

Supporting Roma clients who have experienced rough sleeping

Building Trust	Many Roma people have directly experienced racism and discrimination and are impacted by intergenerational experiences of trauma.	Hear and validate client's experiences and explore how their experiences impact the way they would like to be supported by you.
	Sadly, Roma people can still be victim to discriminatory stereotypes which can prevent clients working with services. For example, clients may ask to have a friend attend with them because they prefer there to be a witness in case they are subject to a false allegation.	Show interest in Roma culture and traditions. It can be helpful to learn a few words e.g. Lacho dives means hello in Romani International Roma day is celebrated all over the world on the 8 th April. Can your service celebrate with your clients?
	Clients are often distrustful of 'authorities' due to previous experiences or those of family members. If you show your badge, they are unlikely to be able to read it and may associate this with 'authorities' and be reluctant to speak with you	Explain verbally that you work for a homeless charity and then show your badge. Keep your initial questions focused on wellbeing and the client's immediate needs. Do not ask for ID or enquire about immigration status straight away.
	Roma client often enjoy talking and sharing their experiences. This can be a really helpful way of building trust and getting to know each other.	Make time for conversation. It is likely that your client will value the space to talk and this might mean your meeting takes longer than expected but your able to build a positive relationship.
	It is a big step for your client to trust you with their support and this can easily be broken especially due to the historic lack of trust between Roma people and services,	Don't overpromise. If something is not confirmed make sure to emphasis this ' I will try but I cannot promise' Do not exaggerate or suggest that something will be quicker/better/closer that it is.
Communication	The language spoken by Roma is Romani chib. There are many dialects including Lovari and Kalderasch. It has is	When communicating via translation (especially in Romanian) make sure to check understanding and to stop the

	<p>routes in Sandscript and is similar to Hindi or Urdu. Some clients who have lived in Romania may speak some Romanian but be aware that this may not be their first language and they may not be fluent</p>	<p>conversation if you cannot be certain that the client can understand.</p> <p>Use simple words and find a quiet place indoors</p>
	<p>Many Roma clients who are supported by homeless services are illiterate and cannot read or write in any language</p>	<p>Avoid providing written materials unless you are certain the client can read. It is helpful to check whether the client went to school and what their preferred method of communication is. Clients might incorrectly answer 'yes' if you ask them if they can read because they are embarrassed.</p>
Assessment	<p>Roma clients are all unique. They each face different challenges and have different aspirations for their future and how they intend to get there</p>	<p>Ask clients about their plan for their future. Work with the client to understand how your support can fit in with their plan based on what motivates them and inspires them</p> <p>Explain the benefits of the small steps in the journey to achieve their end goal</p>
	<p>It is very common for Roma client to want to their family members present for their assessment This is typical of Roma culture, people feel more comfortable having another Roma present.</p>	<p>Treat each request on a case by case basis and be led by clients wishes. If have any concerns about risk of abuse or exploitation between clients contact the Roma Rough Sleeping team for advice and your safeguarding lead.</p>
Support needs	<p>There is stigma in Roma culture around alcohol, substance use and mental health and people often feel a sense of shame. This shame can often be worse for women It will take an enormous amount of trust for a client to open up to their support worker about needs in these areas</p>	<p>If you have concerns, refer to a professional and support the client to attend. Do not attempt to ask lots of questions about the issue yourself as this could cause the client to disengage.</p>
Housing Options	<p>We are very familiar with the housing crisis in the UK and the challenges in accessing</p>	<p>Do not make assumptions and explain the reasons why a property or areas is unaffordable.</p>

	<p>affordable accommodation. However, our clients are not. Clients may have unrealistic expectation about the type and location of housing they can access.</p> <p>Cooking is very important to Roma culture and so some clients may struggle with a shared kitchen.</p> <p>Community is very important to Roma culture so clients will want to know they can easily reach friends and families.</p>	<p>It is helpful work with this the client to understand how they can meet their needs in accommodation that is affordable e.g. planning travel to see friends etc.</p>
Supporting Resettlement	<p>This is likely to be your client's first experience of settled accommodation and they won't know anyone else that has been through the process</p> <p>Things that are obvious to others may not be to your client</p>	<p>Help clients to understand their rights and responsibilities and don't worry about overexplaining. Go through the appendix below and check understanding. Often clients might nod and agree when they are not sure because they are embarrassed.</p>
	<p>Clients will need support to leave English so they are less dependent on support</p>	<p>Refer clients to local EASL courses.</p> <p>Clients are likely to be very nervous to attend and you may need to support them to the first session. Think about what motivates your clients and remember their aspirations for the future.</p> <p>Don't say 'you need to do EASL lessons to keep your benefits.' Do say ' EASL could give you the skills you need to get the job in construction'</p>
	<p>Many Roma clients are not able to read maps, because they have not been taught. (Similar to being taught how to tell the time.)</p>	<p>Often clients learn by doing. If you show the client how to get somewhere with key landmarks/reference points then they will remember and be able to travel themselves in the future.</p>
	<p>Roma clients face additional barriers to accessing health care and</p>	<p>Support the client to register with a GP and make new arrangements for collecting prescriptions. If your client has ongoing health care needs then it is essential to support your client to attend their first appointment</p>

Supporting clients to maintain a tenancy checklist

Rights and Responsibilities	Comment
1. Is the client aware of expectations re: keeping the property in good repair?	
2. Is the client aware of expectations re: leaving the UK and retaining the property ?	
3. Is the client aware of expectations re: paying rent?	
4. Is the client clear on what you can support them with including what you are not able to support them?	
Income maximisation	
1. Has the client maximised their income by making an application for PIP etc.	
2. Has the client applied for free travel if they are eligible?	
3. Have you applied for furniture grants from the local authority or other sources?	
4. Have you applied for council tax reduction?	
Financial management	
1. Have you shown your client how to keep their UC journey up to date?	
2. Have the clients support need including English language skills and ability to read and write been communicated to the DWP?	
3. Have you shown your client how to set up their gas and electricity?	
4. Have you supported your client to set up direct debits	
Settling into the local area	
1. Have you shown the client how to navigate the local area and travel to key places (without maps)	
2. Have you linked your client to local EASL classes and/or adult education and training	
3. Have you supported the client to register at a GP. It is important to do this in person.	
Managing in an emergency	
1. Is the client clear on who to contact if things don't go to plan with their property e.g. landlord or letting agent	
2. Is the client clear on who to contact if there is an issue with their benefits?	
3. Is the client clear on what to do if they are victim of a crime?	