

# Roma and Child Protection Working Group

**Date:** Wednesday 23rd October 2024

**Time:** 11am to 12pm

**Location:** Google Meets [online]

**Attendees:** Mihai, Tyanna-May, Dada, Simona, Iveta

## Agenda and Minutes

Agenda Items	Minutes	Action Items
<b>Welcome and Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mihai to open the meeting and welcome attendees.</li></ul>		
<b>Agenda Item 1: Who we are and what we want this group to achieve.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Context to the current situation regarding Roma families and children's services.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>This working group came out of the Leeds <a href="#">incident</a> this summer.</li><li>There has been some work done on the issue by the RSG. See <a href="#">here</a>. This meeting is about what we want to start doing to act on some of these issues.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How can we approach some of these problems from a policy point of view?</li></ul></li></ul>	
<b>Agenda Item 2: Introducing attendees</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Understanding why everyone wants to be a part of the group and what experience they have.</li><li>What does everyone hope to contribute?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Iveta: involved in social work. Her research and work is concentrated in Bradford. Iveta mentions that there is a gap and lack of knowledge about the Roma community by social workers which has led to mistreatment of Roma children and families known to children's services.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Iveta has had contact with the local council about mishandling and has complained about procedures.</li><li>She is especially concerned as there is a massive young Roma population in Bradford.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Dada and Iveta to connect to further discuss Iveta's work and how Dada may help given her expertise.</li><li>Dada: <a href="mailto:Dada.Felja@lawforife.org.uk">Dada.Felja@lawforife.org.uk</a></li><li>Iveta: <a href="mailto:european.drom@gm">european.drom@gm</a></li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Iveta's intention of getting involved is to gain more knowledge of the area.</li> <li>● Dada: Dada has produced guides and films for the Roma community to support families going through child protection. You can watch these videos <a href="#">here</a>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ She has been researching the experience of Roma in children's services. She has been the first to be involved in research projects <a href="#">documenting the experiences of Roma peoples</a> as opposed to Gypsy/Traveller groups.</li> <li>○ She hopes to support as much as she can on a policy level to create more equitable services for Roma involved in child protective services.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Simona: Simona has a BA and MA in Social Work, and is the CEO of <a href="#">Union Romani Voice</a>. She was in attendance during the Leed's child protection court hearing which was successful as the children returned back to family!</li> <li>● Simona details cases in Ipswich, Birmingham, and Bristol - family has been arrested as family doesn't understand the UK's child protection process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Simona asks for our support and advice as the charity does not have the financial capability to travel around the UK to help with these cases.</li> <li>○ Simona hopes to change current policy and employ Roma advocates to be there during distressing cases and be the main point of contact for Roma families and social workers.</li> <li>○ She hopes to utilise social media or to collaborate on videos so Roma know who to contact if they incur any</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://ail.com">ail.com</a></p>
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	problems.	
<p><b>Agenda Item 3: What are our priorities?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can we meet our aims?</li> <li>• Responsibilities.</li> <li>• Expectations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consensus that everyone wants to understand where and how the mistakes are happening so that this group can fix some of these mistakes in the system.</li> <li>• Dada suggested some ideas on how we can meet our aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Request a <b>child practice safeguarding review</b> after the Leeds case is closed completely. She suggests we do this as a group. She will also ask for support from Joanna to help draft this request for us.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Simona: Simona suggests we write to the Department of Education. This is to suggest to them that they can provide training led by our charities for social workers to understand how to approach and deal with Roma families and communities.</li> <li>• We should also raise the problem with local councillors and MPs for our concerns to be presented in Parliament. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mihai has approached the Department of Education and Parliament but wanted to have this discussion before moving forward. - bilingual roma advocates and part of organisations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mihai: Mihai suggests gathering some of the bi-lingual people that we know who may speak Romanes or other relevant languages to work on the cause who are not already in the area.</li> <li>• Dada: Dada suggests a <b>national pilot program for child protection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dada can support with fundraising</li> <li>○ Premise: 3 key Roma organisations work within three local authorities with the largest Roma populations and implement strategies there. After review, the scheme can be rolled out nationally.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone: As individual groups/charities, we should all request a child practice safeguarding review after the Leeds case is officially closed.</li> <li>• Dada to contact Joanna about possibly helping us draft this request.</li> <li>• Iveta will ask her contact if she can share more information about the pilot programme in America so we can take a look at it as an example.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Not a simple thing, more careful who gets involved in it - requires a lot of knowledge and skill as not everyone is cut out to do it because of sensitivity.</li> <li>■ Think about who is coordinating everything.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Iveta: Iveta mentioned that America has a pilot program. Iveta will ask her contact if she can share more information about the pilot so we can take a look at it as an example. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Finds it problematic when social workers are bilingual but not Roma as they misjudge and don't understand the situation.</li> <li>○ Roma strategy in Bradford: Iveta not being paid for her knowledge and support. Currently, Roma strategy is being done without Roma. Bradford does not want to fund programmes relating to Roma. Wants the council and everyone to change their view on Roma.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Mihai thinks it is easier to start with local authorities that are more supportive in their commitment to helping Roma which may influence less supportive places like Bradford.</li> <li>● Mihai: We need to also support families in understanding what their mistakes were and why they may be in certain positions.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Closing Remarks and Reminders:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establishing meeting frequency.</li> <li>● What needs to be done before the next meeting?</li> <li>● Dada welcomes those interested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Meet monthly because it is a priority.</li> <li>● In our next meetings, 15 minutes will be spent at the start to discuss specific cases that we may be concerned about so we can come together and suggest ways forward. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ These discussions should not centre the main discussion.</li> <li>○ When sharing we must make sure not to disclose sensitive information.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tyanna to contact Filip Sys about getting in family lawyers and possibly joining our calls.</li> <li>● Iveta</li> </ul>

<p>to collaborate on a document they have created, which reports on the recommendations for and the impact on Roma families involved with children's services. Tyanna-May will share the document with the group after the meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Next meeting will be 90 minutes/1 hour and a half.</li> <li>● Simona wants to know if we know of any Roma family lawyers.</li> <li>● The next meeting will be - Monday 25th November at 11am to 12.30.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Simona: Asked if the DfE has funds for the volunteer sector. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dada happy to support Simona to help understand where she can get support or funding for the voluntary sector. – Dada asks to speak with Simona later to know more about the organisation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mihai: Mihai shared this list of services the RSG provides to public services, including children services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="https://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk/intervention-service-for-professionals-working-with-roma-families-and-individuals-in-crisis.html">https://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk/intervention-service-for-professionals-working-with-roma-families-and-individuals-in-crisis.html</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>knows a Hungarian Roma lawyer and will contact if she is familiar with family law to help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mihai: contact Erica to possibly get involved.</li> <li>● All: Map out legal support that is necessary for those who work with Roma - get a contact list.</li> <li>● Share training that is on the 14th with other contacts that they can join.</li> </ul>
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