



# ROMA NET

## Glasgow Baseline Study



Connecting cities  
Building successes



## City of Glasgow

Glasgow is Scotland's largest urban economy with a population estimated at 588,500. This is a reversal of a long term downwards trend due to a combination of a steady flow of in-migrants, more employment opportunities as well as the social and cultural infrastructure to attract and retain residents.

Glasgow's economy generates over £13 billion Gross Value Added each year and supports over 400,000 jobs. The number of jobs located in the city grew by more than 70,000 in the ten years to 2005, making it one of the fastest growing cities in the UK. Despite a buoyant economy over the last decade however, Glasgow is now seeing the effects of the economic downturn.

Historically, Glasgow has poorer health and shorter life expectancy than elsewhere in Scotland. Health inequalities can be attributed to socio-economic circumstances for example housing, poverty and family history, and unfavourable lifestyle choices. Nevertheless, life expectancy in Glasgow is increasing and this could be attributed to campaigns to reverse trends in these unfavourable lifestyles. In terms of quality of living, Glasgow is a mid-ranking City on an EU wide basis.

A significant increase in positive destinations for school leavers has been witnessed over the past decade and this has led to much higher qualification and skill levels. There is also a strong strategic emphasis on vocation training.

## Local Area Focus

This baseline focuses on the area of Govanhill which is in the South East of the City and has a rich history of migrants in the area.

The area is one of the most ethnically diverse in the city, with 19% of the population from the BME community and mainly from the Indian subcontinent (based on the 2001 census). This figure is likely to be an understatement of the current position which is estimated at a significant 30%. In addition there has also been a recent and significant influx of migrants in to the area from the 8 EU accession states, attracted by the availability of private rented accommodation.

Govanhill has a population of around 15,253 however it is uncertain as to what affect migrant workers will have on this figure. Over the past decade, the population of Govanhill has increased at a proportionately higher rate than the rest of the City and at the moment it is anticipated that there are 51 languages spoken in the area.

According to recent research carried out by the South East Community Planning team, the communities in Govanhill consist mainly of:

White (Scottish, Irish)

Asian (Indian and Pakistani)

EU migrants (Polish, Slovakian, Czech)

Roma (Slovakian, Czech, Romanian, Lithuanian)



## Policy Context

Central and East European Roma have been settling in the UK over the past 2 decades. As a result of the process of EU enlargement, the A8 countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia and Slovakia) joined the EU in May 2004 with Romania and Bulgaria following in 2007.

Upon this enlargement the UK government imposed a number of employment restrictions on the A8 migrants exercising their new freedom of movement. A8 nationals have been able to legally reside and work in the UK after registering with the Home Office's Worker Registration Scheme within 30 days of beginning their UK employment. Only after working legally for a 12 month period, with a break of no more than 30 days, can they claim social security benefits such as Job Seekers Allowance or income support.

### *National*

In June 2008, the Scottish Government's ministerial task force on health inequalities launched its report: Equally Well. A key part of implementing the Equally Well report is through test sites. Govanhill was approved as one of 8 core test sites with a focus on service re-design to meet key local priorities in relation to health inequalities and neighbourhood management. Within SE Glasgow, Govanhill as a neighbourhood has the highest levels of serious violent crime (159% above Scottish average); drug related hospitalisation (319% above the Scottish average) and reported drug offending (73% above the Scottish average). It also has the second highest levels of domestic abuse (45% above the Scottish average) and alcohol related hospitalisation (153% above the Scottish average).

The Govanhill Equally Well test site is linked to a number of Equally Well recommendations including "active involvement of the local community and third sector organisations in responding to key local priorities".

In March 2009, The Scottish Government in partnership with COSLA and the third sector launched the Community Empowerment Action Plan to encourage local people to participate in running their neighbourhoods. The Action Plan describes Community Empowerment as a process whereby "people work together to make change happen in their communities by having more power and influence over what matters to them". The plan emphasises that community empowerment cannot be handed to local people. Local people must decide themselves the level of empowerment they want and how they will get there.

### *Glasgow*

Glasgow Community Planning Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Government (2009) sets out 24 local outcomes against which the partnership's performance will be measured. One of these outcomes relates directly to community empowerment: "Improve residents' aspirations, confidence, decision-making capacity and involvement in community life". Research published in February 2010 from the Go Well study into the impacts of neighbourhood change in Glasgow shows how a sense of community, inclusion, belonging and involvement in community life can underpin how empowered people feel in local decision-making. Improving



performance in Govanhill in relation to the SOA outcome of involving of residents in community life should contribute towards a more empowered community.

## **Background and Current Situation**

One of the initial areas of concern is that the estimates of the number of Roma living in Glasgow vary. What is known about this population is that they are predominantly concentrated into the South East area of Govanhill and locally are concentrated in accommodation across around 8 streets. There is simply no reliable information as to where other Roma may be living elsewhere in the City and it can be safely assumed that if there are then they are not as concentrated as they are in Govanhill.

A report carried out in 2007 by two Slovak support workers estimated that there were between 2000 and 3000 Roma living in Govanhill. This estimate has been broadly adopted by agencies working in Govanhill over the last three years when planning for and responding to the needs of the local Roma population.

However there have been several more recent data/estimates of the Roma residing on Govanhill.

### ***GP Registrations***

Estimates from GP practice registrations give us a figure of 1609 Roma residents split across 5 separate GP practices however the accuracy of this is questionable as local workers have stated that the Roma population rarely state their ethnicity.

### ***Police/Environmental Health Estimates***

Police and Environmental Health have no accurate records of the numbers of the local Roma Population. However, recent estimates provided to CHCP staff by Officers from these agencies have suggested that there are between 1400 and 1600 local Roma residents. This is broadly consistent with the actual data obtained from GP practices.

### ***South West Govanhill Social Survey***

A Social Survey was undertaken by IBP Strategy and Research in June 2009 on behalf of Development and Regeneration Services and Govanhill Housing Association. It was undertaken in the 12 blocks which are the most problematic properties in the area, which border a number of streets, including Westmoreland Street, Allison Street, Calder Street, Langside Road, Annette Street, Dixon Avenue and Garturk Street

Demographic information from this survey did not identify Roma specifically but they would be included within the more general 'Eastern European and Other White' category which would also include, amongst others, Poles and non-Roma Slovaks. It identified approximately 304 'Eastern European and Other Whites' within these 12 blocks.

### ***School/Nursery Rolls***

Estimates recently provided by the Education Department on the numbers of Roma children attending local educational establishments (nursery, primary and secondary) suggest that there are approximately 220 within nurseries and primaries and approximately another 100 within secondary schools, making a total of approximately 320 (as reported by Homelink Assistants).

## **Conclusion**



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It was estimated in 2007 that there were between 2000-3000 Roma living in Govanhill. More recent estimates by local officers from across agencies indicate that this may have reduced and now be in the region of 1600 people. This is consistent with the information obtained from GP registers, the only accurate source of information currently available on the Roma within the whole of Govanhill.

There is the possibility that a number of the Roma population will not register with their local GP, perhaps through choice or through only being in the area on a transitory basis. If we make the assumption that this was another 10%, current information would suggest that there are between 1600 and 1800 Roma currently living within Govanhill.

What we do know is that the Roma population is predominantly settled rather than nomadic.

## Anticipated Problems

### Access to Employment and Employment Services

Employment for the Roma community is hard to come by due to poor levels of training or educational attainment, which could be attributed to language barriers, isolation etc. Some do resort to selling the Big Issue (a local Homeless Magazine), although this is usually only Romanian Roma (as well as local Bulgarians) as their A2 status gives them the same basic rights as EU citizens, but who face some restrictions in their ability to get work. It is understood that many Roma work in the black economy though the extent of this is obviously hard to verify.

A number of local agencies do provide casual labour for the Roma, with pickups from local streets. There is uncertainty about the employment status, pay, conditions and rights of the individuals working for these agencies.

Perhaps more worryingly in terms of reducing long term unemployment in the Roma community, it has been suggested by local agencies that Roma take a short term view of employment so may not buy in to traditional employment pathway models.

### Education

Educational attainment is generally low among the Roma. However, as a group they are known more for their practical, learned, non-academic skills with expertise commonly resting in areas such as music, building, gardening and car mechanic skills. A selection of the Roma population speak basic English but their ability to speak and to read English varies.

