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ROMA COMMUNITIES & BREXIT

INTEGRATING & EMPOWERING ROMA IN THE UK

Marley Morris

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NEW IDEAS for CHANGE

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SUMMARY

60-SECOND SUMMARY

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the EU's enlargement in 2004 and 2007, the UK has experienced a rise in the migration of Roma communities from central and eastern Europe. In the wake of the Brexit vote, these Roma migrants face a triple whammy of challenges. Legally, there is considerable uncertainty over the future terms of their residency in the UK (although for now their rights to free movement continue). Socially, as a vulnerable group that has experienced sustained persecution and prejudice in Europe, the surge in reported hate crime after the referendum is likely to exacerbate feelings of insecurity among the Roma community. And financially, EU funding to support Roma integration is likely to cease.

In this report, we argue that local authorities with large Roma communities have a clear incentive to bolster their support for the integration of Roma migrants in this new context. We assert that taking action only at crisis point – for instance, at the point of homelessness or at the height of community tensions – places unnecessary pressures on public services and proves costlier in the long run than investing in early-stage interventions. While local authorities should be proactive in their approach to integrating Roma migrants, their interventions should avoid targeting Roma exclusively and outside of mainstream services: instead, we argue, local authorities should embed specialist provision within mainstream services. This would avoid singling out Roma and thereby potentially fostering a climate of stigmatisation.

Finally, central government has an important responsibility to support local authority interventions. Up until now, the EU has been a key source of funding for Roma integration. Without any compensation from government, services are likely to struggle – to the detriment of the integration of Roma and wider community relations. We therefore call on local authorities with significant Roma populations to develop a common platform to ensure that funding shortfalls caused by Brexit are covered by central government.

KEY FINDINGS

- Since the fall of the Berlin Wall – and particularly following the accession of several central and eastern European nations to the EU in 2004 and 2007 – the number of Roma migrants in the UK has grown. Estimates of their precise number vary considerably, ranging between 80,000 and 300,000. Whatever the true figure, it is clear that some local areas have seen a rise in Roma migrants in recent decades – including Govanhill in Glasgow, Page Hall in Sheffield, Normanton in Derby, and Loxford in the London Borough of Redbridge.

- In the wake of Britain's vote to leave the EU, Roma migrants from central and eastern Europe, alongside all other non-British EU citizens, face uncertainty about their future in the UK. In the short

term, reports of a sharp increase in the number of hate crimes towards ethnic minority groups are a cause for concern and require immediate attention. In the long term, EU migrants' legal rights of residence and access to healthcare and other public services are no longer set in stone.

- These uncertainties are particularly worrying for Britain's Roma community as many Roma migrants face multiple dimensions of disadvantage across employment, education, housing and health. Evidence from Glasgow suggests that Roma often work in unregulated sectors of the economy, taking temporary jobs through non-statutory employment agencies, with very low wages, illegal deductions and poor working conditions. Gypsy/Roma children (as categorised by the Department for Education) tend to have high school exclusion rates and low levels of educational attainment. Research suggests that Roma tend to experience poor housing conditions and overcrowding, and are often exploited by unscrupulous landlords. Our research has found that Roma face particular barriers to accessing healthcare, often due to language difficulties and their unfamiliarity with NHS systems.

- In general, there is little evidence of widespread conflict between Roma and non-Roma groups in the UK. However, in some communities, low-level tensions have emerged between Roma and other residents, developing on the one hand from concerns about alleged anti-social behaviour among the Roma community, and on the other from fears of anti-Roma xenophobia and stigmatisation.

- Local authorities face a major funding shortfall in supporting Roma communities, which exacerbates these issues. Given the likely loss of European structural funds, there is considerable uncertainty over the future funding base for Roma integration, support and advocacy work.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES WITH LARGE ROMA POPULATIONS

- **Local authorities without strategies for supporting migrant integration should urgently develop such strategies in the aftermath of the Brexit vote.** The strategy should analyse how Brexit could affect the rights of vulnerable residents and impact community relations, and should set out priorities for supporting cohesion in the lead-up to, and aftermath of, leaving the EU. Local authorities with large Roma communities should ensure a specific focus on Roma within their strategies.

- **As a key part of this strategy, local authorities should encourage the development of Roma-led community groups to directly provide services and support.** This is essential for strengthening the community's social and political capital, creating a trusted and representative Roma voice, and providing a dependable and permanent resource for Roma in the local area.

- **Local authorities should take a more active role in planning services for Roma migrants** – for instance, by collecting better data on the Roma community in their area (such as data on Roma pupils in local schools), sharing information on their Roma populations between

services and with neighbouring local authorities where appropriate, assigning clear responsibilities for Roma integration to relevant officials, and making sure that they are aware of different funding sources to support work with Roma communities.

- **Local authorities should also ensure that service provision is adapted for their Roma population.** This can involve service providers doing the following.
  - **Providing support for non-English-speaking Roma** – for instance, by hiring interpreters and providing translation services and bespoke English language education.
  - **Targeting those Roma communities who might be unaware of services or reluctant to engage** – for instance, by promoting services to local residents in areas with large Roma populations, by hiring experienced Roma individuals who can work with Roma communities or act as community mediators, or by working with local schools attended by Roma pupils to engage with families.
  - **Only running exclusive projects or services for Roma when strictly necessarily** – for instance, by focusing on Roma indirectly by targeting services at particular areas or at hard-to-reach groups. Where exclusive interventions are necessary, they should be designed on the basis that they will be integrated into mainstream provision to help encourage interaction between Roma and non-Roma communities in the long term.
  - **Equipping the frontline staff of mainstream services with the necessary cultural understanding and specialist skills to support Roma clients** – for instance, by hiring part-time bilingual Roma community engagement officers or mentors, or by organising exchanges between the local authority and the Roma population's region(s) of origin.

- **Local authorities should take action to improve community relations when tensions arise** – for instance, by supporting the third sector to reconcile different communities, by facilitating public meetings to discuss difficult issues, by publishing open letters to communities to delimit expected norms of behaviour, and by holding community events and festivals to encourage Roma and non-Roma to interact.

