great. One very experienced TES manager stated clearly that if her service was not able to continue supporting the Roma in the way that they had tried to do thus far, there was no capacity anywhere else to take up the work. She felt that without the type of support that she and her team were able to offer, there would be repercussions both within schools and the Roma communities, and also in terms of community cohesion within the wider community generally.

“Unlike other new international arrivals, the Roma come as whole families. Therefore, they are a complete ‘package’, and that is also how social services should treat them. The case of Roma settling in England shows the real need for a truly holistic and multiagency approach, where the needs of the child are considered as relating to the overall wellbeing of the family. That, of course, includes the adults as well.”

There also tended to be too great a concentration on the needs of Roma children and young people at the cost of services for adults or families. In fact, almost all the work being done to support the Roma families and communities was aimed at addressing issues around education. Adult services for Roma communities were hard to find, as there were virtually none, especially in the field of employment. With the exception of heavily overstretched drop-in centres operated by a few local authorities or NGOs, Roma themselves would find it almost impossible to obtain any kind of advice or counselling on employment, an area crucial in terms of the wellbeing of the child and their performance at school.

The current structure of the Children’s services was seen as posing a fundamental problem in terms of its narrow focus on children. Many practitioners voiced their

concern that a truly holistic approach should focus on the parents' situation as well, or at least there has to be some model of cooperation between those authorities working with children and those working with adults. In addition, such a model should be in line with the Every Child Matters agenda. In some local authority areas, formal cross-agency cooperation had been started, involving other agencies, (PCT, social services, the police, youth offending teams etc.) this was happening in Manchester, Bradford, London and Bolton, to name but a few. Where this existed, it had clearly improved services and relieved the key education staff of some of their extra workload, allowing them to concentrate on improving educational inclusion and attainment. It had also improved services provided to adult community members.

9.6 Addressing the needs of Roma communities settled in England

A2 and A8 Roma communities have been moving to England to settle here; they are staying in spite of the fact that in the face of the current economic recession, most of their non-Roma compatriots are returning to their home countries. Without the necessary support and resources, the future looks difficult for the Roma communities. Going back to their countries of origin is not an option for most of them. Children that have grown up in Western Europe do not want to return to a place where they are treated as second-class citizens, excluded from the labour market and most public services. Many children have grown up speaking English at school and Romani at home; some do not speak or read and write in the native languages of their parents.

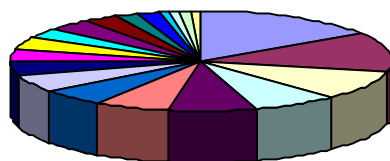
A large majority of local authorities said that until the situation of Roma communities was fully understood by decision makers at the local level, funding and capacity would continue to be insufficient to meet even the most urgent needs.

“It would be very beneficial if the Council were (as part of its equalities strategy) to fund an organisation such as the Roma Support Group to engage with the local Roma communities to assess numbers and needs and use the information to develop strategic solutions to issues such as housing, poverty and social exclusion.”

At present, in the vast majority of cases, training appeared to be restricted to face-to-face workers. Not all staff receive training and many felt that the quality and type of training they had received was inadequate. To this effect, statutory and non-statutory practitioners thought more awareness-raising seminars were urgently needed across all sectors and at all levels, including training and awareness raising for elected members.

Of the total of 104 local authorities that completed the questionnaire, 40 responded to the question asking what they would need to improve the service they provide and the lives of the Roma living in their local authority areas as follows:

- 17 Roma staff, TAs, outreach/liaison workers
- 14 Training for LA staff and members across the board
- 10 Resources for awareness raising seminars on Roma
- 8 Better interpreting and translation services
- 9 More advice on employment, training, access to housing and welfare rights/entitlements
- 7 Educational strategic and curriculum resources for pupils, either written or electronic or both
- 8 Ring-fenced funding for Roma support groups/school with high numbers of Roma
- 6 More multiagency working
- 5 Written materials, DVDs and welcome packs in home languages
- 4 Need for Roma specific health visitors, health education officers from the community
- 4 ESOL classes for adults
- 4 School uniforms, FSM and travel for Roma children
- 4 Roma early childhood and youth workers
- 3 National support network
- 2 Improve recognition of the community
- 2 Community cohesion workers/events
- 1 Increased consultation with Roma
- 1 All schools to have an inset day on Roma
- 1 Change to PLASC ethnic categorisations
- 1 Importance of good practice



9.7 Priorities of working with A2 and A8 Roma communities as expressed by local authorities

“Professional understanding of language backgrounds and implications for teaching and learning is a problem; training has been received but this is within a wider framework of working with minority ethnic children and young people and their families. There should be a directive to all local authorities to ensure training is received at all levels to increase awareness, reduce prejudice and improve practice.”

The list below prioritises what local authority representatives felt was necessary to improve the existing situation and to enable them to move forward. These priorities were reiterated at a joint meeting of representatives of Roma communities, local authorities and NGOs working with Roma, organised by European Dialogue and held on 28 July 2009 in York.

- More resources are needed to employ and train Roma staff such as TAs, outreach workers, home and school liaison workers. Also, local authorities need more accurate information around the conditions that apply when employing A2 staff, including Roma.
- Systematic, well signposted and continuous advice on employment, training, housing and welfare rights and entitlements is crucial.
- There is an urgent need for more Roma specific health visitors and health education, workers for and recruited if possible from the community.
- Awareness-raising seminars and trainings for local authority staff members are necessary in all areas of service provision. It is essential to inform wider society, including local senior managers and elected representatives by organising awareness-raising and cultural background training events.
- More ring-fenced funding should be made available for school with a high number of Roma pupils,
- Roma support groups, offering improved translation and interpreting services that genuinely reflect the backgrounds of Roma, and capacity building opportunities for community members.
- More cross and multiagency working is necessary.

- It is crucial to improve the way in which information on good practice in the field of provision for Roma is shared at the national level.
- Finally, the political implications of the movement of Roma to England cannot be allowed to affect the way the community is serviced. In particular, Roma children fleeing exclusion and persecution in their home countries have to be empowered and enabled to take their rightful place as EU citizens whilst preserving, respecting and valuing their heritage and culture. Local authorities cannot ignore this issue as some have appeared to do in the course of this study, in the hope that it will go away or just because it is politically ‘uncomfortable’.

10. Models of good practice

In the course of the research, the research team came across several local authority areas where some or most of the measures detailed in Section 9: *Challenges and needs relating to school and service provision to A2 and A8 Roma in England*, were already in operation. Good practice is instrumental in sharing knowledge and disseminating information on strategies that work effectively at the local level. Examples of good practice are very resource and cost effective as what operates well in one local authority area can be replicated in other areas or at the national level, at decreased cost. Some models of good practice are referred to below:

10.1 Traveller Education Support Service

The work of specifically designated units with a remit to work with GRT pupils, constituted at the local level as Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) or Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) teams,⁷⁵ is crucial in terms of working with the predominantly increasing/static populations of A2 and A8 Roma. Across the country, there are a number of models of such good practice in this area (London Boroughs of Newham/Redbridge, and Rotherham, Bradford,

⁷⁵ Or variations of the same service with different names

Sheffield, Peterborough and Birmingham).

“Following Bradford LEA's critical OfSTED inspection of 2000, Bradford Council decided to establish a strategic partnership for the provision of school-focused educational services. This involved the procurement of a direct service provider who would work in partnership with and under contract to the Council. The contract was awarded to Serco which took up its responsibilities in the contract under the name of Education Bradford in July 2001. The Education Service for New Communities and Travellers (part of Education Bradford), on a basis of need, provides support to Roma families living in the Bradford District regarding educational issues.”

