

A large, stylized graphic of a handprint in white, set against a blue background. The handprint is composed of several thick, rounded fingers extending from a central palm area. The graphic is positioned in the upper half of the page.

Roma communities in England and Wales: 2021 Census

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Ted Sale

November 2024

About us:

The Roma Support Group (RSG), the first Roma-led registered charity established in the UK, has been working with Roma refugees and migrants since 1998. From 2017, RSG has supported the Office for National Statistics (ONS) with its work on the census, facilitating discussions with Roma community members, and supporting a national campaign to encourage Roma communities to respond to 2021 census.

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1. Introduction

This paper summarises RSG’s analysis of 2021 census data on Roma in England and Wales, providing an overview of the national and local statistics on those who identified as Roma. The ONS has published detailed [bespoke analysis](#) of national data on the outcomes of the Roma population of England and Wales.

The second half of this report supplements ONS analysis by focusing on the ten areas of England and Wales with the highest proportion of the national Roma population, showing how outcomes differ across localities.

Significantly, the 2021 census was the first to include Roma as an ethnic category, an important step towards improving representation and awareness of Roma people in England and Wales, and gaining a better understanding of the lives of Roma in these countries.

According to 2021 Census data, 26% of Roma in England and Wales reported their country of birth as Italy, making Italian Roma the largest Roma community recorded. This differs dramatically from our experience and expectations. Italy was also, unexpectedly, the most common country of birth reported by Roma in the Scottish Census. National Records of Scotland [state](#): “We believe the [Roma] box may have been ticked in error by individuals born in Rome, Italy but cannot conclusively determine what proportion of individuals may have inadvertently ticked the wrong ethnicity”.

Furthermore, the census cannot count 100% of the population of England and Wales and will not have responses from all Roma, especially those who are irregular migrants or are rough sleeping. Additionally, not all Roma will readily identify their ethnicity as Roma, for fear of discrimination.

RSG recommends that those using Roma census data to consider these factors, especially while looking at national averages for Roma and outcomes in localities with high proportions of Italians identifying as Roma.

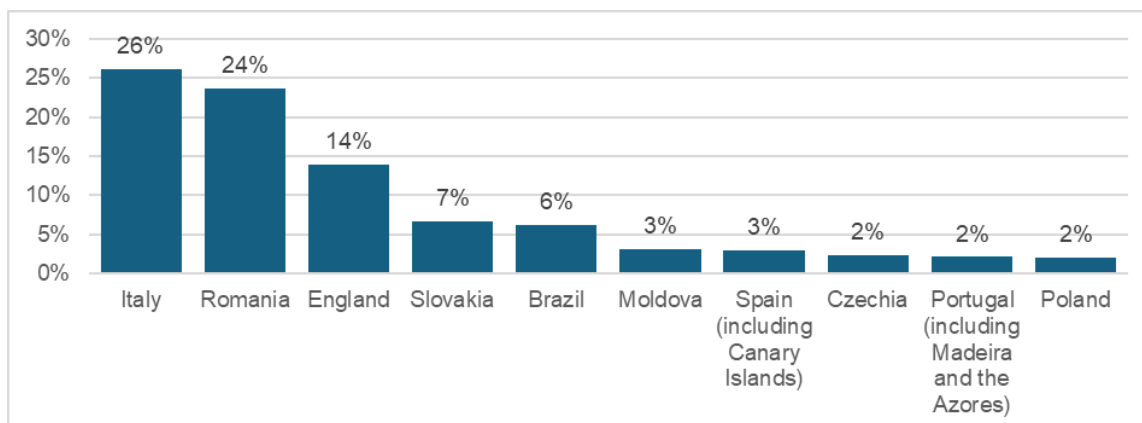
2. Roma in England and Wales

This section gives a brief overview of the outcomes for Roma communities in England and Wales. For a more detailed analysis of the national picture, see the ONS [bespoke analysis](#).

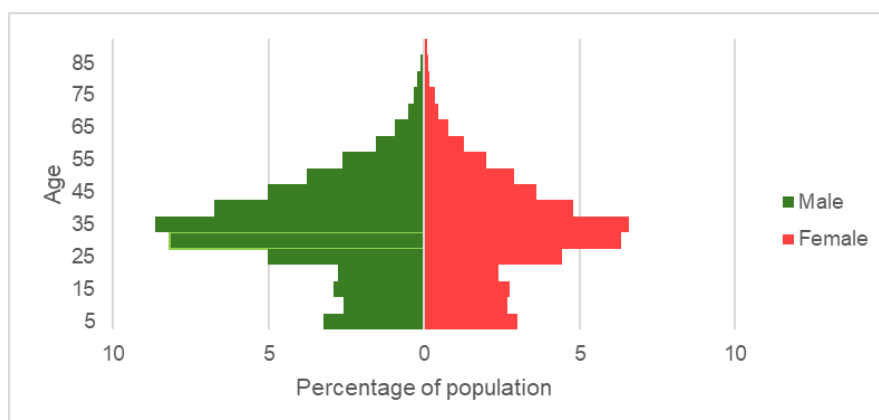
The main findings for Roma in England and Wales:

- 103,020 people identified their ethnic group as Roma in the 2021 Census.
- Roma who responded to the census tend to have a younger age profile compared to the national average.
- Roma were more likely to report health as good (91%) compared to the national average (82%), perhaps due to their younger age profile.
- The majority of Roma are employed, with higher than average levels of self-employment, but are overrepresented in elementary occupations with 29% working in this area, compared to 11% of the population of England and Wales. (See [here](#) for information on occupational classifications).
- The majority (70%) of Roma moved to the UK after 2011, with significant numbers (45%) arriving after 2016.

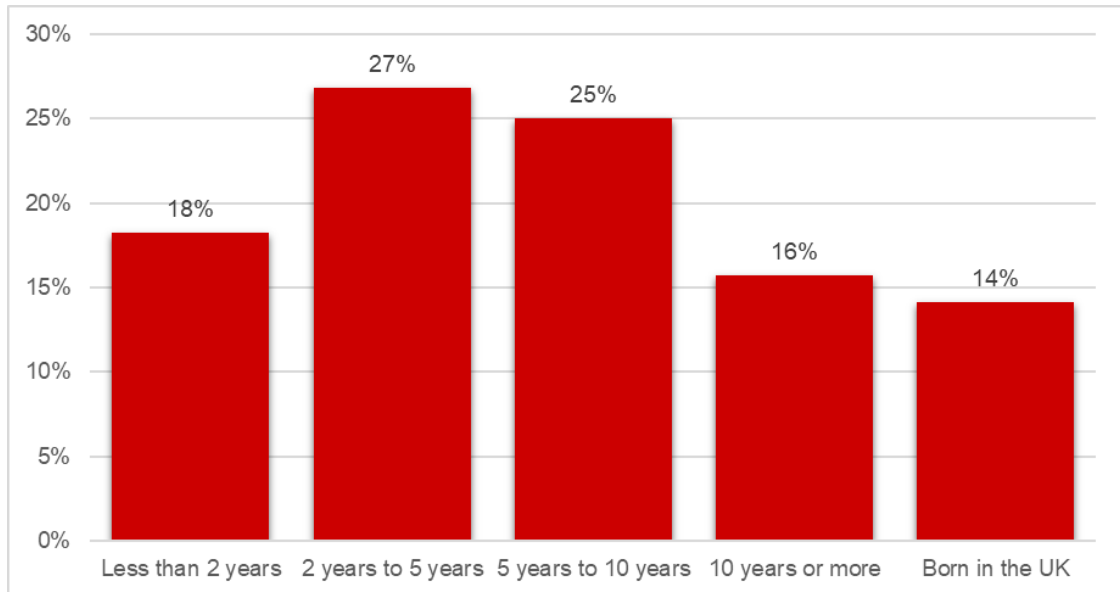
Top 10 countries of birth of those who identified as Roma:



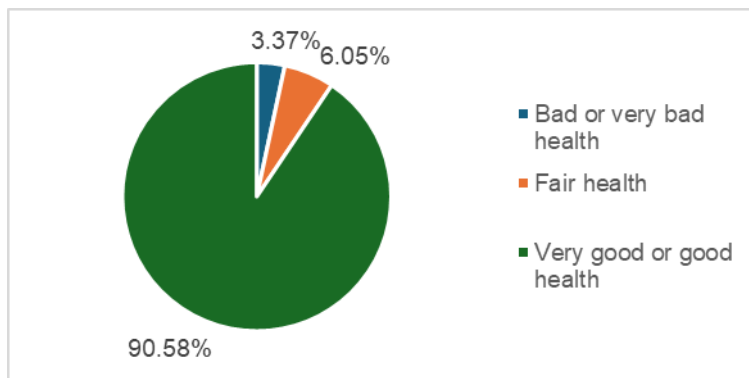
Age and sex of those who identified as Roma:



Length of residency of those who identified as Roma:

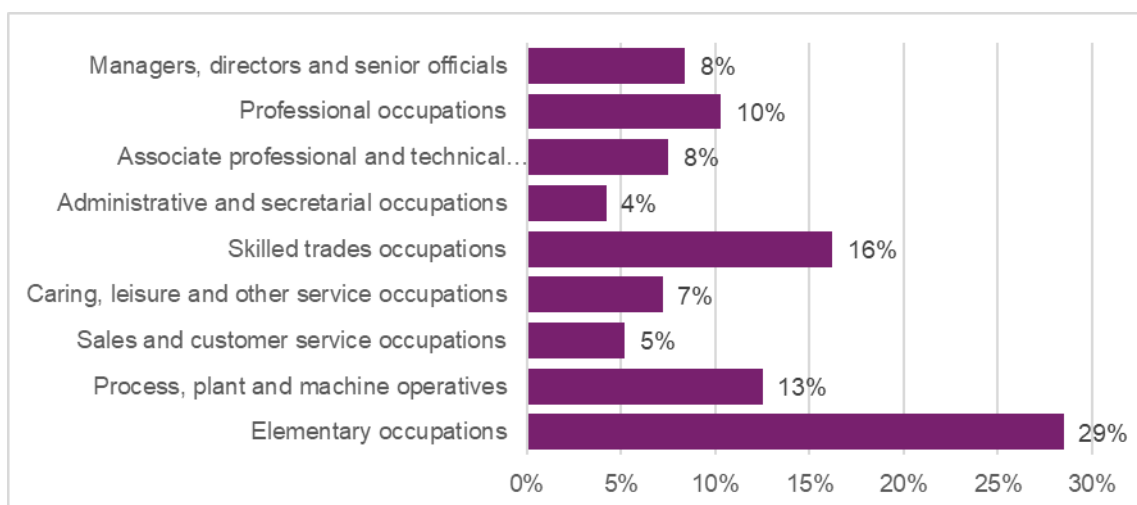


Health of those who identified as Roma:



For more information on Roma health, please see our [Roma Health Guide](#).

Occupation of those who identified as Roma:



3. Roma communities at a local level

This section analyses census data on Roma communities at a local level, focusing on the ten areas with the largest Roma populations. It provides an insight into the profile and outcomes of localised Roma communities, and shows the significant disparities between different areas.

For example, educational attainment reported by those identifying as Roma varies widely, with 39% in London having Level 4 or above qualifications, compared to just 9% in Sheffield. The proportion of Roma with no qualifications also varies significantly, from 26% in Liverpool to 67% Sheffield.

The types of jobs Roma are employed in differs, and while the highest proportion in each locality are employed in “elementary occupations” this percentage ranges from 23% in London to 52% in Bradford. The percentage of Roma working as managers, directors, or senior officials is 11% in London but is around 3% in Sheffield, Bradford, West Northamptonshire, Derby, and Newcastle.

Health outcomes also differ significantly. In Derby, 10% of Roma report having bad or very bad health, compared to just 1% in West Northamptonshire.

Overall, it appears that areas with a higher proportion of Roma reporting Slovak as their main language (such as Sheffield, Bradford and Derby) tend to exhibit worse outcomes for Roma than other areas where Italian or English are the main languages.

These findings illustrate the diverse experiences of Roma communities in England and Wales and highlight the need for tailored policy approaches to address the specific challenges faced by different communities in different localities.

3.01 Greater London:

Roma population = 37,905 (36.7% of England and Wales Roma population).

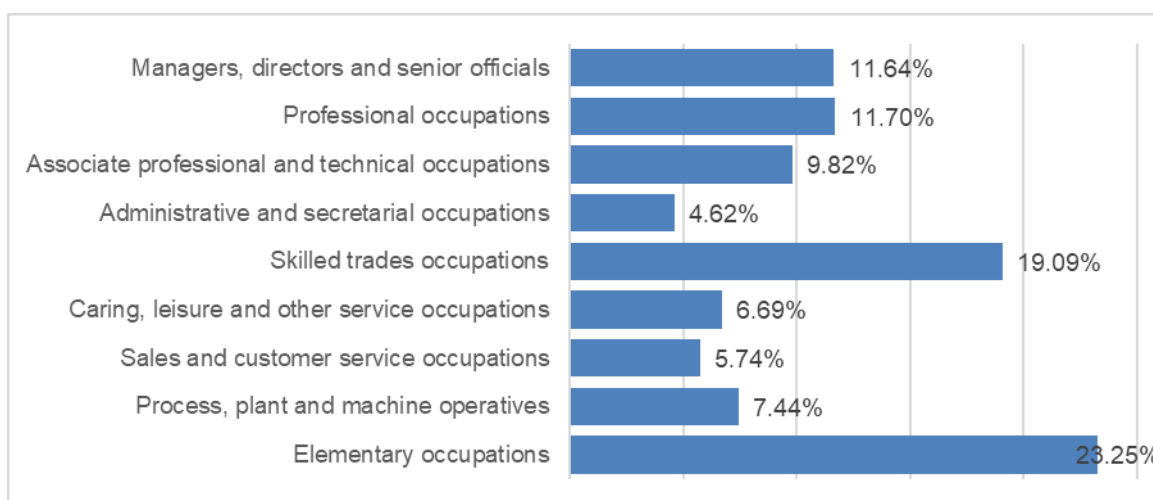
Boroughs with highest percentage of England and Wales Roma population:

Borough	Roma Population	% of total England and Wales Roma population.
Brent	2525	2.5%
Newham	2360	2.3%
Tower Hamlets	2230	2.2%
Haringey	2015	2%
Wandsworth	1730	1.7%
Southwark	1585	1.5%
Barnet	1560	1.5%
City of London and Westminster	1560	1.5%
Lambeth	1540	1.5%
Hammersmith and Fulham	1485	1.4%

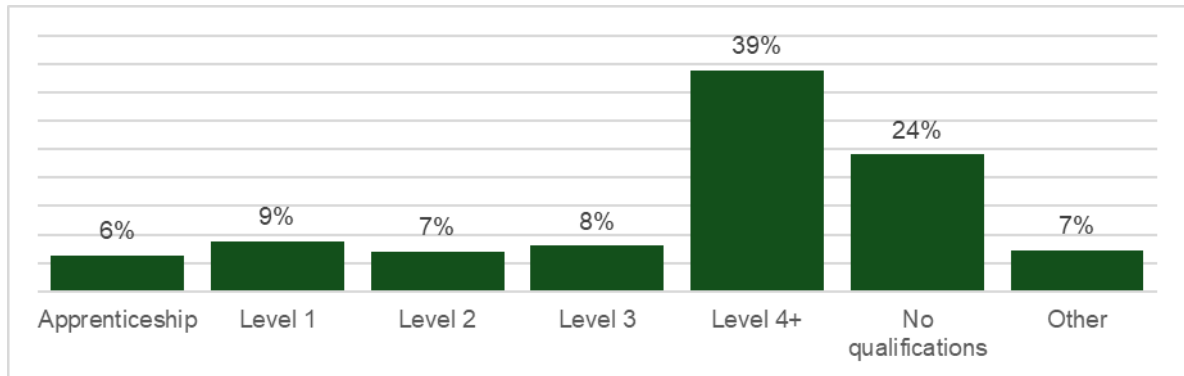
Main languages:

- Italian (35% of Roma)
- English (25% of Roma)
- Romanian (18% of Roma)

Occupation:

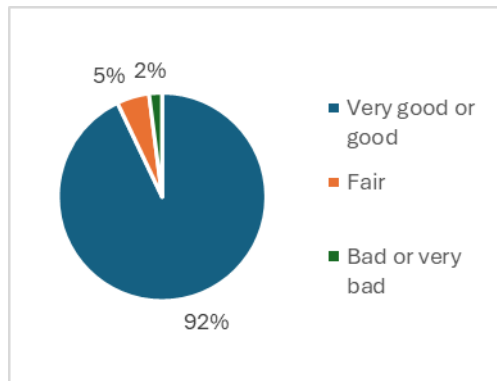


Education:



Level 4+ qualifications are not equally distributed across London's Roma communities, with 40% of Roma Londoners with Level 4+ qualifications reporting Italian as their first language, compared to 13% reporting Romanian as their first language. See [here](#) for more information on highest level of qualification classifications.

Health:



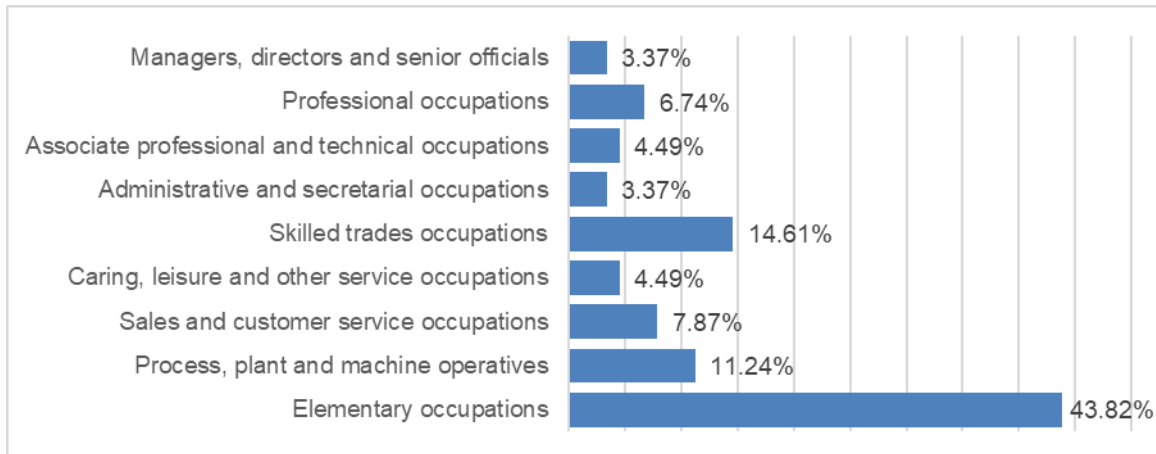
3.02 Sheffield:

Roma population = 2710 (2.6% of England and Wales Roma population).

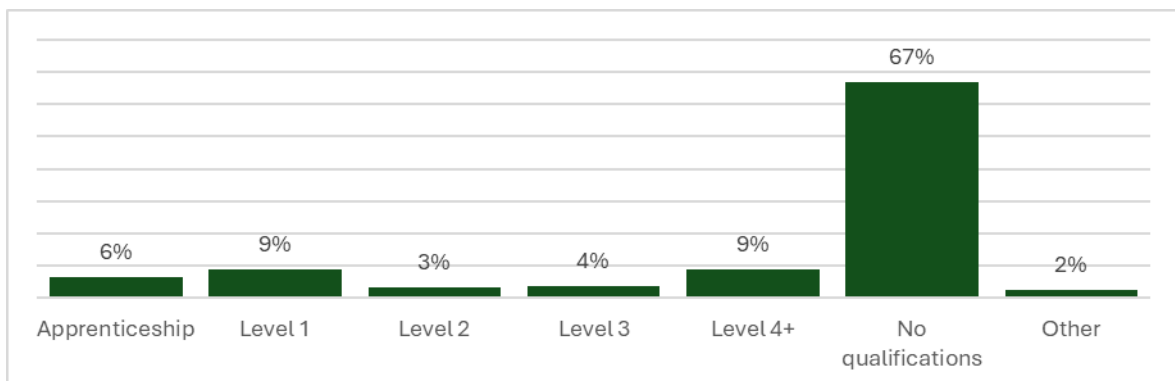
Main languages:

- Slovak (58% of Roma)
- English (37% of Roma)
- Romanian (4% of Roma)

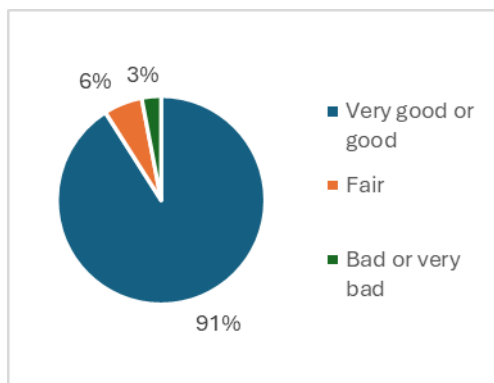
Occupation:



Education:



Health:



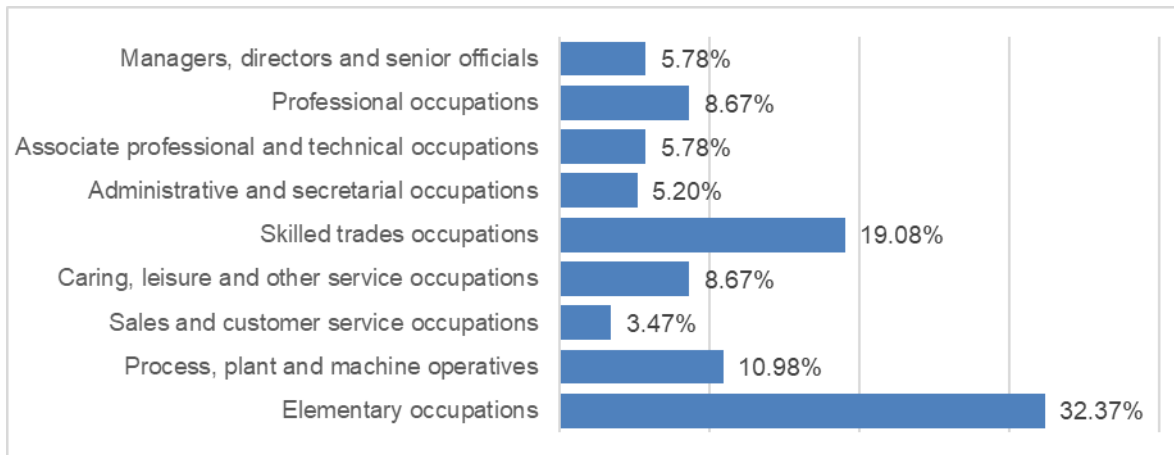
3.03 Birmingham:

Roma population = 1890 (1.8% of England and Wales Roma population).

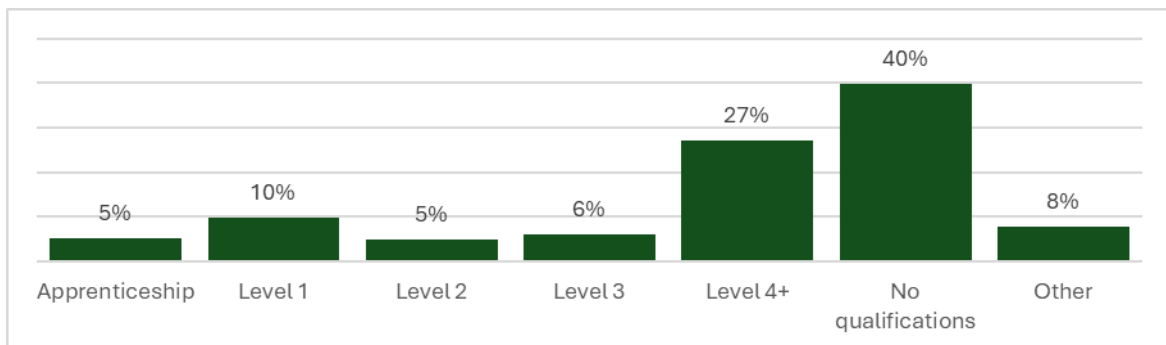
Main languages:

- Romanian (44% of Roma)
- English (23% of Roma)
- Italian (18% of Roma)

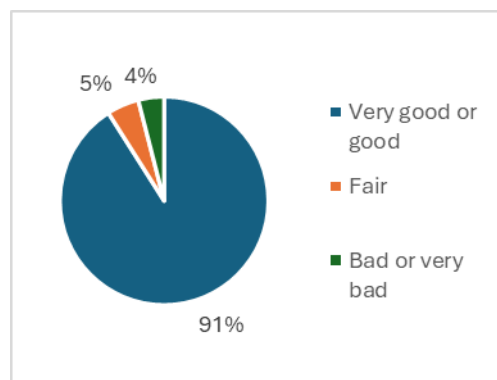
Occupation:



Education:



Health:



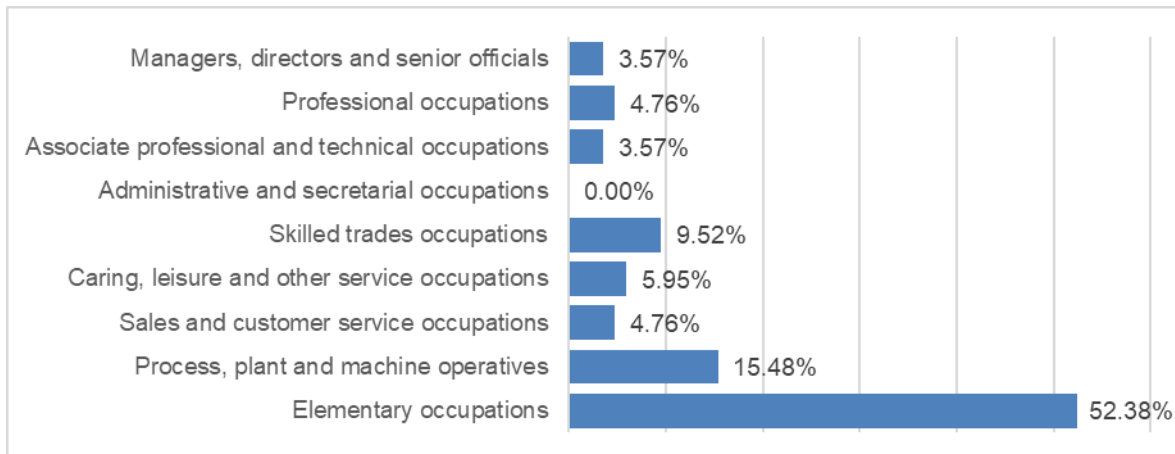
3.04 Bradford:

Roma population = 1840 (1.8% of England and Wales Roma population).