- **Local authorities should urge government to replace EU funding for Roma integration work.** The government has begun to make a number of commitments to make up for the significant funding shortfalls expected as a result of Brexit. However, these tend to focus on issues towards which an active and co-ordinated approach has been adopted by affected groups (such as the higher education sector). Given the scale of EU funding available for supporting Roma integration in the UK – a total of £1.1 billion in European structural funds for the 2014–2020 period were available to be used for Roma-focused integration initiatives – local authorities with significant Roma populations should rally together to make the case to national government for national funds to replace this funding. Local authorities should also seek opportunities for new funding streams, such as foundations (including the Big Lottery Fund), government departments, housing associations, clinical commissioning groups and charities.

1.
INTRODUCTION

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007, the UK has experienced a rise in the migration of Roma people from central and eastern Europe. Historically, Roma migration to the UK has tended to be small-scale and concentrated in particular areas. Roma from Romania – the EU country with the largest Roma population – have typically preferred to migrate to countries with languages similar to Romanian, such as France, Italy and Spain. Nevertheless, the main expansion of the EU into central and eastern Europe in 2004, followed by the accession of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007, has seen the UK experience larger inflows of Roma migrants in recent years. While the true extent of Roma migration to the UK is hard to determine, it is clear that there have been increases in some local areas. In Sheffield, for instance, schools experienced a rise from approximately 100 Roma pupils in 2009 to 2,100 in 2014 (Ofsted 2014).

As the largest ethnic minority group in Europe – and a community that historically has experienced extreme persecution and hardship (which continues today) – Roma migrants face a particular set of challenges in the UK. Evidence exists of widespread poverty, poor housing conditions and below-average educational outcomes. Roma tend to face much larger barriers to labour market integration than non-Roma migrants from central and eastern Europe (Cherkezova and Tomova 2013). In some places the social exclusion of Roma has placed additional pressures on public services such as GPs (Poole and Adamson 2008).

The past few years have also seen a number of reports of tensions between Roma and non-Roma communities in certain parts of the UK, including Sheffield and Hexthorpe in South Yorkshire, and Redbridge in London. Tensions have tended to centre on allegations of anti-social behaviour, intimidation and petty theft among Roma communities, as well as claims of xenophobia towards and stigmatisation of Roma residents. These twin issues of deprivation and community tensions have posed a challenge for local authorities with large Roma populations.

The result of the EU referendum has the potential to exacerbate these issues. The Roma community is now settled in the UK and is unlikely to simply emigrate *en masse*. But Britain's exit from the EU is expected to lead to a change to the current free movement rules that have facilitated Roma migration to the UK. Reforms to the UK's migration system could both restrict future potential Roma migrants from moving to the UK and affect the rights of Roma currently resident here. Given that Roma tend to have large families and often migrate for family reasons, future restrictions on the family route for EU citizens could have a serious impact on the lives of Roma already settled in the UK. Moreover, rights do not just relate to residency: they also concern entitlement to welfare and public services.

With many Roma already facing social exclusion and destitution, there is a real danger that these changes – and even just the uncertainty surrounding the rules – will further marginalise Roma communities.

Even before the referendum decision, Roma in the UK faced a challenging policy environment. Recent government reforms aimed at limiting EU migrants' access to the benefits system have had a substantial impact on some Roma migrants. Although the circumstances may change as Britain negotiates a deal to leave the European Union, at the moment the current reforms are applicable to EU citizens. These reforms place a range of benefit restrictions on EU migrant jobseekers, as well as on those who do not meet the minimum earnings threshold of £155 per week and who are not considered to be doing work that is 'genuine and effective'. While the measures are judged to be compatible with EU law because they do not restrict benefits for EU workers, there is also evidence of some part-time Roma workers being barred from receiving housing benefit because their work has been judged by the local authority not to be 'genuine and effective' (Shallice and Greason 2015).

At the same time, some local authorities have been forced to reduce provision targeted at Gypsy, Roma and Travellers due to significant budgetary constraints. For instance, specialist services for ethnic minority achievement and Traveller education have been cut entirely by a number of local authorities (Ofsted 2014), and further local authority cuts are expected. With Britain now set for Brexit, EU funding – another key source for local authorities for supporting Roma integration – is likely to come to an end.

But it is not just the legal and financial consequences of Brexit that should worry policymakers. With a 42 per cent rise in reported hate crimes recorded by the National Police Chiefs' Council in late June (NPCC 2016), there is a danger that Roma will begin to feel increasingly unwelcome, isolated and vulnerable in the UK in the aftermath of the vote.

Taken together, these changes are a serious challenge for local authorities with significant Roma populations. It is therefore crucial that, in the climate of budget cuts, Roma are seen as a priority vulnerable group. In the long run, the alternative will almost certainly be damaging to social cohesion and, as services are forced to make interventions at crisis point, far costlier for local authorities.

This report explores how local authorities with large Roma populations can respond to the challenges of both local community tensions and Roma social exclusion in the context of the Brexit vote. By examining strategies for early intervention, tailored provision of services and stronger community relations, we explore how local authorities should support the integration of their Roma communities – and, in particular, how this support can be led by the Roma community itself.

To inform our analysis and recommendations, we have conducted more than 25 interviews with local authorities, service providers, and community groups working with Roma (including members of the Roma community themselves) in three local area case studies: Redbridge in northeast London, Govanhill in Glasgow, and Normanton and Arboretum in Derby. In the following sections, we explore the evidence on Roma marginalisation in the UK, discuss examples of practical interventions to

strengthen Roma integration in the UK, and set out how local authorities should support Roma integration in what we expect to be a challenging post-Brexit landscape.

