

# Working with Eastern European Roma settled in the United Kingdom

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British Transport Police

# Roma in the UK

The first Roma sought asylum in the UK in the 1990s.

Since 2004 and 2007, right to free movement:

Many more Roma have moved here to find work, equal opportunities and a good education for their children.

It is estimated there are at least 500,000 Roma in the UK, of which approximately 65% are children of school age (2009 Mapping survey of Roma)

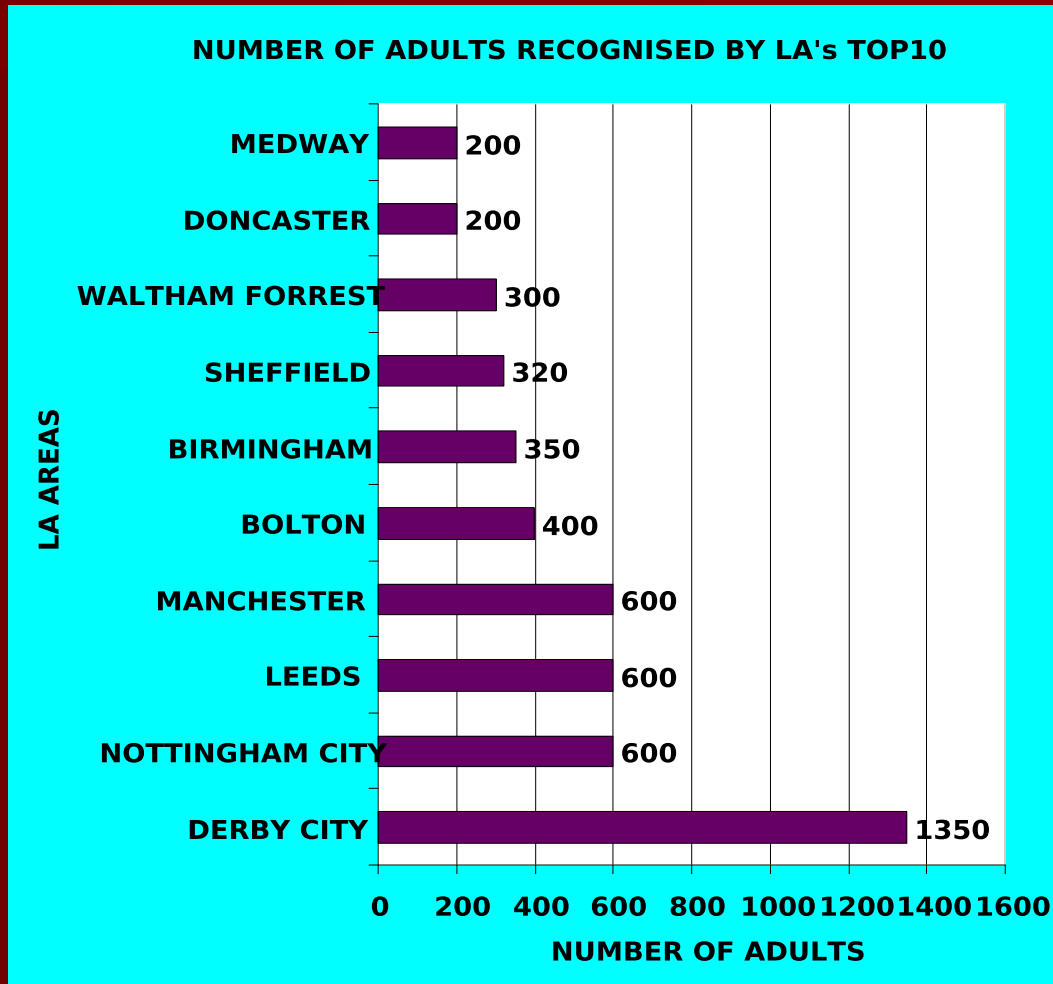
# Significant communities throughout the UK

- north of England
- Midlands
- Kent/Medway
- north and east London
- Scotland (Glasgow)
- Wales (Cardiff, Newport)
- Northern Ireland (Belfast)

# The most numerous national groups

- The most numerous national groups were the Slovak, Czech and Romanian Roma.
- **In the 53 local authority areas, there were:**
  - 28 Slovak Roma communities
  - 25 Czech Roma communities
  - 21 Romanian Roma communities
  - 20 Polish Roma communities
  - 7 Lithuanian Roma communities
  - 5 Latvian Roma communities
  - 3 Hungarian Roma communities
  - 2 Bulgarian Roma communities.

