Report on the Situation of the Roma Community in Govanhill, Glasgow

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Executive Summary

The Roma have been identified as the most vulnerable and deprived ethnic group within Europe. As Harda (2006) argues, "Disproportionately affected by poverty and discriminated against in employment, education, health care, administrative and other services, they face considerable obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms".[1] With the collapse of state socialist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), those living in the former Eastern Bloc have seen their quality of life deteriorate, losing what little employment they had along with their housing and many of the social programmes on which they depended.[2] Facing increased hardship, racism and discrimination the Roma have fled their worsening situation in greater numbers, first as asylum seekers and later, after May 2004, as 'new' citizens of an enlarged European Union (EU). However, they have been met by a new wave of anti-Roma attitudes emerging in Western Europe, marked by media speculation about the consequences, real and imagined, of large scale immigration of Roma from the East.

Historically, immigration has presented a number of significant challenges to nation states, not least in relation to their nationally-based systems of welfare. The development of the welfare system in Britain took as its starting point the prioritising of British workers and their families and notions of the 'national interest'.[3] Indeed, Britain, not unlike other European member states, has a long history of, at best, the subordinated inclusion of racial and ethnic minorities deemed to be 'in' but not 'of' the nation[4] and, at worst, their total exclusion from welfare services and benefits.

Similarly, the EU project has represented a particular kind of challenge to its member states insofar as it has been built on a commitment to the free movement of capital and labour, goods and services. More specifically, as the EU has enlarged over time, those previously deemed to be 'outsiders' have been reconstructed as 'citizens of Europe', legitimate 'insiders' in possession of a portfolio of formal rights that cannot be limited by individual national governments within the framework of EU law, whilst at one and the same time being at risk as a result of processes of racism and discrimination operating at the local and national level.[5]

In short, the Roma are vulnerable to the combined impact of being an ethnic minority and migrant workers. In addition to these two factors, their historical, and at times systematic, abuse by both state and civic society across Europe has left a legacy of mistrust and isolation.

This report brings together research on a number of complex and inter-related issues regarding the social exclusion of Roma minority groups in Europe. In particular, the authors have examined the challenges that Roma communities, migrating from Eastern to Western Europe, face. The report is organised into several sections dealing with barriers to Roma inclusion across Europe and across a range of public services, as well as more specifically in relation to access to housing and employment opportunities in the UK. A significant part of this study evaluates the work of service providers in the Govanhill area of Glasgow where Slovak Roma are now residing. This evaluation places the Roma experience within the broader political, social policy and cultural context. It also recognises the complexity and multiple levels of the policy-making arena.

The research found that many of the problems of the Roma stem from their deliberate exclusion from citizenship in the EU countries from which they originate. This exclusion is a result of deep-rooted racism at all levels of society. Clearly more needs to be done to protect the rights of Roma people in countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania and in this the EU, and hence all of

its member states, have a significant role to play. Of course, the protection of the rights of Roma is already a legal requirement placed on all member states, new and old, due to two legally binding EU directives known as the *Race Equality Directive* (2000/43/EC) and the *Employment Equality Directive* (2000/79/EC).[6] These two directives alongside the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Charter of Fundamental Rights associated with the 2007 Treaty of Lisbon (in the process of ratification by member states) form the legal basis for the protection of rights in employment and for combating exclusion and persecution motivated by racism. However, it is clear that a great deal more needs to be done to address the specific barriers Roma face (for example, through the adoption of a specific EU Roma directive.[7]) as Roma continue to migrate in search of opportunities and an improved quality of life - a reality that cannot be divorced from the processes of marginalisation and exclusion that they continue to face in their 'home' countries.

In the context of EU enlargement eastwards, it is perhaps rather easy to assume that Slovak Roma, like other A8 migrants, are now 'voluntary migrants' in the traditional sense and that, should they not find the opportunities or quality of life improvements they hoped for, are free to go back and work in their 'home' country. However, given their on-going persecution and exclusion in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, it is not unreasonable to view the Roma as a group that continue to be 'pushed' abroad as much as being 'pulled' by the promise of employment.[8] As a minority ethnic group within Slovakia, they are not in the same position as 'majority' populations, such as ethnic Poles living in Poland or indeed ethnic Slovaks living in Slovakia, who, whilst undoubtedly suffering high levels of unemployment and depressed wages at 'home', are not, racially discriminated against or the focus of collectively targeted abuse and violence. As a result the Slovak Roma can be seen to occupy that grey area between 'forced' and 'voluntary' migration embodied in popular constructions of 'economic migrants' and 'asylum seekers' respectively.

Governments, both at UK and Scottish level, have not only failed to play their part in safeguarding the rights of the Roma as a recognised ethnic group in Europe, but have also failed to promote and raise awareness of Roma rights within the UK. Indeed, whilst the Roma has a right to reside and work within the UK, they have enjoyed little active protection by Government agencies in the area of employment, housing and social benefits. This has lead to the increased vulnerability of this already marginalised ethnic minority.

Often in part-time, temporary employment, outwith mainstream 'legal' structures as a result of their exclusion from public sector employment services and reliance on 'gangmasters' for work and housing, Roma are often unable to access the basic in-work benefits many other people working in the UK take for granted - a contract of employment, a minimum wage, pension rights, paid holidays, maternity leave, and paid sick leave to name a few. Both under EU and UK law the Roma have an ethnic status that safeguards their cultural and social rights and yet there is little recognition and few proactive processes in place within the UK to ensure these rights can be accessed and enjoyed by the Roma. This is despite the adoption in 2000 by the UK, along with all EU member states, of National Action Plans (NAPs).

The stated purpose of these commonly agreed NAPs is to combat poverty and increase social inclusion. In the UK this involved a commitment to "modernising its social model, based on the shared values of social justice and the active participation of *all* citizens in economic and social life."[9] Indeed, the UK's NAP calls for "a strong, stable economy and a fair society with security and opportunity for all."[10] Importantly, it identifies several priorities for action as well as strategies for making progress on

these priorities. The top priority is tackling child poverty through "promoting financial security to poor families in and out of work and increasing income through participation in the labour market."[11] The strategy underpinning the NAP and the EU common objectives is made particularly clear in the UK document *Working Together: UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion* 2006-08, wherein it is stated that "It is important that citizens experience the benefits of sustainable growth and social cohesion in years to come. That is why our overall domestic objectives are for a strong stable economy and a fair society with security and opportunity for all."[12] In relation to the Roma, these stated objectives seem rather hollow.

Of course, the situation in Scotland is further complicated by the division of responsibilities between Scotland and Westminster arising out of Devolution. In particular, Section 5 of the 1998 Scotland Act reserved 11 key policy areas to Westminster including employment, social security and immigration.[13] However, as is the case in relation to asylum seekers and their families[14], the vast majority of services that relate directly to A8 migrants, including the Slovak Roma, are devolved. More specifically, whilst the Home Office and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) develop and implement legislation relating to immigration policy, including transitional arrangements applied to A8 migrants, and access to benefits across the UK centring on the principle of 'no recourse to public funds', health care, education, children's services, housing and policing are all the responsibility of Scottish Government.

This situation creates problems for both policy makers and service providers at the local and regional levels. For example, Scottish government can draw up codes of guidance in relation to say homelessness or improved access to welfare services for A8 migrants, but local councils and service providers are then left to interpret them whilst at one and the same time ensuring that their actions are in line with the primary legislation enacted at Westminster. In this way policy making at the different levels can and does become contradictory. Moreover, situations have already arisen where local policy makers and providers are being asked to provide additional services to meet growing demand without additional resources.

It is in this highly complex national, EU and International policy context that research was carried out relating to the needs, service provision for and welfare access of Slovak Roma living in the Govanhill area of Glasgow.

That said, it should not be forgotten that the UK NAP, expressing the common objectives of the EU, is reflected in policy documents at the level of the Scottish Government *and* at the level of local authorities. In 2003 the priorities of the Scottish Government were identified as:

- To prevent individuals or families from falling into poverty,
- To provide routes out of poverty for individuals and families,
- To sustain individuals or families in a lifestyle free from poverty.[15]

Moreover, in July 2004 a further Scottish initiative entitled *Closing the Opportunity Gap* was launched comprising six objectives:

- To increase the chances of sustained employment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups - in order to lift them permanently out of poverty,
- To improve the confidence and skills of the most disadvantaged children and young people -

in order to provide them with the greatest chance of avoiding poverty when they leave school,
- To reduce the vulnerability of low income families to financial exclusion and multiple debts - in order to prevent them becoming over-indebted and/or to lift them out of poverty,
- To regenerate the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods - in order that people living there can take advantage of job opportunities and improve their quality of life,
- To increase the rate of improvement of the health status of people living in the most deprived communities - in order to improve their quality of life, including their employability prospects,
- To improve access to high quality services for the most disadvantaged groups and individuals in rural communities - in order to improve their quality of life and enhance their access to opportunity.[16]

The biggest challenge for government at all levels, then, is the *implementation* of the NAP for *all* citizens. With special transitional arrangements in place for A8 migrants, including the Roma, which work to severely restrict their access to public funds and hence reinforce and reproduce their exclusion over time and space, this is something which demands the immediate attention of politicians and policy makers alike, at all levels of government.

The impact of policy on Roma inclusion

The commitment to inclusion and integration embodied in the NAP must be assessed in the context of the transitional arrangements relating to A8 (and A2) migrants that are currently in place.

For the moment, not all EU citizens coming to the UK are viewed equally. More specifically, post-2004, CEE nationals from the A8 nations have been granted rights of: movement; employment; education; retirement; family reunion and; welfare. However, these rights are circumscribed in important ways relating to restrictions in terms of access to public funds and labour market participation. Across the EU, most member states, with the exception a handful of countries including the UK, withdrew the right to work from A8 migrants. This resulted in the development of the 2005 *Five Year Strategy for Asylum and Immigration*[17] in the UK, alongside other new arrangements for migrants workers, which granted A8 migrants the right to work but denied them the right to make claims on public funds where they were not yet participating in the labour market.

Access to Employment and Employment Services

In theory, then, A8 nationals are free to access the labour market. However, there are some conditions attached to the granting of employment rights. In particular, from 1 May 2004 these migrants have been required to register with the Workers' Registration Scheme (WRS) within 30 days of the start of their employment in the UK. The stated objective of the Scheme is to enable the government to monitor the numbers and impact of A8 workers on the domestic labour market. However, barriers to registration exist resulting in some Roma losing any legal rights they may have to in-work benefits and health care.

Moreover, Roma migrants cannot access JobCentre Plus or other state services and schemes (such as New Deal) due to the complex regulations limiting their usage, thus narrowing their legal employment opportunities. This puts them more at the mercy of non-statutory 'employment agencies' and 'gangmasters', especially where an individual's education and skill levels are low and there are significant literacy and/or language difficulties.

Roma who utilise non-statutory 'employment agencies', which constitutes the vast majority estimated

at around 95%, access low-skilled, temporary and low paid work (almost always paying below the legal minimum wage and requiring the payment of additional 'expenses' for travel to and from work, for example). These jobs frequently involve working in appalling conditions, in extreme temperatures with excessively long shifts at night or during other unsociable hours. Roma were the only takers of these employment vacancies. A combination of low wages, the irregularity of work and the variation in hours available (depending on seasonal demand, for example) means that Roma families are forced to pool their meagre resources and share sub-standard accommodation in order to maintain a roof over their heads.

On arrival, Roma without exception find themselves either without employment, or with a temporary 'position', and sharing small flats in conditions of extreme overcrowding and squalor. Having paid weekly 'fees' to 'gangmasters', Roma find they are unable to change their situation. Indeed, to break away from this exploitation puts them at extreme risk, not only of unemployment, but also homelessness and destitution in the absence of benefit entitlement.

Access to Welfare Benefits

Employed A8 citizens can apply for in-work benefits (child tax credit, working tax credit, child benefit, housing benefit and council tax benefit) subject to national conditions and eligibility criteria. Once an individual has been employed for 12 months continuously, with no more than a 4 week break, they are granted the same rights and entitlements as other EU nationals, which means access to social security benefits. Central here is the right to claim Job Seekers Allowance and Income Support. However, these benefits are subject to passing the Habitual Residence Test, which means answering questions at the JobCentre relating to length and continuity of residence and demonstrating one's residency status. Therefore, lengthy trips outside the UK may exclude an individual and his/her family from social security benefits, even if they have completed 12 months full-time employment. Other potential barriers to inclusion in the national social security scheme include employment in 'non-mainstream' work where National Insurance is not paid and non-WRS registration.

Roma arriving in Govanhill without employment are unable to make any claims on public funds given the primary legislation developed by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Home Office. This even works to limit their access to emergency payments from social work in times of 'destitution'. As one of the respondents noted, such restrictive legislation creates a tension between professional social work ethics and the principles of anti-discriminatory practice on the one hand, and the day-to-day realities of trying to work with excluded minority ethnic groups like the Slovak Roma. If they remain unemployed they face destitution and may be forced either to return home, or seek emergency assistance from charitable and church agencies. Roma who secure employment for themselves or family members must live on their low wages until entitlement to in-work benefits are triggered. One respondent claimed that the current wait for tax credits was just 3 weeks but that Child Benefit payments took longer to arrive due to the checks that were required in Slovakia prior to entitlement being granted. Low-paid Roma are therefore likely to live a hand-to-mouth existence in the shorter term, especially where they are beholden to a 'gangmaster'. Only a minority of Roma succeed in maintaining themselves in employment for 1 year continuously given the temporary and irregular nature of the employment they can usually access.

Access to Social Housing and Homelessness Assistance

Most A8 migrants living in Scotland are accommodated in the private rented sector, often in unaffordable, poor quality dwellings.[18] However, there has been some confusion at the local authority level regarding the rights and entitlements to social housing and homelessness assistance of A8 migrants, including the Slovak Roma, arising out of the complex policy making process at different levels of government. This has resulted in attempts by the Scottish Government to clarify the position.

The interpretation of the EU Directive that outlines the rights and entitlements of A8 migrants to social housing and homelessness assistance (2004/38/EC - *Right of Union citizens and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States*)[19] has been the focus of on-going debate between the local and national government in Scotland. Becoming law in the UK in 2006, it gives A8 citizens freedom of movement through the EU and free access to the labour market, subject to the transitional regulations in force until May 2009 (as noted earlier). These provide specific rights of residence which can be lost if an A8 national is found to be "an unreasonable burden on social assistance." In essence, A8 migrants need to be employed and registered on the Worker Registration Scheme, be self employed or self-reliant in order to have the right to reside.

However, in the devolution context, in Scotland, unlike England, there were no regulations laid down relating to A8 access to social housing and homelessness assistance until the Scottish Executive (now Scottish Government) drew up a Code of Guidance confirming the same housing entitlements for A8 nationals as other European citizens. That said, there is a contradiction here. Whilst A8 nationals are eligible for social housing which potentially increases their ability to break the cycle of poor housing, social exclusion and racism at the community level, the 'no recourse to public funds' legislation (which denies unemployed A8s Housing Benefit) makes unemployed migrants vulnerable to homelessness or continued dependency on the private rented sector in cases where they are unable to afford the rent. In these circumstances, unemployed A8 migrants would be unable to access social housing despite their eligibility being unrestricted by law.

Roma are particularly vulnerable to private sector dependency, given their high levels of unemployment, temporary, low paid employment, and lack of WRS registration papers. As a result, they experience high rents, sub-standard conditions and non-existent tenancy agreements. This leads to overcrowding (as families are forced to pool their resources to survive in the face of unemployment, low wages and 'no recourse to public funds' legislation), evictions, and strained community relations (as a result of increased noise and waste). These factors also force Roma families to move frequently from one tenancy to another. These conditions and the consequences that arise out of them then work to reinforce negative stereotypes about minority ethnic groups like the Roma.

Other problems in terms of accessing social housing relate to the 'paperwork' demanded by social landlords (such as credit checks) and also impact significantly on Roma as a result of not only the language barrier but also the reluctance of private landlords to provide tenancy agreements and references.

In terms of accessing homelessness assistance, the situation is also complex and unsatisfactory. In 2006 the Scottish Government issued a Code of Guidance relating to homeless A8 migrants that confirmed the responsibility of local councils and housing authorities to accommodate them. However, the legal opinion given to the City of Edinburgh was that homeless A8 individuals and their families are only entitled to local authority provided homelessness assistance if they are economically

active (and hence entitled to Housing Benefit), given the limitations of the primary legislation issued from Westminster.[20] This position is replicated in Glasgow given the shared policy context and has given rise to a situation whereby, *should* the council's Homelessness Unit agree to follow the Code of Guidance from Scottish Government, it must find not only the costs of housing but also the full household costs for homeless families who have no access to public funds in the form of benefits, all without additional funding. This represents an unsustainable, additional financial burden on the local Council. Moreover, to accept that responsibility is also to risk, at least in legal terms, a surcharge being levied on the Council in line with the provisions of the 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act. The only other alternative seems to be to glean the acceptance of the DWP that homeless unemployed A8s constitute an 'emergency case' which would see the release of central funds. At the time of writing, this had not been accepted by the Department.

