

**MigRom: The immigration of Romanian Roma to Western Europe: Causes, effects, and future engagement strategies**



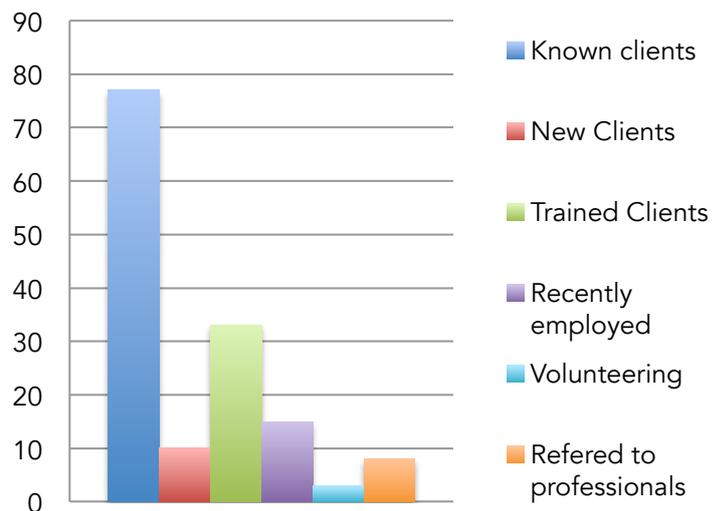
In partnership with Manchester City Council



**Drop in consultation for Roma in Manchester  
in partnership with Sure Start (Longsight) – Sept 2014-Apr 2015**

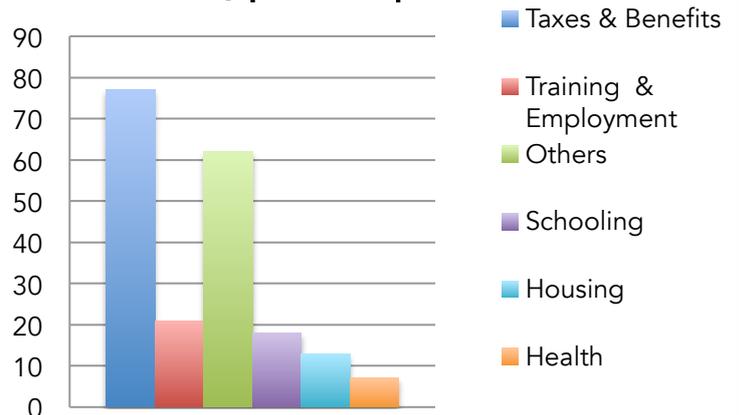
- MigRom is a European research consortium that investigates the experiences and ambitions of Roma migrants from Romania. It runs a pilot engagement scheme with provisions for advice and referral and supports capacity building within the Roma community.
- The project employs three experienced outreach workers. They offer weekly drop-in sessions for Roma at the Longsight Sure Start Centre.
- The drop-in consultation service is unique and innovative in several respects:
  - **Roma-led:** The service is led by members of the Roma community and run in the community's own languages (Romani and Romanian).
  - **Responsive:** The service is deliberately non-assertive. Instead, it offers a fixed open-door consultation that responds specifically to needs raised by the clients.
  - **Punctual:** The approach is purposefully non-holistic. It does not elicit information from the client beyond what is required to understand and respond to the specific issue under discussion.
  - **Client-centred:** Where advice requires specialised expertise, clients are made aware of other advice services. No client information is shared with other agencies except at the explicit request of the clients.
- Between Sept 2014 - Apr 2015, altogether 87 individuals accessed the drop-in session for advice and support. Of these 10 were first time users of the service
- 33 clients were informally trained to assist family members.