# Largest populations of Roma based in cities across Northern England







**London:** Romanian, Slovak, Czech, Polish, Bulgarian, Hungarian

**Gravesend/Chatham:** Romanian, Czech, Slovak

**Cardiff:** Czech, Slovak, Romanian

**Peterborough:** Czech, Slovak

**Coventry:** Romanian, Czech, Slovak

**Birmingham:** Romanian, Czech, Slovak

**Liverpool/Leeds/Sheffield/Rotherham:** Czech, Slovak

**Manchester:** Romanian, Czech, Slovak

**Bolton:** Czech, Hungarian

**Newcastle:** Czech, Slovak, Romanian, Bulgarian

**Glasgow:** Slovak, Romanian

**Belfast:** Romanian, Czech, Slovak, Polish

# New EU Member States

## A8 countries:

Poland

Czech Republic

Slovakia

Hungary

Estonia

Latvia

Lithuania

Slovenia

## A2 countries:

Bulgaria

Romania



# 2009 mapping survey of Roma

## Push and pull factors:

Work: main motivation for  
58% of the respondents

Discrimination in the  
countries of origin the third  
most important factor for  
15% of the respondents

Better life chances and  
education opportunities for  
their children a key factor  
for 22% of the respondents

97% of all the Roma  
respondents claimed that  
their life had improved  
since they moved to the UK

# So, once in the UK, is the situation improved?

- A number of local authorities felt that Roma in their area were socially isolated.
- Overcrowding is a very serious issue, especially in poorer households of Romanian and some eastern Slovak Roma.
- The average number of people living in a household was 6.

Broken down by nationalities,

- on average, 10 people lived in Romanian and Bulgarian Roma (A2) households,
- an average of 4 people per household in the Czech, Slovak, Polish and Hungarian Roma (A8) homes

# Main issues

- Low wages
- Temporary contracts by exploitative agencies
- Labour exploitation/ THB
- Many live in poverty
- In sub-standard rented accommodation shared with others
- Some are destitute
- Severe overcrowding
- Poor health

# Main issues

- Roma children taken by social services due to lack of safeguarding/neglect/family dysfunction
- Low preschool attendance
- Low school attendance and attainment by children (marked improvement though)
- Substantial post-eleven drop out rates
- Most primary school Roma children attend school regularly
- Older children help their families earn an income
- Family cannot afford to pay for school meals or uniforms

# Issues faced by A8 Roma in relation to employment restrictions

Arbitrary withdrawals of benefits

Arbitrary withdrawals of working/child tax credit  
**(lifting of restrictions as of 1 May 2011)**

Wrong application of the habitual residency test

Wrong information re eligibility criteria provided by  
Jobcentre Plus/Revenue office staff

Children ineligible for financial support for free  
school meals (FSM) and school uniforms.

# Issues faced by A2 Roma

Can only be self-employed/in short-term agricultural work  
Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS)

Employer has to apply for a work permit; if granted, the national must apply for an Accession Worker card

Cannot get NINO

Not eligible for FSM or uniform grants

Much harder for Roma to work legally

More vulnerable to labour exploitation

Many Romanian Roma hide from authorities, do not send children to school, register with GPs or access other support.  
Increased the incidence of petty crime.

# Practical implications of inability to work

Resorting to various survival strategies:

- begging
- stealing
- pick-pocketing
- robbing people on the street/ public transport (i.e. the Rostas gang last year)
- involvement in other types of petty crime
- involvement in organised crime -> working for gangs who take money off the beggars and leave them with very little or nothing

Homelessness (Marble Arch, disused football stadium in Hendon)

Expulsion of EU citizens

# Exploitation and trafficking

- Trafficking of Roma from inside/outside EU exists but proportionally rare
- No research has been conducted in the UK
- Some Roma adults do not believe they engage in trafficking or exploitation if they bring a group of young people (under 18 years of age) to whom they are related to the UK with the consent of the parents and the young people in order to work and send money back to their family to survive poverty or buy property.