10.2 Roma participation in service provision

The process that was thought to have the greatest impact on improving the local situation for Roma communities was the employment of Roma in supporting roles. This has enabled community members to feel safe, to understand better what is expected of them, what they are entitled to; it is also a visible sign of community acceptance. In several locations such as Rotherham, Haringey, Bradford and Bolton for example, it has helped to build trusting relationships between the communities and local authorities. In schools where there are Roma staff members (Rotherham, Bradford, Sheffield, Doncaster, Leeds, London and Kent), attendance, attainment and ascription were reported to have improved.

“The Service encourages families to ascribe their ethnicity and is currently carrying out research with families in Bradford with a view to increasing ascription rates. Currently one hundred and thirteen children/young people are ascribed as Gypsy Roma (whose families are originally from Central and Eastern Europe).”

“Welcome Centre accommodates newly arrived children and facilitates their admission to schools. Some schools have appointed Slovakian workers and the LA has just appointed three Roma Peripatetic Teaching Assistants to work in primary and secondary schools (from November 2008). The LA has also funded a drop in advice service at a local community centre, ESOL classes, and also a Roma

environmental health worker. A public education campaign has started to promote recycling, good neighbourliness, and proper waste management. The NHS is in the process of appointing a health worker to work with the Roma community. A borough coordinating group has been set up to share information, best practice, resolve problems, run seminars and conferences, liaise with partner agencies and Government departments. This reports to Rotherham Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership). Councillors have also undertaken a review of the LA's approach and support to children of Roma origin by the LA and schools."

"Many primary and secondary schools in Sheffield employ Slovak/Roma speaking Teaching assistants to support Roma children in the classroom. The LA has a 'Let's Double Our Numbers' campaign to recruit, train more BME school governors which will include the recruitment of GRT governors."

In Kent, Roma are increasingly becoming involved in the delivery of services: there are a number of Roma TAs or dinner ladies."

In areas where there are Roma health support workers, it has enabled PCTs to offer a wide range of services, particularly to women and their families. The employment of dedicated workers to support the community in local areas has noticeably improved community relations. All of these initiatives require funding and policy changes, but all were said to be cost effective in the long term and bring positive results to both the local authority and the Roma community.

Roma participation is also instrumental at the stage of formulating and tailoring provision to the needs of the community.

"There have been two recent events to consult with the Roma population on their specific needs. (Nov 2008 and Dec 2008) The results of the consultation during community events and any feedback from face to face meetings with families in the course of the work of Cara and the Traveller Education Service Birmingham are fed back to the relevant authorities in strategic meetings, it is an area where we are seeking to expand our commitment to involving families in making choices for their own lives. Currently Roma are volunteering their services to agencies

involved on a sessional basis, Traveller Education are in the process of appointing a Roma worker to assist the service with involving the community further and language difficulties faced by the families using the existing support services.”

“Roma groups have been consulted at times e.g. around housing needs and health needs. The outcomes of consultation have informed provision and allocation of resources by Rotherham Partnership”

“Consultation is done on a regular basis with families as part of the normal process – the Bolton Roma Support group was a result of this; also setting up of Roma dance troupe; providing access to EAL provision. The results are fed back through Migrant Workers agency group and other council groups when the opportunity arises – but has not been specifically requested or responded to.”

“EU Migrant Worker families including Roma (which make up the majority of families in Bradford) attended consultation events organised by a A8 Working Group (a multi-agency operational group) to inform policy and provision in the Bradford District. Individual agencies have also consulted different migrant worker groups. Education Bradford has previously employed a Roma interpreter and is in the process of employing a new Roma interpreter. A project funded primarily by the Primary Care Trust employs a Roma worker to assist in giving help and advice to families.”

10.3 Advice provision to Roma

At the local level, advice and counselling on employment, social welfare benefits, training, healthcare and housing, tend to be scarce or provided on a more *ad hoc* basis; however, in Sheffield,⁷⁶ efforts have been made by the local authority to increase counselling and advice provision to adult Roma in drop-in centres.

The Pakistan Advice Centre and Tinsley Advice Centre in Sheffield provide advice for Roma people on employment, benefits, immigration, education and housing through drop-in sessions staffed by Slovak and Polish speaking

⁷⁶ In 2008, a similar drop in centre was operated by the Traveller Gypsy Roma Education Team in London Haringey. Most of the clients were Romanian Roma.

personnel/interpreters. The PCT has also organised multiagency monthly drop-in sessions for Roma families. Additional ESOL classes for the local Roma families have been established to give them skills for employment.

Four full-time additional Family Advocacy Support Workers to be appointed in 2 Service Districts in Sheffield with high Roma population to deal with home visits, settling and signposting families, welfare advice, integration and participation in events. Information surgeries about the education system and related issues have been delivered for the local Roma community based at the Pakistan Advice Centre. An introductory session with Roma parents has been planned and delivered to ask them about their needs. A series of drop in sessions have been delivered by various specialist agencies.

“The Children Missing from Education Team has recruited a worker who speaks Polish and Slovak to ensure effective communication with the families to make sure they understand the school system and legal requirements. EMTAS and other agencies have linked with school based parent evening sessions with the local Roma community to inform them of services that are available in the area.”

10.4 Mainstreaming Roma identity

“The Education Service for New Communities and Travellers Bradford provides awareness raising sessions to schools, other education settings, students in local Colleges and workers in the wider Children’s Services. Evaluations of the sessions have been very positive.”

“I have endorsed a national Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month in June – the first will be in 2008. This will offer us all the chance to raise awareness and explore the history, culture and language of these communities, which is not usually included in the curriculum for all pupils. We can challenge myths, tackle prejudice and be in a position to offer a balanced debate about the issues. We will all be able to celebrate the richness that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities bring to our everyday lives through their many and varied academic and artistic achievements.”⁷⁷

⁷⁷ The Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People, DCSF, 2008, p. 6

The annual Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month, which was held for a second time in June 2009, is a government endorsed celebration of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers which offers a unique opportunity to make the history, culture, language(s) and identity of Roma part of mainstream culture.

As in Sheffield, there are other local authorities (Doncaster, Bolton, London...) which invite Roma bands and dance groups to participate in events organised in connection with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month or other extracurricular festivals.

“The local Roma dance groups perform in local festivals and events to promote inter-cultural understanding amongst communities.”

EMTAS Sheffield also organises and delivers the DCSF EAL Induction training courses for all teaching assistants to provide cultural and educational background of Roma children and young people.

The Bolton-based Community Cohesion & Traveller Education team has also been taking initiatives to mainstream Roma identity, culture and history into school curricula and syllabi. More resources have enabled them to introduce a wider approach by rolling the strategy out not only to immediate target groups, primary and secondary school pupils, but also to teachers, TAs, school administrators and other members of school staff.

10.5 Multiagency working

In a number of local authority areas (Bradford, Rotherham, Kent, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield, Bolton and London), several agencies were working with A2 and A8 Roma: these alliances tend to be powerful where schools, healthcare authorities, social services, the police, youth offending teams, other institutions such as the Gangmasters Licensing Authority and organisations from the voluntary sector, are brought together. They are even stronger where they are reinforced by well-functioning partnerships between local authorities and NGOs to which some work may be outsourced (i.e. the strong partnership between the Newham Traveller Education Service, the Children’s Society and the Roma Support Group).

“A 14-year-old girl with profound hearing loss arrived in Rotherham with a history of virtually no schooling and she could not speak or sign and had no hearing aids. Following good interagency co-operation, the girl was placed in a Unit for Hearing Impaired Children in a secondary school with a key worker and is wearing aids and attends regularly.”

“The LA has a multiagency group which looks specifically at Roma issues. All key services participate in this. One of the current tasks of the group, for example, is to make a grant submission to appoint a member of either the Slovak or Czech Roma communities to work across all agencies. Partners are keen to build skilled professional capacity from within the community. The group has also undertaken some stakeholder mapping.”