**Access to drop-in  
Sept 14 - Apr 15**

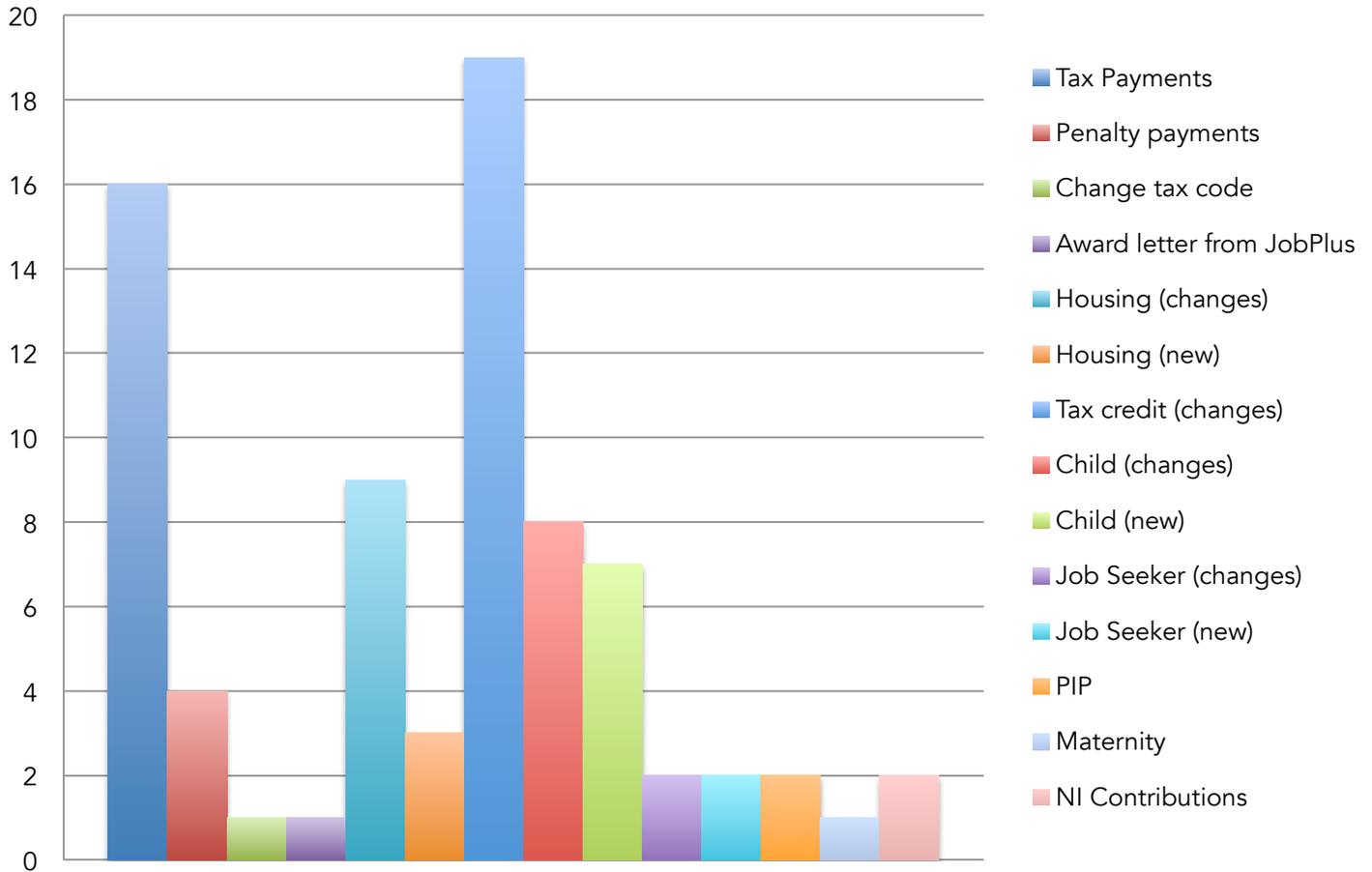


- Most queries covered issues related to changing benefit entitlements and new ways of paying taxes, as individuals move from self-employment to employment.

**Type of queries**

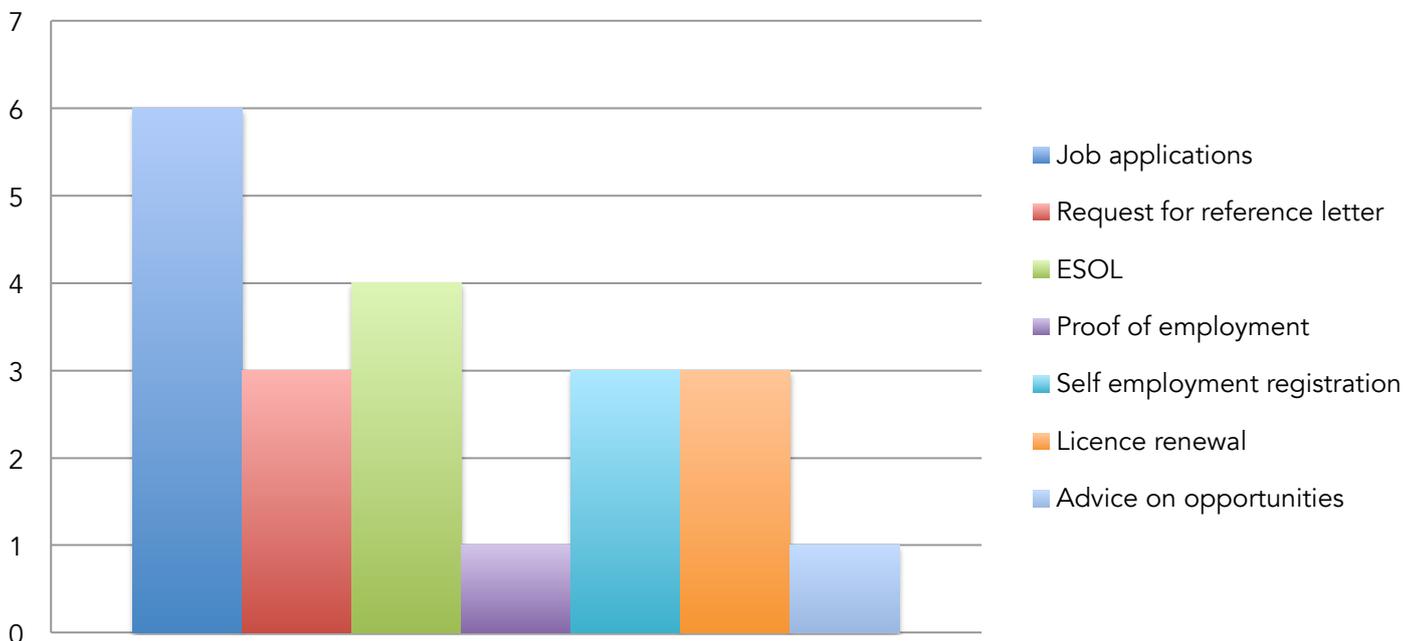


## Taxes & benefits



- While enquiring about tax procedures, 15 clients confirmed they had recently found employment.
- 3 young Roma women asked to volunteer with the outreach workers or at the Sure Start Centre.
- Clients of all ages are regularly asking for assistance in applying for jobs or for advice on training, particularly ESOL.
- Clients were also signposted to various services for specialised advice, e.g. the Council's Tax Support Scheme, immigration lawyers, accountants, and Citizens Advice Bureau.

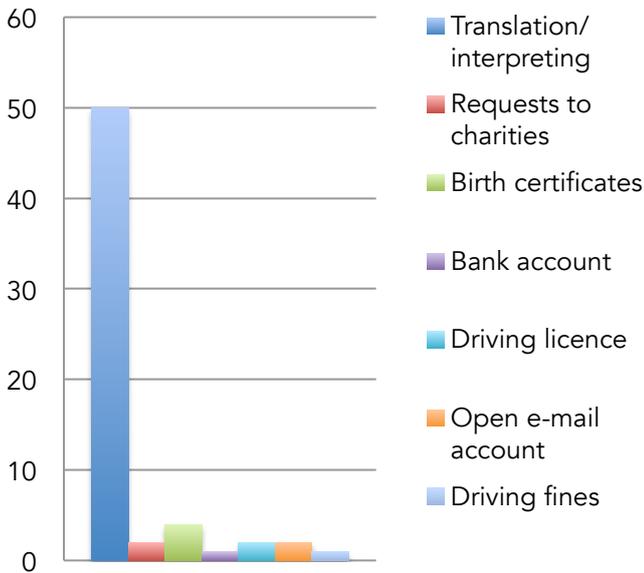
## Training & employment



- Clients have asked for translation of unfamiliar documents like payslips and P60s.

- The move to online and/or phone systems for tax payments meant that many clients required assistance in communicating with HMRC, particularly during the first quarter of 2015.

### Other queries



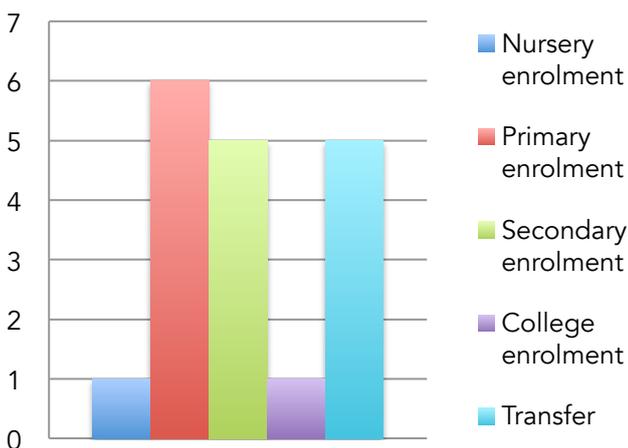
- Families are keen to find school places for their children.

- Some young Roma are progressing to college education.

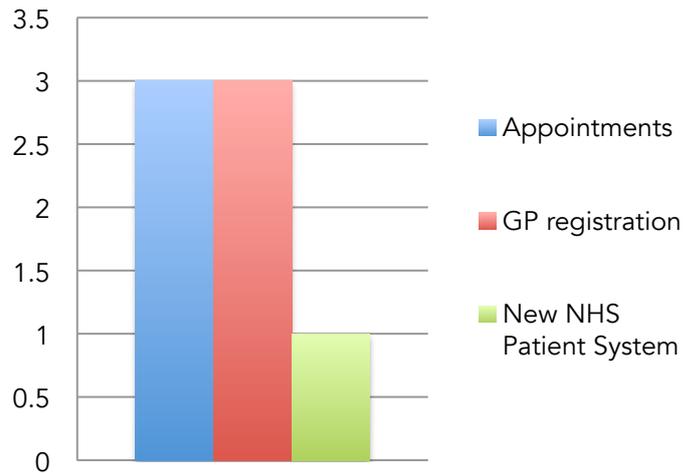
- Families started to enquire about nursery places.