# Exploitation and trafficking

Anecdotal evidence of a small number of people (often non-Roma) who traffic groups of Roma people, including Roma under 18 years of age, to whom they have no family connection, for the purpose of labour exploitation and commercial gain.

The trafficking of young Roma from families for the purpose of sexual exploitation is rare and government figures which are by no means comprehensive would seem to confirm this.

# Roma in London

London Haringey, Wood Green, Enfield, Tottenham, Waltham Forest, Newham, Redbridge, Islington, Walthamstow, Edmonton, Brent, Ealing, Westminster (Marble Arch), Barnet (Hendon)

Huge discrepancies between official and unofficial data  
Estimates ranging from several hundreds to thousands per borough (i.e. Newham or Haringey)

Education services overstretched, very little or no support from other agencies

# Roma in London

An established migrant community of Romanian Roma in North London

3 or 4 houses in the same street with another 2 in adjoining roads housed together 100+ people

A large proportion children, many of them under five

There are three other families, already established near this conclave; all come from a small area of Southwest Romania and all are at least distantly related.

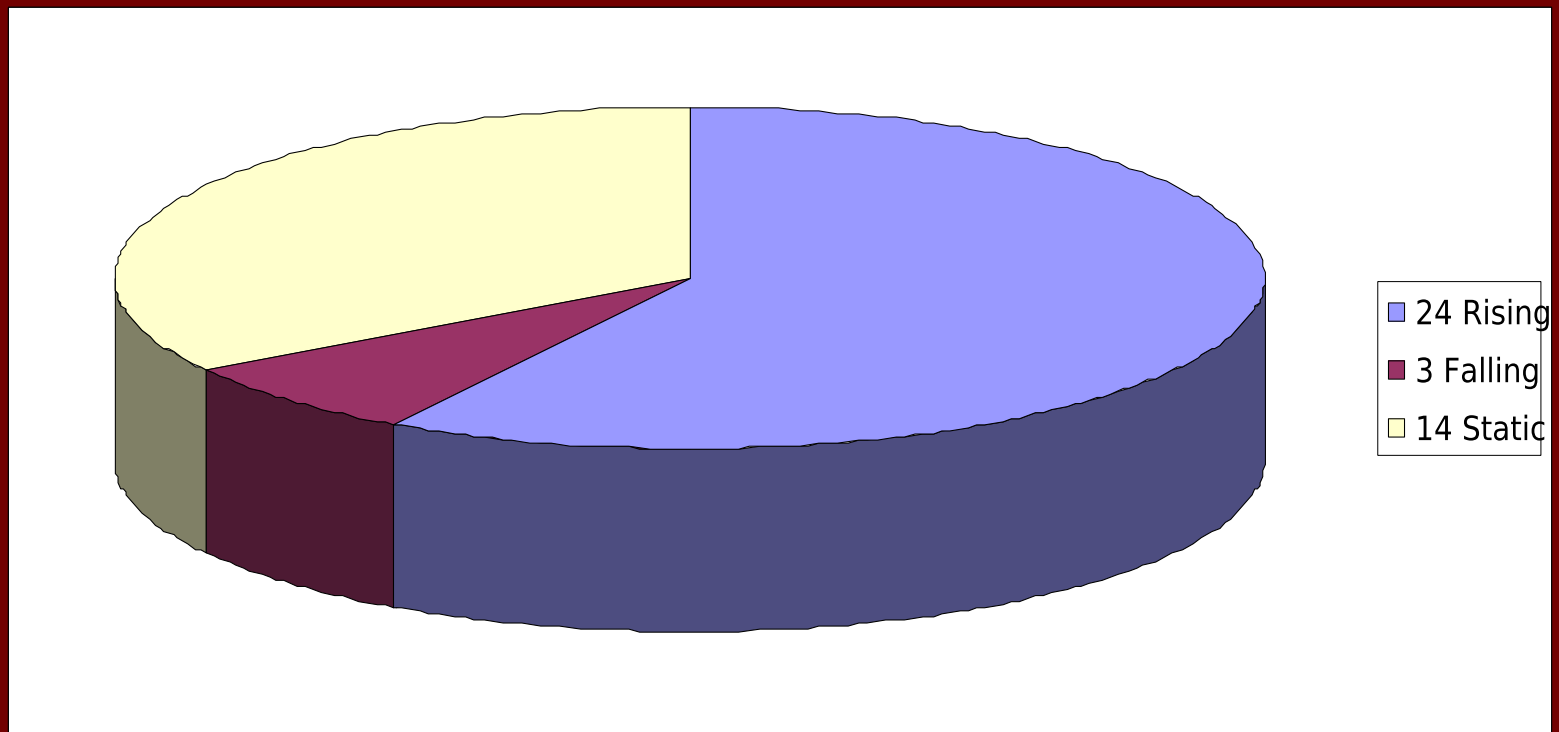
A mix of newly arrived and those who had remained here as former asylum seekers, a minority of whom are now UK citizens.

