



Luton Roma Trust – Annual Report – June 2018

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I. Our Trustees

Bishop Richard Atkinson, Revd Martin Burrell (chair),
Revd Liz Hughes, Chris Neilson, John Barr, Gianina Cozac.

Luton Roma Trust has welcomed this year Revd Liz Hughes to our board. Liz is senior chaplain at Luton-London Airport. This brings her into daily contact with many of our beneficiaries as they first set foot in our town.

We also now have two Roma trustees: John Barr, an English Romanichal, and Gianina Cozac, a Romanian Roma.

Since the opening of our Roma Community Centre, our Trustee meetings have taken place there.

II. Our Professional Team

Martin Burrell – Chaplain (Chair of Trustees)
Crina Morteau - Project Manager
Paul Sayers – Roma Education Champion

Martin Burrell - LRT Chair / Crina Morteau, Project Manager
39-41 New Bedford Road, 9-10 Crystal House, Luton LU1 1HS
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Ciprian Ionita – Project Worker
Pauline Neilson – LRT Charity Secretary
Support & Integration Officer – *Advertised June 2018*
Roma Women’s Champion – *to be appointed in September 2018*

We are delighted to now have in Crina Morteau a Project Manager. She joined our team in March 2018 and brings with her years of international experience as a human rights activist. Crina has a law degree and is herself a Roma from Romania.

Paul Sayers is now in his second year as our Roma Education Champion, working closely with our schools and the 256 Roma children now registered with us. He and his wife, Stephanie, worked in Romania with the Roma for several years and speak Romanian.

Ciprian Ionita is a Romanian Roma with a background in human rights and an expert in the Roma holocaust. Ciprian has a law degree and well equipped to help our beneficiaries with a host of issues they face.

Pauline Neilson oversees our finances and charitable status. She also acts as Secretary to the Trustees.

We currently have a vacancy for a Support & Integration Officer.

Our professional team’s language skills are vital to our daily interventions. Between our team members we can cover English – Romani – Romanian translation. The addition of two ethnic Roma to our team represents a vital step forward in our cultural awareness when working with our beneficiaries.

III. Our Beneficiaries

Since Luton Roma Trust was formed in March 2015 we have welcomed every week new Roma beneficiaries. By 23 June 2018 some 983 individuals have been registered on our Lamplight database. Nearly all are Romanian citizens, but we have a few Bulgarian families too and are aware that there are Polish Roma in Luton who we have yet to reach.

Our Roma beneficiaries have migrated to Luton from across Europe following a pattern of economic chain migration. Relatives regroup in Luton and rebuild their lives here. For many, Luton’s three Roma churches play an important role in helping them settle in our town. Luton Roma Trust supports this, but these churches are all led by the Roma themselves. New beneficiaries come to our charity through referrals from their relatives and friends and from other agencies across the town.

IV. Our Roma Community Centre

Thanks to an award from the Central Government’s Ministry of Housing (from its new fund for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma projects) we have been able to open our own dedicated Roma Community Centre right at the heart of Luton. One of our Roma beneficiaries, aware of our need, discovered another charity that was seeking to sublet part of its premises to another charity who also help the most needy of our town. She introduced us to the tenants and the rest is history!

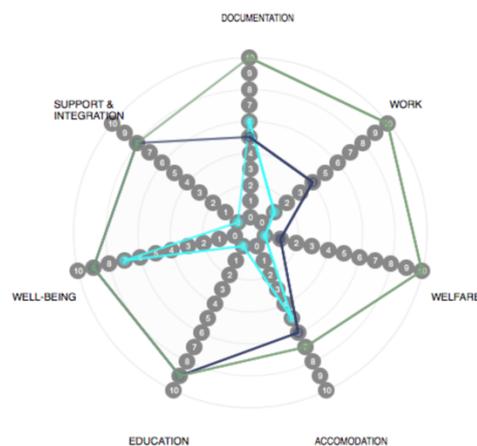
Since opening on Monday 30 April 2018 we are seeing a gradual increase in the number of beneficiaries seeking our help. Our vision is for the centre to become a place of warm welcome where our Roma families can feel at ease and find help with their daily issues. Now that we at last have a base of our own, other agencies in town know where to refer Roma families who are in need. The days of us having to meet with our beneficiaries in cafes in the Mall – with all the tension that brought – have finally come to an end. We finally have a place we can call home!

V. Our daily interventions

Luton Roma Trust seeks to meet our beneficiaries at their point of need, whatever that may be. Using our own dedicated *Roma Migrant Families Outcomes Web (RMFOW)* we record our daily interventions under the following key areas:

Documentation / Work / Welfare / Accommodation / Education / Well-being / Support & Integration

Our families have complex interrelated needs that we try to resolve in a holistic way. Using our *RMFOW* we are able to track progress our individual families make over time. See in the example below how the green (2015), black (2016) , green (2017) shapes are broadening out year on year. This show holistic improvement across the 7 key areas:



Between 23 June 2017 & 23 June 2018 we have recorded 765 interventions which we carried out with 282 different beneficiaries – on average 14 sessions per week. These figures indicate that the

same families continue to return to us for help. The number of weekly interventions has increased significantly since the opening our Roma Community Centre. We are currently recording 17 interventions a week. We urgently need to fill our current vacancy to respond to the increasing demands on our services.