“The Roma in Rotherham are isolated but the local services are beginning to understand their needs and are tailoring services appropriately, e.g. recognising that the people speak Roma and are often not literate in any language and therefore require support e.g. to attend hospital appointments. Roma people increasingly trust some staff in the LA and are therefore able to ask for help (e.g. with deaf children). The Roma community has become recognised as an established now, having been settled within the Borough for more than two years and the LA and various partners have made a commitment to supporting the community. A wide ranging number of interventions have been made including: community mapping; needs analysis and research; drop in advice services; provision of safe and accessible community facilities; housing support and advice; multi-agency seminars and conferences; a review of education provision; health and social care provision. Elected members are taking an active interest in developments. The review of education conducted by Councillors will be reporting in the near future and will make recommendations on future services.”

“The LA has an Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) and a Children Missing from Education Team (CMET) who liaise with and support schools, education welfare officers and service district teams to ensure children missing from education are registered in school. CMET has a database, which is shared with other agencies. EMTAS, CMET have set up information

sharing with staff in the Service District Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST) to support Slovakian children in the first few weeks at school and to ensure Roma children are registered and supported in school. Database of privately rented properties to be shared with CYPD so that staff locally can check on any children in the properties where there is a new tenant EMTAS, MAST and CMET are working together in partnership with schools to provide a personalised support package for Roma families to ensure Roma children are registered and supported in schools. The package includes a home visit by a Slovak speaking support worker, support for the family to travel to school, accompanied admission/interview visit to school, short term support to settle the children in school, teaching resources for the school to support the children, initial language assessment and progress review meetings.”

10.6 Dissemination and sharing of information

Disseminating and sharing information is the most important aspect of empowering communities. At the local level, various initiatives have been undertaken by a number of local authorities, as well as other authorities such as the Gangmasters Licensing Authority. Newcastle, Bolton, Bradford, Rotherham, Sheffield and many other local authorities, have produced welcome packs containing basic vocabulary and information on education and other service provision (healthcare, community safety, forced evictions, workers' rights, policing standards) in written form (leaflets, handouts, booklets), but also as audio and video (DVDs), for speakers of Central and Eastern European languages, as well as Romani.

“A brief information leaflet about local services has been translated into Czech and distributed within streets at the centre of the Czech/Slovak area. The local Neighbourhood Management Group made a survey of households in summer 2008 in a small area where the Roma families are settling.”

“The Sheffield Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMTAS) has produced bilingual vocabulary booklets in the major EU languages and in particular Slovak Romany language for Roma children in school to learn English. Welcome booklets have been produced in the main EU languages Slovak, Czech, Lithuanian and Polish, explaining access to employment, benefits, education and

health services. These are available in audio for people who cannot read.”

“Training DVDs and associated programmes (EU Migrant Workers: some socio-economic factors (EU Accession Migrant Worker Families: A Learning Experience) to raise the awareness of staff of common issues have been developed. A DVD for parents and children/young people explaining the English education system has been developed. The DVD has voiceovers in Slovakian and Polish. Key Words and Phrases booklets for both staff and pupils have been developed in a variety of Central and Eastern European languages. List of school holidays in various Central and Eastern European languages. Posters have been translated into home languages and put up in work places, shops, health centres etc with Service contact details. A booklet 'Welcome to Bradford' has been produced by the A8 Working Group. The booklet outlines key features of life in Bradford.”

Sharing information is crucial not only for Roma, but also for local authorities in terms of exchanging experience on local practice and examples of good practice. A number of local authorities have been holding conferences, such as Bolton, Sheffield (2009 EMTAS Annual conference), Doncaster, and Newcastle, to name a few. The need for workshops at which practitioners from all walks of professional life meet to share experience was reiterated at the aforementioned joint meeting of representatives of Roma communities, local authorities and NGOs working with Roma, organised by European Dialogue and held on 28 July in York.

“The New Arrivals Seminar held in March 2008 was a special event organised by the Council for the local Slovakian Roma community. The community were able to talk about their experiences in Sheffield in terms of employment and education. They were able to express their concerns and needs. The Seminar resulted in the development of an Action Plan to support the needs of the Roma community in terms of health, employment, education and housing.”

10.7 Funding

Ring-fenced funding for Roma-related initiatives and projects, which tends to be devolved to schools, is crucial in terms of being able to keep some of the central Roma staff, increase their numbers, maintain and/or enhance and roll out ongoing activities benefiting Roma communities.

“A New to English Contingency Grant has been approved by the Bradford Schools Forum. This grant provides a one off payment of £500 to the first school that each New to English pupil is on roll at for a minimum of two months.”

“EMTAS Sheffield also provides part-time EAL support for EU migrant children to schools not in receipt of EMAG funding by EAL specialists and first language speakers.”

11. Conclusions

The Department for Children, Schools and Families has been committed to raising the attendance and achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. In spite of the fact that local authorities have been required to collect ethnically disaggregated data on Roma, this report shows that 51% of the 104 local authorities that participated in the survey have been collecting and recording data on Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, and 30.8% have been collecting and recording separate data on Roma. However, very few of these local authorities seem to have actually been doing so accurately. This has been happening in the face of an increased movement of Roma from Central and Eastern European countries to the UK.

Many of these Roma are now permanently settled in England. Despite the current economic recession, most Roma are staying and the vast majority of them intend to stay because this is where their children have grown up. Moreover, the adults do not want to go back to their home countries where they have virtually no access to public services, including employment.

Significant proportions of A2 and A8 Roma populations across England have been and are still growing. This, in turn, has increased the workload of most front-line practitioners working locally with A2 and A8 Roma. The lack of good quality data on Roma means that most service provision to Roma operates on underestimated and inadequate budgets and with very limited financial and human resources.

This is aggravated further by the fact that there is no coherent policy on Roma either at the local or national level. At the local level, there is a lot of flexibility in terms of decision-making processes, which impacts on service provision to Roma. This practice also relates to those schools who refuse to admit students of Roma heritage, in breach of their positive duty to remove unlawful discriminatory practices and promote race equality under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

There is confusion at the local level in terms of rights and entitlements relating to the employment and in-work and/or income-based social welfare benefits of most A2 and some A8 Roma. This affects the standard of service provision in many areas particularly the area of education. Delayed processes of granting social welfare benefits put at a disadvantage not only the parents but also threaten the wellbeing of children; in some cases, leading to extreme hardship and poverty.

Although in a number of local authority areas, multiagency working has been introduced in line with the Every Child Matters agenda, to date this has happened only to a limited extent. The wellbeing of children is predominantly reliant on the wellbeing of their parents/carers. Therefore, it follows that a child's chance to do well at school depends, to a high degree, on the family's financial situation and overall material security; both the above rely on the parents' having the opportunity to work. In a situation where the chances of a particular group of people to engage formally on the labour market are restricted, this cannot but have an adverse impact on the wellbeing of the children.

12. Recommendations

Based on the research findings and the outcomes of the survey, European Dialogue is making the following recommendations:

We recommend that

- A coherent policy on Roma be urgently devised at the national level.
- A nationally recognised contact department responsible for Roma issues be designated which would have within its remit issues pertaining to Roma children and adults, and overseeing, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the aforementioned coherent national policy on Roma. (This may or may not have other GRT **communities** within its remit.)⁷⁸
- All levels of government actively promote the rights of Roma in order to ensure that race and equality legislation is applied to them.
- All levels of government launch awareness-raising and information campaigns concerning the right to free movement and residence of all EU citizens in line with their duty to respect, protect and promote freedom of movement and residence, and make the information accessible to practitioners, as well as the general public.
- All levels of government allocate human and financial resources to support those public services to meet the needs of the Roma in areas such as health, education, housing, employment and income maintenance, ensuring that Roma are made aware of their legal rights.
- All levels of government commit human and financial resources to supporting the development and capacity of institutions and organisations working with Roma communities to protect, enhance and develop their employment, social and cultural rights.
- All levels of government monitor and evaluate service provision to Roma.

⁷⁸ Our brief in this study was to look at A2 and A8 Roma communities. However, we would fail in our obligation if we did not point out that many of the above recommendations also apply to UK Gypsies (and Travellers of Irish and UK origin.) All UK ethnic Gypsies came at some point in the past to this country as migrants. Of the more recent migration, we already are seeing Central/Eastern European Roma with British citizenship, whose parents came 20 years ago as asylum seekers, having children of their own in school. Realistically, the only difference is in the numbers of the current movement of Roma.

- Good quality educational and awareness-raising activities on Roma and Roma-related issues be compulsory for all local authority staff, police, health employees, NGOs working with Roma; and recommended for all locally elected representatives/officers.
- Training modules be devised in consultation with members of Roma communities to reflect the specific needs Roma are facing in the areas of employment, social welfare benefits, housing, healthcare and education.
- An efficient central or local system of monitoring private employment agencies and their performance be established, complementing the work of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority.
- Where sufficient evidence of exploitation is available, efficient safeguards be established to empower victims of exploitation to identify the perpetrators and facilitate appropriate sanctions.
- Cooperation between the police, local governments, civil society organisations and affected communities be improved and key agents and practitioners sensitised to the specific processes of criminal victimisation associated with exploitation.
- The manner in which ethnically disaggregated data on Roma is collected by local authorities and schools be made more effective and efficient.
- Based on the findings of the present report, an in-depth and thorough UK wide research study be commissioned by the DCSF and undertaken by an independent organisation to determine the actual size and needs of all Roma populations.

Annex

Case study 1

Haringey, September 2008

I visited an area of North London where I found that there was an established migrant community of Romanian Roma, in the truest sense of the word community. Three or four houses in the same street with another two in adjoining roads housed together as many as 100+ people, a large proportion being children, many of them under five. In addition to this, there are three other families, already established within five minutes walking distance of this conclave.

These families are a mix of newly arrived (since accession) and those who had remained here as former asylum seekers, a minority of whom are now UK citizens. All but a few had previously lived in the UK, having been returned or left voluntarily prior to accession. All these families come from a small area of Southwest Romania and all are at least distantly related. (There were in addition some tenants from outside the family.)

House 1 is the residence of a family consisting of two parents and five children (two at school and three under five). The mother is currently serving a custodial sentence for shop theft and has been told that she will be deported at the end of the sentence. This was her first offence since 2000 when she again had been arrested twice for shop theft. The family has lived in the UK since 1998: all the children were born here and have attended school regularly. The father has the right to work in the UK but failed to be given UK citizenship as he had returned to Romania for two weeks to attend the funeral of his brother during the period in which he was claiming asylum. The father has legal part-time employment and works for the minimum wage.

The house has three bedrooms, and two living rooms, one used as a bedroom. The three bedrooms are occupied by three other related families who pay towards the rent. A total of 17 people are living in the house, temporarily, and 11 are children. Of these children, seven are under school age, three are babies under 1 year. The people living here are all related. Only two people in this house are working although the others are currently looking for work or trying to arrange documents that will allow them to work.

I arranged during my visit for GP registration and school placements for all those who did not have it, as well as for ante-natal care for one woman who was pregnant. This household has no contact, other than through the local Traveller Education team, with any support system. All the children in the house with one exception were born in the UK. All those of school age had, when living previously in the UK, attended school and all who were returned or had returned voluntarily to Romania told me that their children had not been accepted into school in Romania for a variety of reasons.

I did not visit the other houses but spoke to some of the occupants and although the level of occupancy was lower, there were still concerns about overcrowding and the work/education situation seemed to be the same.

As the restricted accession regulations stand, very few of these families are entitled to statutory support other than urgent medical care and 5-18 education. These families are failing to make any contact with support services because of this, and this increases the vulnerability of the children in particular. It also introduces the risk of low level offending as they may resort to stealing food and so on just to survive. One woman said that if her husband did not manage to find a day's work that day or tomorrow, she would not be able to feed the family. As long as the restrictions are in place, this community will continue to slip through the net of the system that is in place to protect the most vulnerable.

The lack of any voluntary sector support is due in the main to lack of funding and also to the fact that the community fall into a separate group: they are not refugees, asylum seekers, nor new migrants in the true sense of the word. The few voluntary organisations that are trying to support these groups have little to offer, as referral on to those in a position to help is barred by the family's status. It is clear that many Romanian and Bulgarian Roma children and young people, and even many adults, are seriously at risk in this situation. There were once agencies working in this area of Tottenham, to which one could refer clients such as these; however, the status of the clients has changed and many of the agencies either do not now include this group in their remit or they no longer exist.

In addition, those families (usually young couples with children, that have been here for

some time and who often came into the UK some years ago as unaccompanied minor asylum seekers) who do still have support and are able to work and earn some money are sharing this with those that have nothing. They are usually living on or below the poverty line and by helping their less well-off relatives; they are effectively putting themselves and their children at risk.

One family with four children under 10 said that they had returned to their home in Romania to find it occupied (purchased by) another family, whilst in England they had continued to pay the rent on the accommodation; however, the landlord who had taken their money had sold the house and had gone to live abroad. They were unable to find any way of living there, so they had to return here. They told me that although things were bad in England, they were still better here than in Romania.

I was asked to help with the following:

- How to register a new born
- How to apply for a workers card
- How to take a driving test
- Making application for child benefit
- Registering with a GP
- Getting children into school
- Child with health and developmental problems
- Help with uniform, travel and school meals
- Housing for two young women who should be entitled to support and are technically homeless as the families they were living with have returned to Romania.
- Problems communicating with a solicitor
- Problems associated with the Mother that is in prison.
- Registering with a mid-wife and booking hospital ante-natal
- Complications with Romanian documentation
- Help with English courses

This was a huge amount of work, all of which was unexpected and most of which I was able to resolve. However had I not visited that day I doubt if they would have had an

alternative person who could or would have been willing to help. I am not aware of any organisations working in the geographical area that would be able to help these families other than maybe the CAB and the TES. There are also some issues about language: the level of English spoken amongst the group varied from adequate to poor or non-existent. Only two of the adults in the entire group had attended school after the age of ten.



Photo of Maria on her way to sell at the market (a 14 km. round trip). Taken in Cluj County, Romania by Heather Ureche, July 2008

Case study 2

North London, January 2009

Group one: three mothers

Are you settled here? How does living here compare to Romania?

Yes more or less, we don't have good homes or enough money but its OK and anyway better than home.

I will always feel more at home in Romania but the children have grown up here and they like it they don't like going home except for a couple of weeks to see family.

I like it here but home is there. It is not better but different, and I know people better there, how they live how they speak everything.

Its all about how you live, living was easier there but we had nothing, were going to get no better there, everywhere was racism and our children couldn't have any better life than we had, here there is a hope, not for us but for the future, for the children.

We still live all together we can't afford to do anything else, so we share things and help each other and argue together! Our children grow together just like at home. They do go off though when they are older they have other friends outside, from school and so on, that's different. They prefer it here, I think the boys they have more freedom.

The men they also are happier here they can at least get some work here. And for us things can be better here food is cheaper here and you can get good food everywhere. The doctors and the hospitals they are good here but if you need an operation then it's better in Romania because you can have family to look after you and bring food and so on, here they don't let you do this. And you understand things better there because they are speaking your language, you don't always understand here like that. But of course you need a lot of money there particularly if you are Roma, you have to buy everyone and bribes and medicine, everything. In Romania I never had any clothes and never, ever had new shoes for me or the children, often they had to go bare foot, here I wouldn't send the kids out with no shoes on their feet. This year I bought me a coat, the first coat I ever have had, ever.