There is little in the way of evidence to suggest that homelessness is currently a significant social problem amongst the Slovak Roma living in the Govanhill area. Indeed, there appears to be high availability of poor quality private rented accommodation provided by landlords prepared to turn a blind eye to overcrowding providing the price is right. Issuing no formal tenancy agreements means tenants have limited notional rights and therefore cannot easily protect themselves against unregulated landlords. Moreover, these landlords cannot easily be brought under the House in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) licensing regulations without proof of multiple occupancy. In addition, there is a lack of legal protection relating to the problem of overcrowding where the Slovak Roma are concerned. This is because overcrowded properties are usually occupied by families that are related to one another, exempting them from the usual limitations imposed by the state. More specifically, HMO regulations state that: "a house is an HMO if it is the only or principal residence of three or more qualifying persons from three or more families".

That said, homelessness may well affect the Slovak (and Romanian) Roma community in the future should properties in the area currently let to them and other poor individuals and families be upgraded as a result of hard fought for and much needed capital investment. In this scenario, landlords are increasingly able to attract market rents and demand high deposits (unaffordable to those who are largely excluded from the labour market) as well as unobtainable character and credit references. This renders Roma and other poor sections of the community at serious risk of homelessness, especially if the discrepancy between A8 eligibility for benefits and social housing is not addressed by the Home Office. Ineligible for Housing Benefit as unemployed individuals, the only option is likely to be a precarious reliance on charitable provision.

Some service providers highlighted the problem that the majority of social housing stock was inappropriate given the average Roma family size and that social housing providers could not tolerate overcrowding given the legal framework within which they worked. Moreover, waiting lists in the area were already significant. In any case, without access to housing benefit in times of unemployment, the suitability or otherwise of currently available stock is neither here nor there. Furthermore, exclusion from housing benefit also limits choice in the private sector, condemning Roma to the perpetual occupation of accommodation provided by 'slum landlords'.

Access to Health Services

The main barriers to Roma involvement with GPs and other health service providers, including Health Visitors, centre around language and cultural barriers. Roma patients are unfamiliar with the registration requirement and tend to turn up on the day they wish to be seen by a doctor. However, without being registered they cannot access an appointment. When appointments are made they are often not kept, once again reflecting the cultural expectation that patients are seen at some point on the day of presentation, providing they are prepared to wait. This creates concern for the practice in terms of wasted appointments in a context of high local demand and limited resources, but also in terms of missed child immunisations, for example, and the threats to public health low immunisation levels represent.

The significant language barrier that exists for most of the Roma requires the provision of Slovak and sometimes Romani interpreters. The former are available from the Glasgow Interpreter Service but, given already high and growing demand and a low level of supply, there is often a shortage. This can result in patients turning up but being unable to communicate with the receptionists or health care professionals, resulting in another wasted appointment but also an increased risk of 'losing' that individual from the system once more. There is also a need for assistance in the filling out of registration forms and patient histories which makes the assessment of patient need incredibly difficult if not impossible. With no embedded interpreter services all first 'contacts' are extremely time-consuming and frustrating as well as potentially ineffective.

Home visits bring their own challenges. Here health care professionals are required to engage in 'outreach' in order to improve levels of immunisation within the community, tackle poor health status amongst children and families and concern themselves with issues relating to child protection. Working increasingly with the impoverished Roma community in Govanhill, local practitioners have witnessed growing levels of malnutrition amongst children, overcrowding and infestation, all of which carry with them significant public health risks. They are working within a health care paradigm which reflects the norms of western medicine, public health improvement and preventative interventions, and prioritises the welfare of children. These health care professionals are thus faced with the challenge of communicating effectively with Roma parents, especially mothers who are deemed to have primary responsibility for the health and welfare of the family in Roma as in western cultures, and trying to overcome cultural differences played out at the level of family life.

Access to Schooling and Education Services

The Slovak Roma form a diverse community, with levels of educational attainment being much lower than other groups. That may reflect the lower value placed on formal schooling in Roma culture, but it also reflects the multiple forms of exclusion from state education systems that they have endured historically. Moreover, the chronic poverty and social exclusion they have suffered as a social group has created a greater reliance on the economic activity of others in the family outside of the male breadwinner. This has traditionally impacted on levels of attendance at secondary school in particular.

Another factor impacting on levels of attendance and pupil retention is the transitory behaviour of Roma. Like the Pakistani migrants settling in Scotland before them, Slovak Roma go back to their 'homeland' regularly, for example to attend family events, and may be gone for some time. However, how the Roma differ from their Pakistani counterparts is that they are more likely to be gone for longer periods of time and more regularly. Moreover, parents can be away from Scotland, leaving children

in the care of extended family members which makes communication between schools and parents more complex and challenging and the building of trusting relationships a slower process.

In addition, the Roma have experienced discrimination and segregation within the Slovak education system for many years. As noted earlier, they have been excluded from the mainstream and placed in 'special' education facilities, where their needs and educational development have been neglected. This means that they are extremely suspicious of anyone perceived to be 'an agent of the state'. This means teachers, social workers and even voluntary sector support workers must work extremely hard to build trust and develop open lines of communication. This takes time, a high degree of commitment and a significant amount of resources.

Notwithstanding the multiple barriers to their inclusion, growing numbers of Slovak Roma children are now registered in local primary schools, two in particular, Annette Street and St Bride's, with growing numbers now being admitted to a third, Cuthbertson. And, whilst attendance at secondary school is more sporadic, involving smaller numbers of Roma children, again primarily at two local secondary schools, this is in part due to waiting lists for places. Not all children are accepted, though the service providers involved in the study were keen to stress the openness and helpfulness of the staff at the schools where Roma children have been placed. The concentration of secondary provision at Shawlands Academy reflects the school's status as a receiver school for asylum seekers following the signing of an Asylum Seeker Dispersal contract by GCC, which incorporates a Bilingual Support Unit.

Recommendations
The authors make a series of recommendations, arising out of the research, which highlight both the positive and imaginative efforts of local service providers, often in the context of very limited resources, and the responsibilities of the EU, the UK and Scottish governments and local authorities in the combating of social exclusion.

For example, it is recommended that:

- the UK Government urgently revise guidance on access to benefits and publicly funded services which currently discriminates against Roma migrants
- the Scottish Government take greater responsibility for meeting the public service needs of Roma for which they have devolved responsibility, including housing, health and education that all levels of government commit human and financial resources to supporting the development of organisations that have a particular focus on the Roma to protect, enhance and develop their employment, social and cultural rights
- that all levels of governments, where appropriate, allocate human and financial resources to support those public services struggling to meet the needs of the Roma in relation to their health, education, housing, employment and income maintenance, ensuring that the Roma are made aware of their legal rights
- the Scottish and UK government's gives public recognition to the ethnic status of the Roma in the UK and at EU level and actively promotes their rights

It is the view of the authors of this report that to build on the successes already in evidence in the Govanhill area of Glasgow planners, policy makers, service commissioners and providers will need to take continued care to focus on the specific needs of the Slovak Roma - recognising them as a distinct, albeit internally diverse, social group with particular requirements in relation to service

provision - whilst also ensuring that their needs are not met at the expense of other groups living in Govanhill. This requires a targeting of Roma in the short- to medium- term but not always through the development of Roma-specific initiatives. Indeed, there is clear scope here to also develop a range of services that would be of real benefit to the general community as a whole, whilst adopting a highly proactive approach to outreach to ensure that Roma perceive these community-wide services as being for them too. Given that in Slovakia the Roma have been systematically marginalised and actively excluded from local and national services, it will take a considerable amount of time and effort to change their cultural expectation of continued exclusion.

Running parallel to the on-going development of Roma-specific and community-wide services, there is also a clear need to prioritise community development and integration work. This is crucial to build trust between Roma and service providers but also Roma and other ethnic groups living in the area. Building mutual understanding and breaking down stereotypes works to foster tolerance and connections between the different ethnic communities and hence increase their propensity to see the value of identifying shared needs and interests which can be more effectively pursued collectively.

And finally, as the Roma community increasingly embeds itself in Govanhill, there is increasing scope to support and foster Roma-led initiatives which enable the Roma to develop community resources which reflect their own, self-defined needs and identities.

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[2] Zoltan Barany, (2000) 'The Socio-Economic Impact of Regime Change in Eastern Europe: Gypsy Marginality in the 1990s' in *East European Politics and Societies, 15(1)*. See also: www.hrw.org/reports/1994/WR94/Helsinki-07.htm; ERRC, (1997) *Time of the Skinheads: Denial and Exclusion of Roma in Slovakia,* Country Reports Series, No.3; and www.bhhrg.org

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[6] See EERC, (2004) *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union, p.11; OSI, (2006) Equality for Roma in Europe: A Roadmap for Action,* p.16; ERRC, (2007) *The Glass Box: Exclusion of Roma from Employment,* p.36.

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[18] Pam Orchard et al., (2007) *A Community Profile of EU8 Migrants in Edinburgh and an Evaluation of their Access to Key Services.*

[19] http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l33152.htm

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Background to this Report

In recent years, the numbers of Roma people migrating from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) to Scotland has steadily increased, in particular from Slovakia and the Czech Republic, and lately also from Romania. Of course, not all Czech, Slovak and Romanian migrants are from the Roma community. Nevertheless, whilst they are still a relatively small number, their arrival in Scotland presents a number of challenges. The fact that most of these new migrants to Scotland are concentrated in the Govanhill area of Glasgow also presents opportunities in terms of the ongoing development of a coherent and sustainable response to their needs based on the cooperation of a number of local agencies and the potential for Roma-led activities to generate a range of community services, facilities and supports, albeit with the assistance of European funders, which they can call their own.

Roma people have been historically marginalised throughout Europe and still face severe and unique social problems. The issue of the social exclusion of Roma people is one that is also of growing political importance within the context of the EU, and both Europe-wide and national policy continues to develop with the aim of ameliorating their situation. However, there is clear potential for an implementation gap to open up between the political discourse of inclusion and integration, as embodied in the National Action Programme for Social Inclusion (NAPs) developed by the British government as part of the strategy to progress commonly agreed objectives at the EU level, and the local and regional realities of working within primary legislation which asserts 'no recourse to public funds' for migrants from the new CEE member states. That said, recognition must be given to the innovative approach taken by local planners and service providers, particularly, from the point of view of this report, in the Govanhill area of Glasgow, where a range of initiatives have come together to improve the Slovak Roma population's access to health care, education and advice and support.

Between 2005 and 2007, both the South East Glasgow Community Health and Care Partnership and the City Council carried out work with members of the Roma community arriving in Govanhill, but their success was initially limited due to linguistic and cultural barriers and the fear and mistrust of 'authority' traditionally held by the Roma community. In response to this situation, in March 2007 the South East Glasgow Community Health and Care Partnership agreed funding to bring two Slovak support workers to Govanhill in order to provide a bridge between the Roma community and the relevant support agencies. The original remit of the support workers focused on 5 areas:

1) To develop an understanding of the local Roma community,
2) To optimise the ability of these EU citizens to take advantage of non-exploitative employment opportunities,
3) To ensure access to public health services in view of individual needs and also in terms of wider public health protection,
4) To ensure an understanding among Roma people of welfare services and their entitlements,
5) To encourage and enable participation of school age children in full time education.

The development of a drop-in facility, staffed by Slovak workers who were able to communicate with the local Roma community and act as a plug-in to local services, was both an innovation and a crucial development for service providers and potential service users alike. In particular, it highlighted the possibilities of a focused, local response for improving the lives of newly settled migrants and their access to community welfare provision. Notwithstanding medium- to long- term funding uncertainties and the constraints of working within primary legislation which works to limit the social rights of CEE migrants, the achievements of such an initiative cannot be overestimated.

The Research

In June 2007 two Slovak support workers, Lydia Zelmanova and Marcela Adamova, with the participation of Sarah Jeffery, produced a report outlining their work and incorporating valuable data on the Roma in Govanhill.[21] They estimated that 2-3000 Roma were living in Govanhill, concentrated in accommodation across 4-5 streets. Many came from Pavlovce nad Uhom in Eastern Slovakia, with others from other parts of Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The Slovak Roma in Govanhill form a diverse group of people. Most are literate, some having had completed a fair level of formal education in Slovakia, whilst others are unable to read and write either English or Slovak, their principle language being Roma/Rumungre dialect. Hence, the researchers utilised a variety of methods of data collection, supplementing interview techniques with focus groups, questionnaires and social activities. The research generated data on:

- The main motivations for migration to Glasgow,
- Levels of education and access to educational tools and services,
- Health and access to local NHS services,
- Housing circumstances,
- Employment experiences and employment status,
- Language and communication,
- Social networks and social integration,
- Community safety.

Jeffrey, Zelmanova and Adamova (2007) also collected data on the use of the drop-in facility in Daisy Street by Slovakian Roma living in Govanhill between March and June 2007. They interviewed 225 people, all of whom had had some contact directly with the drop-in or the Slovak support workers who form the backbone of the service, providing almost all of the interventions offered at the centre.

The findings of the support workers' report present a mixed and complex picture. To summarise, the Roma community in Govanhill were found to be facing a number of inter-related problems and obstacles to their inclusion, particularly regarding mainstream employment and decent housing. However, owing in no small part to the work of the drop-in support workers, themselves supported by other local service providers, the level of plug-in of Roma to local services was improving all the time. Nevertheless, the report makes a number of recommendations concerning the need to build further on the important work of the Daisy Street drop-in facility.[22]

The present research aims to build on the 2007 report of Adamova, Jeffery and Zelmanova, to provide both a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the Roma community in Glasgow, and to develop a firm knowledge basis for the ongoing strategies of agencies in Glasgow, particularly in the fields of health, employment, housing and education. It also aims to contribute to the awareness of the particular legal, social and economic problems faced by Roma in Scotland, the UK and Europe more generally, and to explicate both the EU and national legislative context within which specific actions by agencies in Scotland take place. On this basis, the report puts forward recommendations relating to the future planning, commissioning and development of services. It is anticipated that this report will also be of value in supporting work with Roma from Romania as their numbers increase over the next few years.

[21] Marcela Adamova, Sarah Jeffery and Lydia Zelmanova, (2007) *Report on information collated between March and June 2007*.

[22] For more details of specific recommendations, some of which are discussed in this report, see Marcela Adamova, Sarah Jeffery and Lydia Zelmanova, (2007) *Report on information collated between March and June 2007*.

Roma in Europe: A Brief Account of a Persecuted Group

In many European countries, particularly though not exclusively in CEE, the Roma face profound difficulties and hardships in common. Statistically, they form the largest ethnic minority and most socially excluded group in Europe, and are the largest ethnic minority in several European countries. For example, the last Romanian census, in 2002, counted about half-a-million ethnic Roma, while independent estimates place this number at around 2.5 million, or more than 10% of Romania's population.[23] Slovakia's 2001 census counted nearly 90,000 Roma, or 1.7% of the population. This figure is disputed by the Minority Rights Group who estimate that the Roma in Slovakia number between 480-520,000, nearly 10% of Slovakia's population of 5.3 million.[24] The number of Roma in the whole of Europe could be between 10 million and 12 million, according to a recent ERRC report for the European Commission.[25]

The history of the Roma in Europe is a tragic one. Migrating from northern India to Europe in the eleventh century, most Roma live today in eastern and central Europe, with many large communities in other European countries. In the parts of the Ottoman Empire today located in modern-day Romania, they have endured persecution and enslavement at the hands of landowners and clergy since the middle ages, being emancipated from slavery only in the mid-nineteenth century.