2.
ROMA COMMUNITIES IN BRITAIN: THE EVIDENCE

This report focuses on Roma migrants originating from central and eastern Europe, as distinct from the indigenous Gypsy and Traveller community in the UK. 'Roma' is a broad term that describes a diverse community. It encompasses groups such as Roma, Sinti, Kale, Travellers and Gypsies, and Roma migrants have come to the UK from a range of Central and Eastern European countries, including Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Estimates of the number of Roma in the UK vary considerably. The Council of Europe estimates that there are between 150,000 and 300,000 Roma in the UK (Council of Europe 2012) (although these figures also include the indigenous Gypsy and Traveller community). A study in 2009 estimated that a minimum of 49,000 Roma lived in England (European Dialogue 2009). A 2013 survey of local authorities indicated that approximately 200,000 Roma migrants live in the UK, with large populations in London and the North West (Brown et al 2013). However, that study contained a number of methodological shortcomings: only 13 per cent of local authorities responded with estimates, risking selection bias, and some of the data was based on anecdotal evidence (Gaffney 2015). Moreover, due to low levels of self-ascription and confusions over categorisations (such as the distinction between Roma and Gypsies and Travellers, and between Roma and Romanians), it is likely that most estimates of Roma migrants in the UK – and consequently most analysis of Roma outcomes – are imprecise at best.

While exact figures are unknown, local reporting and local authority data suggest that Roma migrants tend to cluster in particular areas, such as Govanhill in Glasgow, Page Hall in Sheffield (Pidd 2013), Normanton and Arboretum in Derby, and Loxford in Redbridge. Roma are not a homogeneous group: in the UK they include groups originating from a number of different central and eastern European countries, speaking a range of dialects of Romani, and practising several different faiths. Although – contrary to the stereotype – the vast majority of Roma are sedentary, theevidence suggests that they tend to be more mobile than the population on average (Brown et al 2013). This mobility can make it harder for mainstream services to adapt to service users and has direct repercussions on integration, particularly for children (Strand and Demie 2007).

Roma face significant levels of public hostility across Europe. Public opinion data reveals that Roma are viewed far less favourably than other minority groups (Pew Research Centre 2016). Roma continue to

experience systemic discrimination in their home countries, including segregation in schools and classrooms (Amnesty International 2015). Reports from Slovakia have depicted how a series of cities and villages have erected walls in order to segregate Roma neighbourhoods from the rest of the community (Economist 2013). In Hungary, around three-fifths of the public agree that an 'inclination to[wards] criminality is in the blood of the gypsies', according to a 2011 survey (Bernát et al 2013). A recent Amnesty International report found extensive evidence of hate crimes towards Roma in both western and eastern Europe (Amnesty International 2014). This longstanding and ongoing persecution has fostered deep mistrust among Roma communities towards authorities (World Bank 2014).

Alongside these challenges, Roma in the UK suffer from poor outcomes on a number of key measures of social exclusion, including employment, education, housing and health.

EMPLOYMENT

Many Roma migrants are significantly removed from the mainstream labour market. One Roma interviewee we spoke to in our research described some of the challenges facing parts of the Roma community when seeking work: 'No education, no language, no skills, no experience […], limited literacy'. A study of Roma in Glasgow's Govanhill found that Roma often worked in unregulated sectors of the economy, taking temporary jobs through non-statutory employment agencies, being paid very low wages (often below the minimum wage) from which illegal deductions were made, and experiencing poor working conditions (such as long hours and dangerous work) (Poole and Adamson 2008).

Irregular employment and poor working conditions for Roma are also commonplace in other parts of the UK (European Dialogue 2009). Our interviewees reported low levels of interaction between Roma and Department for Work and Pensions and local authority employment services, including in areas where staff recognised a need for employment support among the Roma community (see chapter 3 for more details on Work Redbridge). Research suggests this is potentially in part a long-term consequence of Roma communities' limited knowledge of their employment rights and of the complexity of the transitional labour market rules introduced for eastern European migrants after 2004 – particularly for Romanians and Bulgarians, who faced stricter labour market controls from 2007 to 2014 than migrants from the 'A8' countries that joined the EU in 2004 (Poole and Adamson 2008).

EDUCATION

Many of our interviewees spoke of the significant English language and literacy barriers facing Roma communities. A recent report by Ofsted documented low levels of attendance and educational attainment and high rates of exclusion among Gypsy/Roma pupils (Ofsted 2014). (No breakdown for specifically Roma migrants is available.) According to recent research on Roma in the education system, these poor outcomes are in large part a consequence of sustained and historic discrimination within the education systems of Roma communities'

home countries (Penfold 2015). The Ofsted report highlighted the fact that schools and local authorities in Derby, Sheffield and Manchester have found it difficult to ensure that those Roma pupils with little experience of formal education followed school routines correctly, but were able to make good progress with Roma pupils who were settled into the school system. Evidence from our interviewees in Redbridge suggests that, where services exist, uptake of English language classes is very low among Roma adults.

HOUSING

Evidence from the University of Salford indicates that Roma people tend to live in poor housing conditions, generally in the private rented sector, and disproportionately face homelessness and high levels of exploitation by landlords and letting agents compared with the wider population (Brown et al 2013). Our interviewees corroborated these challenges. Again, this is likely to be connected to a history of experiencing very poor housing and sustained persecution in their home countries, and to widespread poverty and precarious employment in the UK.

Roma migrants often live in large family units which, combined with poor housing conditions, can lead to overcrowding. Our interviewees highlighted the fact that, due to insecure private rental accommodation, there is a high turnover of Roma migrants – often driven by the ease with which landlords can evict them, rather than being of their own choice.

HEALTH

Studies conducted in central and eastern Europe indicate serious health problems among some Roma communities, including lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality rates and a prevalence of chronic diseases. In central and eastern Europe, the life expectancy of Roma is often around 10 years lower than for non-Roma (European Commission 2014a, Table 10). Some health issues appear to resurface in Roma communities in the UK. Local councils working with Roma migrants have found evidence of high rates of undiagnosed long-term conditions, such as diabetes, tuberculosis and Hepatitis B (Roma MATRIX 2014).

