

Number: **WG26698**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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Welsh Government

## Consultation Document

# A call for proposals on a migrant Roma strategy for Wales

Date of issue: **5 October 2015**

Action required: Responses by **10 January 2016**

## Overview

This call for proposals seeks views on whether there is a need for a dedicated strategy for the inclusion of migrant Roma in Wales. We are also seeking specific proposals to improve inclusion, which would be included within a strategy or as part of improving access to services.

## How to respond

Please complete the questionnaire at the back of this document or complete an online form.

## Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

## Contact details

For further information please contact:

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## Data protection

### How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

## **A call for proposals on a migrant Roma strategy for Wales**

### **Forward from Lesley Griffiths AM, Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty**



I am pleased to launch this consultation to explore whether a migrant Roma strategy for Wales could improve the Welsh Government's approach to the inclusion of this community in Welsh society.

The Welsh Government is driven by values of fairness, social justice and equality. Equality and human rights are enshrined in our founding legislation and reflected within our guiding principles. We are committed to make Wales a country where all people can enjoy the same opportunities and where everyone can fulfil their potential.

Wales was the first UK nation to comply with the European Union's requirement to put in place a National Roma Integration Strategy, in the form of our 'Travelling to a Better Future' Framework for Action and wider social inclusion policies to support migrant Roma. These policies seek to put the principles of equal opportunities into action.

Since the Framework for Action was launched in 2011, I have listened to stakeholders who have called for a dedicated strategy for migrant Roma, though I am not yet convinced such a strategy is necessary to improve the lives of the Roma community.

However, I am keen to listen to your proposals for specific measures which could be included in any Roma Strategy and I will consider any realistic and deliverable proposals which come

forward to ensure we're doing all we can to promote social inclusion.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The ink is a light grey color.

Lesley Griffiths AM

Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

## **Background**

The Welsh Government is committed to promoting equal opportunities and good relations between groups. Section 77 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 requires the Welsh Ministers to exercise their functions with due regard to the principle of equal opportunities for all people. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Welsh Government to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Romani Gypsies and Irish Travellers are ethnic minorities and, therefore, have the protected characteristic of race under the Equality Act 2010.

The UK Member State is also required to promote social inclusion of Roma communities within a National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) or 'integrated set of policy measures'. The Welsh Government, as a devolved administration within the UK Member State, is also obliged to comply with this requirement.

In Wales, *'Travelling to a Better Future: A Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan'* encapsulates the Welsh Government's commitment to indigenous Gypsy and Traveller communities. The inclusion of migrant Roma communities is supported by wider social policies.

## **Definitions**

The European Union defines the term 'Roma' as including a diverse group of ethnic and cultural groups including all Romani groups, Irish Travellers and other indigenous nomadic groups across Europe.

However, the Welsh Government recognises the different cultures and lifestyles of these different groups and how policies may need to be adapted to the circumstances of each group. Therefore, we use the term 'migrant Roma' to refer to those Romani groups who had previously been settled for a period in Central and Eastern Europe and have now migrated to Wales (largely since the expansion of the European Union in 2004). This may include Roma, Sinti, Kale and other 'sub-groups'.

The term 'Roma' is used in an effort to minimise confusion, as it aligns with the term used by the European Union, and reflects the most populous Romani group in Europe.

The Welsh Government also uses the phrase 'indigenous Gypsies and Travellers' to refer to Romani Gypsies, Irish Travellers and other groups with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in caravans, who are native to Wales.

It is recognised that for migrant Roma, the term 'Gypsy' is often seen as a pejorative word. However, Romani communities in Wales appear to be happy

to ascribe to this word and the Welsh Government does not believe the indigenous community finds its use in official publications to be negative.

### **How do we currently address social inclusion?**

Migrant Roma communities in Wales are currently treated in the same way as any other European Union migrant and are eligible for the same support. The control of migration and the rights to access social security are non-devolved matters and are the responsibility of the UK Government. However, migrant Roma are not treated differently in their attempts to access services.

Similarly, where services are devolved, such as healthcare, education or housing, migrant Roma are not treated more or less favourably than other European migrants.

The Equality Act 2010 protects migrant Roma from discrimination, as they possess the protected characteristic of race. The Welsh Government's 'Tackling Hate Crimes and Incidents: A Framework for Action' also includes a commitment to tackle hate crimes regardless of their backgrounds or perceived differences.

We are currently encouraging Local Authorities with migrant Roma populations and those who work with the community to consider bidding for European Social Funds if projects can be identified which will improve social inclusion of this group.

In areas with a substantial migrant Roma population, the Welsh Government has funded training for Public Authority service providers on cultural awareness through the Community Cohesion programme.