During the Second World War, the Roma were collectively targeted for racial persecution. An estimated 1.5 million were murdered in Nazi concentration camps.[26] In communist eastern and central Europe after the war, the state set about targeting Roma, with social policies aimed to eradicate "antisocial traits".[27] Indeed, following the decimation of the Czech Roma by fascist forces in the War years, Slovak Roma were compulsorily resettled there, 'dispersed' and forced to 'assimilate' through an engagement with the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation programmes that characterised the Soviet-style system of economy adopted in the 1940s and 50s. They were, in effect, 'proletarianized', ensnared by legislation that made state employment a compulsory feature of every adult's life in order to meet the needs of the 'extensive' production system.[28]

Despite draconian efforts to socially engineer their 'assimilation' (as opposed to integration), the vast majority of Roma remained marginalised and discriminated against by both state and society across Europe. Anti-Roma racism across Europe remained rampant throughout the post-war period. Some governments in both eastern and western Europe organised programmes of forced sterilization of Roma women. For example, across the former Czechoslovakia, Roma women were sterilized under pressure from state officials without their informed consent, and their children were taken from them and placed in the care of non-Roma families and state institutions, while many others were routinely placed in 'special schools', labelled 'mentally retarded' and denied the opportunity to develop the skills and qualifications needed to progress in society. As a group they were categorised according to the criteria laid down by the state social services on the basis of data collected by the state, often without their knowledge and/or consent, making them understandably distrustful of 'officials'.[29]

The collapse of state socialist societies in CEE resulted in the rapid opening up of the region and a complex, uneven and as yet unfinished process of reform in relation to those political, economic and policy structures established in the early post-war period.[30] The collapse and subsequent shift to a market economy and parliamentary-style democracies, alongside the reigniting of civil society, also generated sustained attempts by new CEE governments to join the European Union (EU). In addition, given the obvious strains of transformation, the pathologizing of social difference has become even

more visible across the region as processes of racialization are continually reworked in the context of national renewal. Following the collapse of Soviet hegemony, nationalism and religion have re-emerged across the region becoming powerful forces. New national-based elites have sought not only to defend their newly won independence and control over their own systems of national government, but also to redefine what it means to be part of the nation in racial and ethnic terms. This has resulted in the continued racialization and exclusion of the Roma, but also those deemed to be non-indigenous peoples. For example both the Slovaks living in the Czech Republic and the Russians living in Central and Eastern Europe, but outside of the Russian Federation, have been constructed as 'other'.[31]

In practical terms the Slovak Roma have lost their employment, their housing and many of the social programmes on which they depended, driving them deeper into poverty.[32] Despite having been granted the right to define themselves as a distinct minority ethnic group in the 1991 census for the first time, they nevertheless continued to be increasingly at risk of racist violence to which the authorities turned a blind eye.

With the division of the former Czechoslovakia into two separate states in 1993 came an agreement on citizenship whereby those living in Slovakia were automatically granted Slovak citizenship but, in contrast, those living in the Czech Republic were only granted automatic citizenship if they were born within the current national boundaries.[33] Indeed, the *Law of the Czech National Council on Acquisition and Loss of Citizenship* stated that up until the end of 1993 Slovaks would only be allowed to apply for Czech citizenship if they "had official residency status in the territory of the Czech Republic continually for at least two years", could submit "proof of having applied for exemption from Slovak citizenship", and had not been "sentenced in the past five years on charges of any intentional crime".[34] However, many of the Slovak Roma who had been forcibly settled in the Czech Republic following the War, as noted above, had never applied for Czech residency, "either because they did not believe it was necessary or because they lived in factory housing and thus were not eligible for permanent residency".[35] Applying for Czech citizenship from scratch in 1993 was both complicated and costly. Members of the Roma minority often lacked the necessary documents and financial means to secure their inclusion. Suffering extremely high levels of unemployment in the context of rapid deindustrialisation and economic transformation, those without citizenship were not eligible for social security benefits, so when they lost their jobs, they were without an income, resulting in their destitution. Of course, after 1993, Slovaks were treated as any other foreigner seeking Czech citizenship.

The situation in the newly independent Slovakia was hardly better. According to the ERRC[36], Roma have been blocked from participating in new migrations to areas with employment opportunities through the use of "location-specific residence permits". These determine where children can register for school and benefits can be claimed. The documentation needed to access a permit is often withheld from Roma by landlords and housing authorities to prevent permanent settlement in a new area and force a return to the previous place of residence. This is in contravention to *Article 23* of the Slovak *Constitution* which guarantees freedom of movement and residence, a formal right which is not necessarily granted in practise as a result of racism and anti-Roma discrimination.

In 1993 the Mayor of Spišské Podhradie, a town in Eastern Slovakia, passed a decree to deny the Roma living there basic rights as a social group. Although it were reversed almost immediately on the grounds that it was unconstitutional, the example serves to illustrate the degree to which the Roma continue to be at risk in the so-called 'new Slovakian democracy'. Indeed, there has been

widespread reporting of anti-Roma sentiment among Slovak officials at all levels and the British Helsinki Human Rights Group has regularly published reports about the situation of the Roma in Slovakia and the Czech Republic[37], relating to their physical exclusion and forced resettlement into areas lacking basic facilities and amenities including electricity and clean water. This is a growing trend which seems to have as its objective the creation of Roma-free zones. In effect, Roma have been increasingly ghettoised in Slovakia, forced to live *outside* the towns and cities in dilapidated makeshift dwellings. Impoverished and excluded as they are, stereotypes about the Roma destroying their own accommodation have nevertheless endured.

In 1997 the ERRC also noted how stereotypes about the Roma destroying accommodation have actually been perpetuated by the media, encouraging the view amongst housing officials and the general public that they are to blame for their own housing predicament. This approach has been paralleled by efforts by Slovak local authorities to seek out individuals and families without the necessary local residency permits and evict them from more desirable areas in urban centres.[38] . From their field investigations ERRC researchers found evidence that those applying for a residency permit retrospectively in order to gain permission to continue residing in their secured accommodation were denied by local officials resulting in their expulsion from the area.[39]

In 1995 a new *Law on the Official Language of the Slovak Republic* was passed which effectively made the legal status of the Roma language uncertain by reversing the requirement that official documents, including legal ones, be available in Romanes/Romani.

More recently Amnesty International reported that in January 2003, the Slovak Government Office of Human Rights and Minorities filed a criminal complaint to investigate illegal sterilisation practices against Roma women. The complaint was in response to the testimonies contained in the report *Body and Soul: Forced Sterilisation and Other Assaults on Roma Reproductive Freedom in Slovakia,* published by the Centre for Reproductive Rights. A press release issued by the same office later that month noted that criminal proceedings would commence against the authors of the report under the *Slovak Criminal Code* for failure to inform law enforcement authorities of criminal activities if the findings of the report were found to be true and for "spreading of false rumours and creating panic in society" if the findings of the report were found to be false, the message being that it is better not to highlight human rights abuses at all.

And in 2004, the Slovak coalition government, led by the Christian Democrat Mikulás Dzurinda, voted to cut payments for the unemployed in half, which affected the Roma disproportionately as a result of extremely high levels of unemployment, reaching close to 100% in some areas (although it should be noted that reports of 60-70% unemployment for non-Roma in some Eastern areas of Slovakia are not uncommon). This led to social unrest and demonstrations in protest, and subsequently a police crackdown.

Castle-Kanerova claims that some Roma have resorted to the *"weapons of the weak"* [40] in order to survive – informal economic activity, petty crime, maximising welfare claims through the development of "underground networks of cooperation, information and subversion", not unlike other groups, East and West, who are structurally disadvantaged and in extreme poverty. However, these activities, no matter how small scale, further fuelled racist stereotypes and were used to 'legitimate' the coercive and discriminatory activities of politicians and policy makers as much as those sections of the population sympathetic to neo-Nazism.

These illustrative examples highlight the ongoing problems faced by Roma living in Slovakia, a reality that the EU has not been able to ignore, making the 'protection of minorities' a precondition for admission to the EU for Slovakia.

In summing up, the situation of Roma in Slovakia has not improved since 1989, and according to a number of reports has actually deteriorated. Despite progress in the adoption of western-style minority protection and anti-discrimination legislation, this protection is still largely notional. As a recent Open Society Institute (OSI) report states:

It is clear that efforts to date to ensure equality for Roma in Europe have failed to produce any significant improvement. The challenges have been and remain enormous: deeply embedded institutional discrimination within government structures, widespread anti-Gypsyism, extraordinarily high levels of poverty and social exclusion, and segregated systems in housing, education and social welfare.

As Castle-Kanerova and Jordan have argued, this reflects the fact that "to be openly supportive of the Roma cause is perceived as 'political suicide' by many politicians in East-Central Europe."[42] It is, then, no surprise that, prior to EU enlargement eastwards which resulted in the granting of new freedoms of movement across European member states for *all* citizens of the new member states, the Slovak Roma took their chances with the asylum system. Fleeing persecution, discrimination, marginalisation and violence in Slovakia, they headed west in the hope of being granted the right to live and work in an environment where they were fearful neither for themselves nor their families. Britain was just one potential destination.

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the less than benign climate in Britain regarding asylum seekers in general, as explored below with reference to developments in refugee policy over the last two decades or so, the press reaction to their arrival was overwhelmingly negative,[43] creating something of a moral panic about the numbers involved and their impact on employment, the costs of welfare and levels of crime.[44]

This is just one example of the negative public discourses about Roma that exist across Europe. Other examples serve to illustrate the pervasive nature of this particularly noxious barrier to the inclusion of Roma and their fair treatment in the EU. There is reluctance in many quarters to acknowledge the status of the Roma as a distinct ethnic group that has suffered persecution and collective abuse transcending Europe's national boundaries for centuries. Public discourse about the Roma people (discourse that they have little hope of directly influencing by virtue of their exclusion) in most cases reinforces the racist notion of a 'Roma problem'. The history of the Roma in Europe, and most recently as citizens of the EU, shows that for the situation of the Roma to improve, racist notions must be vigorously challenged by alternative discourses that reflect the urgency of the 'problems of the Roma', and that acknowledge their status as a group whose members seek justice and equality. Strategies must take seriously the structural and historical factors that force Roma to migrate, and must acknowledge them as victims of persecution, racism and exclusion that has deep roots in all European countries.[45] Roma migration is commonly misunderstood as evidence of a 'culture of nomadism', and their 'social problems' are seen to be an outcome of their own 'behaviours' and 'traditions', creating and reinforcing stereotypes, and constructing them as somehow 'undeserving'. Such responses to the needs of Roma that reduce the complex circumstances of families to simple, myth-based explanations are commonplace. Marginalised groups such as the Roma, who have a precarious existence and little material security, must be adaptable, creative and mobile.[46]

[23] See ERRC, (2001) *State of Impunity: Human Rights Abuse of Roma in Romania, p. 7.*

[24] See Jean-Pierre Liègeois and Nicolae Gheorghe, (1995) *Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority, London, Minority Rights Group.*

[25] ERRC, (2004) *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union.*

[26] See ERRC, (2004) *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union,* p. 7-8; Roma Press Centre, (2004), Roma Holocaust: Recollections of Survivors, Roma Press Centre Books 2.

[27] See ERRC, (2004) *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union,* p. 8.

[28] Mita Castle-Kanerova and Bill Jordan, (2002) *Local Strategies for Civic Inclusion in a European context: The Roma in the Czech Republic,* working paper 34/01; see also Chris Smith and Paul Thompson, (1992) *Labour in Transition: The Labour Process in Eastern Europe and China.*

[29] Florinda Lucero and Jill Collum (2006) *The Roma: During and After Communism* at www.du.edu/gsis/hrhw/digest/russia/roma.pdf

[30] Lynne Poole, (2001) *New Approaches to Comparative Social Policy: The Changing Face of Central and East European Welfare.*

[31] Lynne Poole, (2001) *New Approaches to Comparative Social Policy: The Changing Face of Central and East European Welfare.*

[32] Zoltan Barany, (2000) 'The Socio-Economic Impact of Regime Change in Eastern Europe: Gypsy Marginality in the 1990s' in *East European Politics and Societies, 15(1).*

[33] www.hrw.org/reports/1994/WR94/Helsinki-07.htm

[34] www.hrw.org/reports/1994/WR94/Helsinki-07.htm

[35] www.hrw.org/reports/1994/WR94/Helsinki-07.htm

[36] ERRC, (1997) *Time of the Skinheads: Denial and Exclusion of Roma in Slovakia,* Country Reports Series, No.3.

[37] See www.bhhrg.org

[38] ERRC, (1997) *Time of the Skinheads: Denial and Exclusion of Roma in Slovakia,* Country Reports Series, No.3.

[39] ERRC, (1997) *Time of the Skinheads: Denial and Exclusion of Roma in Slovakia,* Country Reports Series, No.3.

[40] Mita Castle-Kanerova, (2002) 'Migration and Poverty: The Case of the Slovak Roma' in *Social Policy and Society,* 1(2).

[41] OSI, (2006) *Equality for Roma in Europe: A Roadmap for Action,* p. 3.

[42] Mita Castle-Kanerova and Bill Jordan, (2002) *Local Strategies for Civic Inclusion in a European Context: The Roma in the Czech Republic*

[43] Colin Clark and Elaine Campbell, (2000) '"Gypsy Invasion": A Critical Analysis of Newspaper Reaction to Czech and Slovak Asylum-Seekers in Britain, 1997' in *Romani Studies,* vol. 10 (1); see also www.eumap.org/journal/features/2004/migration/pt2/whoafraid

[44] www.romea.cz/english/indexphp?id+servis/z_en_2004_0014

[45] Henry Scicluna, (2007) 'Anti-Romani Speech in Europe's Public Space - The Mechanism of Hate' in *Roma Rights* 3, at http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=2912#1

[46] See Colin Clark et al., (2007) 'Running After them with Fruit and Flowers', in *Scottish Left Review,* no. 42.

Refugee Policy in Britain

For Roma communities from Slovakia, refugee policy in Britain has formed an important set of circumstances constraining their movement to the UK prior to 2004. Refugee policy should also be recognised as an important component of the wider discourse of inclusion and exclusion from the community that has adversely shaped public discourses about migration. These discourses have generated powerful and persistent negative stereotypes about incomers, including Roma people.

In fact, recent developments in British asylum and refugee policy, underpinned by increasingly powerful constructions of asylum seekers as 'bogus',[47] have served to tighten up entry criteria. The bid to reduce successful applications and systematically curtail the employment and welfare rights of those who *do* gain entry serves to send out the message that Britain is not a 'soft touch' for would-be migrants. Ultimately, changes to the law disaggregated different incomer groups from one another in terms of the rights they are afforded, resulting in the complete separation of welfare arrangements for asylum seekers, other incomer groups and the indigenous population in 2000 when the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) took over the provision of support for asylum seekers from Local Authorities.

Indeed, the 2002 white paper *Secure Borders, Safe Haven*[48] confirmed the distinction between migrants, who the government increasingly perceived to bring economic benefits to the nation as a potentially well-educated and highly-skilled group, and asylum seekers who it was claimed needed to be 'deterred' on the grounds that they were likely to be 'bogus', economic migrants attracted by the generous 'honey-pot' that was the British welfare system. This is perhaps something of a reversal of fortune given that in the immediate post-war period public and political concern was more marked in relation to asylum seekers, particularly in the wake of the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.*

In the *Convention* the UN defined a refugee as someone unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."[49] In contrast, an asylum seeker was defined as someone who moves across international borders to seek out protection but whose refugee status has not yet been confirmed.

The *Convention* was developed in the face of the displacements arising out of World War II and the Cold War. Particularly worrying had been the reluctance of western governments to accept Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazi regime in Germany in the 1930s, in spite a growing awareness of the atrocities they had suffered.[50] But the need for a system to deal with refugees was reinforced throughout the early post-war period as crises erupted in Africa in the face of decolonisation, as the US propped up oppressive military regimes in Latin America and as regional struggles in the Middle East and Asia continued. The system was further legitimated with reference to East European 'flashpoints' in the post-war period, including the 1956 Hungarian Uprising and the 1968 Prague Spring.

Here we can clearly see the influence of the political context and the interests of powerful elites at work – there was political mileage in presenting the Eastern Bloc as a producer of refugees and the West as the 'saviour' of victims of Communism. Thus Britain, along with the majority of nation states in existence at the time, signed up. And, whilst on arrival in Britain all asylum seekers continued to be subject to the application of limited social rights and processes of discrimination, exclusion, racism and racialisation, in line with *all* racial and ethnic minorities settled in Britain, they were arguably seen

as generally deserving of humanitarian intervention on the grounds that they had suffered at the hands of discredited governments and regimes dismissive of democracy and the rule of law.

However, what we begin to observe in the 1980s and 90s is a systematic discursive reconstruction of asylum seekers. Throughout this period, those formerly represented as refugee 'victims' in need of our understanding and support were increasingly referred to as 'bogus' asylum seekers, the 'undeserving other' motivated by economic gain whilst *masquerading* as victims of global conflict. Here we see the employment of a different set of imagery and language – terms such as 'swamping', 'illegals', 'the enemy within' were used and social problems were attached to the reality of increasing numbers of asylum seekers with more frequency.[51] Bloch and Schuster emphasise the connection between political ideology, populism and policy development. They claim that the main political parties have played a central role in constructing a *"moral consensus against asylum seekers",* to the extent that Blair and Straw actually called for a rewriting of the 1951 *Convention* on the grounds that it was outdated and inappropriate in the current global climate.[52] Of course, the media has fed into this moral consensus in important ways, as noted above, and the local state has sometimes been complicit, cooperating with the controlling measures introduced by central government.[53]

This reconstruction of asylum seekers as a 'threat' to our economy, welfare state and way of life is in stark contrast to UN constructions of refugees as desperate and in need of humanitarian assistance. As Cook notes, the discourses coming from the UNHCR, which focuses on the unprecedented levels of global conflict as the cause of increased numbers of asylum seekers and presents refugees largely as victims of such conflict, are marginalized in the face of competing or counter-discourses that seek to elevate the importance of economic motivations and present refugees as 'non-genuine' claimants.[54] The emergence of such constructions as dominant also marks the emergence of a consensus around the need to maintain and strengthen controls – for Cohen the debate is presented around how to make asylum fair and 'non-racist' (as indicated in the 1998 white paper entitled *Fairer, Faster, Firmer)* as opposed to whether or not to control asylum seeker numbers – this is a given.[55]

In line with this, the 1996 *Asylum and Immigration Act* worked to increase exclusion from particular welfare benefits and embodied a range of measures including: the fast tracking of appeal to close the door quicker; the introduction of a 'White List' of so-called 'safe' countries - all applications from these countries would automatically be assumed bogus and denied consideration; the withdrawal of asylum seekers' rights to income support, child benefits and public housing, leaving local authorities, with their statutory duties to guard the welfare of children, as the last port of call for destitute asylum seekers; the option of detention without time limit; and the increased criminalisation of carriers of asylum seekers. These particular developments were designed simply to reduce the number of applications through deterrence and process and remove 'bogus' claimants faster.[56]

In addition, that same year Section 185 of the *Housing Act* prevented anyone subject to immigration legislation who had not claimed asylum status on entry from accessing homelessness accommodation or Local Authority housing.

The 1999 *Immigration and Asylum Act* brought under the net most of the remaining benefits available to full citizens, including housing and council tax benefit and social fund payments, alongside disabled persons' and carers' benefits[57] , as well as closing off 'loopholes' around the 1948 *National Assistance* and 1989 *Children's Act* (basically by removing the application of the criteria of 'destitution' to those subject to immigration control) that had been exploited by Asylum Lawyers. This left those seeking

asylum with the newly introduced vouchers worth 70% of Income Support (100% for children) plus £10 cash, as asylum seekers who had not been granted leave to stay could not legally work as an alternative to benefit dependency.[58]

The 1999 Act also empowered a new body, NASS, to disperse asylum seekers across Britain, against their will, and place them in private, Housing Association or Local Authority (LA) housing - a refusal to accept 'rehousing' excluded asylum seekers from any form of assistance. Here we see the role of the local state taking centre stage as NASS is reliant on LAs agreeing to take asylum seekers under the dispersal programme in exchange for a financial inducement. The arrangement is contractual. In the case of Glasgow City Council (GCC), as well as other councils north and south of the border, the letting of difficult-to-let properties on certain estates, some of which had been categorised as 'void', has undoubtedly eased a financial burden, although at what cost remains a moot point – the events at Sighthill following the forcible 'resettlement' of refugees North of the Border have been testimony to the efficacies of this kind of policy. The placing of incomers into areas of already concentrated disadvantage and deprivation in a context of negative media coverage, seemed to breed the perception that 'foreigners' were being prioritised and given the lion's share of what was available, creating increased resentment amongst those already squeezed at the margins of society[59]. Indeed the creation of an environment of competition between extremely needy individuals and families for what were extremely scarce resources seemed to go against the government's stated agenda of social inclusion and community-building, narrowing perceived mutualities between the different social groups who could be strengthened by recognising their shared plight.

In 2000 the *Asylum Support Regulations Act* prevented those under immigration control from being absent from their accommodation for more than 7 consecutive days and nights or more than 14 days and nights in any 6 month period without the permission of NASS. Whilst the 2002 *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum* Act maintained the right to conditional support from NASS, the future aim seemed to be the provision of 'accommodation centres' for all asylum seekers, within which basic needs would be met. As Dwyer notes, whilst asylum seekers may be able to refuse this option, should they do so they will have absolutely no access to any welfare assistance whatsoever despite also continuing to be refused the legal right to work and support themselves.[60]

Vouchers were phased out under this piece of legislation but the level of assistance was not improved upon, leaving asylum seekers to survive on less than the level of Income Support, supplemented by charity. And we should also note that this Act empowered NASS to withdraw all support from those unable to explain why they had delayed their asylum application, how they got into Britain and how they have been surviving to date.

Whilst one might think that this latter initiative is reasonable as would-be asylum seekers, if genuine, should have nothing to fear from declaring their real status on arrival, a brief pause for thought brings to light the fact that changes to the asylum rules over the last decade or so have made it incredibly *unlikely* that individuals will actually be granted refugee status in Britain. Indeed, as a result of recent Acts it is the case that in 2002, just 42% of asylum seekers were found to be in need of protection by the Home Office and were granted refugee status or exceptional leave to remain (ELR), taking into account subsequent appeals.[61] Moreover, by the first quarter of 2007 this had fallen significantly with 75% of asylum seeker applications being turned down by the Home Office.[62] According to the government's own figures, just over one in five appeals resulted in the granting of refugee status or ELR in 2006.[63]

And finally, Section 9 of the *Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.)* Act 2004 gave the Home Office powers to terminate all welfare support for failed asylum seeking families whose applications had been turned down and who were deemed to be failing to take 'reasonable steps' to leave the UK. Effectively starving failed asylum seekers out through destitution, the Act contradicts section 17 of the 1989 Children's Act which states that practitioners are obliged to provide services for children, within their families where possible and, failing that, support them in local authority accommodation. So, under the 2004 Act failed asylum seekers not only risk being made destitute but also having their children taken into care. Government spokespeople have claimed that the idea behind the Act is to remove perverse incentives and encourage families to leave the country voluntarily, which raises the question of whether or not the strategy is working. The answer is a simple one, no - families have gone 'underground' rather than return to where they feel their lives would be in danger or risk their children being accommodated and separated from them. In doing so, they face other significant risks, not least from criminals of one sort or another who can potentially take advantage of these homeless, penniless families with children, desperate to find a roof and some work in order to survive. Indeed, in the first year of the Home Office's own pilot of Section 9 of the Act, 59 families were made destitute, 4 children were accommodated at a cost of £4000 initial outlay plus £1500 per month thereafter and 35 out of 116 families 'disappeared' – only 1 family voluntarily left the country.[64]

Should the legislation be implemented across the UK, up to 5000 families would be affected, raising significant questions about the government's commitment to Human Rights legislation and the provision made under the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child,* which it signed up to in 1991.

In sum, throughout the 1990s and 2000s a two-pronged approach has been in evidence in Britain involving limiting entry and limiting rights, particularly welfare rights, on entry. The starting point throughout this period of 'reconstruction' has been the assumption that British welfare acts as a magnet for economic migrants who gain access to Britain unlawfully by claiming asylum status. This assumption then feeds the drive for a harmonisation of social policy across Western Europe – and that involves a levelling downwards rather than upwards - in the interests of putting would-be incomers off. As Bloch and Schuster note, seeking out the lowest common denominator in welfare functions to make *"all states equally unattractive to asylum seekers"*. These actions are legitimated in the name of defending the welfare state per se, for all 'legitimate members of the welfare community'. The fact that asylum seekers in Britain are actually prevented from participating legally in the labour market forces them into a position of benefit dependency is a great irony, of course – they are unable to contribute to the system even if they are motivated to do so leaving them open to the labels of 'scrounger' and 'welfare tourist'.[65]

Increasingly these very negative meanings attached to asylum seekers have been in evidence *across* Western Europe. Indeed at the European Union level 'Fortress Europe' has been activated with a good deal of enthusiasm. Castles and Miller summarise the main initiatives that this comprised as follows:

- Legislative changes to restrict access to refugee status at the national level,
- Temporary measures to protect those fleeing war zones as opposed to permanent solutions, thus assuming the return of the uprooted at a later date,
- 'Non-arrival policies' to prevent those without the correct documentation from entering the EU, with sanctions for carriers who do not follow these procedures,
- Diversion through the construction of 'safe third countries' that are en-route to the EU, for example the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary prior to their accession in 2004, with a

return policy enacted in relation to these so-called 'transit safe countries',
- More restrictive interpretations of the UN Convention, for example excluding persecution by non-state actors,
- EU-wide cooperation on asylum and immigration with an eye on eventual convergence across member states – important here have been the Schengen and Dublin Conventions, for example.[66]

Despite these developments in British and European refugee policy, Slovak Roma continued to seek asylum right up until EU enlargement eastwards. As Castle-Kanerova (2002) notes, the gradual emergence of a 'European' approach to asylum failed to deter applicants of all origins because it was the only channel for legal immigration for many.[67]

However, in May 2004 the EU admitted eight CEE states – Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, commonly known as the Accession 8 (A8). The admission of Romania and Bulgaria (A2) followed in 2007. Notwithstanding the restrictions placed on A8 and later A2 citizens (discussed below), entry into the Union led to the granting of new rights, not least freedom of movement within EU borders, to CEE citizens, including the Slovak Roma, in line with the rights of *all* EU citizens.

[47] Dee Cook, (1998) 'Racism, Immigration Policy and Welfare Policing: The Case of the Asylum and Immigration Act' in Michael Lavalette et al, (eds.), Anti-Racism and Social Welfare; Rosemary Sales, (2007) *Understanding Immigration and Refugee Policy: Contradictions and Continuities.*

[48] Home Office, (2002) *Secure Borders, Safe Haven.*

[49] United Nations, (1951) *Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* available at www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/o_c_ref.htm

[50] Steve Cohen, (2002) 'The Local State of Immigration Controls' in *Critical Social Policy,* 22(3), p.523.

[51] Dee Cook, (1998) 'Racism, Immigration Policy and Welfare Policing: The Case of the Asylum and Immigration Act' in Michael Lavalette et al, (eds.), *Anti-Racism and Social Welfare.*

[52] Alice Bloch and Liza Schuster (2002) 'Asylum and Welfare: Contemporary Debates' in *Critical Social Policy,* 22(3) p404-05.

[53] see Steve Cohen, (2002) 'The Local State of Immigration Controls' in *Critical Social Policy,* 22(3)

[54] Dee Cook, (1998) 'Racism, Immigration Policy and Welfare Policing: The Case of the Asylum and Immigration Act' in Michael Lavalette et al, (eds.), *Anti-Racism and Social Welfare.*

[55] Steve Cohen, (2002) 'The Local State of Immigration Controls', in *Critical Social Policy,* 22(3), p.520.

[56] Dee Cook, (1998) 'Racism, Immigration Policy and Welfare Policing: The Case of the Asylum and Immigration Act' in Michael Lavalette et al, (eds.), *Anti-Racism and Social Welfare.*

[57] Steve Cohen, (2002) 'The Local State of Immigration Controls', in *Critical Social Policy,* 22(3), p.533.

[58] Peter Dwyer, (2004) *Understanding Social Citizenship.*

[59] Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, (2003) *Age of Migration.*

[60] Peter Dwyer, (2004) *Understanding Social Citizenship.*

[61] www.erylmcnallymep.org.uk/asylum_seekers_in_the_uk.htm

[62] www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/news/2007/may/20070524asylum.htm

[63] www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/practice/basics/facts.htm#factfive

[64] Jo Cunningham and Steve Cunningham, (2007) 'No Choice at All: Destitution or Deportation?' in *Critical Social Policy,* 27(2).

[65] Alice Bloch and Liza Schuster (2002) 'Asylum and Welfare: Contemporary Debates' in *Critical Social Policy,* 22(3) p.395.

[66] Stephen Castles and Mark Miller (2003) *The Age of Migration,* p.106.

[67] Mita Castle-Kanerova, (2002) 'Migration and Poverty: The Case of the Slovak Roma' in *Social Policy and Society,* 1(2).

From ‘Forced’ to ‘Voluntary’ Migration

In this context of EU enlargement eastwards, it is perhaps rather easy to assume that Slovak Roma, like other A8 migrants, are now ‘voluntary migrants’ in the traditional sense and that, should they not find the opportunities or quality of life improvements they hoped for, are free to go back and work in their ‘home’ country. However, given their on-going persecution and exclusion in Slovakia, as illustrated above, it is not unreasonable to view the Roma as a group that continue to be ‘pushed’ abroad as much as being ‘pulled’ by the promise of work. As a minority ethnic group within Slovakia, they are not in the same position as ‘majority’ populations, such as ethnic Poles living in Poland or indeed ethnic Slovaks living in Slovakia, who, whilst undoubtedly suffering high levels of unemployment and depressed wages at ‘home’, are not, racially discriminated against or the focus of collectively targeted abuse and violence. As a result the Slovak Roma can be seen to occupy that grey area between ‘forced’ and ‘voluntary’ migration embodied in popular constructions of ‘economic migrants’ and ‘asylum seekers’ respectively.

Through her work with Slovak Roma migrants seeking asylum in the Czech Republic prior to EU enlargement eastwards, Castle-Kanerova noted that the distinction between ‘forced’ and ‘voluntary’ migration is not always clear cut. She argues the Slovak Roma’s decision to seek asylum in their neighbouring state was closely linked to the loss of their employment status in Slovakia, in the context of rapid deindustrialisation, prolonged recession and structural crises which saw the end of ‘compulsory employment’, ‘tied’ housing and a downgrading of the social safety net in June 2000 through benefit cuts, eligibility tightening and reductions in the length of entitlement. However, working in parallel with this loss of status were other non-economic ‘push’ factors including racism and discrimination. Moreover, the drying up of economic opportunities meant poverty and debt for many, leaving them not only fearing racially motivated crime, against which they did not feel protected by the state apparatus, but also money-lending mafia-linked groups who were pressuring those indebted to them for repayment. As a result Slovakian Roma sought to emigrate to escape threats on their lives and to their children’s welfare, as well as to seek employment. Many realised that their applications for asylum would be rejected but the waiting period gave them time to find work whilst the Czech Republic’s Ministry of Interior processed and decided on their claim and their families were cared for close by in the relative safety of detention centres. Moreover, they were prepared to keep on applying if necessary in order to secure a better life. Interestingly, when asked to comment on the notion that “asylum procedures were reserved for cases of persecution or victims of war”, one respondent answered “Not to be able to feed our children or not having a roof over our heads *is* war.”[68]

Examining the specific situation of Slovak Roma in this dual context of EU enlargement and freedom of movement on the one hand, and the continuing grim situation for this persecuted group in CEE on the other, works to unsettle comfortable assumptions about some shared A8 migrant experience as well as the socially constructed distinctions between the ‘forced’ migrant and ‘voluntary’ migrant that are often taken for granted.

Nevertheless, whether understood as voluntary migration or not, the migration of Slovak Roma to Britain in their capacity as ‘new’ citizens of Europe, has been accompanied by a myriad of policy developments at the EU-level.

[68] Mita Castle-Kanerova, (2002) ‘Migration and Poverty: The Case of the Slovak Roma’ in *Social Policy and Society,* 1(2), p.165.

The EU Policy Context

Pre Accession

Since the post-89 political changes in CEE, there has been an opening up of opportunities for Roma to organise politically,[69] increase visibility, and gain recognition on the part of governments and the EU of the reality of their status as a persecuted group.[70] Moreover, the process of accession and EU enlargement eastwards was facilitated by the development of a detailed conditionality framework which laid down specific requirements for the candidate nations. Included here, though not top of the priority list, was the laying down of a number of minimum standards in relation to the human rights of Roma and the development of anti-discriminatory practices.[71] This involved:

- Legislative reform, enabling CEE countries to adopt the *acquis communautaire,* a *condition* of accession.[72] The importance of this for Roma people lies in the adoption of the basic legal norms necessary for the exercise of human rights,

- The EU working to encourage a change in attitudes and policies on the part of CEE governments towards Roma,[73]

- Programmes such as the EU's *PHARE* including targeted Roma projects to build capacity for action among Roma communities and groups supporting the Roma as part of the overall goal to promote economic and social cohesion,

- The maintenance of political pressure on new CEE member states via the regular monitoring of progress measured against pre-determined benchmarks and the use of rapporteurs.

The fact that CEE countries were under such scrutiny demonstrated that there were serious problems with regard to the infringement of the rights of Roma people. The situation of Roma in CEE countries was also evidenced by the large numbers of families claiming asylum in Western Europe throughout the 1990s, as noted above.

Post-Accession: The Challenge for EU Policy-making

Following accession of the A8, the EU faced new policy challenges, not least in relation to monitoring the treatment of minorities in both the 'new' and 'older' member states and developing a range of policies designed to regulate and support the rolling out of the full compliment of human rights to Roma migrants in particular, given their history of persecution and exclusion.