At the same time, Roma migrants face practical challenges in accessing healthcare. The 2008 study of Roma in Govanhill in Glasgow reveals major barriers to Roma migrants engaging with local health services, including language problems, unfamiliarity with registration requirements, and missed appointments and child immunisations (Poole and Adamson 2008). A study of Eastern European migrants' access to healthcare in Kent found that Roma migrants faced serious difficulties communicating with healthcare workers, and highlighted a lack of respect and trust between patients and professionals (Healthwatch Kent 2015). Another study of Roma migrants in Barking and Dagenham found that mental health among Roma adults was seen as a taboo subject, despite evidence of extensive mental health problems existing within their community (Tobi et al 2010).

3.
WHAT SHOULD LOCAL AUTHORITIES DO?

We have argued that Roma communities face a distinctive set of disadvantages across the labour market, education, housing and health. There is a significant risk that these challenges will grow in the aftermath of Brexit.

So how should local authorities with significant Roma populations respond? Given the challenging financial outlook for local authorities, one option might simply be to not create any targeted measures, and let the needs of Roma communities be addressed through mainstream provision instead. However, while this may appear to be the least costly option in the short term, in the long term it may prove the opposite. Our research has found that mainstream services often struggle to reach Roma communities, and instead become aware of Roma migrants at crisis point, either when community tensions come to a head, or when individual Roma are found to be destitute (such as during contact with children's services or homelessness support).[1] Where Roma do make contact with services, a lack of specialist or bespoke services (such as interpreters) can place these providers under additional strain (Poole and Adamson 2008), while poorly delivered services can lead to a breakdown in trust. Waiting for Roma to make contact with mainstream provision is therefore likely to be costlier than addressing exclusion at the early stages.

Our research suggests that when local authorities take a proactive approach to supporting Roma integration these problems can be avoided. In order to understand how best to support Roma communities, we have investigated three areas in the UK where there are large Roma populations: Govanhill in Glasgow, Redbridge in London, and Normanton and Arboretum in Derby. These areas have been selected because each was seen by practitioners and experts we spoke to as containing examples of high-quality integration work and service provision involving Roma communities. The following recommendations draw on our research in these three locations.

All of our recommendations are designed for local authorities with substantial Roma populations. These recommendations comprise a 'menu' of options for local government rather than a comprehensive programme. Local authorities can select those that seem most appropriate for their specific policy challenges.

We divide our recommendations into three areas: co-ordinating provision, adapting services and alleviating tensions.

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1   For example, see Cox 2012 and Brown et al 2013: 32, where, according to one local authority, 'The community is pretty invisible as many Roma live in private housing and have only previously come to our attention when a family has experienced some kind of housing crisis […].'

CO-ORDINATING PROVISION

In supporting Roma integration in their local area, local authorities are ideally placed to play a co-ordinating role, bringing together different actors including frontline service providers and community and voluntary groups. Each of the local authorities in our research adopted this model in different ways.

- **Redbridge** council has explicitly recognised its position as a co-ordinator of services, providing some support directly through the initiatives of some service leaders in employment, health and children's services, while working with other voluntary groups such as the Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL), Redbridge Equalities and Community Council (RECC), and the Roma Support Group (RSG), which delivers advice and support to Roma. For instance, in response to tensions that emerged in South Ilford between Roma and non-Roma groups, the council set up the South Ilford Community Cohesion working group. This brings together key stakeholders working with Roma or working in South Ilford, from children's services (Gypsy Roma Traveller education), health, housing and the police, as well as community groups such as RAMFEL and RECC, to discuss issues, share practice and co-ordinate provision.

- In **Derby**, the council has developed a 'new communities strategy' in large part in response to the rise in central and eastern European migration in recent years, in order to provide a clear, co-ordinated strategy across different local service providers. As part of this strategy, it created a complex cases group for Roma in 2011 in response to barriers within public services and community tensions. The group brings together police, probation and health services, the City and Neighbourhood Partnership, Derby Advice, housing, children's services, and the voluntary sector on a monthly basis to co-ordinate work with vulnerable Roma families. The aim of the multi-agency partnership is for each partner to fully understand the needs of Roma families, to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, and to provide the necessary health, social care and safeguarding support for both children and adults (Derby city council 2013).

- In **Glasgow**, a 'Romanet' multi-agency informal grouping of around 25 health, education and social work staff was established to improve services for Roma children and families predominantly living in Govanhill, where approximately 3,500 Roma people are resident. It is made up of four subgroups on employability, health and social care, housing and education. The group enables them to work together more closely to meet the needs of Roma communities.

There are, however, important limitations to some of the co-ordination efforts we found. Some of our interviewees noted that local authority co-ordination efforts on Roma integration were in many cases half-hearted or sporadic, often led or instigated by individuals but not necessarily implemented with a clear strategic purpose. In particular, our conversations revealed three key improvements, discussed below, that local authorities could make in their co-ordination and commissioning of different services.

> **Recommendation:** Set up formalised, clear systems for co-ordinating provision.

The service providers we spoke to suggested that local authorities tended to take action to integrate Roma only when a situation reached a crisis point – for instance, because they were made aware of community tensions in a particular area, or an emergency care order had been placed. Local authorities should include fixed, regular monthly meetings for co-ordinating partners to ensure regular communication between key service providers, rather than relying on emergency meetings scheduled to respond to a particular issue.The meetings should also include a clear range of representatives from different local authority services and should have active and consistent representation from the Roma community itself.

Recommendation: Take a more active role in planning services for Roma migrants.

Our interviews suggested that local authorities often do not have plans in place to manage population change and the resultant impact on services. One interviewee from Redbridge explained that, 'Each wave of migration that's come into the borough – I'm talking specifically about the 2004 and then the 2007 [waves] – has come as a complete surprise to them, in terms of infrastructure and planning.' Local authorities should aim to collect better data on the Roma community in their geographical area (using, for instance, data on Roma pupils in local schools), share information (where appropriate) on their Roma populations between council services as well as with external services and neighbouring local authorities, assign clear responsibilities for Roma integration to relevant officials (such as the equality and diversity officer), and make sure that they actively search for different potential funding sources to support work with Roma communities.

Recommendation: Encourage the development of Roma-led community groups to provide services and support directly.

A number of the Roma and non-Roma interviewees we spoke to emphasised the importance of developing Roma-led community organisations in order to strengthen the community's social and political capital, create a trusted and representative Roma voice, and provide a dependable and permanent resource for Roma in the local area. In Redbridge, which currently does not have a Roma-run group, one of our Roma interviewees commented: 'I went the other day to Bethnal Green where I work and I saw a Somali community centre. So why don't we have a Roma community centre?' In the long term, local authorities should support their Roma communities to create and maintain their own permanent community groups and centres in the local area. An example of a Roma-led community group (one that is currently not receiving support from the local authority) is provided in the boxed text below

Roma Community Care, Derby
Roma Community Care is one of the country's first Roma advocacy organisations, based in Normanton and Arboretum in Derby, and supported by the city's Multi-Faith Centre. The organisation was designed to strengthen the voice of the Roma community, particularly in Derby. The Multi-Faith Centre established a small leadership group for the organisation, mainly coming from the three leading

Pentecostal churches in Derby, which our interviewees estimated are attended by 800 to 1,000 Roma. Roma Community Care campaigns for the UK to adopt a national Roma strategy, in addition to holding community events and running client support and advice sessions.

The Multi-Faith Centre and Roma Community Care also set up a youth club, based at a local church, for young people in the area – largely attended by Roma migrants – which has proved highly popular with the local community (more than 500 young people have registered), as well as a 'Junior Club' for 8- to 12-year-olds to provide informal education, raise aspirations, and build up the community (Williams 2014). One interviewee explained,

> *'We've established a youth leadership group. So it's a group of young people who are willing to say they're Roma, to stand up and say they're Roma, and then to say, "but this is my experience of being a Roma in the education system living in this area." And so all of those building blocks established them to be able to then stand up and be counted.'*

ADAPTING SERVICES

Local authorities with substantial Roma populations should tailor mainstream provision to Roma migrants as far as possible. Our research found instances of cost-effective interventions that have adapted specific mainstream services to address barriers facing Roma communities. From our discussions with frontline staff, local authority officials, and community groups, we have identified a number of recommendations for adapting and augmenting existing services. The recommendations in this section are aimed primarily at services run by local authorities, but also at services such as GPs and Jobcentre Plus that work alongside local authorities.

Recommendation: Mainstream service providers should provide specific support for non-English-speaking Roma.

Poor English language ability is one of the major barriers to accessing mainstream services for Roma migrants, compounded by the fact that many Roma people are not literate in their own language. Some of the Roma interviewees we spoke to highlighted language and literacy as particular challenges for accessing employment: for instance, limited literacy can make it hard to search for jobs online. There is a range of ways in which service providers can adapt their services to address this barrier, from hiring interpreters and offering translation services to providing English language support (tailored where necessary to support those with limited literacy skills in their own language). An example of these approaches in the school context is provided in the boxed text on Annette Street primary school in Glasgow.

Translation services have been a recurrent source of controversy within the debate on integration because they can potentially provide a disincentive for people to learn English and thus create a barrier to integration. For this reason, and to save money, they have faced

cutbacks within some local authorities (in the London Borough of Newham, for example). But as the Commission on Integration and Cohesion argued in 2007, providing translation support,

> *'depends on the community: where settled [black and minority ethnic] populations are still relying on community languages, then translations from English are likely to extend their reliance on their mother tongue; where new communities have arrived in a local area then clearly they need initial information in appropriate languages.'*
> Commission on Integration and Cohesion 2007: 168

Given the major language challenges Roma face compared with other minority groups, simply reducing translation support would increase barriers to integration. Instead, local authorities should make translation support available for Roma within mainstream services, while also ensuring that this does not come at the expense of English language classes to facilitate longer-term language development and integration.

Finally, for Roma migrants with limited English looking for employment, support services should consider more creative ways to help their service users into work. For instance, some of our interviewees suggested that local authority employment services could help Roma migrants find job matches that do not require extensive English, such as cookery, painting and decorating, or seamstressing.

Annette Street primary school, Glasgow

Annette Street primary school in Glasgow has experienced a large increase in the number of pupils from central and eastern Europe – many of whom are Roma – over the past 10 years. Now more than 70 per cent of its pupils come from a Roma background. There is also a large 'churn effect', with many pupils leaving the school after relatively short periods.

The school has taken a range of measures to improve educational outcomes among its Roma pupils and to integrate them into the school, such as employing temporary bilingual staff members and organising home visits to encourage attendance. In order to build stronger relationships with Roma parents, the school started up a breakfast club attended by interpreters. The school has adjusted its classroom approach to ensure it is inclusive of pupils for whom English is an additional language, allocating pupils to different teachers according to their language ability. The school also uses techniques such as pairing students with low proficiency in English with more confident linguists, and organising excursions to practise everyday activities (for example, visits to shops and dog-walking) to improve their pupils' grasp of English and understanding of British culture (Blane 2011). However, the school has limited funds to support its work and has recently campaigned for additional donations from locals in order to meet the needs of its pupils (Kyle 2016).

> **Recommendation:** Service providers should actively reach out to Roma communities.

Roma can be a hard-to-reach group for service providers. To take one example, in around 2012, Work Redbridge, Redbridge council's skills and employment programme, set up a once-a-week, two-hour, light-touch drop-in session in Loxford (an area with a large Romanian Roma population) to provide information and advice on getting back into work, training, volunteering, and self-employment, as well as giving careers advice and CV-writing help. Although it placed the session in a location nearby the local Roma population, only a handful of Roma turned up to the sessions. Our interviewee noted that Roma were more likely to participate when they heard positive accounts of the service through word of mouth.

