



Introduction and welcome

Welcome to the latest Roma Support Group e-bulletin. We have the usual range of information, advice, articles and reports about how Brexit and leaving the European Union creates real worries for many Roma people in the UK. But as importantly, we lead with what could be a dangerous precedent for Roma (and Gypsy and Traveller) children, young people and families in England. In the last four years, school inspectors have had to be alert about how schools support, educate and develop Roma children; and how Roma pupils are responding. There is a real threat from next September, school inspections by Ofsted will not be concerned about how groups of learners – like Roma – are progressing. We urge everyone to read the article below and contact Ofsted before 11.45 on Friday 5 April.

For more information about Roma Support Group, go to our website here and look at the [‘projects’ pages](#).

Contact us via:

andy@romasupportgroup.org.uk

Changes in the way that schools will be inspected – dangers for Roma (and Gypsy and Traveller) children, students and their families

If you agree with us that Roma, as well as Gypsies and Travellers should remain a special focus in education, then write to Ofsted and let them know. Ofsted is intending to remove Roma, Gypsy and Traveller children from “groups of learners who require particular attention” in inspections. If there is no requirement for inspectors to ask questions, then the needs of groups of learners can easily be overlooked or ignored. It would be a negative step to remove this opportunity and we ask you to consider reinstating their status as a group. We know they benefit from the kind of special focus which was included in the current framework as it was beginning to show results. It's URGENT - write to inspection.consultation@ofsted.gov.uk before Friday 5 April.

Ofsted is the government agency that is responsible for checking how effective all schools, colleges, nurseries and early years settings are in developing and educating our children - and their pupils, students and young children.

The decisions and judgements that Ofsted makes about an institution can have huge impacts, not least for the staff who work there and the young people that attend. So, the way in which Ofsted and their inspectors conduct themselves, and carry out their work, is very important. All Ofsted inspections are governed by an Education Inspection Framework (it used to be called the Common Inspection Framework). The previous template was introduced in 2015; Ofsted are now consulting on a revised template which they hope to introduce from next September.

You can find out what Ofsted themselves say about the changes here.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-launches-a-consultation-on-proposals-for-changes-to-the-education-inspection-framework>

Roma Support Group – and many other charities and agencies working with Gypsies, Travellers and Roma – are very concerned about another change that Ofsted appears to be making. The 2015 framework which you can see here,

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/717953/The_common_inspection_framework_education_skills_and_early_years-v2.pdf

talks about “groups of learners”. The 2015 document explains:

Inspection is primarily about evaluating how well individual children and learners benefit from the education provided by the school or provider. Inspection tests the school's or provider's response to individual needs by observing how well it helps all children and learners to make progress and fulfil their potential.

However, the framework makes clear,

In making judgements, inspectors will pay particular attention to the outcomes for the following groups:

And then it lists a number of groups of learners, including:

- disabled children and learners and those who have special educational needs
- children and learners in specialist provision
- boys/men
- girls/women
- the highest and lowest attaining children and learners
- **children and learners for whom English is an additional language**
- **children and learners from minority ethnic groups**
- **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and learners**
- lesbian, gay and bisexual children and learners
- transgender children and learners
- young carers
- children and learners attending alternative provision
- children and learners with medical conditions
- disadvantaged children and learners
- children looked after and care leavers
- older learners
- children and learners of different religions and beliefs
- ex-offenders

- teenage mothers

Now, for the 2019 framework for inspections, there is no mention of the need for inspectors to “pay particular attention to the outcomes” of any groups. You can see the 2019 draft framework here.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/770924/Proposed_education_inspection_framework_draft_for_consultation_140119.pdf.pdf

How much does this matter? Sean Harford, the Director of Education at Ofsted explained to MPs at the Women & Equalities select committee hearing last September. Government ministers had in 2012 wanted to see Gypsy, Roma and Travellers identified as a particular group of students in education facing particular problems. They wanted Ofsted to make a commitment to include GRT students and pupils in their inspections. Sean said:

(The) Commitment.....was to highlight them as a vulnerable group in the revised Ofsted framework, and there were a couple of revisions when we revised it in 2014 or 2015..... Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils were identified as one of the vulnerable groups, or a subsection of them. As such, inspectors are directed to pay particular attention to those pupils if they are in sufficient numbers to be able to draw any conclusions from that.