The protection of the rights of Roma is already a legal requirement placed on all member states due to two legally binding EU directives known as the *Race Equality Directive* (2000/43/EC) and the *Employment Equality Directive* (2000/79/EC).[74] While it is clear that a great deal more needs to be done to address the specific barriers Roma face, these two directives alongside the *European Convention on Human Rights,* and the *Charter of Fundamental Rights* associated with the 2007 *Treaty of Lisbon* (in the process of ratification by member states), will for the time being form the legal basis for the protection of rights in employment and for combating exclusion and persecution motivated by racism. There is now significant momentum behind the adoption of a specific EU Roma directive.[75] At the same time, the OSI and World Bank are currently promoting the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion', although the nine participating governments are all in CEE.[76]

Since the 2000 Lisbon European Council, National Action Programmes (NAPs)[77] have been part of the EU strategy to progress commonly agreed objectives to eradicate poverty and social exclusion, as part of the remit of the EU Commission's Directorate General of Employment and Social Affairs. The inclusion of vulnerable groups, including Roma, is one focus point of the wider agreed objectives for 'Social inclusion' promoted by this DG.[78]

The EU European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is currently preparing an opinion on the 'Integration of Minorities – Roma' due in April 2008. The remit of the opinion is to explore the promotion of 'concerted efforts to maximise the impact and effectiveness of all relevant instruments in order to fight discrimination and promote the integration of minorities, notably Roma.'[79] However, the role of the EESC is merely a consultative one, its opinions are not binding, and in this case the opinion's remit is to evaluate existing provisions rather than explore new ones.

According to a recent OSI report, "the most potentially positive legislative development for the Roma was the adoption of the Race Equality Directive [noted above]. The Directive constitutes a landmark in Europe's legal development…All EU member states are required to ensure that their legislation conforms to the provisions of the Directive." However, the report goes on to note that "there is a long way to go before real and sustained benefit from the legislation is realised." The question is whether the Directive is sufficiently robust to address the particular challenges faced by Roma, specifically obstacles in the way of accessing the legal system, difficulties in establishing that discrimination has taken place and the use of nationality and/or Roma collective identity as grounds for discrimination.[80] This last, namely the illegal collective expulsion of Roma, has been the case in Italy in 2007.

Post-Accession: The Challenge for the Roma

The EU accession of CEE countries also presents new challenges for members of Roma communities. First of all, following the accession of the A8 countries in 2004 and the A2 countries in 2007, the asylum route is now closed to citizens of those countries. Secondly, EU policy instruments such as conditions and monitoring for CEE countries associated with the enlargement process have ceased.[81] Thirdly, post-accession restrictions on the freedom of movement of certain categories leave Roma migrants to the UK in an exceptionally vulnerable situation. For the moment, not all EU citizens coming to the UK are viewed equally, although restrictions on free movement are temporary. Roma migrants are legally entitled as EU citizens to live and work in the UK, but only under certain conditions, and their vulnerability is compounded by restrictions on access to a number of benefits (as discussed below).

It is without doubt that pre-accession tools were beginning to have at least some impact in terms of improving the situation for Roma in CEE, alongside pressure from advocacy groups supporting the Roma rights agenda. However, there is now perhaps less immediate political pressure on CEE governments to act to protect the rights of Roma than there was before accession, despite the fact that restrictions in the benefits system across the EU often hit Roma trying to escape poverty the hardest.

So, as far as the Roma are concerned, the EU political landscape has now changed. A recent diplomatic row between Romania and Italy serves to illustrate how the issue has taken on new political dimensions.[82] It is no longer the case, as in pre-accession days, that the EU is in a position to cajole, encourage and insist that CEE countries seriously address these issues. Now the issue can easily take on the form of wrangling between equal member states. While the row has pushed the issue up the EU agenda, it is essential that the focus on real access to rights for Roma is maintained as a political issue. The case of Romania and Italy clearly demonstrates that political posturing at the level

of the member states around the issue can be a double-edged sword. Such posturing can either advance the issue, or threaten to get in the way of the equality of Roma as EU citizens through the adaptation of policies to support this group in meaningful ways.[83]

Post-Accession Challenges for UK Policy Makers

As noted above, in 2000 EU member states adopted National Action Plans (NAPs) as part of a coordinated strategy aimed at "making the Union the most dynamic, knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010,"[84] whilst at one and the same time maximising inclusion in the process of economic 'modernisation' that would be required. NAPs were, in essence, the tools through which EU member states would ensure that the social dimension of EU economic 'modernisation' did not fall by the wayside.

The stated purpose of the commonly agreed NAPs is to combat poverty and increase social inclusion. In the UK this involved a commitment to "modernising its social model, based on the shared values of social justice and the active participation of all citizens in economic and social life."[85] Indeed, the UK's NAP calls for "a strong, stable economy and a fair society with security and opportunity for all."[86] Importantly, it identifies several priorities for action as well as strategies for making progress on these priorities. The top priority is tackling child poverty through "promoting financial security to poor families in and out of work and increasing income through participation in the labour market."[87] While it is acknowledged that challenges remain, the NAP commits the government to the development of policies and services across the country. The strategy underpinning the NAP and the EU common objectives is made particularly clear in the UK document *Working Together: UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2006-08,* wherein it is stated that "It is important that citizens experience the benefits of sustainable growth and social cohesion in years to come. That is why our overall domestic objectives are for a strong stable economy and a fair society with security and opportunity for all."[88]

The UK NAP, expressing the common objectives of the EU, is reflected in policy documents at the level of the Scottish Government and at the level of local authorities. In 2003 the priorities of the Scottish Government were identified as:

- To prevent individuals or families from falling into poverty,
- To provide routes out of poverty for individuals and families,
- To sustain individuals or families in a lifestyle free from poverty.[89]

In July 2004, a further Scottish initiative entitled *Closing the Opportunity Gap* was launched comprising six objectives:

- To increase the chances of sustained employment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups - in order to lift them permanently out of poverty,
- To improve the confidence and skills of the most disadvantaged children and young people - in order to provide them with the greatest chance of avoiding poverty when they leave school,
- To reduce the vulnerability of low income families to financial exclusion and multiple debts - in order to prevent them becoming over-indebted and/or to lift them out of poverty,
- To regenerate the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods - in order that people living there can take advantage of job opportunities and improve their quality of life,
- To increase the rate of improvement of the health status of people living in the most deprived communities - in order to improve their quality of life, including their employability prospects,

- To improve access to high quality services for the most disadvantaged groups and individuals in rural communities - in order to improve their quality of life and enhance their access to opportunity.[90]

The biggest challenge for the government at all levels is the implementation of the NAP. This is in part due to the transitional arrangements in place for A8 migrants, severely restricting their access to public funds as discussed below, but also because in the past immigration and the integration and inclusion of incomers into British society has always been problematic.

[69] Ilona Klímová, (2002) 'Romani Political Representation in Central Europe. An Historical Survey', in *Romani Studies,* vol. 12 (2).

[70] EERC, (2004) *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union.*

[71] Ulrich Sedelmeier, (2004) 'Eastern Enlargement', in Helen Wallace and William Wallace, (eds.) *Policy-making in the European Union;* see also *Journal of European Social Policy,* 14(3), Special Issue on EU Enlargement, August 2004.

[72] John O'Brennan, (2006) *The Eastern Enlargement of the European Union.*

[73] http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/financial_assistance/phare/economic_and_social_cohesion_en.htm

[74] See EERC, (2004) *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union*, p. 11; OSI, (2006) *Equality for Roma in Europe: A Roadmap for Action,* p. 16; ERRC, (2007) *The Glass Box: Exclusion of Roma from Employment,* p. 36.

[75] See EERC, (2005) 'EU Roma Integration Directive – Filling the Gap in the Equality Legal Regime', in *Roma Rights Quarterly,* no. 1.

[76] 'The founding international partner organizations of the Decade are the World Bank, the Open Society Institute, the United Nations Development Program, the Council of Europe, Council of Europe Development Bank, the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Roma Information Office, the European Roma and Traveller Forum, the European Roma Rights Centre, and the Roma Education Fund.' For an assessment of the recent activities of the Decade programme, see (2007) *Decade Watch: Roma Activists Assess the Progress of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.*

[77] http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/com_obj_en.htm

[78] http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/vulnerable_groups_en.htm

[79] EESC, (2007) *Integration of minorities* – ROMA, SOC/263. http://eescopinions.eesc.europa.eu/viewdoc.aspx?doc=//esppub1/esp_public/ces/soc/soc263/en/ces193-2007_nins_en.doc

[80] OSI, (2006) *Equality for Roma in Europe: A Roadmap for Action,* p. 5-6.

[81] A motion put to the European Parliament in 2004 to continue monitoring of the Slovak government post-accession in relation to Roma rights was voted down. See EERC, (2004) *The Situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union,* p. 15.

[82] See 'Italy moves to expel EU Nationals as part of crime crackdown', in *EU Observer,* 5 November 2007. euobserver.com; also 'Italy and Romania urge EU help with migrants' in *EU Observer,* 8 November 2007.

[83] See ERIO, (2007) *Statement on Collective Expulsion of Roma in Italy.*

[84] DWP, (2006) *Working Together: UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2006-08, p.v.*

[85] EU Commission, (2005) *Working Together, Working Better: A New Framework for the Open Coordination of Social Protection and Inclusion Policies in the European Union,* p.2

[86] DWP, (2006) *Working Together: UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2006-08, p.vi*

[87] DWP, (2006) *Working Together: UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2006-08, p.vi*

[88] DWP, (2006) *Working Together: UK National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2006-08, p.vi*

[89] Scottish Government, (2003) *Partnership for a Better Scotland*

[90] See *Closing the Opportunity Gap,* Scottish Government http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Social-Inclusion/17415/opportunity

The National Policy Context in Britain: The Challenge of Immigration

Historically immigration has presented a number of significant challenges to all nation states, not least in relation to their nationally-based systems of welfare. The development of the welfare system in Britain took as its starting point the prioritising of British workers and their families (deemed to be racially and ethnically homogenous as a population) and notions of the 'national interest'.[91] Indeed, Britain, not unlike other European member states, has a long history of, at best, the subordinated inclusion of racial and ethnic minorities deemed to be 'in' but not 'of' the nation[92] and, at worst, their total exclusion from welfare services and benefits.

For example, Jewish refugees escaping the Russian pogroms in the late nineteenth century were constructed as illegitimate members of the national welfare community and were subject to the provisions of the 1905 Aliens Act. The Act embodied a 'no recourse to public funds' clause, which meant that incomers unable to demonstrate and maintain their self-sufficiency and economic independence, and found to be attempting to make claims on the welfare system within 12 months of their arrival, along with those found to be living in overcrowded conditions, could be deported. 1905 and 1906 saw the mass deportation of German gypsies.[93] Moreover, in addition to the early immigration and settlement restrictions placed on immigrant groups arriving on British shores, different waves of incomers have frequently suffered discrimination in relation to *specific* welfare entitlements. For example, the 1908 Pensions Act embodied an eligibility criterion of 20 years residency/British subject status, whilst the 1911 National Insurance Act provided only limited payments for non-British individuals who had been resident for less than 5 years. The 1918 Unemployment Benefit Scheme allowed the payment without a means test or contribution record to certain categories of workers but not generally to 'aliens' who were denied access by the local welfare providers through the withholding of information about their rights.

The tying of immigration policy to welfare access and entitlement, and sometimes directly to specific policies, was clearly then one of the main ways in which the 'exclusive' basis of welfare was ensured in Britain. Indeed, even after 1945, when the social rights of citizenship were extended and the principles of equity and universalism became the stated cornerstones of the British welfare settlement, successive governments continued to play a significant role in constructing minority ethnic groups as a threat to 'British identity' and the nation.[94] The victims of individual and institutional racism, constructed as *'other',* the racialised *'undeserving poor',* it is perhaps no surprise that racial and ethnic minorities coming to Britain – including the Irish, Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, all of whom settled north and south of the border - have struggled to integrate fully and become accepted into the national community.[95]

The EU project has itself represented a particular challenge to member states insofar as it has been built on a commitment to the free movement of capital and labour, goods and services. More specifically, as the EU has enlarged over time, those previously deemed to be 'outsiders' have been reconstructed as 'citizens of Europe', legitimate 'insiders' in possession of a portfolio of formal rights that cannot be limited by individual national governments within the framework of EU law, whilst at one and the same time being at risk as a result of processes of racism and discrimination operating at the local and national level. As Sales notes:

The notion of a national state gives legitimacy to government policy carried out in the name of the 'national interest'. In reality, the boundaries around who is included and who is excluded have not been static, but have shifted continually, and encompass both changing geographical borders and changing social divisions in which some groups have been privileged over others.[96]

There is a clear tension between the notion of the 'British nation and its people' as represented in political discourse and the 'national basis of welfare' as it has evolved over the course of the twentieth century on the one hand, and the notion of a 'new Europe' and the construction of the 'European citizen' on the other.[97] This also reflects the contradiction between the economic and legal logic of the EU single market (openness), and the political logic of the 'exclusive' nation-state (closure). In essence, the movement of people across national boundaries represents a trans-national challenge to nationality as a basis for welfare.[98]

Indeed, in terms of shifting geographical boundaries, the enlargement of the EU eastwards from May 2004 onwards is profoundly important for a number of reasons including:

1) it changes (once again) definitions of who the 'insiders' and 'outsiders' currently are, with the CEE citizens enjoying a shift in status from 'outsider' to 'insider' (with clear implications for the national basis of welfare entitlement),
2) in the face of the European Union's evolving legal framework and the development of international human rights legislation, member states are obliged to live up to increasingly stringent standards,
3) the route of entry into Britain and the other 'older' member states for CEE citizens in general, and the Slovak Roma in particular, has also changed as a result. More specifically, in the pre-Accession, post-1989 period, Slovak Roma had only one route into 'Fortress Europe' and that was as a persecuted, disadvantaged and excluded minority seeking asylum, as noted above. However, with EU expansion eastwards, Slovak Roma coming to Britain have had to exchange their status as 'asylum seekers'/refugees (or, in some cases, 'illegal immigrants') for the status of 'EU migrant'. This route clearly offers more *potential* for settlement and for the accessing of increased work opportunities and an improved quality of life than the asylum route, not least because it is rights-based.

[91] Fiona Williams, (1989) *Social Policy: A Critical Introduction*.

[92] Gail Lewis, (1998) 'Welfare and the Social Construction of "Race"', in Esther Saraga, (ed.), *Embodying the Social*.

[93] Colin Holmes, (1988) *John Bull's Island: Immigration and British Society,* 1871-1971, p.19.

[94] Peter Dwyer, (2004) *Understanding Social Citizenship*, p. 134.

[95] See for example: Mary Hickman, (1998) 'Education for "Minorities": Irish Catholics in Britain' in Gail Lewis, ed., *Forming Nation, Framing Welfare;* Mary Hickman and Bronwen Walter, (1997) *Discrimination and the Irish Community in Britain;* Ian Law, (1996) *Racism, Ethnicity and Social Policy;* Lydia Morris, (1998) 'Legitimate Membership of the Welfare Community', in Mary Langan, ed., *Welfare: Needs, Rights and Risks.*

[96] Rosemary Sales, (2007) *Understanding Immigration and Refugee Policy: Contradictions and Continuities*, p. 3.

[97] Andrew Geddes, (2000) *Immigration and European Integration: Towards Fortress Europe?*

[98] Fiona Williams, (1995) 'Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Class in Welfare States: A Framework for Comparative Analysis' in *Social Politics;* Bill Jordan, (1998) *The New Politics of Welfare.*

Roma Rights in Scotland and the UK

Clearly, Roma, like other EU migrants, are protected by European and International law with regard to racial discrimination and human rights abuses for example. Moreover, as a disadvantaged and excluded community, they are also one of the groups targeted by the UK NAP, at least in theory. However, the commitment to inclusion and integration embodied in the NAP must be seen in the context of the transitional arrangements relating to A8 (and A2) migrants that are currently in place.

Indeed, for the moment, not all EU citizens coming to the UK are viewed equally. More specifically, post-2004, CEE nationals from the A8 nations have been granted rights of:

- Movement
- Employment
- Education
- Retirement
- Family reunion
- Welfare

However, these rights are circumscribed in important ways relating to restrictions in terms of access to public funds and labour market participation. More specifically, a 'transitional phase' was put in place during which immediate rights to work were denied by most other member states, with the exception of the UK, Sweden and Ireland (followed in May 2006 by Finland, Spain, Greece and Portugal). This resulted in the development of the 2005 *Five Year Strategy for Asylum and Immigration*[99] which envisaged A8 migrants replacing non-European migrant workers and perhaps older less skilled British workers where those coming from CEE were also relatively unskilled. This has been made more explicit in the new arrangements announced in February 2008 which introduce a points scheme enabling entry to be assessed in relation to the specific needs of the labour market.

It should also be noted that in Scotland the Fresh Talent Initiative was introduced in 2004 in a context of demographic changes and projections relating to a declining population. It sought to attract 'newcomers' (as well as Scottish expatriates) to work in Scotland, for example by offering visa extensions for overseas students who stayed on to take up paid employment with the prospect of being granted permanent residency where they secured permanent positions.[100] This initiative demonstrates the extent to which politicians and policy makers north of the border have accepted the need for migrant labour to meet the growing demands of the Scottish economy. However, despite being granted the right to work, A8 migrants were denied the right to make claims on public funds where they were not participating in the labour market. In this way, CEE migrants have not yet been granted full EU citizenship.