All but a few had previously lived in the UK

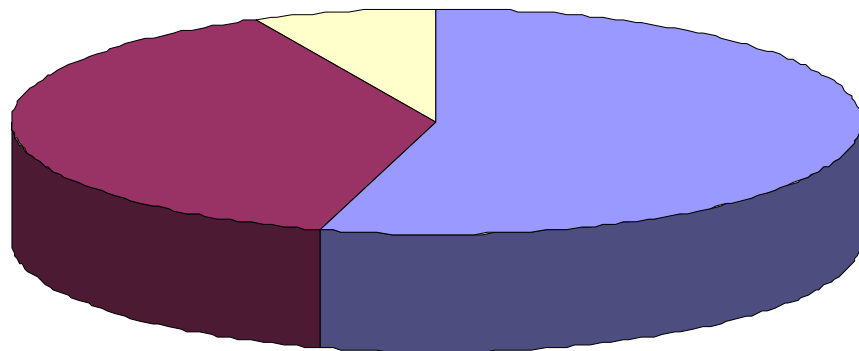
# Roma in London

- How to register a newborn, registering with a GP, midwife and booking hospital antenatal
- How to apply for a workers card, take a driving test
- Making application for benefits
- Getting children into school
- Child with health and developmental problems
- Help with uniform, travel and school meals
- Problems communicating with a solicitor
- Problems associated with family members in prison.
- Help with English courses