That is one of the issues around this, because the youngsters tend to be in quite small numbers and spread quite thinly, although there are large numbers in some schools. That commitment, in addition to the survey work, has absolutely been fulfilled.

Sean Harford concluded by saying:

I have examples of where, if Traveller, Gypsy or Roma pupils are being treated particularly badly or particularly well in schools, we have reported publicly on those specific schools on those issues, so I know it is coming through in the framework.

If Ofsted national director said in September 2018 that identifying GRT pupils as a vulnerable group was important in some inspections, what had changed by January 2019 when the new draft Framework was tabled?

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/women-and-equalities-committee/tackling-inequalities-faced-by-the-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-communities/oral/89448.html>

(Q420)

Secondly, we have examples where a school has been found to be operating in a potentially unlawful manner for Roma students. If the inspectors had not been required to pay “particular attention” to outcomes for Roma students, would this have been picked up? For instance, Clifton Community School – a secondary school in Rotherham with about 15-20% of the students being (migrant) Roma – was inspected in March 2016. The inspectors found:

Work to improve the attendance of pupils from the Roma community continues to have a positive impact. Their attendance now compares favourably with that of Roma pupils nationally, and is consistently better than it was last year. However, in order to achieve this improvement in attendance, leaders adopted a strategy of grouping Roma pupils into their own, culturally separate, mixed age tutor groups. Although this initiative has had some positive outcomes since its introduction last September, leaders accept it must be a temporary intervention, as it may, in time, conflict with the school’s wider work to promote tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions. Leaders will now set time limits for the initiative and adapt their approach to better meet individual pupils’ needs, no matter what their cultural heritage.

To decide to omit any reference to learners of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller origin, or groups of learners for whom English is a new language, or particular groups of students and pupils of a minority ethnic origin would be a disservice. It would be to maintain a pretence that no groups of students face similar and difficult obstacles (as the government’s own Race Disparity Audit clearly showed). And that groups of particular ethnic and cultural backgrounds face some real difficulties in benefitting from the opportunities that the English educational system should provide.

Many Roma families explain their reason for wanting to be in this country as it gives their children access to an education that is denied to them in eastern Europe. We would urge as many people as possible to respond to Ofsted’s consultation by objecting to the removal of particular groups of learners from the proposed new inspection framework. Please click on this on-line response here,

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/EIFConsultation/>

or write to:

inspection.consultation@ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted consultation re inspection framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-draft-for-consultation>

Schools handbook consultation

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/772065/Schools_draft_handbook_180119.pdf

RSG statements and etc re EUSS and Brexit

The dangers of Brexit

“Brexit has made me afraid of speaking my native language in the UK”

Staff and volunteers from Roma Support group wrote this article which appeared in the Metro on 15 March 2019.

<https://metro.co.uk/2019/03/15/brexit-has-made-me-afraid-of-speaking-my-native-language-in-the-uk-8892060/>

“Britain's Roma community fears post-Brexit future”

Staff, volunteers and users at Roma Support Group and Luton Roma Trust also contributed to this article in Al-Jazeera on 25 March 2019

Al-Jazeera:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/britain-roma-community-fears-post-brexit-future-190324212814472.html>

#LondonIsOpen EU Londoner advice sessions

The Mayor of London is hosting events offering free legal advice through 1:1 sessions and group seminars with immigration lawyers.

Learn more about the Settled Status application process. You will be guided through the [EU Londoners Hub](#) and offer useful information leaflets in all EU languages.

Free. Just turn up.

Friday, 29 March

Event 1: Woolwich Centre Library/General Gordon Square, 35 Wellington St, Woolwich, London SE18 6HQ

- 14:30 - 16:30

Saturday, 30 March

Event 1: Polish Social and Cultural Association, 238-246 King St, Hammersmith, London W6 0RF

- 11:30 - 13:30

Event 2: Westfield Shepherd's Bush, (*near Jamie's Italian*), Ariel Way, White City, London W12 7GF