It is important to note that the Romanian and Bulgarian accession to the EU on 1st January 2007 was met with a reversal of policy, with the British government not allowing either recourse to public funds or immediate access to the labour market to A2 migrants in the way that it had A8 migrants. [101]

As the Home Office states:

If you are a Bulgarian or Romanian national you are free to come to the United Kingdom to live. You will need to be able to support yourself and family in the United Kingdom without the help of public

funds…. If you want to work in the United Kingdom you will need our permission before you start work...Once you have been working legally in the United Kingdom for 12 months without a break you will have full rights of free movement and will no longer need our permission to take work. You can then get a registration certificate confirming your right to live and work in the United Kingdom, although you are not obliged to do so.[102]

In essence, their employment opportunities are now restricted to already existing quota schemes in the agricultural and food processing sectors, for example the Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Scheme, and schemes involving the issuing of 'work permits' to those deemed to qualify for the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme. Outside of these very specific entitlements, there is no freedom of movement for A2 migrants unless they can demonstrate their financial independence and self-reliance without recourse to either public funds or the British labour market. This strikes a note of continuity with the past, insofar as governments have always tried to maximise the benefits of labour migration without incurring its costs. Indeed, in relation to CEE migrants' rights and entitlements to benefits and services we can see how the situation also reflects recent approaches to welfare access on the part of the British Government. Inclusion and access to the social rights of citizenship is principally gained through paid work.[103]

The implications for A2 migrants, who have been denied complete and full access to the British labour market until 2009, but also for A8 individuals, including the Slovak Roma, whose access to welfare, including emergency payments for families, depends on their labour market status, are clear. For Roma, the lack of employment opportunities afforded to them results in widespread unemployment and destitution at worst, and temporary, low-paid work at best. Given the language barriers, low levels of literacy and formal education, coupled with their routine subjection to racism and discrimination, Roma find themselves in a vicious cycle of 'gangmaster' involvement, overcrowding in sub-standard private sector housing and other forms of exploitation, as discussed more fully below.

Moreover, notwithstanding this complex UK-wide framework relating to A8 migrants, the situation in Scotland is further complicated by the division of responsibilities between Scotland and Westminster arising out of Devolution. In particular, Section 5 of the 1998 *Scotland Act* reserved 11 key policy areas to Westminster including employment, social security and immigration.[104] However, as is the case in relation to asylum seekers and their families[105] , the vast majority of services that relate directly A8 migrants, including the Slovak Roma, are devolved. More specifically, whilst the Home Office and Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) develop and implement legislation relating to immigration policy, including transitional arrangements applied to A8 migrants, and access to benefits across the UK centring on the principle of 'no recourse to public funds', health care, education, children's services, housing and policing are all the responsibility of Scottish Government.

This situation creates problems for both policy makers and service providers at the local and regional levels. For example, Scottish government can draw up codes of guidance in relation to say homelessness or improved access to welfare services for A8 migrants, but local councils and service providers are then left to interpret them whilst at one and the same time ensuring that their actions are in line with the primary legislation enacted at Westminster. In this way policy making at the different levels can and does become contradictory. Moreover, situations have already arisen where local policy makers and providers are being asked to provide additional services to meet growing demand without additional resources.

It is in this highly complex national, EU and International policy context that research was carried out relating to the needs, service provision for and welfare access of Slovak Roma living in the Govanhill area of Glasgow.

[99] Home Office, (2005) *Controlling Our Borders: Making Migration Work for Britain. Five Year Strategy*

[100] Gerry Mooney and Charlotte Williams, (2006) 'Forging New "Ways of Life"? Social Policy and Nation Building in Devolved Scotland', in *Critical Social Policy,* 26(3).

[101] See http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/workingintheuk/livingandworkinga2.pdf also http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/bulgariaromania/liveworkuk/

[102] See http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/workingintheuk/livingandworkinga2.pdf also http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/bulgariaromania/liveworkuk/

[103] Ruth Levitas, (1998) *The Inclusive Society?: Social Exclusion and New Labour.*

[104] Gerry Mooney and Lynne Poole, (2004) 'A Land of Milk and Honey? Social Policy in Scotland after Devolution', in Critical Social Policy, 24(4); see also Michael Keating (2002) 'Devolution and Public Policy in the United Kingdom: convergence or divergence?' in John Adams and Peter Robinson (eds.), *Devolution in Practice: Public Policy Differences within the UK.*

[105] Gerry Mooney and Charlotte Williams, (2006) 'Forging New "Ways of Life"? Social Policy and Nation Building in Devolved Scotland', in *Critical Social Policy,* 26(3).

Evaluation of Service Provision for Roma in Govanhill: Research Methodology

Currently there is little in the way of comprehensive qualitative data relating to A8 migrants living in Scotland. A number of reports have drawn upon government statistics, collected as part of the Workers' Registration Scheme and National Insurance Number records. It will not be until the 2011 census that service planners will have access to more accurate quantitative data on this group. More comprehensive and up-to-date quantitative and qualitative data relating to the Slovak Roma in particular will also be required to facilitate the planning and development of services in the future. Priority must also be accorded to initiating surveys of Romanian (and/or Bulgarian) Roma in anticipation of increased numbers.

The primary method of data generation for the present report was the semi-structured interview. Interviews were carried out with key service providers in the locale with the objective of eliciting the views and perceptions of those offering frontline services in Govanhill and working with Roma. It was deemed that they were in a good position to identify the needs of this section of the community, what works, and examples of good practice. Moreover, they were well placed to assess the impact of new demand on the quality of service, the local population, and identify the pressure points and service gaps.

Interviews were not tape recorded in most instances, although this was the initial plan. The support workers were interviewed first and stated their preference not to be recorded and this set the pattern. Instead, it was agreed that both researchers would take detailed notes at the same time in order to capture as much information with as much detail as possible, hence guarding against lapses of concentration leading to omissions and errors. Two sets of notes also served as a 'check' to ensure that meaning had been discerned accurately and reliably, thus ensuring greater reliability of primary data. This method was also deemed a more suitable approach to use when the researchers sat in on a scheduled meeting of the Roma Registration Group/Practitioners' Group at Govanhill Health Centre as observers (see below).

The semi-structured interviews took the form of open ended questions which the respondents were encouraged to answer as fully as possible. The researchers offered 'prompts' in order to encourage fuller responses, for example, asking if there was anything they wanted to add, or any other examples or issues that they thought relevant before moving on to the next question. On occasion the researchers took the respondent back to an earlier issue where it was felt that the interview had progressed onto another important and relevant topic without a full exploration of the previous one.

It was not possible to conduct interviews with Slovak Roma due to language barriers and the absence of trusting relationships between the researchers and would-be respondents. However, it was felt that the Daisy Street drop-in support workers had a good knowledge and understanding of Roma needs and views. They had explored with members of the Roma community their perceptions of local services, what worked for them, and had significant knowledge acquired from their day to day work with them. The data generated by the interviewing of service providers is presented below.

[106] Blake Stevenson, (2007) *A8 Nationals in Glasgow.*

[107] See Marcela Adamova, Sarah Jeffery and Lydia Zelmanova, (2007) *Report on information collated between March and June 2007.*

Research findings

Access to Employment and Employment Services

In theory, A8 nationals are free to access the labour market. However, there are some conditions attached to the granting of employment rights. In particular, from 1 May 2004 these migrants have been required to register with the Workers' Registration Scheme within 30 days of the start of their employment in the UK. The stated objective of the Scheme is to enable the government to monitor the numbers and impact of A8 workers on the domestic labour market. Registration yields a Worker Registration Card, valid for 12 months, and a Worker Registration Certificate for each employer an individual works for (thus providing the necessary paperwork for employers to demonstrate that they are only employing 'legals'). Research shows that not all migrants from A8 accession states register, perhaps due to the cost of registration, currently standing at £90, the requirement that applicants enclose a letter from their employer (which may not be accessible if the employer does not want to register their employees for whatever reason, including paying less than the minimum wage) or as a result of them not knowing about the Scheme. To not register is, for both the employee and employer, to commit a criminal offence and for the employee to forgo any legal rights to in-work benefits and health care.

Impact on the Roma in Govanhill

Roma migrants cannot access JobCentre Plus or other state services and schemes (such as New Deal) due to the complex regulations limiting their usage, thus narrowing their legal employment opportunities. This puts them more at the mercy of non-statutory 'employment agencies' *and* 'gangmasters', especially where an individual's education and skill levels are low and there are significant literacy and/or language difficulties.

Taking each in turn, service providers in the Govanhill area reported that Roma who utilise non-statutory 'employment agencies', which constitutes the vast majority estimated at around 95%, access low-skilled, temporary and low paid work (almost always paying below the legal minimum wage and requiring the payment of additional 'expenses' for travel to and from work, for example). These jobs frequently involve working in appalling conditions, in extreme temperatures with excessively long shifts at night or during other unsociable hours. Roma were the only takers of these employment vacancies. A combination of low wages, the irregularity of work and the variation in hours available (depending on seasonal demand, for example) means that Roma families are forced to pool their meagre resources and share sub-standard accommodation in order to maintain a roof over their heads.

In relation to 'gangmaster' activity, service providers working with the Roma acknowledged that some individuals and families had been in contact with 'gangmasters' prior to their arrival in Scotland. They are targeted with promises of well-paid employment, decent accommodation, and an improved quality of life. In exchange for an upfront payment, plus regular 'fees', they offer to arrange transport, secure employment, and housing. On arrival, Roma without exception find themselves either without employment, or with a temporary 'position', and sharing small flats in conditions of extreme overcrowding and squalor. Having paid weekly 'fees' to 'gangmasters', Roma find themselves unable to change their situation. Indeed, to break away from this exploitation puts them at extreme risk, not only of unemployment, but also homelessness and destitution in the absence of benefit entitlement.

Several service providers noted that there were plenty of low-paid, low-skilled vacancies in Glasgow that could not be filled, where good language skills were not necessary. The Roma needed assistance to access them and thus reduce their dependency on 'employment agencies' and 'gangmasters'

which was unsustainable in the longer term. That said, there was also some recognition that, given the current lack of employment services working to integrate them into the more 'mainstream' labour market, in the shorter term these agencies and gangmasters were a necessary 'support' given the alternative of unemployment and/or a return to Slovakia where Roma quality of life remains extremely poor.

Only a tiny minority are skilled craftspeople who also have sufficient English to market themselves to more 'mainstream employers', enabling them to break the cycle. However, many with the skills that are currently in demand within the construction industry do not have proficiency in written Slovak making the mastering of English extremely challenging. The fact that the majority of Roma who have been in Scotland for over a year still do not have even basic English demonstrates the need for appropriate language classes, provided over a sustained period. It is important that these interventions be pitched at a level which allows Roma to benefit in meaningful ways. Already available FE college-based courses are effectively inaccessible to the majority. What is therefore needed is a form of provision which utilises a broad range of tools and methods that would facilitate progress among the most in need, as well those who already have a grounding.

There is also a clear need for this to be supplemented by the longer-term provision of bilingual support workers and advocates who can support and assist Roma in finding suitable employment and bridge the language gap that is likely to persist for many.

The Daisy Street drop-in support workers already liaise regularly with a number of more reliable 'employment agencies' in order to match Roma with employment opportunities. In addition the bilingual advocacy worker at the Crossroads Youth and Community Association works with local Roma, offering advice, practical assistance and a translation service in order to facilitate registration on the WRS (albeit sometimes retrospectively given the cost and level of ignorance about the scheme) and National Insurance Number scheme, as well as helping with tax issues and benefits access not least in relation to forms, letters, documents and phone calls. However, the services they provide are already oversubscribed. Moreover, their positions are temporary, undermining their ability to plan and extend service provision to this community. A number of service providers also highlighted the need for more services to be developed with the *explicit* aim of integrating Roma within the mainstream labour market and addressing the skills gap through training initiatives.[108]

Access to Welfare Benefits

As noted above, employed A8 citizens can apply for in-work benefits (child tax credit, working tax credit, child benefit, housing benefit and council tax benefit) subject to national conditions and eligibility criteria. Once an individual has been employed for 12 months continuously, with no more than a 4 week break, they are granted the same rights and entitlements as other EU nationals, which means access to social security benefits. Central here is the right to claim Job Seekers Allowance and Income Support. However, these benefits are subject to passing the Habitual Residence Test, which means answering questions at the JobCentre relating to length and continuity of residence and demonstrating one's residency status. Therefore, lengthy trips outside the UK may exclude an individual and his/her family from social security benefits, even if they have completed 12 months full-time employment. Other potential barriers to inclusion in the national social security scheme include employment in 'non-mainstream' work where National Insurance is not paid and non-WRS registration.

Impact on the Roma in Govanhill

Roma arriving in Govanhill without employment are unable to make any claims on public funds

given the primary legislation developed by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Home Office. This even works to limit their access to emergency payments from social work in times of 'destitution'. As one of the respondents noted, such restrictive legislation creates a tension between professional social work ethics and the principles of anti-discriminatory practice on the one hand, and the day-to-day realities of trying to work with excluded minority ethnic groups like the Slovak Roma. If they remain unemployed they face destitution and may be forced either to return home, or seek emergency assistance from charitable and church agencies. Roma who secure employment for themselves or family members must live on their low wages until entitlement to in-work benefits are triggered. One respondent claimed that the current wait for tax credits was just 3 weeks but that Child Benefit payments took longer to arrive due to the checks that were required in Slovakia prior to entitlement being granted. Low-paid Roma are therefore likely to live a hand-to-mouth existence in the shorter term, especially where they are beholden to a 'gangmaster'. Only a minority of Roma succeed in maintaining themselves in employment for 1 year continuously given the temporary and irregular nature of the employment they can usually access.

The support workers based at the Daisy Street drop-in and at Crossroads currently provide a lifeline to Roma residents by offering benefits and tax credit advice, where appropriate. The Daisy Street workers have also secured the input of social work in the form of a weekly rights and advice service based at the centre. They themselves work alongside social work to interpret and translate as required. In addition to these activities the drop-in and Crossroads workers also provide assistance to individuals wanting to open bank accounts and offer basic financial advice, helping them deal with direct debits, debt recovery following Direct Debit default and the payment of bills, in the hope of minimising the Roma's vulnerability to financial exploitation.

Access to Social Housing and Homelessness Assistance

Most A8 migrants living in Scotland are accommodated in the private rented sector, often in unaffordable, poor quality dwellings.[109] However, there has been some confusion at the local authority level regarding the rights and entitlements to social housing and homelessness assistance of A8 migrants, including the Slovak Roma, arising out of the complex policy making process at different levels of government. This has resulted in attempts by the Scottish Government to clarify the position.

The interpretation of the EU Directive that outlines the rights and entitlements of A8 migrants to social housing and homelessness assistance (2004/38/EC - *Right of Union citizens and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States*)[110] has been the focus of on-going debate between the local and national government in Scotland. Becoming law in the UK in 2006, it gives A8 citizens freedom of movement through the EU and free access to the labour market, subject to the transitional regulations in force until May 2009 (as noted earlier). These provide specific rights of residence which can be lost if an A8 national is found to be "an unreasonable burden on social assistance." In essence, A8 migrants need to be employed and registered on the Worker Registration Scheme, be self employed or self-reliant in order to have the right to reside.

However, in the devolution context, in Scotland, unlike England, there were no regulations laid down relating to A8 access to social housing and homelessness assistance until the Scottish Executive drew up a Code of Guidance confirming the same housing entitlements for A8 nationals as other European citizens. That said, there is a contradiction here. Whilst A8 nationals are eligible for social housing which potentially increases their ability to break the cycle of poor housing, social exclusion and racism at the community level, the 'no recourse to public funds' legislation (which denies unemployed A8s

Housing Benefit) makes unemployed migrants vulnerable to homelessness or continued dependency on the private rented sector in cases where they are unable to afford the rent. In these circumstances, unemployed A8 migrants would be unable to access social housing despite their eligibility being unrestricted by law.

Impact on the Roma in Govanhill

Roma are particularly vulnerable to private sector dependency, given their high levels of unemployment, temporary, low paid employment, and lack of WRS registration papers. As a result, they experience high rents, sub-standard conditions and non-existent tenancy agreements. This leads to overcrowding (as families are forced to pool their resources to survive in the face of unemployment, low wages and 'no recourse to public funds' legislation), evictions, and strained community relations (as a result of increased noise and waste). These factors also force Roma families to move frequently from one tenancy to another. These conditions and the consequences that arise out of them then work to reinforce negative stereotypes about minority ethnic groups like the Roma.

Other problems in terms of accessing social housing relate to the 'paperwork' demanded by social landlords (such as credit checks) and also impact significantly on Roma as a result of not only the language barrier but also the reluctance of private landlords to provide tenancy agreements and references.