There is a need, therefore, for service providers to take an active approach to engaging with Roma migrants. If there is a problem with engagement, service providers should explore alternative methods to ensure Roma communities are aware of and comfortable with using their services. This could include making contact with trusted Roma individuals who can act as community mediators, or hiring members of staff to translate and communicate directly with the community. It could also involve thinking imaginatively about how different services interconnect and where engagement with Roma migrants in the local authority is most extensive. For instance, a number of our service-provider interviewees said that they were working (or were hoping to work) with local schools attended by Roma children, in order to engage with these pupils' families.

The boxed text below includes positive examples of active engagement from our case study areas.

Public Health Redbridge

In 2011 Redbridge Public Health provided funding for a health visitor-led project which focused on improving the health of hard-to-reach groups, including the Roma community. The project aimed to address the low uptake of immunisations and development checks among Roma children, as well as the low rate of GP registrations.

The team was led by a health visitor and employed a part-time immunisation nurse and administrator. The team ran a weekly health visitor clinic, at which immunisations and developmental checks were offered. The clinic was run in a children's centre alongside a play session for Roma children, which was very popular and encouraged attendance. In addition to the clinic, the health visitor carried out home visits to families.

The project ran from January 2011 for 12 months, and during this period Redbridge saw a significant improvement in uptake of immunisations and developmental checks, along with an increase in the number of children who were registered with a GP.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

In 2007, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde set up a team of four dedicated health support workers within the children and families team to provide targeted support, in response to the growth in the Roma population in Govanhill. Services include home visits and drop-in sessions (with interpreters) to register newcomers, provide health and parenting advice and support, and carry out child immunisations. Health strategies are continuously reviewed to respond to changing populations and healthcare needs. Explaining the rationale for the service, one interviewee said:

> 'I guess we're all really aware of the public health needs and the long-term financial outcomes if we don't try to do something about this quite significant group of patients' health.'

Crossroads Tuesday Evening Drop-In, Glasgow

The Crossroads Youth and Community Association partners with a local church and CrossReach (a separate, faith-based NGO) to offer a weekly family drop-in, attended by Slovakian and Czech Roma. This provides a welcoming place where Roma and other members of the community can take their children to play, meet new people, access advice and eat healthy snacks (ROMA-NeT 2012). As trust within the community developed, this group experienced a rise from around 30 people in the first year to around 120 people attending each week. The drop-in session partners with other organisations (for instance, the financial advice service Money Matters) to provide advice and support on issues such as education, housing and welfare.

The priority for Crossroads is community development and empowerment. One co-ordinator explained that the sessions have created a virtuous circle of deeper cohesion and more comprehensive services:

> 'They're not only getting help from Money Matters, for instance […] but also we build a relationship with people, so they know where to find us […]. They start to engage with community development activities and events.'

Crossroads also runs a weekly Roma Baking Group, which aims to share participants' experience and skills and increase their future employability. In the long term this has the potential to become a Roma-run social enterprise.

Recommendation: Service providers should only run exclusive services and projects for Roma when strictly necessarily, and should aim to integrate this work into mainstream provision in the long term.

Our interviewees highlighted the fact that providers aimed to avoid running separate services for fear that this could reinforce stigmatisation against Roma communities. Instead, they focused provision on Roma indirectly, by targeting particular areas or broader groups not defined by their ethnicity

or nationality (for example, hard-to-reach groups or EAL [English as an Additional Language] groups). Where separate classes or services were necessary (for instance, due to language barriers), we found examples of Roma migrants being integrated into mainstream provision in the long term – (see below examples)

Albert Road Children's Centre, Redbridge

In Redbridge, Albert Road Children's Centre has run separate mother and toddler groups for Roma and Romanian women alongside its other classes. Over time, the programme's success meant that it was integrated into the mainstream mother and toddler group at the centre. One interviewee explained:

> 'As of last month they're no longer doing those classes. Not because of the cuts but because they had built that community up. Now the community is fully included into the other children's services groups that they have there.'

Bridge Programme, Derby

The Bridge Programme was set up to provide targeted English language provision and orientation for Roma primary school children in Derby, to address low levels of English language skills and low attendance among Roma pupils. However, over time, pupils from other backgrounds (including Iraqi, Syrian and Somalian pupils) have started to use the service, and Roma pupils have become less frequent users. A service initially designed primarily for Roma pupils has, therefore, become mainstreamed in an organic way: in the words of our interviewee, the service 'translated into a primary strategy for *all* new communities'.

Recommendation: Service providers should ensure that frontline staff have the cultural understanding and skills necessary to support Roma clients**.**

Our interviewees highlighted examples of how service providers developed their understanding of Roma people in order to strengthen their service delivery and build better relationships with the Roma community. Staff should understand key distinctions between Roma and other communities (such as Romanians and Irish Travellers) and within Roma communities, be aware of key elements of historical and cultural context, and recognise Roma people as being a group at high risk of social exclusion. This would give staff a greater understanding of how to tackle the root causes of Roma marginalisation and would help to build trust between staff and Roma communities.

At the very least, basic resources such as factsheets on Roma communities should be available to frontline staff. But local authorities should also aim for more ambitious projects to further build trust between frontline staff and Roma: for instance, through hiring part-time, bilingual Roma community engagement officers or mentors to provide bespoke support to non-English-speaking Roma and to build positive relations between Roma, the rest of the

community, and service providers. Ideally, members of the Roma community itself should be actively involved in service provision. One of our Roma interviewees described how they had successfully helped run storytelling workshops at a local school:

> '*We provided workshops for kids in the school, also a storyteller. So we were translating the Roma story in English. And then after that we had Roma workshops. So that's a very good experience, because kids can learn about Roma, and the teachers as well…*'

Redbridge's H.E.A.R.T. project, described in the boxed text, represents an example of good practice in cultural exchange from one of our case study areas.

The H.E.A.R.T. project, Redbridge

In 2012 the School Improvement Service at Redbridge council secured EU funding for H.E.A.R.T. ('Help Educate All Roma Together'), a project on exploring and sharing good practice on improving attendance and achievement outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. The project twinned Redbridge with the city of Brasov in Romania,[2] and involved shared learning, training sessions and trips to Brasov and Redbridge for school teachers, with a focus on meeting and working with Roma pupils and learning from partner schools, staff and children.

