

Introduction from Roma Support Group

July 2014 e-bulletin

In this special, one-off July 2014 edition of the newsletter, we are really pleased to bring you the news of the first ever launch of a funding programme directly addressing the needs of Roma communities in the UK. The **Migrant Roma Funding programme** has been announced by Metropolitan (Housing Association) under its charitable initiative, **Migration Foundation**.

Following last month's newsletter with information about the variety of changes to services and benefits for EU migrants which we think will hit Roma communities very hard, we are also taking this opportunity to alert you to a recent comprehensive and fairly objective report from the House of Commons library, "*Measures to limit migrants' access to benefits*".



July 2014 newsletter

Welcome from Roma Support Group

Welcome to the third edition. We want to bring you information, reflections, arguments and discussion about the issues that face Roma communities in the UK. The Roma Support Group has developed over the last fifteen years into a major service agency working for and with Roma communities, mainly in London. We run advice and advocacy sessions; education support programmes (including homework support) for children and families; a Roma Support and Engagement Programme (including tailored staff training and development); and an arts and culture programme. Recently, RSG has been able to develop its work on developing Roma advocacy and mediation, community engagement and development (again principally in London) and also into policy development and information provision. This e-bulletin is one manifestation of these recent developments.

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DEBATES AND DISCUSSIONS in the UK

New funding programme launched: Roma Migrant Funding programme

Metropolitan (Housing Association) through its charitable initiative, the Migration Foundation, has launched the first ever UK funding stream to explicitly address Roma communities in the UK. The funding is for the next three years and amounts to £390,000 in total. All applications will be assessed in two stages with the deadline for the first stage being 8am Monday 28th July. Applications are initially a maximum of two A4 pages (minimum 11 point font!) Applications can only be submitted for communities and areas where Metropolitan is active as a social housing agency - South Yorkshire; Midlands; East of England; and London.

The main priorities that the funding seeks to address are:

- the lack of strong local and national Roma leadership
- the absence of local Roma-led community organisations
- the poor state of national and local networks to support Roma communities
- poor housing in private rented housing sector
- what works to encourage Roma integration and prevent poverty

Paul Birtill (Director of Metropolitan Migration Foundation) explains:

'Like many migrant communities before them, Roma migrants are making new lives in the UK and want to contribute as best they can. Poverty, language and discrimination all pose challenges for effective integration and this programme aims to make a small contribution to organisations that are tackling some of these issues. We want to support projects that will leave some lasting change.'

For more information, visit the Migration Foundation website:

<http://www.metropolitan.org.uk/images/Roma-Funding-Initiative.pdf>

"Measures to limit migrants' access to benefits"; report from House of Commons library

Staff at the House of Commons library have produced a very comprehensive, and relatively objective report on the precise details of the variety of changes that affect EU migrant workers from 1st January 2014. Readers of this newsletter will already be aware of these changes, and the likely impact on Roma communities. This report provides a more researched perspective, and includes some tentative suggestions as to the impact of these changes, and some obvious issues. It also includes some of the DWP guidance for their staff on particular changes.

For more information, download the report:

www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN06889.pdf