



## Equalities Committee

6 December 2016

### Report from the Operational Director, Human Resources & Organisational Development

Wards affected:  
ALL

### Task and Finish Group Progress Report: Eastern European Communities living in Brent

#### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This cross-Council group has been established to look at the socio-economic barriers and challenges experienced by the Eastern European communities living in Brent and make recommendations to address these. The scope of the group does not cover rough sleepers, overcrowding and anti-social behaviour because these themes are either within the scope of other forums or will be considered as separate work streams.
- 1.2 The core membership of the group consists of representatives from the Equality team, Partnerships and Engagement, Customer Services, Housing Needs, Public Protection, Private Sector Licensing, Employment, Skills and Enterprise. The group also engaged with organisations working with Eastern European residents to obtain a community perspective. The next stage is to engage with these organisations in community outreach work and activities listed in section four of this report.

#### 2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Equalities Committee is asked to note and comment on the findings and proposals outlined in the report.

#### 3.0 Detail

##### Anecdotal evidence

- 3.1 The two largest Eastern European groups in Brent are Polish and Romanian. The Polish community is on the whole quite well settled and has an established support network in Brent. Unlike the Polish community, the Romanian community does not have access to an established support network. The majority of the Romanians in Brent are single men and/or economic migrants who are financially supporting their families back in Romania. Some of them are coming to Brent to do seasonal casual work, they are not interested in

interacting with Council's and NHS services and often do not have National Insurance numbers. They often sleep rough and/or in overcrowded conditions, their health needs are often unmet. There has also been an increase in female sex workers from Eastern Europe who are often subject to abuse and violence and who also experience health inequalities.

- 3.2 In terms of geographical spread, it is known that there are high concentrations of Eastern European groups in Neasden, Harlesden and Wembley, for example.
- 3.3 A summary of the information provided by different services who are interacting with these communities is available in **Appendix 1**.

### **Summary of key findings**

- 3.4 A summary of the key findings obtained to help inform the work of the task and finish groups is outlined below:

#### **Children's Centres**

- The number of Eastern European children in children's centres between 2011 and 2014 increased by 43 per cent from 2,325 children in 2011 to 3,338 in 2014; the number of children in children's centres over the same time period increased by seven per cent (from 37,487 in 2011 to 40,131 in 2014).
- Eastern European children make up eight per cent (3,338) of all children (40,131) using children's centres. The great majority (2,826) of Eastern European children in children's centres are with unspecified nationality.
- Of those Eastern European children whose nationality is known, Albanian and Kosovan are the largest Eastern European groups using children's centres, with 226 and 197 children respectively.

#### **Languages spoken in schools**

- In secondary schools three per cent of the population (500 pupils) speak Romanian as a first language and in primary schools four per cent of the population (1,164 pupils) speak Romanian as a first language. This suggests an increase in the Romanian population.
- In secondary schools two per cent of the population (384 pupils) speak Polish as a first language; this doubles to four per cent (1,000 pupils) for primary students, showing this population is growing rapidly.

#### **Adult social care users**

- 1.3 per cent (75 individuals) of Adult social care (ASC) users are Eastern European.
- Eastern European ASC users are mostly aged 18-24 (58 individuals or 77 per cent) compared to 20 per cent of all ASC users (1,214 individuals).
- 11 percent (eight) Eastern European ASC users are aged 65 and over compared to 53 per cent of all ASC users (3,121 individuals).
- 73 per cent (55 individuals) of Eastern European ASC users are male, compared to 46 per cent (1,207 individuals) of all ASC users.

## **Employment and Skills**

- The third largest group, not including British, to access employment and skills services are Eastern European with 193 people (seven per cent).
- Of this group, 82 learners (42 per cent) are Polish; 65 learners (34 per cent) are Romanian, and 46 (24 per cent) are from other Eastern European nationalities.

## **Homelessness referrals (Start Plus)**

- Referrals to start plus of White Other people vary from quarter to quarter between seven per cent (23 out of 311) and 12 per cent (33 out of 277) of all people referred. This variation seems random, with seven per cent in Q2 and Q4 of 2014, and 12 per cent in Q2 of 2013 and Q3 of 2014.
- There is no geographic pattern of homeless referrals of the White Other population.