Schools are the thing here, there is always the law, at home you can't get the children in the schools even though the law says they can go; here you can get them in but they have to stay until they are 16 that's a long time, our children are grown ups by then and they don't need to be in school, some want to be out working or getting married by the time they are 16 that's our way, so it's good they get an education but you can have too much if it.

Group 2: four fathers

It's hard here not the life we are used to, we couldn't often get work in Romania so if you do get work here it is hard to get into the way of working such long hours. We are better at being business men doing deals making money like that. Buying and selling. We have no education and so we can make more at business the jobs we get are just badly paid ones. We all want the same a house, some land, to go home to Romania and have a decent life.

Our sons they want the same and our daughters they want what all women have always wanted a rich husband and lots of children, a husband that treats them well and makes enough money. They don't want to study or get paid work, well not permanently anyway.

Its hard bringing up girls here its free for girls here, we don't like that our daughters have to stay close to their mothers. People think we are lazy, we are not we just have a different attitude to life I suppose, partly its because we don't have money so we don't have all the things that save work, women still have a lot to do, they have more children and they cook proper food, bread and soup and so on and we have rules about cleaning and who does what.

Our women work really hard harder than the men I dare say. We discuss things a lot talking thinking working out deals and how to make some money. We work with our heads, the women with their hands. We also like to be social, with family to share what we have, to see people. We like to be hospitable and if we have money we like to have a party, when we have a marriage or a christening we have to entertain everyone. If we don't have money we have to wait, we can't marry or baptise a child if we can't put on good show. It's a question of obligation, better to wait until you can do the thing well. My son was eight before I could afford to have him baptised.

We like the children to go to school but its difficult when we have to go away to work or to do business. We have to take them with us and the Schools don't like that and say we have to stay put. The other thing is, we want them to read and write and have some learning but they learn a lot in the high school that's going to be no use to them. They are better helping their parents make some money and learning the things that will help them later in life.

We are Gypsies and I suppose a lot is in the blood, we have our traditions and our rules, we move around trying to make the best of life, trying to better ourselves. I know we don't live on the road like we used to, we have a house a home, however poor it is or however rich! But we still travel. I have been to most countries in Europe at least once and of all of them this is the best, the kindest, we get less racism here than anywhere. But you are very strict here about how to behave, more than other places, you are very correct, this is hard for us.

Group 3: five daughters aged 8 to 16

I am going to be something; I go to school and have lots of friends from all over the world. Then I come home and I am Roma and have to help make bread or clean the floor,

wait on my brothers, look after the little ones I don't want this I want a job and my own money, a car and a nice man and just a few children, two or three. We come from Bucharest so it's not too bad, not like the village where my grandparents live, that's terrible.

I like school, like art and maths and history.

I am getting to old now for school my dad says I have to think about marriage and children and learn how to manage the things. We are the changing generation, half like our mothers and half like the other girls here. When I go back to visit my village I can't wait to get out again it is so poor and dirty, so poor and hard they laugh at us, at our clothes and our hair and say we are too proud.

I like to go back but would not ever want to live there again, my big sister she went back and got married now she has a baby and she all the time tries to get her husband to leave and come here or to Spain she is not very happy. She says her mother-in-law is terrible to her and treats her like a slave. She used to like to read and now she can't she isn't allowed to. My dad says we are going to go back to live there I am dreading it but I am only 13 so will have to go if they go.

If I could be anything, I would be:

A hairdresser

A doctor

A teacher

A mother and wife

A solicitor (they make lots of money)

Group 4: four sons aged 9 to 19

Its good here, its fun, you can have a good time and there are lots of different people. People treat you well here. I go to school but not always. I never lived in Romania but when we have been back to visit I don't like it much; I want to live here not there. I don't even speak Romanian very well, so it's hard.

School was good when I was younger but I am 15 now and it's a bit of a waste. I like Mechanics though and Maths and Computer studies I have learnt a lot about computers I would like to work with them one day. I would like to go to college to learn about computers or car mechanics but because I shan't get the grades in my GCSE, I don't reckon they will take me.

I love school I have just moved from the juniors it's really good and there are different subjects I like French, Maths and computers.

I didn't like school at all I liked to go out with my dad and my uncles and make some money, I was always missing days and they got really mad so I just left. That was when I was about 15. I don't want to get married for years, I want to make some money and get a house, not in Romania though, no way will I go and live there, ever! My dad wants to go back and buy a house, I shall stay here with family or go to Spain with my uncle. I mend cars for money, I am quite good at it, I do all the family's cars and even some neighbours ask me to do things.

If I could be anything, I would be:

Rich, a businessman

Own a computer shop

A teacher or a worker with computers

A car mechanic, own my own repair shop

When I had finished I asked the parents what they thought, without disclosing which child had said what. They were surprised, particularly the fathers. They said that they were not likely to change their plans though! They did all admit that it must be hard for their children to live in two worlds the way that they do. However, in the end they all said that tradition and family were the most important things and felt that they knew what was best for their children.

Case study 3

Birmingham/ Glasgow

Mrs. V is aged 18, married with two children and lives in Birmingham. She has no previous convictions, has worked on and off, which she can prove. She is in England legally and has an accession worker registration card.

In early December she was arrested on suspicion of shop theft in Worcestershire. She was taken to court but the case was not proceeded with (No Further Action). On leaving court, she was re-arrested as she was deemed to be wanted by police in Stirling Scotland. She was taken to Glasgow, held in custody for three days and appeared in court and asked to plead. She had the duty solicitor with her, and an English solicitor paid for by the family, who liaised with the solicitor in Scotland.

The Sheriff refused bail on the grounds that as she was an *“itinerant traveller”* who *“could not prove her residency to his satisfaction and was likely to not return to court”*.

She was told that if she pleaded guilty she would most likely get a small fine and be released; if she pleaded not-guilty she would be retained in custody until the full hearing. She insisted that she was not guilty, had never been in Scotland before and had committed no offence. She was therefore remanded until December 29th, 2008. On December 29th, the court was offered full proof of residence, her husband and father were present in court and they offered to stand surety but again bail was refused and she was remanded, this time to appear on January 22nd.

This young woman neither reads nor writes, she did not know her full address and was not legally married, all of which formed the basis of the reasons given by the Sheriff for refusing bail. She will have been in custody for 7 weeks on January 22nd. The court would not hear any expert evidence regarding her status and/or reliability.

Case study 4

Rotherham, November 2008

A short ad hoc focus group with six girls and two boys from four families (one Czech and two Slovak). All were of secondary age and all been here in the UK for less than one year.

They loved the Welcome centre, all of them had all been at school in their home countries *and had, they said, learned almost nothing as they stayed where they were placed at the back of the class and did nothing. The lessons were boring and held no relevance for them.* One Slovak girl said that *because she was Roma the teacher had made no effort to help her.*

It was different here, they were excited and engaged they said with the things they did at the centre. They were in a widely diverse group and yet did not seem to see the differences. (On the day of my visit they were learning about Divali and dressing up and dancing in Asian costumes and to Asian music, you noticed that with the shawls tied round their waists and dancing in their own way they were demonstrating traditional Romani dance which had much in common with the Indian and Pakistani dancing being done by the teacher and the ethnic Asian children in the group, it was however somewhat more exuberant and they were very, very enthusiastic.)

The centre has developed many strategies to teach language, literacy and life skills in such an engaging way that the group members, even the ones that had only recently arrived were comfortable talking to me and had some ability to speak English. At home they spoke in a mixture of Czech/Slovak and Romani with their families, during the group they spoke mainly in Czech/Slovak but broke sometimes into Romani. (the Slovak dialect seemed more akin to the Romanian /Hungarian Dialect than that of the Czech children but they were both understandable.) (It struck me that there was a subtle difference between the two groups; the Czech children were better dressed, more serious and engaged in the conversation more than the Slovak children who tended to make asides and joke to each other.)

