Introduction

The Equal Opportunities Committee are undertaking an inquiry into migration and trafficking. The remit of the inquiry is to:

- explore the impact and contribution of migrant populations within Scottish society and the extent and nature of trafficking.

The CHCP has been invited to give oral evidence at the meeting on 1 June. This is a follow up to Cathie Cowan’s attendance at the Committee on 26 January 2010. The focus of the session on 1 June will be on the provision of health services to migrant communities.

Further information is available on: [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/equal/inquiries/migration/mtcallforev.htm](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/equal/inquiries/migration/mtcallforev.htm)

The following have also been invited to the meeting on 1 June:

- Dr Alison McCallum, Director of Public Health & Health Policy, NHS Lothian
- Eileen Dinning, Secretary, UNISON

Clearly the Committee will be interested in our experience of the impact of the Roma population in Govanhill on CHCP services, and the actions we have taken. These fall into two broad areas:

- action we have taken to improve access to CHCP services, and support families and individuals; and
- action we have taken in partnership with other agencies to address impacts on the wider community and other key services.

Other issues the Committee will be interested in are:

- The demands on the NHS of migrants - do their health needs differ from the indigenous population - what impact do migrants have on particular health services because of their specific needs
- The barriers migrants face in accessing health services – how is health promoted to migrant communities
- Raising awareness – for example among female migrants and access to antenatal services
- The role of migrant workers in the NHS – making best use of their skills etc

**Roma Population**
It is estimated that there are approximately 2,000 to 3,000 Slovakians of Roma origin living in Govanhill. Estimates vary but locally agencies estimate that this equates to approximately 1,000 families.

**CHCP Action**

When the first families began to arrive in 2005 it was evident they were at high risk of experiencing considerable health and social inequalities. The CHCP responded by undertaking the following:

- Leading on the establishment of a Practitioners Group to co-ordinate a multi-agency response to the specific needs of the Roma community
- Providing interpreting services
- Creating a drop-in facility and information centre
- Appointing 2 Slovakian community development workers
- Appointing a dedicated health visitor and two health support workers to work specifically with the Roma community
- Building capacity within the Roma population and supporting the creation of ‘Norma’, the Slovak Association of Glasgow, to provide an ongoing representative voice for this community.

Coming to a new country presented the Roma community with a number of significant challenges, including finding work, locating and financing affordable housing, and accessing a range of public services including health, social care and education. Adding to and exacerbating these challenges was their lack of basic English language skills.

CHCP frontline services were amongst the first to encounter the Roma community and to identify their specific needs, although we recognised that an effective response required a multi-agency effort, given the breadth of these needs.

**Partnership Action**

The CHCP has also been involved with a wide range of partners in co-ordinating a wider response to the challenges faced by public services. The CHCP and its partners have come together to jointly agree a set of shared objectives and priorities. These are set out below:

- Provide immediate support to meet the short term ‘crisis’ needs of the Roma population on initial arrival in Govanhill
- Build relationships with the Roma population in order to signpost them to local services and support their integration into the local community
- Develop an understanding of the culture of the incoming Roma population and their needs and expectations from public services
- Promote partnership working across the statutory and voluntary sector in order to reduce the health and social inequalities being experienced by the Roma population

- Raise awareness within the CHCP and amongst Community Planning partners of the needs of the Roma population and develop capacity within mainstream services to respond to these.

- Identify additional development opportunities to improve the services available to the Roma community and work together with partners to secure appropriate funding sources to support these.

- Build capacity amongst the Roma community in order to enable them to articulate their opinions and to engage with partners in the planning and delivery of local services.

The CHCP has worked with a range of organisations to raise general awareness of the Roma population and to improve our collective understanding of their needs. The University of the West of Scotland were also commissioned to undertake a research study into the Roma population, which was published in 2008.

In addition, we have worked together to encourage organisations to develop their capacity to deliver mainstream services that meet these needs in an appropriate and sensitive manner.

The impact of the above collaborative work is demonstrated by the activities that are currently being provided by a wide range of partners. For example:

- Education have appointed bilingual school access officers to respond to the problem of children either failing to register for school or attending once registered.

- A BME Employability Support Worker has been appointed by Langside College to increase the number of people accessing employment and learning opportunities.

- The Police have appointed a Diversity Liaison Officer to encourage better links and communication with the local community. They are also involved in a range of diversionary activities such as football, youth clubs and music clubs and provide inputs to the sessions organised by Culture and Sport and the CHCP.

- Crossroads have appointed a Slovakian worker and offer a range of information and advice services. They also run a weekly Roma women’s group aimed at reducing the isolation of mothers with young children.

**Equally Well Test Site**

Since October 2008 Govanhill has been an Equally Well test site. A neighbourhood management approach to tackling a number of multi faceted problems was established by all community planning partners in early 2008. As this approach mirrored closely the Scottish Government’s approach to health inequalities as outlined in Equally Well, test site status was awarded since 2008 a range of initiatives have been taken forward including:
- environmental improvements;
- housing improvements;
- dealing with pest and infestation issues;
- landlord registration;
- anti social behaviour interventions;
- enhancing employment, training and education opportunities;
- encouraging and supporting school attendance; and
- establishing an operational service hub involving key partner agencies.