Local agencies suggest that the lack of English language skills is the primary reason they struggle with formal education locally, to seek work or to engage with mainstream service provision. Many Roma are keen to access local ESOL provision but struggle to engage with local providers.

### Anti Social Behaviour and Crime

The local Police force has engaged with the Roma community for around 3-4 years and the focus over this period has been around complaints of anti-social behaviour in many forms including groups of males hanging around the streets, creating a fear of crime, excessive noise within communal stairwells where Roma families reside, inappropriate disposal of rubbish, overcrowding in private let properties, child protection concerns for example children not attending school or being in the streets late at night. Reports from the local Police force suggest



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that the Roma population have not been involved in any overtly criminal activity however police statistics show that it is the anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime that are the areas of concern for the community.

## Ethnic Rights

The Roma are not recognised in Scotland as a distinct ethnic grouping though there is provision for Gypsy/Travellers within the Scottish Government's equalities monitoring forms. The previous census in 2001 and the current census of March 2011 do not include Roma as a distinct ethnic group.

While some Roma may be comfortable with the Gypsy/Traveller grouping, the majority would not consider themselves to be nomadic, generally originating from villages and towns where they were forced to assimilate under previous political regimes.

## Housing

The Govanhill neighbourhood area is dominated by sandstone tenements. The majority of these properties were built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a process that continued on into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The area was developed along the axis of Victoria Road and Cathcart Road which, together with the Cathcart Circle Railway line, provided good transport links to the city centre.

During the interwar years the City Council continued to develop in the area through building a mixture of tenements and family housing for social renting in the northern and eastern parts of the neighbourhood. The bulk of post war housing development has also been by the social rented sector, largely small scale infill development. There has also been one substantial private sector development where a number of poorer quality pre-1919 tenements were demolished in the 1980's. The major post war housing programme in the area has been the refurbishment of sub-standard pre-1919 tenements by Govanhill Housing Association within Housing Action Areas for Improvement designated by Glasgow City Council. The Association has also been responsible for a number of infill new build developments in the area, including family housing and particular needs housing.

Over 90% of the properties in the area are flats, mostly tenements. The largest proportion of houses in the area is rented, with social renting accounting for approximately 50% of the stock and 20% in the private rented sector. Nearly the entire private rented sector in the neighbourhood area is within pre-1919 tenements, with much of it focused on the remaining poorer quality properties in the south-west of the area where levels of private rented accommodation rise to nearer 75%. Govanhill Housing Association is the largest provider of social housing in the neighbourhood with around 80% of the sector, following a recent transfer of properties from Glasgow Housing Association. Approximately 50% of the social housing stock in the area is in the worst 15% data zones in Scotland based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The key strategic housing issue relates to the condition of the older private housing, where there are major problems of disrepair, much of it related to blocks where there are significant levels of private letting. Changes to the disbursement of Private Sector Housing Grant have greatly inhibited the ongoing comprehensive improvement and repair of BTS tenement properties, particularly in mixed tenure blocks. Glasgow City Council is currently promoting statutory and voluntary common repair schemes to address the housing quality issues in the private sector.



There is a clear problem with overcrowding and slum landlords in Govanhill which has been extensively reported on and which Govanhill Housing Association is making considerable efforts to address. However it is not the case that all or the majority of Roma are living 10-12 to a flat or that there is a cultural reason causing the Roma to choose to do so. Local agencies suggest that economic pressures caused by the work restrictions on A8 nationals and the difficulties in seeking work due to not speaking English are behind the overcrowding, with many Roma suffering acute poverty. They also suggest that many Roma live in single family dwellings, typically occupied by 5-6 people.

## Health

The prevalence of alcohol and smoking is increasing significantly within communities, including the Roma population.

There is a lower rate of cancer but increased morbidity and premature cardiovascular mortality amongst this population group. Respiratory diseases are low but as the Roma population often don't access services, many illnesses can go undiagnosed. This information may be inaccurate however as we are unsure if this relates to the Slovakian community has been used, rather than specifically Roma.

There is evidence of low birth weight and increased infant mortality and morbidity rates. Resulting in poor health outcomes or disabilities and in some cases can be linked to consanguineous marriages taking place between 2nd generation family members.

There are an unknown number of cases of infectious diseases within the Roma population, again as access to services is perceived to be difficult and can remain unreported. Cockroach and bed bug infestation is prevalent in the sub standard housing within the local area and the infestation is easily spread from property to property by the transient nature of the close family networks that exist. This contributes to frequent infected bites and skin irritation generally within this community.

There is thought to be poor or variant childhood nutritional intake with evidence of low weight for age in early years and subsequent obesity in later childhood. With increased dental caries and poor oral health.

Obesity is reported to be quite high within the adult Roma communities. This is thought to be due in part to high degrees of poverty and generally as a result of a complex mix of social and behavioural influences.

## Current Service Provision

### Education

There are two local primary schools accommodating Roma children but both have significant populations of other Ethnic Minority and migrant children and are under severe pressure to cope. In Annette Street Primary for instance 97% of the children come from an ethnic minority background. There are home-link assistants employed at Shawlands Academy to provide support for primary and secondary school age Roma children, but not for pre-school or college ages. There is significant demand for after-school places which appears to be stretching the supply in the area.



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There is very little attendance of local Roma at pre-school or nursery and as a result the young children are at a disadvantage both educationally and in learning and speaking English at the formative stages.

## Ethnic Rights

While the Roma are not defined as a distinct ethnic grouping, local agencies and community/voluntary organisations have been able to attract considerable amounts of funding to support the Roma. Govanhill and Pollokshields Integration Network has funded a number of organisations which provide advocacy, advice, information and other supports to the local Roma population. Funding from other Trusts and Foundations has supported this work. Additionally £1.8m of Scottish Government funding was announced in June to deal with the problem of rogue landlords in Govanhill, for property acquisition and to make environmental and capital improvements to the area.

## Housing

One reason why various migrants have made their way to Govanhill over a long period of years is that there is a significant private rented sector in the area. While many people may find difficulty in accessing social rented housing, this is less true of private landlords. More than a quarter of the houses in the area are privately rented. Changes to Housing Benefit entitlement due to come into effect in April 2011 will have a significant impact on this.

The Chartered Institute for Housing in conjunction with Glasgow Housing Association (GHA), the Lintel Trust, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and the Scottish Government recently launched a Housing Rights for Migrants website which hosts up to date information on the legal entitlements for all types of migrant, whether they are homeless, want social housing or wish to apply for housing benefit. While this is an excellent resource, questions have been raised around accessibility and how easily it would be for the Roma population to access this given their levels of digital exclusion.

## Employment

There are a number of local agencies or structures working to support the Roma into employment.

Local agencies such as Crossroads Youth and Community Association, Daisy St Neighbourhood Centre (in partnership with Glasgow Life), the Larkfield Centre and Govanhill Law Centre, provide a variety of advice, information and advocacy supports or services for the local Roma population, with support for individuals in finding work commonly a part of the wider range of services offered. Oxfam have also been heavily involved in the local area for the past 3-4 years.

Glasgow South East Regeneration Agency Job Clubs – working well but high turnover of attendees. Many tend only to come for the first time. These work in partnership with Crossroads and the CHP.

Govanhill and Pollokshields Integration Network Employability sub group works to ensure that barriers to employment are addressed and that local statutory agencies develop services in ways which are appropriate for ethnic minorities.



Job Centre – most Roma simply use the Job Centre as a place to ‘sign on’. The absence of interpreting facilities means that most Roma are unable to access the services provided by the local job centres.

A range of lessons have been learned from delivery of the projects to date, including the need to ensure advisers are well qualified and have extensive experience of working with a broad range of clients; ensure frontline advisers have access to good quality, unequivocal information about eligibility criteria, but be free to deliver an all-inclusive service; ensure clients are fully aware of, and understand, the goals of services on offer, with the host organisation that deals with the particular client group taking the lead in explaining this; and encourage peer group support among clients addressing, for example translation of Job vacancy information;

## Health and Welfare

As part of the Equally Well test site, a dedicated resource in the form of a Service Improvement Co-ordinator and a bi-lingual support worker will lead a proposed action research pilot. This is to test out a locally relevant anticipatory care model to improve health outcomes for the Roma population.

The objectives are;

- To review available health services research in relation to the needs of the Roma communities;
- To link with representatives of the local community to develop acceptable ways of delivering the programme, in particular through identification of potential barriers to the project;
- To determine if the anticipatory programme should address any other significant health issue in addition to those in the existing Keep Well template and extend the core Keep Well dataset where relevant;
- To engage target individuals, their wider families and their social networks in health improvement;
- To develop and deliver culturally appropriate cardiovascular health check to the Roma target population in Govanhill.

Suggested priorities for Govanhill are:

- Drug and alcohol prevention, including smoking;
- Reproductive health for mothers;
- Blood pressure checks for men;
- Early intervention/parenting support.

The Community Health Partnership has employed a Roma Development Worker and the Roma Information Centre was established in 2007. The Development Workers key role was to build bridges between the Roma community and local health and social services, welfare rights, safety, education etc. It is reported from this worker that the vast majority of her time is dedicated to issues of welfare and housing as well as:

- Issues around tax credits;
- Child benefit;
- Making GP appointments;
- Writing and reading letters;
- Home Office issues;



- Education; and
- Housing benefit.

## Anti-social Behaviour/Environmental Issues

There was an early recognition in the local area that all of the local agencies and partners were struggling with different aspects of anti-social behaviour, environmental and other issues. It was agreed that a new approach was required which would enable operational practitioners from each agency to come together on a daily basis to consider how to tackle recurring common issues and what might deliver the lasting resolution and/or change in behaviours that would alleviate some them.

The Govanhill Hub was established in April 2010 and operates from within Govanhill Housing Association. The Hub operates on the basis of a daily task meeting attended by all of the partners. During this meeting the partners discuss live issues that their organisations are facing in the local area and determine what action should be taken. This approach quickly identified some strategic issues that had previously been unresolved for example serious overcrowding and lack of effective regulation around private let properties, and as a result a petition to the Scottish Government secured £1.8m for the local area: £300,000 for continued operation of the hub and £1.5m for back court improvements.

The Hub has created important linkages between partners, allowed faster and more aligned operational responses and provided a mechanism to deliver a more comprehensive response on real issues.

## Community Engagement

The South East Community Planning Team carried out research in April 2010 that highlighted the areas of strength and weakness in terms of engaging with the local community in Govanhill on a range of issues.

It is apparent that the physical development of the area is an important issue for the local community and has prompted the largest response when consulting with local residents. As mentioned, environmental issues are of serious concern to local residents with a number of heated and confrontational public meetings taking place, safety, street cleansing and the local environment of particular concern.

In relation to the Roma community however, the research cited this group as unrepresented by community groups in the area and disconnected.

Many barriers to engagement were identified however language was identified as the most significant. Translations services are now available with “happy to translate” signs being used by the Govanhill Community Development Trust.

Voluntary Organisations employ multi-lingual workers and now statutory services are also attempting to break down language barriers with the health partnership and Glasgow Life employing Slovakian youth workers.

In April 2009 Oxfam and European Dialogue organised a meeting to bring together 15 representatives from the Roma community to share experiences of accessing services and



getting involved in public life. Some of the key issues raised from the Govanhill community included:

- Concerns raised by the participants that such events/meetings being organised by non-Roma organisations;
- Lack of funding to support activities and heavy reliance on the Roma community volunteering their time;
- Language barriers;
- Lack of experience and employment due to discrimination in countries of origin.

Positively however they highlighted:

- Absence of institutional discrimination;
- Satisfaction with no discrimination in health care provision in the majority of cases;
- Satisfaction with education provision where it has been accessed.

Oxfam has carried out a significant amount of work in the local area, supporting a range of local initiatives including the employability sub-group of the Integration Network. They have supported reports focusing on the issue of the Roma community including the aforementioned European Dialogue, the West of Scotland University report and the Glasgow Braendam Link. Engagement with the Roma through NORMA, the local Roma group has not been very successful however a number of Roma community events have been hosted over the past 4 years including the Roma Day and Christmas parties.

For further information in relation to the Roma Net project please contact:

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<http://urbact.eu/en/projects/active-inclusion/roma-net/homepage/>

