**A Living Tradition CIC**

**Gateshead Roma Kavárna Project**

**Report for November 2020**

We have continued to support the Gateshead Roma community during the Lockdown.

 We have sent lots of referrals from the community to the Children Society regarding the EU Settled Status scheme. Many Roma families have expired passports or IDs or the children have no passport at all.

We have continued our appointment drop in for families who desperately need help and have to have face-to-face support, following the rules of social distancing and wearing face masks as appropriate.

We have responded to telephone and online inquiries.

Here are some of the things we have been helping people with in November:
We have been dealing with Universal Credit applications and appeals.

We have continued to pass on vital information about subjects including the following:

Information about the new Lockdown on 5th November New rules for shopping More information about the Lockdown Covid-19 News from the Czech Republic Changes regarding Universal Credit News regarding Covid-19 Vaccine Information regarding EU Settled Status

We have continued our discussions with Tyneside Mind regarding mental health support for members of the Roma community in Gateshead.

EU Settled Status

On Wednesday 11th July 2018 a representative of A Living Tradition attended an All-Party Parliamentary Group meeting

There was an All-Party Parliamentary Committee follow-up meeting on Tuesday 17th November about the Roma and EU Settled Status, to which we were invited, and from what was said, there is potentially a huge crisis looming. All EU citizens need to get applications in to apply for Settled Status after Brexit and the deadline is June 30th next year.   However, there is likely to be a backlog of cases and so realistically it would be best if families can start the process by the end of this year.

There is also a huge issue with many barriers to the Roma applying as are outlined on the notes attached.

Fortunately some families have already done this and are secure.  However, many others haven't and there is also a lot of misinformation about.  For example, some Roma think that if there is a No Deal Brexit then they can't apply and don't understand that No Deal would relate to trade, but has nothing to do with their rights. There will likely be a lot of tension, stress and worry in the Roma community in the coming months, on top of what is there normally and the stress caused by the Covid-19 crisis.

We have been getting information out to Roma families since 2018 and helping them to get to people who can help them to get through the Settled status process. We have also liaised with a number of schools on Tyneside to help them to understand what is happening and also with the NEU education union, so that teachers will be aware of the seriousness of the situation.

If the Roma families don't do anything, then they risk losing their basic rights to things like healthcare and may also be vulnerable to deportation back to eastern Europe.  There the children are likely to face a segregated education system and they and their families face widespread discrimination in housing, healthcare, the job market and many other areas of life,  Among many other human rights' abuses, in recent years Roma women have been forcibly sterilised, while families have been known to have been evicted from their homes and put to live in lorry containers, next to the town or city sewage plant.

We have been liaising with schools in Gateshead, and with the office of Ian Mearns M.P., among others to help families to understand what they have to do regarding EUSS.

Many thanks to the Children’s Society, Northumbria Police, Citizens Advice Gateshead, Tyneside Mind and all our other partners and supporters.

Peter Sagar, Company Secretary, A Living Tradition CIC, and Irma and Zaneta Karchnakova, interpreters and workers, December 2020