In terms of accessing homelessness assistance, the situation is also complex and unsatisfactory. In 2006 the Scottish Government issued a Code of Guidance relating to homeless A8 migrants that confirmed the responsibility of local councils and housing authorities to accommodate them. However, the legal opinion given to the City of Edinburgh was that homeless A8 individuals and their families are only entitled to local authority provided homelessness assistance if they are economically active (and hence entitled to Housing Benefit), given the limitations of the primary legislation issued from Westminster.[111] This position is replicated in Glasgow given the shared policy context and has given rise to a situation whereby, should the council's Homelessness Unit agree to follow the Code of Guidance from Scottish Government, it must find not only the costs of housing but also the full household costs for homeless families who have no access to public funds in the form of benefits, all without additional funding. This represents an unsustainable, additional financial burden on the local Council. Moreover, to accept that responsibility is also to risk, at least in legal terms, a surcharge being levied on the Council in line with the provisions of the 2002 *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum* Act. The only other alternative seems to be to glean the acceptance of the DWP that homeless unemployed A8s constitute an 'emergency case' which would see the release of central funds. At the time of writing, this had not been accepted by the Department.

There is little in the way of evidence to suggest that homelessness is currently a significant social problem amongst the Slovak Roma living in the Govanhill area. Indeed, there appears to be high availability of poor quality private rented accommodation provided by landlords prepared to turn a blind eye to overcrowding providing the price is right. Issuing no formal tenancy agreements means tenants have limited notional rights and therefore cannot easily protect themselves against unregulated landlords. Moreover, these landlords cannot easily be brought under the House in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) licensing regulations without *proof* of multiple occupancy. In addition, there is a lack of legal protection relating to the problem of overcrowding where the Slovak Roma are concerned. This is because overcrowded properties are usually occupied by families that are related to one another, exempting them from the usual limitations imposed by the state. More specifically, HMO regulations state that: "a house is an HMO if it is the only or principal residence of three or more qualifying persons from three or more families".

That said, homelessness may well affect the Slovak (and Romanian) Roma community in the future should properties in the area currently let to them and other poor individuals and families be upgraded as a result of hard fought for and much needed capital investment. In this scenario, landlords are increasingly able to attract market rents and demand high deposits (unaffordable to those who are largely excluded from the labour market) as well as unobtainable character and credit references. This renders Roma and other poor sections of the community at serious risk of homelessness, especially if the discrepancy between A8 eligibility for benefits and social housing is not addressed by the Home Office. Ineligible for Housing Benefit as unemployed individuals, the only option is likely to be a precarious reliance on charitable provision.

Service providers working in the Govanhill area all agreed that housing benefit eligibility was too tight and exclusive. One respondent noted that unless this cycle of poverty, unemployment and bad housing was broken, they could see no way forward regarding the integration of Roma. They would always be on the margins, blamed for community ills, and condemned to a life of exploitation.

Some service providers highlighted the problem that the majority of social housing stock was inappropriate given the average Roma family size and that social housing providers could not tolerate overcrowding given the legal framework within which they worked. Moreover, waiting lists in the area were already significant. In any case, without access to housing benefit in times of unemployment, the suitability or otherwise of currently available stock is neither here nor there. Furthermore, exclusion from housing benefit also limits choice in the private sector, condemning Roma to the perpetual occupation of accommodation provided by 'slum landlords'.

The Daisy Street drop-in support workers currently liaise with the local housing associations, working to bridge the gap created by language barriers in particular. They are helped in this by a Slovak support worker based at Govanhill Housing Association who also has an outreach role. These activities are crucial if Slovak Roma are to take advantage of the currently very limited opportunities they have in relation to social housing and will continue to be invaluable should the Home Office work to tackle the anomalies relating to housing benefit as more Roma find themselves able to escape the private rented sector.

Notwithstanding the increased demands placed on it in a context of limited resources, GCC's Homelessness Unit also provides a housing advice clinic for Roma based at Daisy Street with the help of funding from the local Community Planning Partnership. This service was originally set up to serve the whole of the Pollokshields area but was rolled out to the Govanhill setting in order to help meet the specific needs of the Slovak Roma. This initiative demonstrates the willingness of service providers in the area to do what they can to respond to new issues as they arise through incremental efforts which collectively work to improve the access of excluded migrants to advice and support as well as services.

Access to Health Services

The main health care resource used by Slovak Roma is the Govanhill Health Centre. Although a significant proportion of the community use the Butterbiggins Health Centre, most gravitate towards and seem to prefer the Govanhill Centre for its close proximity to their flats and the growing accessibility of the services provided.

That said, accessing primary care represents another significant challenge for the Roma and it is

a credit to the work of the health care professionals, practice receptionist and, crucially, the Daisy Street drop-in support workers that close to 50% of the local Slovak Roma population were registered with a GP by mid-2007.[112] Once again the 'bridging work' carried out by these support workers on a regular basis has been crucial in the facilitation of better relationships between service providers and Roma families. They have played a central role in signposting the service, encouraging contact and reconnecting individuals with the service following breakdowns of communication. But given the size of the challenge, Roma inevitably fall through the net with profound implications for the health of children and families.

The main barriers to Roma involvement with GPs and other health service providers, including Health Visitors, centre around language and cultural barriers. Roma patients are unfamiliar with the registration requirement and tend to turn up on the day they wish to be seen by a doctor. However, without being registered they cannot access an appointment. When appointments are made they are often not kept, once again reflecting the cultural expectation that patients are seen at some point on the day of presentation, providing they are prepared to wait. This creates concern for the practice in terms of wasted appointments in a context of high local demand and limited resources, but also in terms of missed child immunisations, for example, and the threats to public health low immunisation levels represent.

The significant language barrier that exists for most of the Roma requires the provision of Slovak and sometimes Romani interpreters. The former are available from the Glasgow Interpreter Service but, given already high and growing demand and a low level of supply, there is often a shortage. This can result in patients turning up but being unable to communicate with the receptionists or health care professionals, resulting in another wasted appointment but also an increased risk of 'losing' that individual from the system once more. There is also a need for assistance in the filling out of registration forms and patient histories which makes the assessment of patient need incredibly difficult if not impossible. With no embedded interpreter services all first 'contacts' are extremely time-consuming and frustrating as well as potentially ineffective.

Home visits bring their own challenges. Here health care professionals are required to engage in 'outreach' in order to improve levels of immunisation within the community, tackle poor health status amongst children and families and concern themselves with issues relating to child protection. Working increasingly with the impoverished Roma community in Govanhill, local practitioners have witnessed growing levels of malnutrition amongst children, overcrowding and infestation, all of which carry with them significant public health risks. They are working within a health care paradigm which reflects the norms of western medicine, public health improvement and preventative interventions, and prioritises the welfare of children. These health care professionals are thus faced with the challenge of communicating effectively with Roma parents, especially mothers who are deemed to have primary responsibility for the health and welfare of the family in Roma as in western cultures, and trying to overcome cultural differences played out at the level of family life.

The health care professionals are currently restricted and sometimes unsure about their levels of responsibility, especially in the context of the limited rights and entitlements afforded to the Roma and the lack of reliable interpreters who can accompany them on visits.

The Practitioners' Group

Shortly after the South East Glasgow Community Health and Care Partnership was set up in 2006,

a Practitioners'/Roma Registration Group was established as a means of bringing local health care practitioners, community support workers, practice managers and administrative staff together on regular basis to discuss the needs of and service provision for Slovak Roma in Govanhill. Issues and problems emerging from increased demand are shared, good practice identified and disseminated and innovative responses to specific challenges proposed and discussed.

This forum generates a range of imaginative responses in order to increase the access of Roma to community health care services. However, in doing so it also creates new demand for the limited resources available[113] , stretching the service and increasing the reliance on 'voluntary' input and good will. These informal inputs are crucial to the inclusive work of the primary care providers in the area. However, they are not, on their own, sufficient to maintain and develop local health care services in the face of a growing diversification and intensification of need, now or in the longer term.

Staff at the Govanhill Health Centre report high levels of stress and frustration, service overload, stretched resources and problems managing the sheer volume of people on the premises at certain busy times, indeed even when they were *not* the Practice 'on duty' for new registrations.

It was recognised by many at the Practitioners'/Roma Registration Group meeting that whilst a 'sharing of the load' in relation to the meeting of local Roma health needs would be welcome - and should be encouraged where possible through increased cross-service communication and a sharing of good practise - there were also significant barriers to this. Some of the services were in closer proximity to the principal streets where the Roma live and they had extremely good links with the Daisy Street drop-in, hence they attracted greater numbers. Moreover, individuals tended to follow family members to their Practice or Centre of choice irrespective of where they were directed. In addition, the Govanhill Health Centre in particular, had been very proactive in trying to increase service accessibility and social inclusion (through a range of initiatives to break down communication, language and cultural barriers, for example, often without additional resources), perhaps making it a more attractive option to Roma. Some practice managers warned, however, that without additional resources and/or a fall off of demand, practice managers may be required to close their lists to guard the quality of service for all registered patients.

Access to Schooling and Education Services

The Slovak Roma form a diverse community, with levels of educational attainment being much lower than other groups. That may reflect the lower value placed on formal schooling in Roma culture, but it also reflects the multiple forms of exclusion from state education systems that they have endured historically. Moreover, the chronic poverty and social exclusion they have suffered as a social group has created a greater reliance on the economic activity of others in the family outside of the male breadwinner. This has traditionally impacted on levels of attendance at secondary school in particular.

Another factor impacting on levels of attendance and pupil retention is the transitory behaviour of Roma. Like the Pakistani migrants settling in Scotland before them, Slovak Roma go back to their 'homeland' regularly, for example to attend family events, and may be gone for some time. However, how the Roma differ from their Pakistani counterparts is that they are more likely to be gone for longer periods of time and more regularly. Moreover, parents can be away from Scotland, leaving children in the care of extended family members which makes communication between schools and parents more complex and challenging and the building of trusting relationships a slower process.

In addition, the Roma have experienced discrimination and segregation within the Slovak education system for many years. As noted earlier, they have been excluded from the mainstream and placed in 'special' education facilities, where their needs and educational development have been neglected. This means that they are extremely suspicious of anyone perceived to be 'an agent of the state'. This means teachers, social workers and even voluntary sector support workers must work extremely hard to build trust and develop open lines of communication. This takes time, a high degree of commitment and a significant amount of resources.

Given their experience of segregated schooling in Slovakia, Roma children also struggle to adapt to new systems of schooling which embody rather different normative frameworks to those they are used to. Norms relating to pupil conduct and behaviour as well as the imposition of routine and structure represent particular challenges for these children and hence their teachers, particularly given the language barriers, the low levels of proficiency in Slovak that a significant proportion of the children demonstrate and the difficulties they have understanding the nature of tasks and activities in the classroom setting. Many, including those with a good command of English, are also disadvantaged by the lack of encouragement they receive from parents and the lack of educational materials (including desks, writing equipment and often even the space to sit and concentrate on school work) especially where whole families share one room as is the case for the overwhelming majority.

Taken together, these factors represent an enormous challenge to teachers and support workers in schools as well as policy makers and funders seeking to met the needs of an extremely diverse community where some schools have a high proportion of bilingual children and children without any English.

Impact on the Roma in Govanhill

Notwithstanding the multiple barriers to their inclusion, growing numbers of Slovak Roma children are now registered in local primary schools, two in particular, Annette Street and St Bride's, with growing numbers now being admitted to a third, Cuthbertson. And, whilst attendance at secondary school is more sporadic, involving smaller numbers of Roma children, again primarily at two local secondary schools, this is in part due to waiting lists for places. Not all children are accepted, though the service providers involved in the study were keen to stress the openness and helpfulness of the staff at the schools where Roma children have been placed. The concentration of secondary provision at Shawlands Academy reflects the school's status as a receiver school for asylum seekers following the signing of an Asylum Seeker Dispersal contract by GCC, which incorporates a Bilingual Support Unit.

All of the schools involved in the education of Roma children work closely with the Daisy Street drop-in support workers, who act as a bridge between teachers and parents as well as liaising with parents and schools regarding incidents of truancy, bullying and learning difficulties. Positive relationships have been built over time between teachers and parents, initially with the regular assistance of the support workers based at the drop-in and more recently with that provided by the Slovak education support worker based at Annette Street Primary. This 'bridging' work is crucial, and is clearly very highly valued by both Roma families and schools. The work therefore represents an important first step in engaging children and teenagers more fully with formal schooling.

Initially Slovak Roma children were given places at Oakgrove Primary at St. George's Cross as it too had a Bilingual Support Unit, this time for the younger age group (though not accommodating the youngest infants who are taught in local primaries). However, they did not attend, sometimes claiming that the travelling was a problem despite the laying on of a school bus. In fact the main barrier to

their attendance was cultural. Suspicious of 'special', non-local schooling, given their experiences of segregation in Slovakia, their parents were keen to be integrated into local provision and it was accepted that it was better for them to attend the local school of choice than not attend at all.

This acceptance resulted in an immediate rise in the number of enrolments of Slovak Roma (along with other A8 and more recently A2 migrant) children, putting pressure on resources from the off. At the infant level this did not represent so much of a shock to the school system given the integration of bilingual children historically. But for the older primaries there was a visible strain placed on the children and the staff in relation to behaviour, intermittent attendance, the pace of learning and pupil relations. This was compounded by the initial lack of EAL/Bilingual teachers and support staff.

Initially Annette Street primary relied on the use of interpreters. However, with the funding of a principal EAL teacher and later a Slovak support worker, albeit both temporary staff shared with other primaries, the school was able to plan and develop new strategies for integrating the children whilst at one and the same time ensuring that their very specific needs were being met. With the setting up of a 'Response Team', coordinated by the head of the Bilingual Support Unit at Shawlands and designed to assist schools beginning to receive A8/Slovak Roma children for the first time, resources were stretched as the principal EAL teacher was also drafted in to work within that team in addition to her other responsibilities. But, nevertheless, a number of innovative strategies have been developed in the Govanhll area to meet the need of *all* of the children in these very mixed primaries, including the Slovak Roma.

One of the first challenges to be addressed was poor attendance. In addition to the 'bridging' and outreach being done by the Daisy-Street drop-in support workers, local primaries publicised the Breakfast Club, a facility available for *all* children attending the schools and one that fell outside the remit of 'no recourse to public funds' legislation (unlike free school meals), and encouraged Roma children and their families to participate. Poor and often hungry, children came along with their parents and this enabled the teaching staff to make contact with future pupils and their families. This contact was built upon through the development of outreach, whereby the principal EAL teacher and the Slovak support workers went out into the community on home visits to encourage enrolment and attendance. Absolutely crucial here was the presence of someone with proficiency in Slovak on the one hand and continuity of personnel on the other. In this way communication was maximised and trusting relationships could be built up. Indeed, staff at Annette Street report the retention of core families and their children over time with an increase in communication by parents in relation to planned absences, and a growing willingness to complete the necessary forms and thus secure their places for the future.

Given the impact of a large influx of Roma and other A8 migrant children on the pace of learning in the non-infant classes in particular, the teachers and support workers also worked to develop an innovative approach to learning, embodying practices that had been shown to be effective with other bilingual children. At Annette Street Primary a Bilingual Base was set up in part of the school and this is where the core programme is now delivered to the bilingual children by the principal EAL teacher and Slovak support worker. It enables the specific needs of this group to be met in relation to the pace and methods of teaching and learning used. Experienced staff are able to adapt education materials and build confidence and enthusiasm amongst the children, in turn increasing their propensity to continue to attend regularly. The children also respond well to the continuity of staff and the opportunity to develop both their English and Slovak language skills. There is though a need

to increase the input of native speakers, not just Slovak but also Romanian. Annette Street Primary has secured a Romanian volunteer for a couple of hours a week which represents a valuable addition to the EAL/bilingual team but is insufficient on its own, particularly as the number of Romanian Roma in the area and hence the school is already on the increase.

In the afternoon, in the absence of the EAL teacher who is also working in other schools as part of the 'Response Team', all the pupils are taught together, and here the emphasis is on integration, in particular learning together about different cultures and histories, performing music and drama. The 2007 Arts Project at Annette Street, which involved each class learning about a particular culture through music, art and drama and ended with a performance in the local church hall for all parents and family members, is an example of how this commitment to integration and the development of mutual respect and understanding between groups, in addition to meeting the specific needs of Slovak Roma children, has been operationalised. The Slovak support worker based at Annette Street is redeployed in the afternoons to make a highly valued contribution to the teaching of the infants, enabling them to maintain and develop their English *and* Slovak.

The work that has taken place in the playground and through after school clubs and activities has also been a crucial aspect of increasing inclusion and retention and improving relations between the different groups of children. Sport has been shown to be particularly effective in breaking down barriers as children are organised into mixed teams and members of the local police force as well as the school Janitor have been instrumental in broadening access and building relationships.