## **Rough Sleepers**

- According to the latest count of rough sleepers carried on 25 November 2016, the number of rough sleepers in Brent is 24. This is a significant reduction from last year when the number of rough sleepers was 64.
- Romanian and Polish are the two largest groups of rough sleepers in Brent.

## **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 Hold a round table discussion on 30 November with organisations working with Eastern European communities living in Brent with the aim to:
- get a better understanding of the people they work with, their needs, concerns and priorities
  - map out the services provided, identify potential duplications and gaps, and
  - provide them with information about support / funding available via the Council and CVS.
- 4.2 In partnership with Volunteering Brent, Community and Voluntary Sector and other local organisations provide support and training to capacity build the voluntary organisations/charities working with local Eastern European communities. Additionally support the recruitment and training of Brent staff and other volunteers.
- Note: Some of these volunteers to provide support to customers visiting Brent Customer Services Centre and/or to other front-line services.*
- 4.3 In partnership with organisations working with Eastern European communities in Brent hold at least two local drop-in information sessions in local churches, cafes and community hubs across a wide range of themes including: residence rights, employment rights, employability, personal & social skills, housing, health and wellbeing (e.g. Drugs and Alcohol, Smoking Cessation, Mental Health).

4.4 Hold an Open Door event for Eastern European communities to provide information on relevant Council services and services provided by local organisations.

4.5 Work with Advice4Renters to offer tailored information, advice and assistance for Eastern European residents.

*Note: A signposting leaflet to be produced that the Private Sector Licensing can hand out when coming into contact with Eastern European residents.*

4.6 Carry out an ethnographic research to inform the outreach work and the other work streams of the Task & Finish group.

## **5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 The proposed recommendations will have some cost implications but these will be covered as part of the allocated budget for the outreach work with Eastern European communities based on evidenced need.

## **6.0 Legal Implications**

6.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

## **7.0 Equality Implications**

7.1 There are no equality implications directly arising from this report.

## **8.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)**

8.1 There are not staffing/accommodation implications directly arising from this report.

## **Background papers**

None

## **Contact Officers**

Andreyana Ivanova, Head of Equality

Genevieve George, Partnerships and Engagement Manager

## **Appendix 1**

### **Customer services**

The majority of Eastern European service users are Polish and most of them are well settled, can communicate in English and access relevant services. Romanian communities cannot communicate as effectively and do not have the network support to signpost them to or help them access services. Engaging volunteers from the community is an effective way of communicating with them and overcoming issues around lack of trust.

### **Employment and Skills**

The service is aware of four Romanian organisations within the borough but these are not well established and do not have sufficient knowledge to signpost or effectively support their communities. Employment and Skills have come into contact with about 40 Romanians, the majority of whom were Roma. However, they couldn't provide them with ESOL training as these residents did not have National Insurance numbers. It would be helpful if Employment and Skills and other front-line officers are trained to provide relevant information and signpost people when they are in contact with these groups.

### **Community Safety**

There are reports from residents of anti-social behaviour from members of the Romanian, Polish and Hungarian communities, such as smoking and drinking. The Roma community tend to look for casual labour and as such, not all of them are interested in having an NI number or accessing Council services. They are often economic migrants and tend to work seasonally. There are mostly single working age men or men who came in Brent to earn some money to send back to their families. There are certain coach companies that bring them in Brent.

### **Housing Needs, Care and Support**

The majority of the Roma community are economic migrants and are not interested in registering for NI numbers. They work for a few months and then return home. These communities are also transient, travelling from one area to another. Between 40 and 50 per cent are rough sleepers and the rest of them live in severely overcrowded conditions. Brent came second highest in London for rough sleepers.

### **Private Sector Licensing**

Eastern European groups are over-represented in the overcrowding cases Private sector enforcement deals with. Residents often report anti-social behaviour by Eastern European communities. There have also been a number of cases of Romanians being unlawfully displaced or evicted by their landlords even though they had tenancy agreements.

The communities need to be signposted and provided with advice and information. It would be helpful officers have a signposting leaflet to hand out when coming into contact with these communities.

### **Policy and Engagement**

It would be useful to build on the initiatives and services already in place via the voluntary sector and CVS Brent's contract. Community groups are able to access funding and support and learn more about capacity building via CVS Brent's contract. Currently, there is some funding allocated to emerging communities which can be used for initiatives such as engagement work, information and advice, education activities targeted at these communities, capacity building for the networks and organisations supporting these groups.