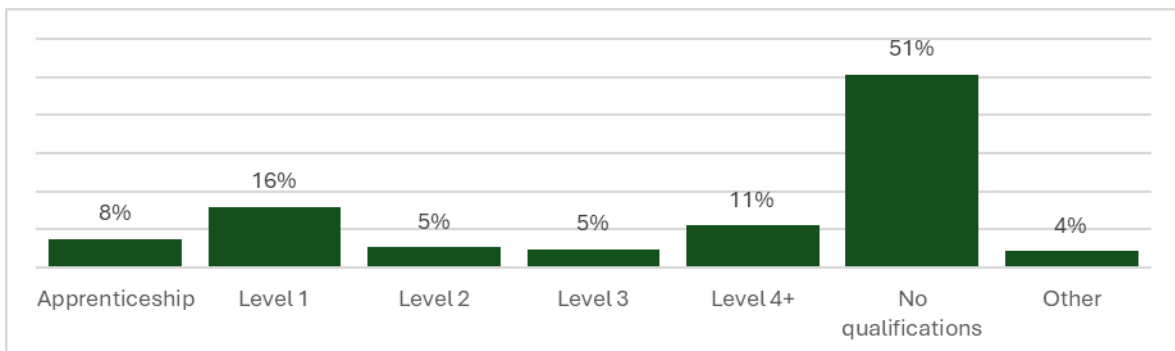
Main languages:

- Slovak (43% of Roma)
- English (32% of Roma)
- Romanian (10% of Roma)

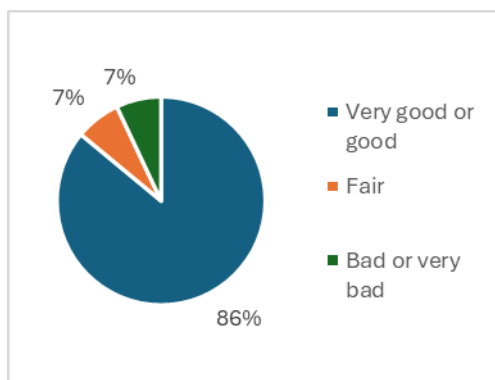
Occupation:



Education:



Health:



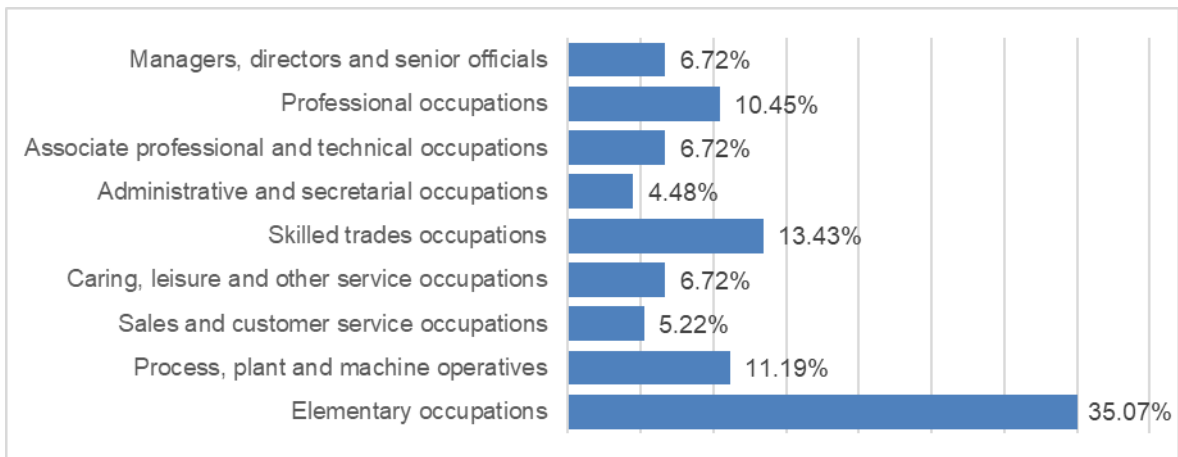
3.05 Leeds:

Roma population = 1685 (1.6% of England and Wales Roma population).

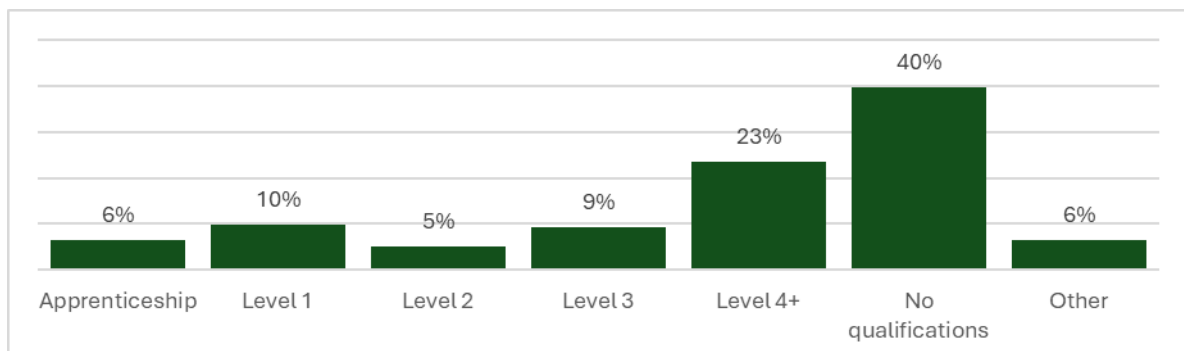
Main languages:

- Romanian (36% of Roma)
- English (27% of Roma)
- Italian (14% of Roma)

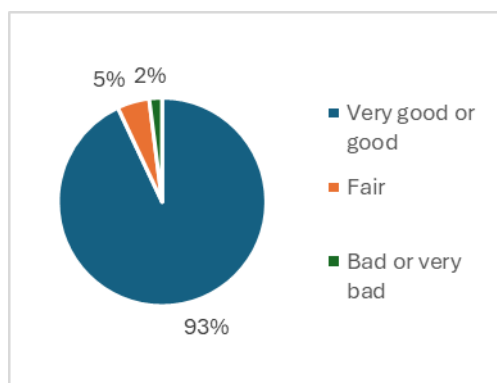
Occupation:



Education:



Health:



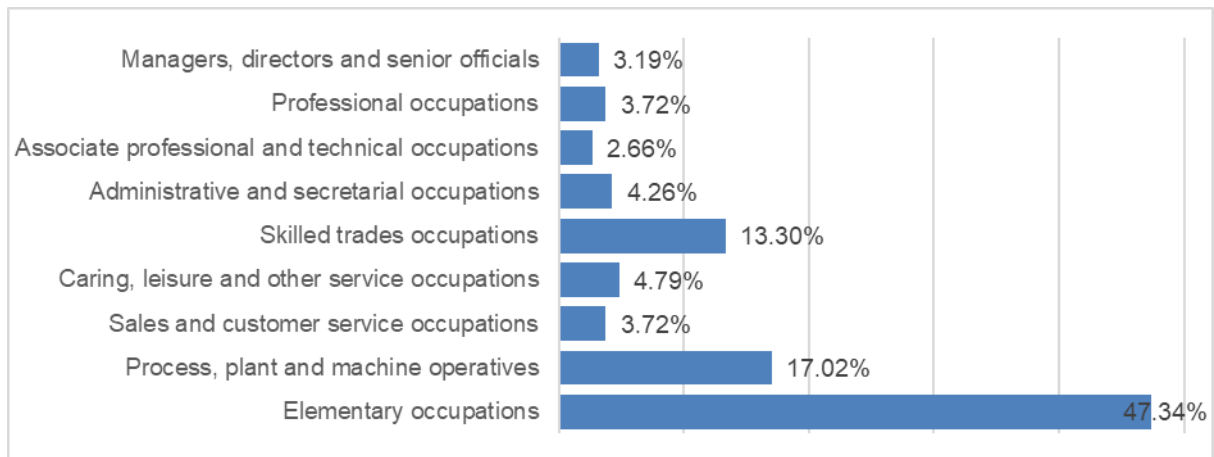
3.06 West Northamptonshire:

Roma population = 1410 (1.4% of England and Wales Roma population).

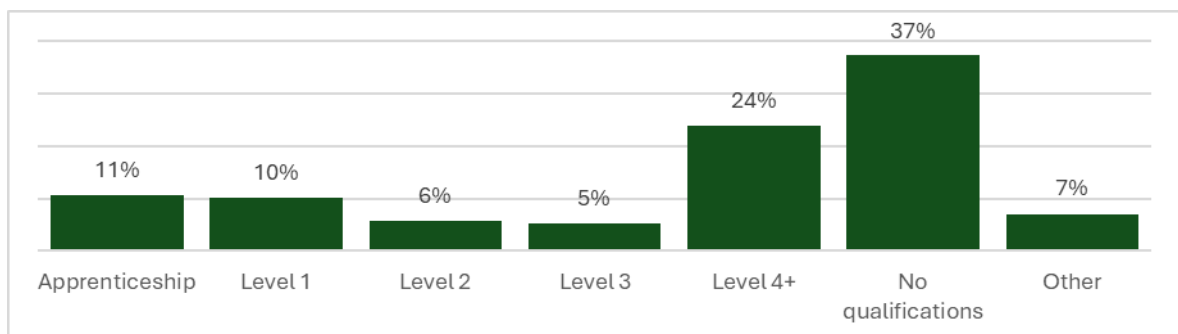
Main languages:

- Romanian (68% of Roma)
- English (20% of Roma)
- Italian (5% of Roma)

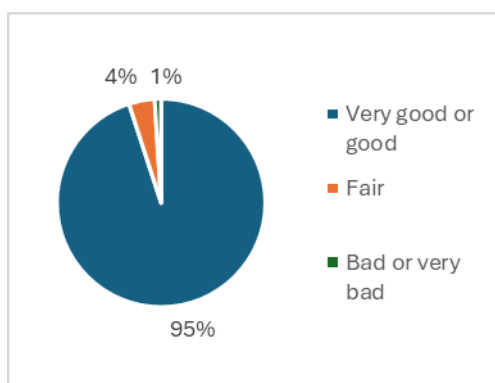
Occupation:



Education:



Health:



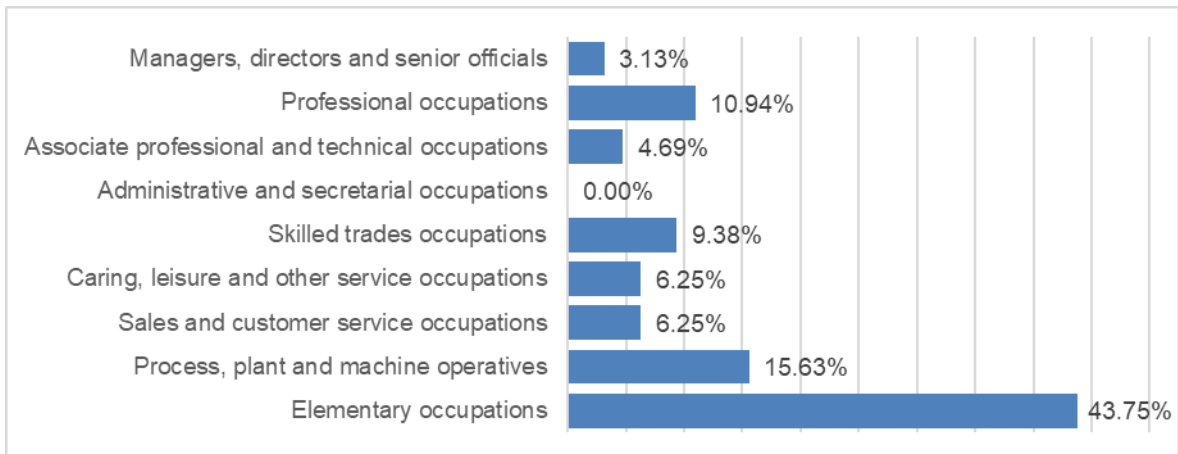
3.07 Derby:

Roma population = 1315 (1.3% of England and Wales Roma population).

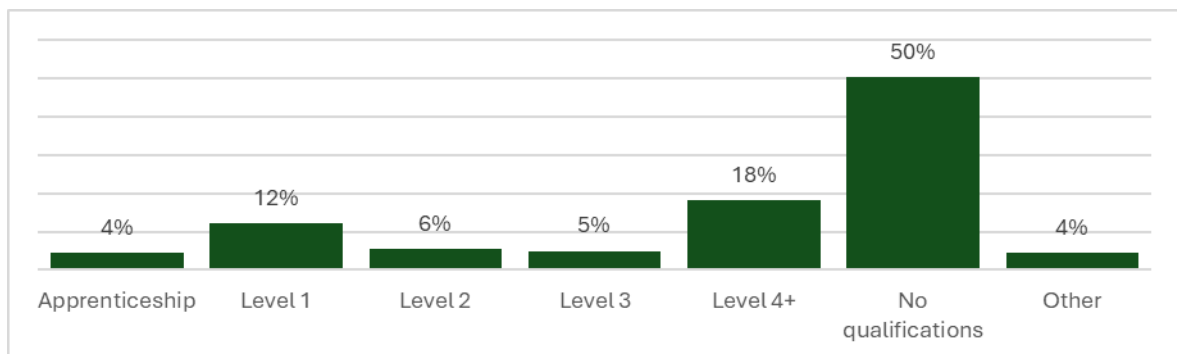
Main languages:

- Slovak (42% of Roma)
- English (31% of Roma)
- Czech (10% of Roma)

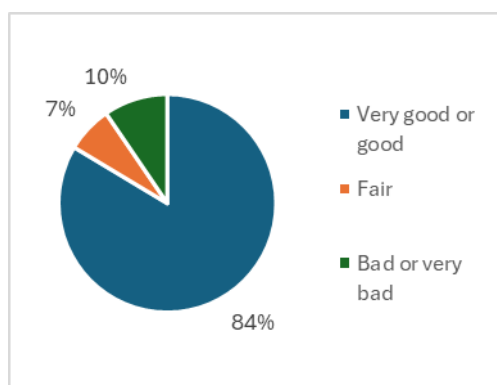
Occupation:



Education:



Health:



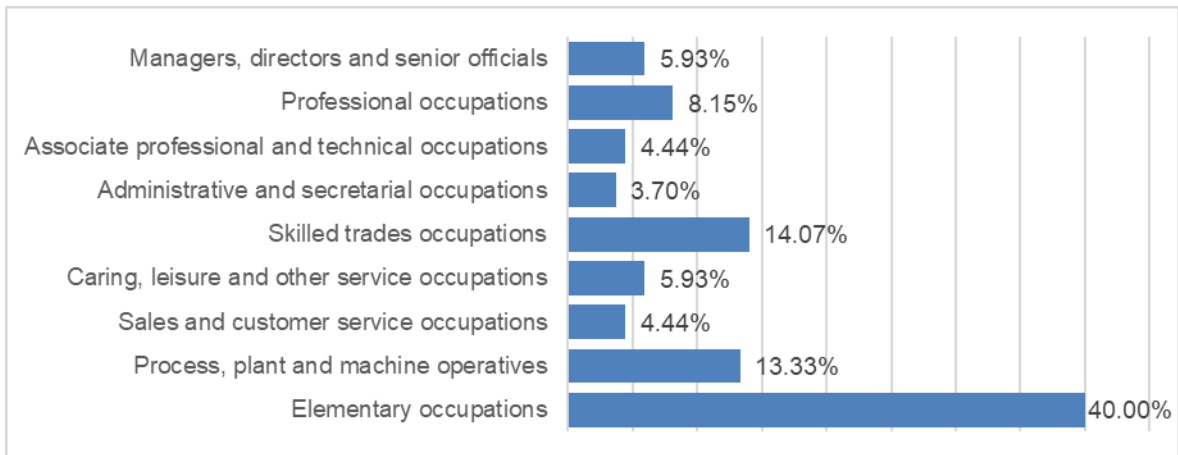
3.08 Liverpool:

Roma population = 1190 (1.2% of England and Wales Roma population).

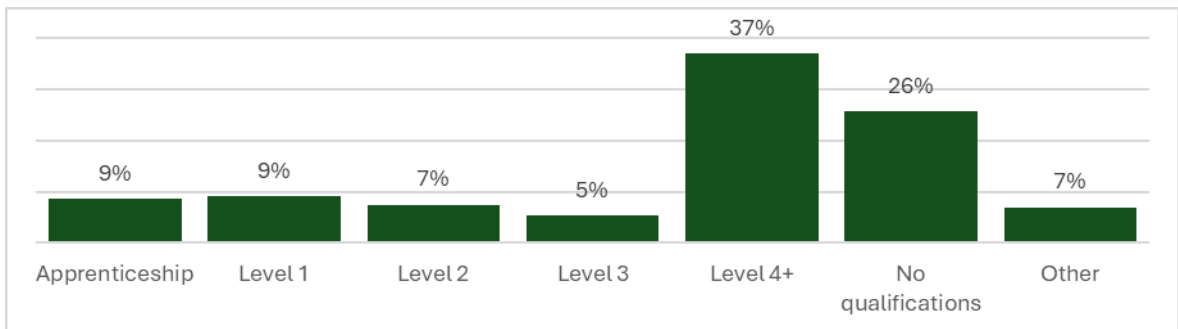
Main languages:

- Portuguese (24% of Roma)
- English (23% of Roma)
- Italian (21% of Roma)

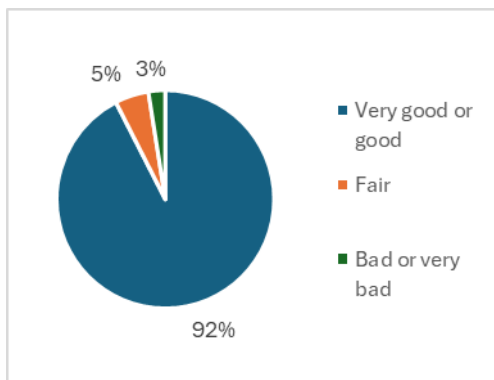
Occupation:



Education:



Health:



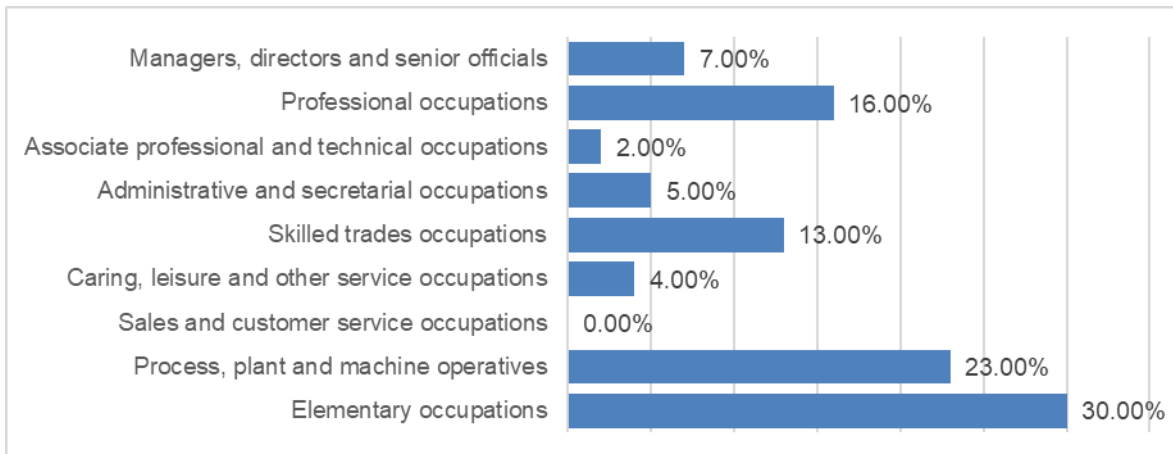
3.09 Nottingham:

Roma population = 1135 (1.1% of England and Wales Roma population).