The project helped to build confidence among Roma pupils. As one participant from Redbridge explained:

> '*By bringing these Romanian professionals to us, it brought to life our Roma children – it gave them credibility in our schools, because they were the experts. They were showing them around. They were valued in their schools. […] There was a forum for them to excel, rather than for them to be the child who couldn't perform academically in their classroom.*'

By providing opportunities to travel to Romania, the project also increased awareness among teachers and support staff, which in turn helped to strengthen credibility and build trust with Romanian Roma families (European Commission 2014b).

One of the project's aims was to boost ascription (that is, self-identification of Roma pupils), as higher ascription rates would enable closer monitoring of Roma pupils' attainment over time. Rising ascription is also a sign of growing self-confidence among Roma children, and there are some indications based on school data that higher rates of ascription are related to stronger educational outcomes (Penfold 2015). The school data on ascription indicated some positive project outcomes, with one school moving from having two ascribed Roma pupils in 2013 to 21 in 2014.

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2   The key partners in Redbridge were four local schools, the Council's School Improvement Service, and Redbridge Equalities and Community Council. In Brasov, the partners were four local schools, the School Inspectorate and Save the Children Brasov.

ALLEVIATING TENSIONS

> **Recommendation:** Local authorities without strategies for supporting migrant integration should urgently develop such strategies in the aftermath of the Brexit vote.

There is little evidence of widespread conflict between Roma and non-Roma communities in the UK. However, in some parts of the UK – including Redbridge, as well as Page Hall in Sheffield – there have been reports of small-scale tensions between these communities, generally developing from concerns among the local population about alleged anti-social behaviour and low-level crime, alongside concerns about stigmatisation and prejudice directed towards Roma communities.

In the aftermath of the referendum vote to leave the EU, there is a risk that the political context in the coming months and years will foster further divides between Roma and non-Roma communities. Immediately after the referendum there was an increase in reported hate crime, and as a group that has traditionally been subject to considerable prejudice, Roma are at risk of feeling increasingly isolated and marginalised in the UK. Local authorities should therefore develop their own strategies for managing community relations and integrating migrants in the aftermath of the EU referendum – and those local authorities with large Roma communities should ensure that support for Roma integration is included as an essential part of their strategy.

There are a number of steps that local authorities can take as part of such a strategy. Our interviewees suggested that tensions involving Roma and non-Roma are generally interrelated with the poor social and economic conditions facing Roma communities. For instance, overcrowding in some Roma households means that they tend to be more likely to congregate in outdoor spaces, which others may perceive as intimidating. This suggests that addressing the barriers facing Roma with respect to public service provision should support their social integration in the long term.

However, there are also direct measures that local authorities can take to address community tensions. In particular, local authorities can support the third sector in their local area to support integration by, for instance, facilitating public meetings to discuss difficult issues, publishing open letters to delimit norms of behaviour, and organising community festivals and get-togethers (see the below examples from Govanhill and Redbridge).

Community integration in Govanhill, Glasgow

In Govanhill, a number of organisations have held community events and festivals and organised youth and family work to support community integration and facilitate mixing (Poole and Adamson 2008). In particular, the Crossroads Youth and Community Association has organised outings for Roma families, set up a band bringing together Scottish and Roma musicians, and conducted 'street work' to engage with the Roma community locally.

One initiative set up by Crossroads piloted a fitness class for Roma women, which was then mainstreamed into sessions for the wider community. The initiative has helped to develop a group of female leaders within the community, who have begun to self-organise trips to other parts of Scotland. Other initiatives include the Understanding Each Other Project, which runs workshops in local schools for pupils from different migrant backgrounds (including Roma) to share their experiences of migration (Crossroads Youth and Community Association 2016).

Community tensions in Redbridge

In Redbridge, some tensions emerged surrounding the local Romanian Roma community in the south of the borough in the late 2000s. Concerns focused on worries over some young Roma people congregating in parks and open spaces, alongside other anxieties around petty theft, fly-tipping and the collection of scrap metal. A local councillor set up a petition about addressing anti-social behaviour which some of our interviewees claimed deliberately targeted Roma. Tensions were heightened in 2010 after a police raid on a number of Roma families suspected of child trafficking (ultimately, no one in the community was charged with this offence).

In response to these growing tensions, local community groups implemented a number of initiatives to foster cohesion. Redbridge Equalities and Community Council (RECC) ran a regular forum for different parts of the community, including Roma, to discuss issues and develop solutions. The emphasis of these meetings was to focus on problems and solutions that all sections of the community could unite around, alongside carefully discussing the issues that were triggers of hostility. The forums also provided an opportunity to bring in statutory bodies (such as healthcare providers) to give advice on practical issues.

During a period of particularly high tension, RECC organised the delivery of an open letter in English and Romanian entitled 'Unity in the Community' to residents in the area. The open letter made clear that the community would not tolerate anti-social behaviour and listed a number of dos and don'ts for all residents such as, 'Do keep front and back gardens rubbish free and tidy… Do talk to your neighbours if you are having a party or large gathering that may be noisy… Do not call people insulting names'. The leaflet made clear that the rules applied to everyone and that no particular community was being singled out. In order to ensure the Roma community were not offended by the letter, RECC held a number of meetings with Roma in advance to secure their endorsement and participation. Finally, RECC held regular community events, often with Uphall school, to bring Roma parents together with other parents in the local area.

Over time, community relations between Roma and non-Roma people in Redbridge have improved significantly. While, naturally, it is hard to specify the precise impact of the community work – and interviewees noted that progress was in part due to the Roma

community becoming more settled over time and more confident in understanding local systems – the qualitative accounts of positive developments indicate that these community initiatives played a role in facilitating stronger social relations with Roma groups.

4.
FINDING THE FUNDING

In the long run, it is likely that providing early-stage, targeted support will be significantly more cost-effective than waiting and reacting once Roma marginalisation reaches crisis point. The climate is still challenging but there are options for local authorities looking to invest in initiatives to tackle social exclusion and support community relations between their Roma and non-Roma communities. Examples of funding options are provided in Table 1 below.[3]

It is clear from the table that EU sources make up a vital component of funding for local authorities looking to run Roma integration initiatives. While there is no exclusive, ring-fenced source of funding for Roma, in the UK a total of €1.3 billion (£1.1 billion) in European structural funds have been dedicated to supporting social inclusion, tackling discrimination and alleviating poverty among the disadvantaged in the 2014–2020 period; these funds were available for the UK to carry out Roma integration initiatives (European Commission 2016). Once the UK leaves the EU, it is highly likely that these funding sources will no longer be available to local authorities. Indeed, even before then it may prove harder for local authorities and services to secure some EU funding, as it could be more difficult to find willing partners in other EU countries. It is therefore imperative that local authorities make the case to central government now for replacing these funds.

> **Recommendation:** We call on local authorities with significant Roma populations to develop a common platform to ensure that funding shortfalls caused by Brexit are covered by central government**.**

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3   Not all of the examples listed here were directly run by local authorities: some were delivered by independent local services, often in partnership with the local authority.

TABLE 1

Examples of funding for initiatives targeted at Roma integration

Type of funding	Local?	National?	EU?	Example
Separate pots of funding within the local authority	X			Leeds city council is funding a part-time Roma engagement worker at the charity Touchstone through its innovation fund, which supports projects that involve the council and the third sector working together on Leeds' delivery priorities.[a]
Universities	X			The University of Derby supports and works closely with the Multi-Faith Centre, which has helped to create and maintain Roma Community Care, Derby's Roma advocacy group.
Housing associations	X	X		Work Redbridge received funding from a local housing association to set up a drop-in centre in Loxford, Redbridge, to give employment advice. In Liverpool, Riverside Housing (along with the city council and the Big Lottery) is helping to fund a Roma community development worker and interpreter (Genova 2015).
Charities	X	X		In Govanhill, Glasgow, Oxfam Scotland has worked over a number of years with the Roma community, including supporting a 12-week voluntary clean-up and flower-planting operation in the local area (Eyre 2012).
Charitable foundations	X	X		The Metropolitan Migration Foundation has given funding to the Coventry Law Centre for it to provide legal support and advice to the Roma community (Day 2015).
Big Lottery Fund	X	X		The Big Lottery Fund is supporting a Migration Yorkshire project to bring together different organisations working with Roma in South Yorkshire and the Roma community to develop integration. The project is working with the University of Salford, Sheffield city council and 'Roma community champions' (Migration Yorkshire 2016).
Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)		X		Sheffield city council has recently received funding from DCLG to increase language acquisition for Roma adults in order to facilitate access to education, health and employment services.[b]
Devolved administrations		X		The Scottish government – through the People and Communities Fund and the Promoting Equality and Cohesion Fund – funds some of the Roma integration work carried out by the charity Crossroads.
NHS England		X		NHS Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group received funding through the prime minister's GP Access Fund to improve access to urgent primary care appointments, including funding for specific advocacy and support for practices with large Slovak Roma populations.[c]
Controlling Migration Fund / Cohesive Communities Fund		X		These funds have not yet been set up, but have been pledged by this government. The Controlling Migration Fund was promised in the 2015 Conservative manifesto (Conservatives 2015). The Cohesive Communities Fund is set to be announced later in 2016. The Migration Impacts Fund, the forerunner to these funds, supported a range of initiatives for Roma communities in 2009–2010.
European structural and investment funds (including European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund)			X	In Govanhill, Jobs and Business Glasgow – one of Glasgow city council's arm's-length external organisations – received funding from the European Social Fund to provide employability support to Roma migrants (Social Marketing Gateway 2013). The European Regional Development Fund has also funded ROMA-NeT, a transnational project across nine European cities – including Glasgow – to help support the integration of Roma (ROMA-NeT 2012).
EU Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014–2020			X	The Roma MATRIX project, which 'aimed to combat racism, intolerance and xenophobia towards Roma and to increase integration', was funded by the Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme, a precursor to the current programme. The project involved 20 partners including Glasgow and Rotherham councils, in 10 countries.[d]
The Horizon 2020 Framework Programme			X	The MigRom project, led by the University of Manchester in partnership with Manchester city council and other EU partners, was funded by the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, the forerunner to Horizon. The project combines research activities with practical efforts to provide advice, support and capacity-building for Manchester's Roma community, and it has set up the Roma-led community group Roma Voices of Manchester with support from the council (Matras et al 2015).[e]
Erasmus+ programme 2014–2020			X	The Redbridge H.E.A.R.T. project (discussed above) was funded through the Comenius Regio EU's Lifelong Learning Programme, a precursor to the Erasmus+ programme (European Commission 2014).

[a] www.leedsmultiagency.org.uk/job-opportunity-roma-engagement-worker/
[b] https://sccjobs.sheffield.gov.uk/ljrl/pages/vacancy.jsf?latest=01005561&site_version=text
[c] www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/futurenhs/pm-ext-access/wave-two/about-wave-two-pilots/
[d] https://romamatrix.eu/about-us
[e] http://migrom.humanities.manchester.ac.uk

5.
CONCLUSION

Following the UK's vote to leave the EU, Roma communities face a triple whammy of risks: uncertainty over their future legal status, rising concerns about hate crime, and a potential loss of EU funding for integration and support services.

Local authorities should take proactive steps in order to ensure that they can sustain support for the integration of their Roma communities in these new circumstances. They have a clear incentive to do so, as a proactive approach focused on early intervention should, in the long run, ease pressures on services and save money. On the basis of our interviews with local authorities, service providers and community groups in three case study areas in the UK, we conclude that early-stage interventions delivered via mainstream services that have specialist expertise and that actively engage Roma users are the most cost-effective way to boost outcomes, reduce pressures on services, and strengthen community relations.

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