# Demographic trends in the size of A2 and A8 Roma populations in 53 LA areas

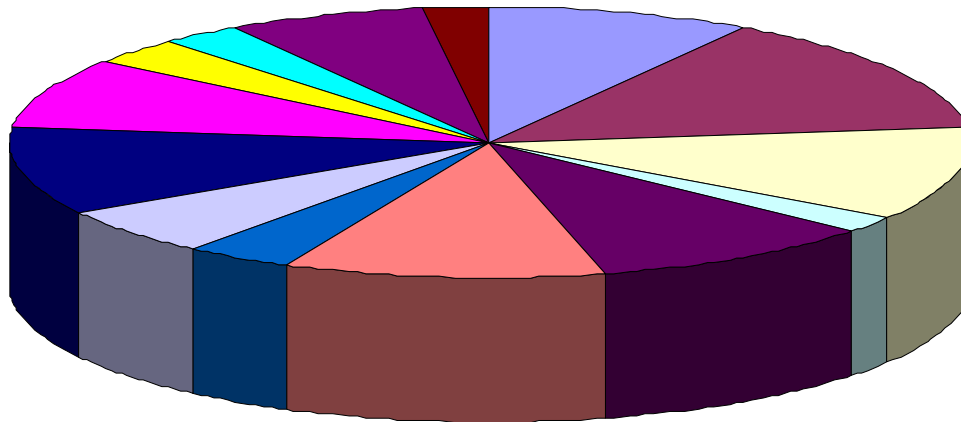


# Degree of social cohesion



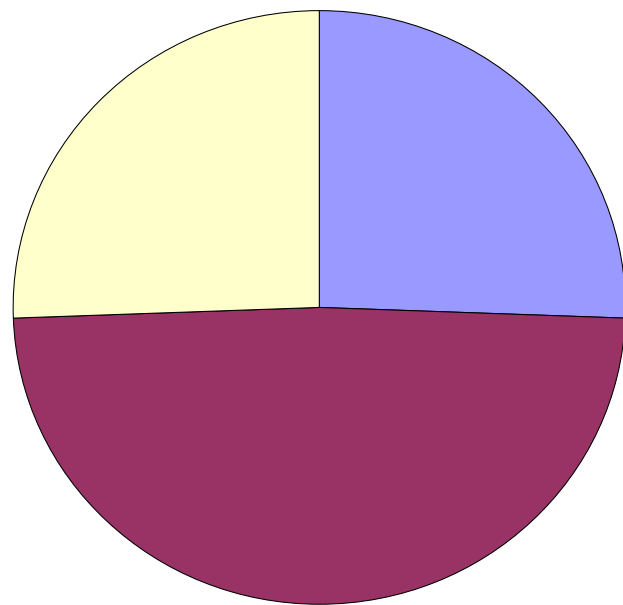
- 24 LAs said Roma were not well integrated
- 17 LAs said Roma were moderately well integrated
- 3 LAs said Roma were very well integrated

# Difficulties hampering attendance by A2 and A8 Roma pupils



- mobility 12
- language 20
- school places 15
- interpreters 3
- understanding systems and information 13
- attendance 15
- discrimination/bullying 5
- extended visits back home during term 8
- poverty 14
- cultural barriers 12
- ascription 4
- admission age 4
- childcare and family health 9
- SEN/EAL 3

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



- 12 LAs reported more than 10 incidents
- 23 LAs reported less than 10 incidents
- 12 LAs said there were none known



# Models of good practice

## TES/EMAS

- Educating Roma pupils in mainstream schooling
- Collection of ethnic data: Pupil Level Annual School Census
- Roma participation in service provision (education, healthcare)
- Walking buses (Rotherham), breakfast clubs, out-of-school clubs, complementary schools
- Advice provision to Roma
- Mainstreaming Roma identity (both curricular and extra-curricular activities (Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month))
- Multi-agency working (including the police)
- Dissemination of information
- Funding allocation as part of local school budgets

# Models of good practice

TESS and EMAS a major force in fostering **social inclusion** often the first, and sometimes the only contact Roma have with any service providers

A 'springboard' for other agencies to reach out to these communities in a **multi-agency** approach.

The **Pupil Level Annual School Census** has helped format local provision to better reflect the needs of the Roma communities.

# Education policies on Roma in the UK

Model of good practice in the DCSC as well as FRA study, unique in the whole of the EU

Primary place of social inclusion and social cohesion

Facilitation of work with Roma families by means of multi-agency working

Expose the severe and ongoing problems of segregated education and the lack of inclusion policies on Roma in the countries of origin

# The impact of SR on outreach work, EMA, the Pupil Premium and housing benefit

LA areas where the level of provision to Roma has been excellent have lost key staff members and funding. Services restructured or disbanded altogether.

The reduction of outreach work has negatively affected community relations, social tension and the work of the police.

# The impact of SR on outreach work, EMA, the Pupil Premium and housing benefit

Young Roma have been hit hard by EMA withdrawal

Assessing eligibility to Pupil Premium on the pupil being in receipt of FSM means many Roma students are not be entitled to inclusion in PP allocation

Cuts to housing benefits have pushed poor families to areas of high unemployment rates and exacerbated their social exclusion.

# Organisations working with Roma

Roma Support Group (East London)

The Children's Society (New Londoners project)

Hibiscus Female Prisoners Welfare Project (<http://fpwphibiscus.org.uk/>)

The AIRE Centre

Migrants Rights Network

RAMFEL

International Association of Roma Professionals

Roma Education Support Trust

Roma Community Care, Derby

Thank you for your attention