In 2011, the Welsh Government commissioned Cardiff Ethnic Minority Communities First team to undertake a migrant Roma community needs analysis.<sup>1</sup> Only a small minority of community members wanted to see the development of Roma-specific services in Wales, instead preferring to access mainstream services.

### **Call for Proposals**

The Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty has committed to reviewing this approach to consider whether any targeted proposals could be identified to better support migrant Roma communities in Wales. This 'Call for Proposals' aims to identify and investigate proposals to improve community cohesion and social inclusion of migrant Roma communities.

Various research reports suggest migrant Roma communities are socially excluded in a number of areas, including employment, education and

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[http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/829/CardiffEURomaReport\\_SUMMARY\\_V1%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/829/CardiffEURomaReport_SUMMARY_V1%5B1%5D.pdf)

healthcare despite being afforded equal treatment in law. However, an absence of robust data prevents clear conclusions being drawn regarding whether such issues are experienced more commonly to migrant Roma than other migrants.

We are particularly interested in receiving detailed policy proposals which could achieve the outcomes mentioned above, without marginalising the migrant Roma community. If realistic and desirable proposals are identified they will be considered for possible inclusion in a revised *'Travelling to a Better Future'* Framework for Action during 2016.

Proposals should aim to address any issues which disproportionately affect Roma, which are not already addressed through wider social policies. The Welsh Government recognises the unique culture of migrant Roma communities and we are seeking information regarding instances where current policies or practices do not currently take sufficient account of cultural differences.

However, proposals should not seek to treat Roma community members more favourably than other European Union migrants or indigenous citizens. Such proposals are likely to be counter to Human Rights and Equality legislation.

Inevitably, some issues will revolve around the language barriers and relocation from the country of origin to Wales, however, these issues are likely to affect all European migrants and not specifically migrant Roma. If these barriers have a disproportionate impact on Roma, we would be keen to see evidence of this as part of the consultation process.

Proposed social inclusion policies should follow the European Union's 10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion:

1. Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies
2. Explicit but not exclusive targeting
3. Inter-cultural approach
4. Aiming for the mainstream
5. Awareness of the gender dimension
6. Transfer of evidence-based policies
7. Use of European Union instruments
8. Involvement of regional and local authorities
9. Involvement of civil society
10. Active participation of the Roma

### **Who we will ask**

The Welsh Government is seeking to consult all organisations and stakeholders with an interest or involvement with supporting the migrant Roma community in Wales. We are committed to consulting the following groups:

- Migrant Roma community members through focus groups
- UK Government departments

- Welsh Local Government Association and Local Authorities
- Wales Strategic Migration Partnership
- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Education services (including Gwent Ethnic Minority Service, Cardiff EMTAS and Swansea TES)
- Roma Support Group
- Roma Education Fund
- Romani Cultural & Arts Company
- Gypsies & Travellers Wales
- Save the Children's Travelling Ahead project
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Police Association
- National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups
- Race Equality First
- South East Wales Regional Equality Council
- Swansea Bay Regional Equality Council
- North Wales Regional Equality Network
- Welsh Refugee Council
- Tai Pawb
- Shelter Cymru
- Communities First Clusters in areas with known migrant Roma communities
- National Roma Network (administered by Migration Yorkshire)
- Children's Commissioner for Wales
- NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights
- Local Health Boards in areas with known migrant Roma communities
- Public Health Wales
- The Big Issue
- Welsh Police Forces
- Ministry of Life (Cardiff)
- South Wales Gypsy Church
- People Around Here
- Open Society Foundation

If you believe we have missed an important organisation to consult, please let us know.

### **Next steps**

This call for proposals will run until 10 January 2016. Responses will be considered during spring 2016. A decision on whether to adopt specific proposals for migrant Roma will be made in the new National Assembly for Wales term after the election in May 2016. If specific proposals are to be included they will be subject to further consultation, in due course.

**Consultation  
Response Form**

Your name:

Organisation (if applicable):

email / telephone number:

Your address:

**Migrant Roma inclusion proposals**

**Question 1** – Is there a need for specific proposals aimed at improving the social inclusion of migrant Roma in Wales?

Yes   
No

**Question 2** – What are the barriers to migrant Roma social inclusion and how should these barriers be addressed?

**Question 3** – What proposals do you think should be developed?

**Question 4** – Are there examples of good practice relating to targeted services provided to Roma which could be replicated elsewhere?

Yes   
No

If you answered 'Yes', please detail them below.

**Question 5** – Have we asked all of the most important questions? If not, on what other issues should we be seeking views?

Responses to consultations may be made public – on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to be kept confidential, please tick here: