

Migrant Roma in the United Kingdom. Population size and experiences of local authorities and partners

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Aims

The overall aim of the study was to address gaps in the knowledge about migrant Roma communities in the UK, in particular the size of the population. Additionally, the research aimed to gain an understanding of what contact local authorities had had with migrant Roma and what key issues and challenges they faced.

Methodology

- A semi-structured questionnaire was distributed to every local authority in the UK. 8 local authorities in Yorkshire and Humber responded, of which 6 were aware of the presence of Roma in their area.
- The questionnaire asked each authority to indicate if they were aware of Roma in their area, and to provide an estimate if one was available. The survey also asked for details on particular experiences, challenges and the nature of contacts with Roma.
 - This was followed up by interviews with 29 key informants from 12 case study areas comprising a representative sample of authority types.
 - A total of 151 questionnaires were returned out of 406 issued.

A specific place typology methodology was selected to estimate the population size of Roma communities across the UK. This technique uses datasets to identify places which have comparable demographic, economic, educational and physical attributes, which can then be used to predict certain trends likely to occur in similar locations. In this study comparisons for local authorities which did supply estimates were sought among those without data by assessing their similarity on an extensive set of variables, with the aim of identifying where Roma communities may be expected to reside, and in what number.

Key issues

The report outlines the context for the research, placing it within wider UK and EU policy discussions and strategies. The subsequent structure of the report follows the thematic areas of the local authority questionnaire with chapters on levels of awareness of migrant Roma communities, engagement with migrant Roma in local areas; and perceptions of challenges and issues.

The findings are divided into: estimated size of the migrant Roma population in the UK; settlement in the UK; the engagement of migrant Roma with service areas; mobility of migrant Roma; and addressing migrant Roma settlement.

Conclusions

The primary conclusion is that the UK's migrant Roma community is significant in size when compared to other Black and Minority Ethnic [BME] communities, and is likely to grow. An national estimate of at least 197,705 individuals was made, and within this the Yorkshire and Humber region was estimated to host 25,451.

Information from local authorities also shows that the migrant Roma population is mainly urban and located in areas that are already ethnically diverse. It was frequently reported that Roma communities were characterised by high mobility and presenting with complex needs. Several authorities reported the existence of a Roma population in their area but that they had little contact with the authorities. It was also noted that cuts to local authority budgets had reduced the number of workers engaging with Roma communities, and that important knowledge was being lost as a result.

Recommendations

In the absence of systematic and comprehensive data and information about the migrant Roma population in the UK, the authors recommend that this exercise is repeated regularly in order to document the population of migrant Roma and focus in on specific issues pertinent to areas such as age, gender and employment.

The authors also recommend that their place typology based approach to assessing population size could prove a valuable tool for future forecasting settlement patterns but caution that the figure proposed in this report is preliminary and that any similar survey in the future must be accompanied by direct statistical sampling in the absence of other sources. In general, more research is needed to understand the choices Roma make regarding settlement.

Web Link
[Migrant Roma in the United Kingdom. Population size and experiences of local au...](#)
Migrant Group

EU migrants
Topic
Community and society
Integration
Migration trends
Roma
Place
UK - inc. Yorkshire & Humber element
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