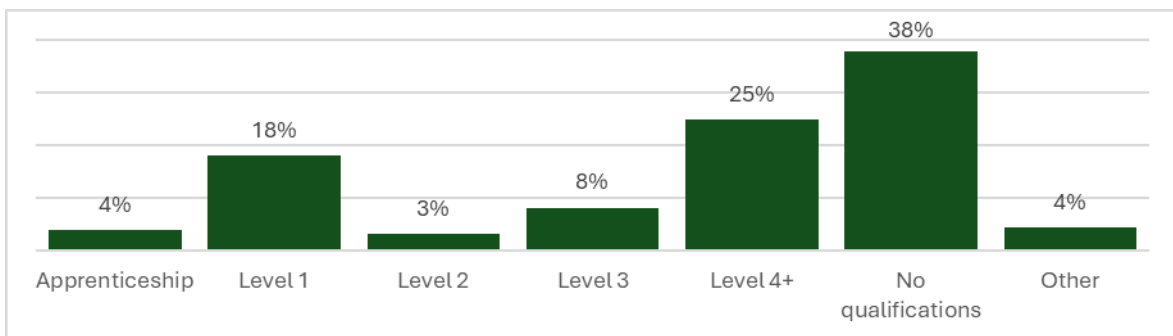
Main languages:

- Romanian (34% of Roma)
- English (26% of Roma)
- Italian (14% of Roma)

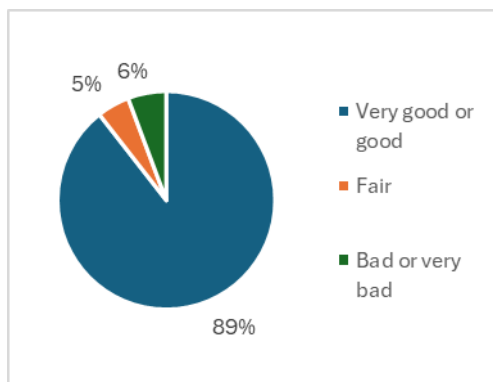
Occupation:



Education:



Health:



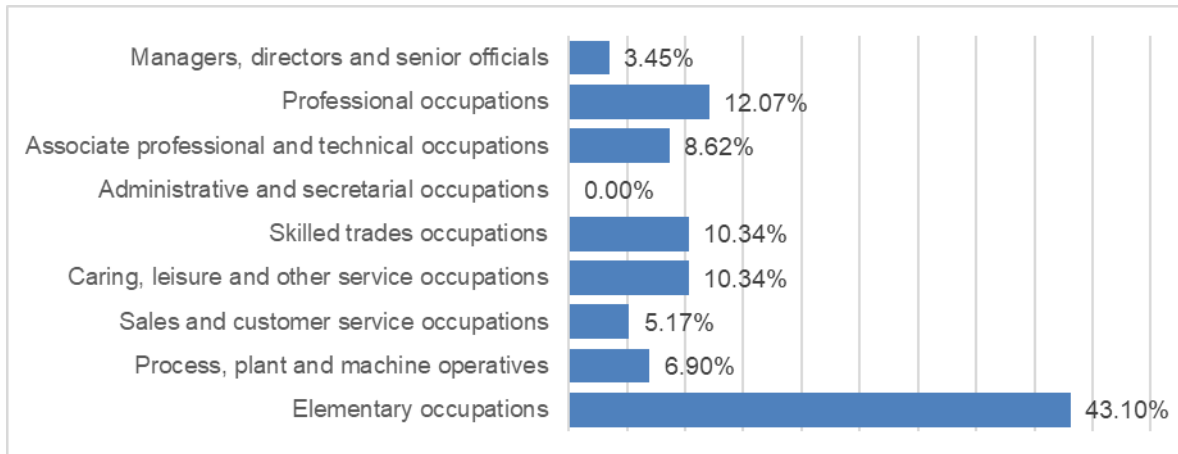
3.10 Newcastle:

Roma population = 1150 (1.1% of England and Wales Roma population).

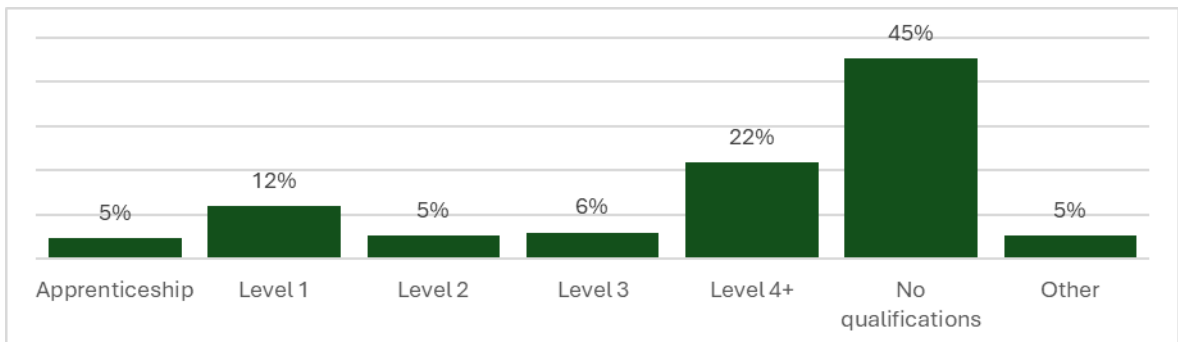
Main languages:

- English (28% of Roma)
- Czech (22% of Roma)
- Slovak (21% of Roma)

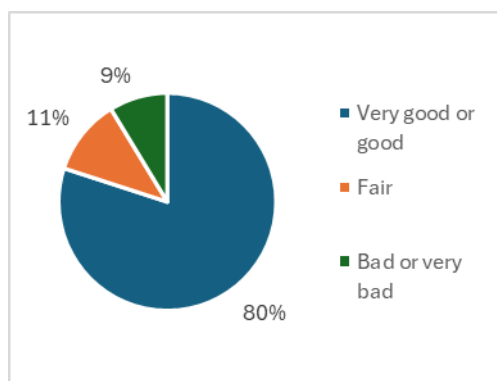
Occupation:



Education:



Health:



4. Bibliography:

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ONS: [Roma populations by national identity in England and Wales: Census 2021](#) (October 2023)

ONS: [Roma populations by main language in England and Wales: Census 2021](#) (October 2023)

ONS: [Roma populations by labour market breakdowns in England and Wales: Census 2021](#) (October 2023)

ONS: [Roma populations by education in England and Wales: Census 2021](#) (October 2023)

ONS: [Roma populations by health, disability and unpaid care in England and Wales: Census 2021](#) (October 2023)