



Introduction and welcome

Welcome to a shorter, special edition of our newsletter. We have a **call for action** on a survey we have devised for Roma on COVID-19, and an update on one of our recent campaigns on supporting Roma children to return to school.

An important historical moment for Roma is fast approaching. This year's International Romani Day on 8 April 2021 will mark the **50th Jubilee of the First World Romani Congress**. A diverse range of events are planned for 8 April and across the course of the month. Read below for more information on how to take part.

COVID-19 and the Roma community survey

We know by now that COVID-19 does not affect everyone equally and that BAME communities are affected worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. Underlying inequalities in health, education and work are being made worse by the pandemic and the lockdown

period. Roma people are among the most marginalised in the UK, but we still know very little about how the pandemic has affected the community. **We have created a [survey](#) to find out more and hope you can help us get responses.**

The deadline for completing the survey is Monday 12 April.

How to help

We want local authorities to work effectively with the NHS and community organisations to support the Roma community through the pandemic, and that is why **we are gathering information on how the Roma community has been affected in the last year, what support people have relied on and whether they are getting access to the healthcare they need.**

We encourage distribution of the survey to Roma and anyone working with Roma communities. The survey takes roughly 5–10 minutes for someone with English language skills to complete. If you have time to include this in your work with Roma clients who do not have English language skills, even better. Please contact ilse@romasupportgroup.org.uk if you have any questions.

The more responses we receive, the better we will be able to map the problems that Roma have experienced during the pandemic and suggest targeted solutions. We will be following up on how COVID-19 has affected the Roma community in future editions of the newsletter.

Letter to the Department for Education

RSG, along with other Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) stakeholders, have sent a letter to Education Secretary Gavin Williamson, **calling for immediate action to ensure GRT children are fully supported to return to school after a year's disruption to their education due to the COVID-19 pandemic.** Read the letter [here](#).

The letter suggests a combination of approaches to make returning to school easier for children and their families, including:

- Reach out to GRT parents to address concerns about the risk of virus transmission in a school setting and put plans in place for pupils to return.
- Make targeted efforts to promote take-up of the National Tutoring Programme in the GRT community.
- Suspend attendance fines for the rest of this academic year, and confirm offers of school places made before the pandemic.
- Mandate any schools which have GRT children who have been removed from the roll for any reason over the last year (other than phase transfer) to reach out to those families and invite the children back.
- Ask local authorities to reach out to any year seven GRT children who were on the roll in year 6 but have not started at secondary school, with a view to helping them restart their education.
- Make Government funding available for a designated worker in every local authority to ensure that children are not missing out on their access to education.

Young Roma in RSG's [Roma News Project](#) have made a video expressing concerns about their education and keeping up with school work during the pandemic:



50th anniversary of the first World Romani Congress

Many of the events taking place for International Romani Day and across April will soon appear on the recently launched [Romanistan website](#).

On 8 April itself, a month-long online "stretched" World Romani Congress will begin, starting with a series of online commemoration events that will join cities from across the world in a celebration of Romani history and culture. The subsequent congress events will aim to reset the path of inter-continental Romani politics and critically reflect on the

ongoing challenges that are still faced by Romani people worldwide.

Check www.romanistan.com soon to view the full online conference programme.

Oblique Arts and Foundation Kai Dikhas, in cooperation with the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC), will also be holding a **two-week online art exhibition**. The exhibition is inspired by the World Romani Congress and will feature the work of Roma artists, writers and other arts and cultural producers from across the world. **Check out the Galerie Kai Dikhas [Facebook Page](#) for updates on the exhibition.**

And finally...

Aluna's message on the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)

Our colleague Aluna has made a video in collaboration with the European Union and the3million. She discusses her experience of living in the UK, applying to the EUSS and addresses the barriers to applying that many Roma are still facing.



For more information about Roma Support Group, go to our website here and look at the [‘projects’ pages](#).

We would be grateful if our subscribers could help us to reach out to more people by using the "Forward" button below to share the newsletter in your networks.



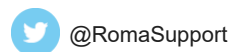
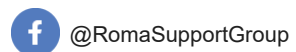
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