- 14:00 - 18:00

Sunday, 31 March

Event 1: The Mall - Wood Green, 159 High Rd, Wood Green, London N22 6YQ

- 10:00 - 12:30

Event 2: Leytonstone, near Tube station, Church Lane, London E11 1HE

- 13:00 - 15:15

Event 3: Migrant Resource Centre, Berol House, 25 Ashley Road, London N17 9LJ

- 16:00 - 18:00

Monday, 1 April

Event 1: Heathrow Airport - Bay 10 of Terminal 3 coach park, Compass Centre Nelson Rd, Longford, London, Hounslow TW6 1QG

- 10:00 - 12:00

Event 2: Willesden Green, High road, opposite Costa Coffee, London NW10 2QD

- 13:00 - 15:00

Event 3: Latin American House - Camden, Kingsgate Place, London NW6 4TA

- 16:00 - 18:00

From our friends at Free Movement

How should you respond if the Home Office has made a mistake in assessing your application for Settled Status, or if you disagree with what they have said? This article clearer explains what you can do, and how you can deal with errors, mistakes and incorrect judgments.

Receiving unsettling news: how to challenge the refusal of EU settled and pre-settled status

https://www.freemovement.org.uk/refused-eu-settled-status-appeal/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=refused-eu-settled-status-appeal&utm_source=Free+Movement&utm_campaign=f36d213602-RSS_EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_WEEKLY&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_792133aa40-f36d213602-116231393&mc_cid=f36d213602&mc_eid=1ce38ae791

From Coram Legal Children's Centre

Further worrying news that some children who are living in households with parents as EU nationals, or in foster care, in care homes, might find themselves through no fault of their own, in perilous circumstances. Read the report here.

https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/mar/18/thousands-of-children-could-become-undocumented-after-brex-it-new-windrush-generation?CMP=share_btn_link

UK Parliamentary Joint select committee on Human Rights

“Immigration Bill strips EU citizens in UK of rights after Brexit”

Another group of MPs and Lords joined the growing number of people in and around Parliament who are aware of the dangers for Roma and other EU nationals of the government policy for the EU registration scheme to achieve

Settled Status. See their latest report here; we attach below their conclusions and recommendation to government.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/news-parliament-2017/legislative-scrutiny-report-published-17-19/>

Conclusions and recommendations

EU Settlement Scheme

1.The Committee is concerned that the main provisions of the Bill, unless amended, will remove all EU free movement of persons rights, without addressing the rights of those who currently benefit from rights of free movement of persons under EU law, or social security rights. This includes the rights of those who have resided in the UK for many years, working in the UK, paying into our social security system, and even having been born in the UK and lived here their whole lives. Removing their rights with no equivalent legislative protection in place raises significant human rights concerns. These provisions could leave individuals and families in a situation of precarity as to their futures, including housing, social security and property rights. (Paragraph 7)

2.The Committee proposes amendments to the Bill to put protections and guarantees in the Bill itself by ensuring that those with acquired rights will be protected through the manner in which the SI-making power is used. Such an amending clause would require that any regulations made under clauses 4 and 5 should contain measures to protect the acquired rights of those who have rights within the United Kingdom deriving from EU free movement rights. (Paragraph 10)

3.The Committee shares concerns expressed by other Committees that the EU Settlement Scheme as currently proposed creates problems relating to the lack of physical proof of status. We consider that more should be done to raise awareness of the EU Settlement Scheme and to assist individuals with applications. However, we do not consider that these steps alone will address the concerns around a lack of physical proof of status. The Home Office should ensure that physical proof of status is issued to those registered under the EU Settlement Scheme. (Paragraph 14)

4.The Committee is also concerned at the ambiguity about the situation of those who miss the deadline for applications under the EU Settlement Scheme. These could be individuals who have lived and worked in the UK their whole lives. Their rights should not depend on subsequent registration with a scheme

within a specific time limit. The Committee considers that steps should be taken either to make provision for registration outside of the EU Settlement Scheme time limit, or to ensure that the entitlement to this status is not dependant on registration, for example with the registration solely being used to assist with physical proof of status. The Committee considers that steps should be taken either to make provision for registration outside of the EU Settlement Scheme time limit, or to ensure that the entitlement to this status is not dependant on registration, for example with the registration solely being used to assist with physical proof of status. (Paragraph 15)

5.The Committee is particularly concerned that certain categories of vulnerable people may have difficulty in accessing the EU Settlement Scheme and therefore may be excluded from the rights to which they should be entitled under it. The Committee recommends that the Government take steps to ensure that vulnerable groups are made aware of their rights and are assisted in accessing their rights under the EU Settlement Scheme. (Paragraph 16)

Multi-media tool kit for Roma parents

<https://www.lawforlife.org.uk/law-for-life-projects/multimedia-toolkit-for-roma-parents/>

Relations between Roma community members and social workers have never been easy. But in the last year, efforts have been made by both Roma Support Group and Law for Life (a highly respected NGO working for legal education) to challenge misconceptions within the Roma communities. We highlighted the information guide that is written for Roma parents some time ago. This has now been followed up by a short film (21 minutes) in Romanes again especially for Roma parents. As the Roma Support Group champions, trustees and paid workers explain at the beginning of the film:

We all want to keep our children safe. As Roma, we only want the best for our children. And here in the UK, we have a chance to make sure that our children receive the very best education and health care. We have to make sure that the way we look after our children meets the standards required by UK law. Because if we don't, that can cause problems. Our children are the most precious thing we have in our lives. So, in this video, we'll hear about what can be done to keep our children safe, how

we can help when we need it and how to work with social workers when we need support.

Watch it here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeZREM6kT8c>

Law for Life says,

We are pleased to share with you our short film which looks at key elements of the legal framework of child protection in England, and the skills needed to fully meet the requirements. The film is narrated by Roma community members in Romanes. We also hope that this resource will be used by Children's Services to help them make the legal frameworks more accessible and engage more effectively with Roma families.

INVITATION TO LGBTIQ Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Conference

The National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1NA

Thursday 4th July 2019 – 18.00pm – 20.00pm

Jane Hutt, Deputy Minister and Chief Whip will open the event

The Romani Cultural & Arts Company (RCAC) is proud to invite you to the LGBTIQ Gypsy, Roma & Traveller (GRT) Conference. The event, hosted by National Assembly for Wales, will feature Dr Daniel Baker (England) and Christine Lee (Wales) plus guests including Vera Kurtic (Council of Europe/Serbia) Dezsó Mate (Hungary). This varied range of speakers with their diverse areas of expertise will open up debate regarding LGBTIQ issues as they relate to GRT individuals and communities. This event is one of many that RCAC is currently co-ordinating. We are excited to be giving a 'minority within a minority' a platform and a voice. This LGBTIQ GRT conference presents a unique opportunity to participate in discussion with an international panel of inspiring speakers.

Dr Daniel Baker, Romani artist, curator and academic says

Discussions regarding the significance of intersecting identities are more important than ever. By recognising commonalities across difference

through shared experience and knowledge we move closer toward a more caring society.

Isaac Blake; Director of the Romani Cultural & Arts Company says

An open, tolerant society cannot pick and choose which groups should merit tolerance and understanding. Every individual living on our beautiful planet deserves to be judged on their own words and actions; not on their race, nationality, religion, sexuality or family background. Let's stand together and be proud of the amazing diversity that humanity encompasses.

Christine Lee, Romani Cultural and Arts Company Community Champion says

Meaningful change for the LGBTQI Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community is not going to come from just knowing more information, but from doing something with it.

Jane Hutt, Deputy Minister and Chief Whip said

I'm proud to support Romani Arts during Gypsy Roma and Traveller History month with their conference on LGBTIQ within the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community. Welsh Government's next Strategic Equality Plan will take an approach that recognises the importance of understanding intersectionality between different protected characteristics. Events such as this lecture will help to provide a platform for conversations to take place and influence policy on a national level, providing reassurance to all communities that Welsh Government strives to ensure that equality is at the core of our business, diversity is celebrated and where discrimination has no place.

Book here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lgbtiq-gypsy-roma-traveller-conference-tickets-58588662266>

...and finally

From our friends at Gateshead Kavarna:

Gateshead funding appeal

- We will deliver an exhibition about the culture of the Roma living in Gateshead.

- We will deliver illustrated talks to community groups in Gateshead, telling the stories of the Roma community.
- We will speak to 10 community groups and take our exhibition to 12 venues in Gateshead.

By 11 April!

<https://www.spacehive.com/celebrating-roma-culture>

Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily suggest that they are in accordance with the trustees of the Roma Support Group.

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