At Secondary level the challenge of increased numbers of Slovak Roma in Govanhill has been even more profound. Here the main issue appears to be attendance and retention. The success of the Bilingual Support Unit staff is hindered by a poor level of commitment to secondary schooling, reflecting cultural and economic realities. However, important outreach work is being done and the police, along with a temporary Education Liaison Officer attached to Govanhill are being very proactive in terms of youth engagement, encouraging the dissemination of positive school experiences at the Daisy Street drop-in and alerting young people to sporting and other activities with which they can get involved. In school, efforts are being made to emphasise opportunities to engage in music too, not least for its community building potential.

[108] This echoes the recommendations of a recent ERRC report for the European Commission. See ERRC, (2007), *The Glass Box: Exclusion of Roma from Employment.*

[109] Pam Orchard et al., (2007) A *Community Profile of EU8 Migrants in Edinburgh and an Evaluation of their Access to Key Services.*

[110] http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l33152.htm

[111] Pam Orchard et al., (2007) *A Community Profile of EU8 Migrants in Edinburgh and an Evaluation of their Access to Key Services.*

[112] Marcela Adamova, Sarah Jeffery and Lydia Zelmanova, (2007) *Report on information collated between March and June 2007.*

[113] Rosemary Sales argues that the impact of enlargement and 'managed migration' policy has not been properly considered and prepared for and that a number of reports have already highlighted the potential and real problems in England. For example, in Slough and Crewe the needs of new arrivals had not been factored in with regard to the financial assessment of council funding needs. See Rosemary Sales, (2007) *Understanding Immigration and Refugee Policy: Contradictions and Continuities.*

Community Building, Community Integration and Community Safety

As noted above, several agencies have been proactive and innovative in their approach to street work to ensure that the opportunity to participate in activities, such as football and those provided through the local youth club, is available to the young people on the streets of Govanhill. However, the Crossroads Youth and Community Association and the Daisy-Street drop-in have had and continue to have a crucial role in community development and integration. For example, Crossroads has recently set up a women's group, offering the opportunity to learn sewing skills and drawing on the work of volunteers as well a core Association staff. Crossroads has also recently been approached for assistance in setting up a Roma-led initiative, offering music nights to the wider community, building links within and beyond the Roma community. They require help and advice in relation to formalising their group, accessing funds and securing venues.

In addition to 'youth engagement' activities, the local police are also actively working in schools to increase tolerance and understanding whilst regularly liaising with Roma on the street in order to raise their awareness of how they themselves are perceived by other local residents. Whilst not actually representing a significant threat, their grouping together on street corners, a reflection of Roma culture, can be and often is seen as threatening by those who do not share such traditions. Together, these activities work to educate 'new' and 'older' migrant groups about each other and as such represent important aspects of a community development and integration strategy.

Liaising with the Roma in this way also enables the police to make links with prominent members of the community and hence the Roma community at large. Aware of the complex relationships that have developed between some of the more powerful community members and the general Roma community, which may at one and the same time be both exploitative and fruitful (in terms of increasing access to work opportunities, for instance), those officers working at the community level have been able to maximise their understanding of the Slovak Roma living in multi-cultural Govanhill and work more effectively to combat negative stereotypes and build bridges between the different ethnic groups. This is no easy feat given the complicated territorial and ethnic strands to the established and newly emerging youth cultures in the area.

Summary

In relation to CEE migrants' rights and entitlements to benefits and services we can see how the situation reflects recent approaches on the part of Government. Inclusion and access to the social rights of citizenship is principally gained through paid work.[114] There are clear implications for A2 migrants, who have been denied complete and full access to the British labour market until 2009, but also for A8 individuals, including the Slovak Roma, whose access to welfare, including emergency payments for families, depends on their labour market status. However, the lack of opportunities afforded to the Roma result in widespread unemployment and destitution at worst, and temporary, low-paid work at best. Given the language barriers, low levels of literacy and formal education and their routine subjection to racism and discrimination, Roma find themselves in a vicious cycle of 'gangmaster' involvement, overcrowding in sub-standard private sector housing and other forms of exploitation.

As noted above, the original remit of the support workers was to:

1) develop an understanding of the local Roma community,
2) optimise the ability of these EU citizens to take advantage of non-exploitative employment opportunities,
3) ensure access to public health services in view of individual needs and also in terms of wider public health protection,
4) ensure an understanding among Roma people of welfare services and their entitlements,
5) encourage and enable participation of school age children in full time education.

This evaluation has found that the objectives listed above have been achieved through the sustained activities of the support workers coupled with the development of a role within the community for the drop-in centre. In some areas, the achievements of the support workers and the drop-in centre have gone beyond the original remit, for example by facilitating the integration of the Roma community. However, it is also clear from this research, that the progress that has been made, incrementally but in a sustained way since the arrival of the first Slovak Roma families in the area, would not have been possible without the commitment of local service providers and the innovative and proactive approaches utilised by the local schools, health care facilities, youth and community groups and the local police. Together, these activities have been supported by a range of community groups and partnerships, some of which have worked to increase communication between planners and providers, coordinated activities and provided a forum for imaginative strategies and initiatives to be developed and provided the impetus for grassroots community partnerships to develop with a particular remit in mind.

In addition, many of the local initiatives that this report has described have been made possible through funding provided by a range of agencies and funds including GCC, Community Planning, South East Glasgow Community Health and Care Partnership and the Scottish Executive's Race Equality, Integration and Community Support fund. However, much of the finance provided to date has been provided on a short-term basis.

This report has shown that whilst many of the initiatives funded to date have achieved an enormous amount in relation to improved access to services, community development and integration, more needs to be done. Moreover, funding needs to be secured in the medium- to long-term in order to facilitate and enable local planning in relation to the future needs of migrant groups and the communities into which they settle, and to build on the good practice identified in the Govanhill area which has been shown to be effective.

[114] Ruth Levitas, (1998) *The Inclusive Society?: Social Exclusion and New Labour.*

Recommendations

When Govanhill Community Health Care Partnership was established in 2006 there was an immediate awareness amongst the local partners of increased numbers of A8 migrants, in particular Slovak Roma families, moving into the Govanhill area. This was not something that had been anticipated with the EU expansion eastwards.

The Partnership was keen to work in a 'joined up' way within the community in order to tackle a range of complex and inter-related issues which immediately became apparent. Low levels of immunisation and the real risks to public health that poses, vulnerability to infectious diseases, linked to the problem of multiple occupancy in below tolerable standard housing, and the issues of child health and child protection were all a focus of concern. Social integration and the maintenance of good community relations were also identified as key priorities.

The Slovak Roma were recognised as a distinct minority ethnic group with specific needs who it was hoped could be, in the longer term, *mainstreamed* into existing services, not through a forced 'assimilation' but rather through a growing adaptation and evolution of health and welfare services. In this way, provision could slowly move beyond the 'one service fits all' traditions of British welfare and towards an increased flexibility and diversification of service provision incorporating the specific needs and demands of Roma, as it had worked to meet those of migrant populations, including those from Ireland, India and Pakistan, who had themselves settled in Govanhill in the twentieth century.

However, this is a process that cannot be completed quickly – mainstreaming and the diversification of service provision takes time, resources and a good deal of planning. This means that in the *short* to *medium term* there is a clear need for Roma-focused, *targeted* services, support networks and interventions to meet the *specific* and *urgent* needs of this profoundly marginalised, poverty-stricken group who face racism and discrimination in all areas of their lives.

Such a strategy is also to be viewed as beneficial to the local community as a whole insofar as it facilitates social integration, good community relations and the development of local social capital which can be mobilised for the good of Govanhill and its people. Moreover, the development of specific services and support networks will also be needed into the future. In 2009 A2 nationals, including Romanian and Bulgarian Roma, will be granted full freedom of movement within the European Union and it is to be expected that greater numbers will come to Britain, bringing fresh challenges to local communities. When the Slovak Roma came to Govanhill it was largely unexpected. How much better to be prepared for the new challenges that come with a further diversification of the local population?

In communities such as Govanhill, characterised by an incredible diversity and multiculturalism, there is a growing need to meet the specific needs of 'new' migrant groups coming to the area, whilst at one and the same time continuing to meet the ongoing needs of more settled groups. This is made all the more challenging in a context of limited resources, increased demand for investment in both those services already in place and those new services coming on stream and a complex and multi-layered policy making process.

To date, the service providers in Govanhill have grappled effectively with the need to increase access to local services for the Slovak Roma whilst also seeking to improve community integration and there

is an acute awareness amongst them to learn from past mistakes, for example in relation to the experiences around the dispersal of asylum seekers, and thus ensure that, where possible, resources serve the whole population of Govanhill. As a relatively poor and disadvantaged area of the City with complex and multiple needs this is a difficult path to tread.

It is the view of the authors of this report that to build on the successes already in evidence in the area, planners, policy makers, service commissioners and providers will need to take continued care to focus on the specific needs of the Slovak Roma - recognising them as a distinct albeit internally diverse social group with particular requirements in relation to service provision - whilst also ensuring that their needs are not met at the expense of other groups living in Govanhill. This requires a targeting of Roma in the short- to medium- term but not always through the development of Roma-specific initiatives. Indeed, there is clear scope here to also develop a range of services that would be of real benefit to the general community as a whole, whilst adopting a highly proactive approach to outreach to ensure that Roma perceive these community-wide services as being for them too. Given that in Slovakia the Roma have been systematically marginalised and actively excluded from local and national services, it will take a considerable amount of time and effort to change their cultural expectation of continued exclusion.

Running parallel to the on-going development of Roma-specific and community-wide services, there is also a clear need to prioritise community development and integration work. This is crucial to build trust between Roma and service providers but also Roma and other ethnic groups living in the area. Building mutual understanding and breaking down stereotypes works to foster tolerance and connections between the different ethnic communities and hence increase their propensity to see the value of identifying shared needs and interests which can be more effectively pursued collectively.

And finally, as the Roma community increasingly embeds itself in Govanhill, there is increasing scope to support and foster Roma-led initiatives which enable the Roma to develop community resources which reflect their own, self-defined needs and identities.

The authors of this report submit the following recommendations:

1: The work of the community support workers through an independent drop-in centre should be maintained as a priority. The bridging service provided by this initiative has proved to be invaluable in the establishment, development and maintenance of a connection between Roma families and local services and agencies. It should be viewed as an example of best practice, of paramount importance with regard to the improvement of the situation of Roma families. The relative independence from other local services and agencies of the drop-in centre, as well as the current scope of its work, should be maintained in order to further enhance its role as a 'hub'. Given the level of demand and service oversubscription, priority should also be given to securing additional support worker posts such as that currently in place at the Crossroads Youth and Community Project.

2: Sustainable employment opportunities for Roma are critical if they are to find a way out of the cycle of poverty, social exclusion and poor housing. There are a number of actions that could support this.

2.1: Skills, training and language gaps must be addressed.

2.2: An initiative such as an employment agency to enable Roma workers to 'plug-in' to suitable, non-

exploitative legal vacancies in the labour market should be seriously explored. In the long term, such a strategy would have undoubted benefits not just for Roma families, but for Govanhill as a whole.

2.3: A community-based employment service embodying self-help and using the higher skilled with good language skills could help to bridge the gap.

2.4: The possibility of work placements that meet the needs of the community should also be explored.

2.5: Soft skills training should be encouraged, including how to look for and maintain oneself in work, and developing bridging between the Roma community and statutory employment services needs to be a priority.

2.6: Opportunities for self-employment could usefully be explored too.

3: The language barrier, compounded by low levels of literacy, must be addressed. Significant numbers of Roma are bilingual and therefore poor literacy should not be misunderstood as an insurmountable barrier to acquiring a working knowledge of English. Language services should be pitched at an appropriate level, utilising tools that reflect levels of formal schooling but also, crucially, normative methods of learning within the Roma community.

4: Language support should be extended, in particular with regard to health service provision. There is already evidence that supports the employment of Roma socio-cultural mediators in hospitals and other health care settings in order to increase the trust and communication between staff and Roma service users, on the grounds that mediators employed directly by the service, as opposed to being 'out-sourced' from outside were more effective. Small things such as the translation of essential leaflets and forms should be done. Copies of leaflets and forms could be left at the drop-in centre where they could be explained.

4.1: In addition to interventions aimed at increasing Roma access to health care provision in local centres, a parallel strategy of outreach could usefully be employed. This may involve healthcare professionals going out into marginalised communities to provide preventative healthcare, such as vaccinations, via a local civil society organisation, and/or with the support of an embedded liaison/support worker at the local level of healthcare provision. This would create a two-pronged approach, which involves Roma accessing medical centres, but also necessitating strategies to reach out to the most marginalised and excluded until the mainstreaming of health care for Roma can be achieved. This may be best viewed as a medium term strategy that could usefully be in place in anticipation of the arrival to the area of increased numbers of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma.

4.2: The more direct involvement in this endeavour of the Daisy Street drop-in could perhaps be facilitated, should sufficient resources be made available.

4.3: It should be the responsibility of government to undertake nation-wide information campaigns (in a number of languages and formats) to clarify the extremely complicated and differentiated system of welfare rights for different groups of migrants, as opposed to requiring stretched local bodies to respond to gaps within existing budgets. This is in line with the social inclusion agenda of National Action Plans, agreed at EU level. This would also be useful in anticipation of increased Roma migration from CEE to areas other than Govanhill.

5: The dire housing situation of the Roma needs to be acknowledged as unacceptable. This report has outlined some of the major issues, but the problem requires engagement on the part of the local and national authorities to address some of the anomalies that are present in the system and that disproportionately impact on the Roma as a group.

5.1: Of particular importance is the issue of housing benefit. Campaigning work needs to be done in order to further progress at the Home Office and DWP in relation to the current contradiction between granting labour market rights while granting only very limited access to benefits.

6: Local education providers have already achieved an enormous amount in terms of meeting the specific needs of Slovak Roma and enhancing integration at the school level. However, the importance of continued funding for EAL/Bilingual support staff cannot be overestimated. The increasing number of Roma children, both from Slovakia and Romania, in Govanhill requires a longer-term commitment to retain experienced, core staff. Indeed, the fact that Roma children are absent from school for sometimes several weeks or months means that when they return to the Scottish school setting it is almost like they are starting over. Moreover, there is a growing need for Slovak and Romanian speakers to support the bilingual as well as the EAL agenda, particularly given the language barriers and literacy deficits in evidence amongst this population. The learning curve is likely to be slower than for some of the other migrant groups who have settled in Glasgow given the low levels of literacy amongst the older generation and the cultural barriers to formal schooling. Medium- to long-term investment in EAL/bilingual support staff represents value for money given their skills in adapting materials and their experience of working with a wide range of EAL/Bilingual children. Furthermore, continuity of funding facilitates a continuity of service provision not only in relation the classroom activities but also to the outreach services that schools are increasingly providing. Without this continuity, the building of trust between schools and parents will slow to a halt and the progress already made, undermined.

7: Charities and agencies involved with service provision that is subject to social inclusion norms should explore the possibilities for various types of funding, such as that from the EU and World Bank, that is available for Roma-led and Roma-targeted projects. The Crossroads Youth and Community Association has begun to offer help and advice to one such Roma-led musical group, though given current resource constraints staff there are already stretched. There is clearly scope for much more work in this area and raise awareness about what Roma-led initiatives can potentially achieve at the community level, particularly when partnered with other service providers.

8: Avenues for the employment of Roma in public services as service providers in their own right should be explored. Concerted efforts need to be made to identify, train and fund the work of emerging Roma community leaders.

9: The development of anti-racist, anti-discriminatory education at the community level to encourage inclusion and integration should be further developed as a means of raising awareness of shared experiences in Govanhill. Opportunities to develop a mutual understanding between members of the community from different backgrounds would be valuable in highlighting the things they have in common. Community experience and knowledge of exclusion and integration is valuable and should, where possible, be co-opted. The Roma, like every migrant ethnic minority before them, have something to offer. The drop-in centre has already been instrumental in promoting awareness of the Roma culture and facilitating shared cultural activities and Crossroads is also doing valuable work in this area. This should be supported and built upon.

10: Professionals and other public services providers should be offered training to ensure that the advice they give is of a high standard and is consistent with current policy and levels of rights afforded to Roma.

11: As part of an overall strategy, the coordination of services and resources, and the effective communication between providers, must be enhanced. Crucial to this is the continuation and development of the work of the Steering Group and the Govanhill Settlement and Integration Network.

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List of Participant Organisations and Agencies

Annette Street School

Crossroads Youth and Community Association

Daisy Street Community Drop-In Centre

Glasgow City Council Education Improvement Service

Glasgow City Council Homelessness Unit

Glasgow South-East Community Health and Care Partnership

Gorbals Police Office

Govan Law Centre

Govanhill Health Centre

Govanhill Health Centre Practitioners' Group

Pollokshields Area Social Work Office

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