- Assistance in transferring children between schools is often sought when children from a single family are assigned to different, often distant schools.

### Schooling



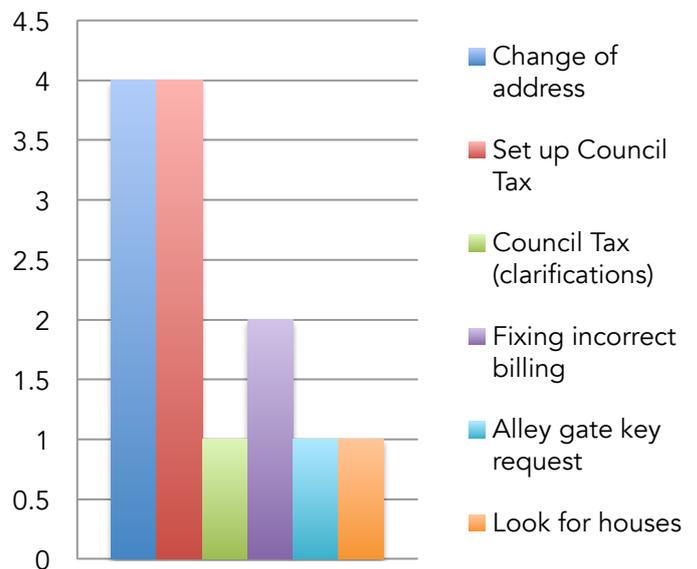
### Health



- Queries relating to health and housing show clients' awareness of services and of proper ways to access them.

- Queries about housing and health came from one family of new arrivals and from older members of the community, who needed assistance due to poor command of English.

### Housing



- The project promotes a strategy of Self-Reliance. It offers informal training to young members of the community to assist family members.

- Consultation notes from the period of assessment (see examples overleaf) show an increase in confidence, self-awareness and recognition of skills, and a commitment to draw on skills and experience to support others in the community.

11/09/2014

F69 started a new job and needed help to understand her payslip. She also asked for information about tax codes. Since her present tax code is an emergency one, she needed information on how to change it. She will do this on her own.

02/10/2014

F48 needed to call the tax credit office to let them know about changes in work circumstances. Her husband has moved from self-employment into employment. She also came to check if a payslip was indeed all that they needed to send as proof of employment to the tax credit office.

30/10/2014

F91 came to check that she had prepared the right documents to send to the Child Benefit Office, the Council Tax Office and to register as self-employed as she has just received the pedlar licence to sell flowers. She is happy to have received the licence, but says she is also looking for other jobs, encouraged by her friend who has recently started working at a packaging company. F91 says she would like a similar job as it brings more security than selling flowers in the street.

06/11/2014

F90 asked about payment of national insurance contributions. For the past tax year he was exempt from paying Class 2 national insurance contributions, but since his income has now increased he wanted to know how he could start paying. We showed him the HM Revenue website and the forms available there.

08/01/2015

F98 asked us to check whether she had filled in her child benefit form correctly.

F56 needed help phoning the tax office to ask if they could send him a new tax code. F56 needed this in order to fill out his online self-assessment.

12/02/2015

F63 came to the drop-in as her housing benefit payments have been suspended when she stopped getting jobseeker allowance. As a result, she has now received an overpayment. We phoned the city council and arranged for her to pay back in instalments and she already paid the first instalment.

05/03/2015

F27 phoned in the morning to arrange an appointment at the drop in. She wanted us to help her phone the tax credit office.

30/04/2015

F69 gave us some job application forms last week as there were vacancies at her place of work. She gave us the forms so that people from the community could apply for the jobs. She then came to the drop in to collect the completed forms.

- As more individuals secure employment and stabilise their income, friends and relatives increasingly try to do the same.
- Individuals are starting to use the drop-in as a way to disseminate information to community members they are not directly in contact with.

MigRom ('The immigration of Romanian Roma to Western Europe: Causes, effects and future engagement strategies') is funded by the European Union under the 7th Framework Programme call on 'Dealing with diversity and cohesion: the case of the Roma in the European Union' (GA319901). MigRom is approved and monitored by the University of Manchester's Committee on the Ethics of Research on Human Beings (Project Ref. 12412) and by the Ethical Review in FP7 Protocol (Proposal ID 319901)

Project Manager: Charlotte Jones  
Project Coordinator: Prof Yaron Matras

Contact: romani@manchester.ac.uk, +44 (0)161 275 5999  
Research Associate: Dr D. Viktor Leggio

<http://romani.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/migrom>