VI. Our Projects

i. Children's Music Project

In partnership with Flying Start Central, Worldbeaters and Luton Music Centre, we continue to run our weekly after-school music sessions for our Roma children at Flying Start Central (Beech Hill School). The Roma Children's choir responds to invitation to sing at events across Luton: Moorland Gdns Care Home, Pick nick in the Park, High Town Festival, Luton-London Airport. We appeared in June on BBC1 Look East news.

ii. Open welcome events at our local schools & Education

Our Roma Education Champion has now helped us build partnerships with 3 major secondary schools and 4 primary schools in Luton which have significant numbers of Roma children attending. At each of these schools we have now welcomed Roma parents and their children, teachers and other key professionals to meet each other informally. These gatherings are proving fruitful in improving communication and addressing concerns, especially those of the Roma themselves.

Our Roma Education Champion is in daily contact with Luton Borough Council's education department. Together we insure that all our Roma children are in full-time education, transitioning to secondary and tertiary education is facilitated, and that attendance levels are kept as high as possible. Local schools approach us when special interventions from our team are needed to facilitate communication and to seek holistic solutions to the problems families are encountering.

iii. "ENGLISH FOR LIFE" EFL

Thanks to the award from the Ministry of Housing we are now launching our new programme for helping the Roma to learn English. So many have been asking us for this for so long – at last we are in a position to start lessons in our new Roma Community Centre where a special area has been set aside for the teaching to take place.

Our Project Manager, Crina Morteau, is heading up EFL. Volunteers are being recruited and matched to our beneficiaries. The teaching content is being matched to the daily language needs of the Roma adults and we are encouraging parents to share their learning with the children who are in most cases fluent in English. We believe knowledge of basic English will greatly enhance our beneficiaries' employment opportunities and their ability to integrate into the wider life of the UK.

iv. www.lutonromatrust.org.uk

This year we rebuilt our website and created personal emails for all our team.

VII. Our Funders

Luton Roma Trust is deeply indebted to our funders who have made possible our work thus far.

We would like to thank:

- Bedfordshire & Luton Community Foundation -
LLAF, Community Fund, Comic Relief Fund, Youth Fund, Mark West Fund
- Tudor Trust
- Metropolitan Migration Foundation
- Wixham Tree Trust
- Ministry of Housing – Funding for our RCC & English for Life project
- Near Neighbours
- The Tufton Trust
- The Arts Council
- Luton Arts
- Youth Music
- The Big Lottery – Awards for All
- The Diocese of St Alban's – funding of our Chaplain's 3 year 'House for Duty' project (2015-2018)

VIII. Our Partners

Luton Roma Trust's work would be impossible if attempted alone. We are grateful for the expertise and collaborative spirit of all our partners:

- World Beaters (Music project)
- Luton Music Centre
- Flying Start Central
- Luton Borough Council – esp. Welfare Dept, and Education Dept.
- Citizen's Advice Luton
- NOAH
- Luton Food Bank
- Level Trust
- Penrose Housing
- Stockwood Park Academy
- Putteridge Academy
- Ashcroft High School
- Dallow Primary
- Beech Hill Primary
- Denbigh Primary
- Maidenhall Primary

- The High Sheriff of Bedfordshire
- Bedfordshire Police
- Youth Offending Service
- Migrants Rights Network
- The Diocese of St Alban's – Church of England
- Rugul Aprins
- Churches Together in Luton
- Churches Network for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma (Chair- Martin Burrell)
- National Roma Network
- Roma Support Group
- RomaNetworks

IX. Future Plans

- i.** Increase our capacity to respond to the growing needs of the Roma community.
- ii.** We plan to install 3 computer stations in our Roma Community Centre for our beneficiaries to use to practice their English, access their civic affairs on line, access other agencies, access LRTs website.
- iii.** Appoint volunteers to help our beneficiaries use the computer stations.
- iv.** Appoint volunteers to help with data entry as new beneficiaries are registered.
- v.** Carry forward and expand our English for Life programme
- vi.** Restart our Music programme for pre-school children and their parents.
- vii.** Begin in September our new work with Roma Women – thanks to an award from BLCF Mark West Fund.
- viii.** Secure funding to keep our Roma Community Centre open beyond May 2019.
- ix.** Secure funding to increase the capacity of our professional team for the next 3-5 years.
- x.** Help our beneficiaries apply for *Settled Status* in the UK.

For more information please go to www.lutonromatrust.org.uk