We talked about why they should go to school and the importance of education as a way of ensuring their futures. *One said she had not thought about what career she wanted but*

knew that she wanted to finish school and get training and a job. One said that she wanted to be a teacher; one thought she would like to be a doctor one a waitress. All their parents had had some education and all said that their parents were keen for them to attend school until they were at least 16 or 17. One of the Czech Girls said that her mother had been to a professional school and left with a certificate of school completion and a qualification as a flower arranger, this was the only parent who had completed basic education.

When asked about marriage they all said that they would not want to marry until they had finished their education and I asked if their parents wanted them to leave school and get married how they would react. The Czech young woman said that her parents would never do this, one of the Slovak girls said that it would be her Father who might make this decision and she said if he wanted her to leave school then she would refuse. She was here now and she wanted a good job so she needed to go to school and stay single. (She actually said; he can try to marry me off but it won't work.)

The boys were less committed and less engaged, however they were younger than the girls.

They asked why I was asking them these questions, when I explained they were surprised that there were so many Roma in this country. They also had no idea that the English Gypsy community had problems or that the Roma here had come many years ago from central and Eastern Europe. They seemed interested and were talking about it after the group finished and they went back to class.

There was a difference in the attitudes between the Czech students and those from Slovakia. The Czech children were more serious and thoughtful in what they said and in their responses. They all came from large families (4 plus children).

When asked how they would feel about wearing school uniform and following strange new rules, they said it would take some getting used to but they had to be the same as all the other children.

They also said that the teachers here were very much more supportive and easy to learn from and that they made the lessons fun and interesting for them.

Two of the older Slovak girls *said that they would prefer to stay at the centre as they were worried about going to a bigger school where there was no interpreter if they got stuck.*

All the children had a very high attendance record at the centre.

There were some concerns from the staff that moving to real school would be disruptive and that although they were happy at the centre and doing well they may have been better going straight in to the real school setting but with a good support network around them. The staff also emphasised the need to ensure that the staff in schools understood the culture and also the problems that the newly arrived Roma children and families may face in the school setting.



Roma family at home in the UK. Taken by Heather Ureche, August 2007

Case study 5

Stop and verify

During the month of October 2008, we have been made aware of a significant number of Roma, mostly Romanian but also Slovak and Bulgarian, being stopped, and either asked for proof of identity and/or searched and questioned, taken to police stations, sometimes charged with a variety of offences and taken to court. Some have had sums of money confiscated. Two solicitors said that they have dealt with a number (20) of these cases in the last two months. These actions are taking place mainly in international travel centres, London Airports, The Eurostar terminal, Victoria Coach station and they are not all travellers, some are there only to meet arrivals.

October 2008: Sunday afternoon at St Pancras station

Two Romanian Roma young people, a male aged 15 and female relative aged 19 travelling by themselves to France. This couple had been in the UK visiting family for two weeks having arrived on a flight from Romania into Heathrow. They were on their way to France to visit the boy's Mother. They were boarding the train when police asked for ID and also asked how much money they had with them. Having told the officers who they were, where they had been and where they were going, declared the money they had with them their bags were then searched and an envelope was opened which contained 3000 euros which had been given to them in Romania by the boy's Father to take to his mother. Neither the girl who was carrying the envelope nor the boy knew what was in the envelope, and had not considered mentioning it as it was not theirs. The police officers were suspicious because they had not mentioned it and the young people by now scared had difficulty explaining where the money had come from other than saying that they had been given it by his Father. They were taken from the train and taken to a local police station for further questioning. The police claimed that they suspected that the money was proceeds of crime as they could not prove where they had got it.

When I rang the police, told them that I had spoken to the family, explained where the money came from and what it was for, offered a copy of the father's bank statement to show the withdrawal, the couple were released and the money returned. They had by this forfeited their Eurostar tickets and had to travel the next day. The delay cost them both the price of the lost tickets an increased price of the new ones, their stress and my entire Sunday afternoon. Had I not been available they would have ended up in court the next

day which is what they were told at the police station. The young woman told me that other passengers had their passports checked in the normal way but as far as she had observed they were not asked about where they had been, where they were travelling to or how much money they had on them.

I have travelled many times on Eurostar and have never been asked to identify myself other than at passport control, and never have I been asked to declare how much money I am carrying when travelling within Europe.

All the other 14 or so cases are similar; at least half have been non-travellers going to pick up friends or family members. Most have had the cash taken from them, some released with warnings or (NFA) but all have had to fight to get their money back.

Sunday: Stanstead Airport

A Roma man went to Stanstead Airport to collect his parents who were arriving from Bucharest, he was stopped as he was waiting at arrivals, asked for ID and his details were checked, he was told he was wanted by police in both Barnsley and London and he was arrested. He was taken to Barnsley and interviewed about a suspected shop theft and then released (NFA) as he did not match the CCTV footage. He was then transferred to Haringey and interviewed about an un-paid driving fine. He had been held in total for four days and eventually he was released on payment of the outstanding fine.

At the time this man was stopped at Heathrow the police did not know about this outstanding fine. They had no reason to think he was wanted by anyone for anything, He said that a number of other people who were obviously Roma were also stopped at the airport whilst he was there but others, passengers and those waiting for visitors, did not seem to being questioned in the same way.

The obvious conclusion is that Roma are being targeted. Sections 1 and 2 of the Police and criminal Evidence Act 1984 (revised from 26 October 2008) PACE make the conditions of stop and search very plain and such targeting is clearly outside these regulations. However this would have to be tested legally and there may be other overriding legislation that could be being employed in this instance. I have contacted the relevant police authorities to ask if they are aware of any such current operation involving Roma from European member states travelling within the Europe and they have said they

have no knowledge of any such operation targeting any one group of travellers.

Case study 6

Newcastle, October 2008

Meeting with health professionals and local safeguarding team

The area covered by the PCT is a typical inner city area, with all its attendant problems. There had been a lot of structural work on local housing stock but there are still high rise flats in a poor state of repair and where there are many asylum seekers and migrants living.

The main issues raised by the team included:

- Safeguarding, child neglect
- Female health, Hepatitis B, TB, neglected, untreated illness, poor nutrition of mothers and STDs.
- Early pregnancy
- Overcrowding (housing)
- Separated or unrelated children
- Possible trafficking (Police led concern)
- Lack of financial stability (particularly amongst Roma from Romania)
- Low levels of engagement with services (particularly Romanians)
- The lack of training and knowledge of cultural issues amongst the practitioners
- Lack of interpreters

Members of the team reported that the most frequent counties of origin of the local Roma were Romania, Slovakia and Czech Republic (and the former Yugoslav states). Among the local Roma, there is higher than average number of them who have UK citizenship/refugee status: many have lived there for 8-12 years. The participants made it clear that it is local policy to treat these groups as economic migrants when, in their view, it would be more appropriate to treat them as refugees as their needs are more aligned to refugees than migrant workers and their recent history is the same. They believed that the most challenging of all were probably the Romanian community due to the multiple barriers they are facing.

There is a lot of support available but the communities either do not want to or do not understand how to access it. Newcastle does seem to have an unusually flexible and innovative attitude to solving problems of community cohesion and inclusion. The people interviewed were keen to do everything possible to support these communities and were driven by real interest and concern for the wellbeing of the Roma. Not once was there any mention of the Roma having or causing difficulties with other communities. All the professionals had a realistic but very positive attitude towards the communities.

The participants were concerned by attitudes of some other professionals who they felt did not have enough information to make some of the decisions that either had already been made or would have eventually to be made. They had also concluded that negative media coverage had influenced to a far too great extent the way the Roma communities were generally judged, unfairly.

There were specific problems facing different groups; both the Romanian and the Slovak Roma were often living in very unsafe and overcrowded conditions. School attendance amongst some groups, particularly plus 11, was said to be an issue. Early pregnancy (13+) was also an issue, not wide-spread but present. A2 Roma with no right to work were definitely worse off in all respects and they were also the most difficult to reach.

Conversations with Roma from Newcastle

Newcastle, October 2008

Three adult members of UK/Slovak family (mother, father and the eldest daughter)

The family is one of five children plus parents, a son-in-law and two brothers and their wives and children; an extended family of 17 people living in a standard Victorian 3 bed terrace house rented from a housing association. Only the original family have UK citizenship. They get working tax credit and child benefit; most adult males work on construction sites, the women sell *The Big Issue* as do a couple of the men from time to time. The eldest daughter is 16 and expecting her first child. The family did live for a time in London and were moved to Newcastle before getting status; they have lived here for 8 years. They have friends and family in London, Manchester and Birmingham.

The mother has complex health problems and receives regular treatment, the daughter visits the GP for ante-natal care but not with any great enthusiasm. She attended school

both in London and Newcastle, speaks very good English and Romani but (she says) poor Slovakian. She stopped attending school regularly at about 14 and they received frequent visits from the Education service about this. Three of the other children are all still at school and the father said they are doing well.

The family are thinking about returning to Slovakia for the first time to visit. They also think about trying to move back to London as work is hard to find in Newcastle.

They feel that the major difference is the way that they are treated, but there are differences even here. The people on the street in London stared at them; here in Newcastle people do not notice them except some times when they start to speak, when they are often asked if they are Polish. Professionals in Newcastle treat them much better than those in London. They felt that the professionals here in Newcastle have more understanding and more respect for them.

In Slovakia they had always been treated as the lowest class, and they said that they faced racism every day: the people on the streets and the professional people all of them were against the Roma. They said that they knew that there were laws to give Roma people rights but they were often ignored.

There were some people working to help the Roma in London, organisations that they had heard about but they have not heard of such things in Newcastle. They still feel that they are better off here taking everything into consideration

Group of five Slovak and Romanian Roma men aged 18 to 32

They are working but do not know how long for, they have heard about the credit crunch and think that it may affect work for migrants, particularly for those without papers and particularly in places outside London like Newcastle. Of the five of them, three are UK Roma having been given citizenship under the family amnesty; the other two have arrived from Romania since accession and are related to the other Romanians. They live in the same street, their families mix and they speak understandable English, some better than others. Between them, they have 16 children and all but two were born in the UK. Their houses are rented from a housing association through the local housing department. All the aged 5+ children are at school and all are aged under 14. They are worried that if they lose their jobs, only three have worked long enough or have the right to claim

benefits, which will put a strain on their finances as they do not have anything saved. Two of them have a car and UK licences. One of their wives (Romanian) works part time as an interpreter, she is not qualified and only reads and writes a little but they are so short or interpreters in Newcastle that she does get some work, mostly for Solicitors or private work paid for by other Roma.

The UK citizens get child benefit and two get working tax credit and housing benefit. All have obligations to families at home. They are very unhappy about the lack of change and progress in their homelands, particularly as it affects Roma. They all said that racism still is everywhere, and it is hard to get your children into school, get decent housing and good free health care. They are not afraid of work but feel it is right that they be paid a decent wage that allows them to provide for their families.

All of them liked Newcastle and although they had all lived for at least a short time in London, all preferred it here. They felt people were friendly and said that professionals were very helpful and it was easy to get help if you needed it.

The older men (one Romanian and one Slovak) said that they were pleased with the schools, they pointed out that theirs were the first generation to be able to read and write in English and other languages. They both had boys at secondary school and both hoped that they would finish school and get GCSE passes; however, they also worry about their daughters going to secondary school and the question of boys, sex education and social and peer pressures. They said and all agreed that their children were Roma first at home and English first outside. The Slovak father said that as he and his wife did not speak good Slovakian, his children spoke only a word or two. The Romanian father also said his children spoke little Romanian, in fact he said that his son's French sounded better than his Romanian.

They were pleased that the boys were learning practical things at school and that they could all use computers and play sports. One father said he wished he had been able to learn the music and so on that his children can now do when he had been a child.

Case study 7

Newcastle, 16th May 2009

The local community group of Czech Roma called Neve Roma (New Roma) and Roma Northeast organised the first conference on Roma community health awareness in conjunction with the local Primary Care Trust. Representatives of Newcastle City Council and the Children's services gave presentations to an audience of around 200 adult Roma, primarily Czech and some Slovak, and approximately as many children. It was a major achievement given the fact that the event took place on Saturday.



The event was attended by local decision makers, senior staff and elected representatives, who for the first time got a more accurate idea of the potential size and culture of *one* of Newcastle's Roma communities. The event also brought together representatives and employees of some of the key service provider, such as the Police, Youth Services, Benwell Neighbourhoods Management Initiative, the local TESS, and the representatives of the voluntary sector such as Newcastle Links. Local elected representatives and senior managers from the local authority, head teachers and chair of the PCT. All attended and many of them met the community for the first time.

The event manifested very good joint working between the two Roma organisations. There was a good atmosphere in the team. The community was well organised and had pulled together a very informative, enjoyable and positive event which had a cohesive and uniting social side to it. The women from the community had cooked Czech Roma

specialities and a Roma music band gave an outstanding performance. Many of the speakers and professionals present shared with the research team that they were impressed by the family atmosphere and the sense of community.

The two Roma organisations are now moving on as one joined up NGO called Jekhetane Roma (Roma Together), and have been promised an office with an employed member of staff. This shows that very positive developments have taken place in Newcastle. In the last eight months, the research team have observed that the community has gone from virtually no activity or knowledge in around Roma issues (except amongst small isolated groups of people) to the organisation of the event, cross community participation, outside awareness growing and an acceptance of the permanency of the community in the city.

Case study 8

Bradford, February 2009

While visiting Bradford, mostly Slovak Roma families were encountered by the research team. In one instance they were a large family, 12 children, recently arrived, well organised and with three family members working (registered). They had contacts and family members in Bradford which had made their decision of where to settle easy. As yet, they had not received any benefits; this was a common complaint that the benefits agency was slow and disorganised, lost documents and claimed not to have received many communications.

The other families had been in England for longer, 3-7 years, and they had had many problems. The greatest difficulties were:

- Racism from the Asian community, often violent and threatening
- Poor quality and expensive housing, usually with no contracts and rented from Asian landlords
- Lack of continuous employment; working on/off for agencies and therefore not qualifying for benefits
- Lack of funds for school, lunches, uniforms and outings, which had a clear effect on children's attendance

The agencies working with the community directly had a good grasp of the situation and a good relationship but in general at a strategic level the number of families was not known and the specific problems of families was only picked up by a very overworked Education Bradford and the local community liaison workers. The inter-ethnic problems were quite serious and had the potential to get much worse. There were also difficulties getting newcomers into school, particularly special schools as there were long waiting lists at some schools, and there were some others that were not happy to take the children. There were also a noted substantial number of children with hearing problems within the Slovak Roma Community.

Case study 9

Manchester, April 2009

The research team visited Romanian Roma in two areas, Gorton and Longsight (Levenshulme). There were two communities one particularly linked with a Local Pentecostal church run by a Roma pastor. The Roma encountered during the field research all came from the Romanian County of Ialomita, roughly from the areas surrounding the towns of Fitesti and Tanderai and many of them were members of the same extended families. These Roma are known collectively as “Tandereni”. This is historically a very poor area of the country but one that has a large Roma population. The area is not far from both the seaside and ports of the Black Sea and also the capital Bucharest.

There has been a rise in the wealth of the Roma in this area since 1989 but recent migration has brought with it a variety of social problems; children being left with grand parents, inter community gang wars, suggestions of widespread organised crime and a widening wealth gap between those with family members abroad and those who have remained behind.

The majority of the Roma interviewed in Manchester were living in some of the best housing and social conditions of all the Romanian Roma mapped during this study. Not only were the physical conditions better but the community structure is very much more developed. In some areas, there were three or four streets where almost every house was occupied by Roma families, the children playing on the street were mostly Roma, the

men were meeting and doing business and the women sharing household duties and childcare. There was no obvious extreme hardship or deprivation as observed in other areas. Nor was there any sign of extensive overcrowding in the homes such as observed in other areas.

However, the drop out rate in schools for teenage girls was said to be high, the proportion of young people that were on the books of the Youth Offending team was also above average. School attendance is still an issue and there is a shortage of places in all three schools that serve this community. Parents were unwilling to send their children to other schools preferring to wait for places at the local ones, even if that took a long time to materialise.

The women were married very young within this group, most were parents at 16 or 17 and the families were large. Mothers confiding to us that the church did not condone any form of birth control. The roles of the women were in the main very restricted to those of traditional culture but they were also expected to contribute to the family businesses as they were often themselves registered as self employed, many selling the Big Issue. Each member household contributed 1/10 of their total income to the church.

Although the families were well settled here one or two thought that if they had made a decent living, eventually they may return to live in Romania once the children had left school.

In spite of the declarations made during interviews that since joining the church, they had turned away from previous criminality such as shoplifting, begging, theft and credit card fraud, professionals said that such offences were still very much an issue.

The church played a large part in the lives of the community and the Romanian Roma pastor the research team encountered during the field research spoke on behalf of the whole community from the position of a community leader. His word was the guiding factor in the lives of most community members.

Case study 10

Vsetín, Czech Republic/Peterborough, summer 2008

A Czech barrister based near the city of Ostrava, the Czech Republic, informed the research team in the summer of 2008 that the plaintiffs of a very high profile case of forcible eviction had moved to England. This was later confirmed by Mr. K who suggested that the family were based in Peterborough.

The case dates back to November 2006 when the local authority in the East Moravian town of Vsetín (the Zlín region, Czech Republic), headed by the then Mayor (and later the Minister for Regional Development and Deputy Prime Minister) Čunek, had forcibly evicted a group of Roma from their housing in a town-owned property. As the case was still going on in summer 2008, Mr K made it clear that at that stage, he preferred not to be interviewed as the family wanted to be left alone.

Below follows an account of what this particular family had gone through to capture the moved fates of some of the Czech Roma currently settled in England. In the summer of 2007, the case was brought to the attention of the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing.

The K family were among approximately 100 persons who were forcibly expelled not only from the town of Vsetín, but who were actually made to leave the Zlín region. On 13 October 2006, the then Mayor Čunek had those Romani families, whom he called “inadaptable” and “problematic”, transported into the Olomouc region in the middle of the night. Some of the families were expelled to places as far as 230 kilometres from Vsetín, on the Czech/Polish border.

Prior to what some of the victims called “yet another transport”, men, women and children had been allegedly separated: children, accompanied by men, were separated from their mothers. They had not eaten when they were forced to start the journey on a coach as electricity supplies had been cut off on the morning of the same day, making it impossible to cook anything. Mayor Čunek claimed the families had “reached an agreement with the town of Vsetín”, which had purchased derelict agricultural properties in isolated areas throughout the neighbouring Olomouc region and was reselling them –

sight unseen – to the families, who were also loaned the money for purchasing these properties by the town of Vsetín.



In the middle of the night, the families were summarily expelled from transport in front of various dilapidated buildings, some of which were actually barns or stables.



Photos of the dilapidated barn in Stará Červená Voda taken by Lucie Fremlová in May 2007

Most of the people expelled from Vsetín ended up in extremely substandard or otherwise

tenuous housing arrangements in remote or deserted parts of the Jeseníky mountains area of northern Czech Republic. The region already suffers high unemployment, so the placement of 100 more people in the area put an even greater strain on regional resources.

The rest of the original inhabitants of the building slated for demolition in the centre of Vsetín, which had housed 42 families, were relocated into metal containers built on a piece of land on the outskirts of the town that had been previously polluted by heavy metals. In October 2006, the town completed the installation of these metal buildings, which provided 36 flats in total. The municipality of Vsetín held a grand opening for the “new Roma ghetto”, as it was referred to in the media, which more than 40 municipal representatives from towns all over the Czech Republic attended, praising the project to the press as a model one. The town was reported to have designed the buildings “especially for inadaptable citizens.” Vsetín Mayor Čunek stated that there was a need to build flats in isolated places for what he termed “problematic”, “inadaptable Roma” so they would not come into contact with the “adaptable” (and/or non-Roma) residents, and that these flats would be assigned to (Romani) tenants who met their “civic obligations” by paying their rent regularly. He was also quoted as saying that “we have to separate those who are inadaptable so they do not bother decent citizens.” The tenants received month-to-month contracts and the mayor reportedly stated that anyone with whom the contract had to be terminated would be immediately put out in the street.

Subsequently, the new Vsetín Mayor was resisting recommendations by the Czech Public Defender of Rights (Ombudsman), whose office reviewed the deportation of the families from Vsetin. The mayor reportedly stated that the Ombudsman did not know anything about social policy. She insisted that the decision of her predecessor, Mayor Čunek, to evict the Romani families was the correct one. In her opinion, the Roma should have been evicted onto the streets instead of being offered “alternative housing”.

Case Study 11

Southend-on-Sea, August 2008

The G family has lived in England since 1999. The family sought asylum in the UK after the father had been brutally attacked in a racially motivated assault by neo-Nazis in the North Moravian city of Ostrava, the Czech Republic. He suffered injuries to the head, which were so serious that he almost died. The perpetrators were never found and punished.

After several months of recovery, the family, which now consists of the two parents and two daughters, decided to seek asylum in England. They, as Roma, did not feel safe in the Czech Republic. They moved to Southend-on-Sea, where there is a sizeable community of predominantly Czech Roma. The parents both work: the father works full-time as a cleaner in the local Sainsbury's, the mother does a part-time job in the same supermarket, but only part-time to be able to look after the household and their two daughters who both go to school.

The mother comes from a very educated family: her mother studied Romani studies at Charles University in Prague and now teaches Romani at one of the local universities in Ostrava, the Czech Republic. According to her, most ethnic Czechs say that Czech Roma are uneducated and this is the cause of their inadaptability and consequent problems. So, how come that educated Roma are exposed to racism and victimised? she asked. These are just excuses made by racists.

She had a negative experience of giving birth in a Czech maternity ward in Ostrava (in a hospital which had previously coercively sterilised Romani women), where, according to her, the medical staff looked down on her as a Gypsy, and treated the newborn baby in the same, humiliating way. That, combined with the profound psychological hardship after her husband's serious injury inflicted by neo-Nazis, has made her feel that she never wants to go back to the Czech Republic. She gave birth to her younger daughter in England: it was such a stark difference between being treated like a second-class citizen in the Czech Republic, and in a dignified way in England, in a way that every human being should be treated.

They only go back to visit their family members back in the Czech Republic when they have enough holidays and finances to be able to do that. They have happily settled in Southend-on-Sea, alongside a couple of their friends. There is frequent movement between Southend-on-Sea and Peterborough (in fact, they knew some of the respondents the research team had interviewed in Peterborough) and that is how they keep in touch with some of their Czech Roma friends. Relatives come to visit them regularly; especially now, since the 2004 Accession, it has been so easy to come over and do short-term, menial jobs. That is also how Mrs. G's brother has been coming to England to improve his English and earn some money, which, otherwise, he would not be able to earn in the Czech Republic.