



REVIEW OF ROMA ADVICE TEAM PROJECT 2024/25

SUMMARY

A minimum **cumulative financial gain of £1,500,000** was secured for Roma families living in poverty as a result of the Community Renewal Rom Romeha project funded by Glasgow Community Fund in 2024/25.

The delivery costs for the Roma Advice Team which is a part of Community Renewal Rom Romeha for the year 2024/25 was £ 80,619 including staff, client costs, premises, overheads and all management costs. This was approximately the same value as in the previous and subsequent year.

For each £1 spent of the project at least £19 benefits were achieved.

Given that families in poverty spent around 5% of their income on council tax[source], **the increased council tax receipts alone resulting from this work will likely have covered the full cost** of delivering the project. This is without considering the many likely additional wider savings to other council services.

In 2024-25 this work supported 859 individuals with advice on housing, welfare rights, migration status and other aspects of advice. Four in five Roma in Glasgow are thought to have used the team's services over the last 5 years.

The project was operating ahead of target. Reaching **245% of the target for the number of individuals** benefiting.

The average income of families first engaging our service was £11,664. The average income of those same families after we had provided our advice services was £22,996,

a doubling in average income. This is five-times higher than the target income uplift per family for which the project was previously recommended for funding.

This does not include any one-off income, nor savings from debt written off nor housing costs saved although both of these were also significant savings to hundreds of individuals. Those **one-off impacts are additional** and not captured in the figures above.

By assessing the profile of client financial gain it is estimated that over 100 children were lifted out of poverty. If this was the only metric on which the project would be lifting children out of poverty at a cost of only £800 per child, yet this was only one aspect of the project.

The work was delivered in 5 different languages, most beneficiaries were not able to be supported in English. Almost all families reported wider disadvantage, health inequalities, poverty, discrimination and/or trauma.

CASE STUDY

Ferdinand Rostas had lost his job due to a heart attack and as a result his tax credits eventually ceased. His family of 6 were living in an overcrowded house (just 2 bedrooms) and had been barely surviving for a year on child credits and PIP paid to his blind wife and blind son. This amounted to just under £1,700 a month. As Ferdinand's tax credits had been paid for a time after his heart attack, he was also facing a debt he couldn't afford to pay back.

When he came to the Community Renewal Rom Romeha hub, the caseworker found him distressed, defeated and literally out of breath, holding himself up against the wall due to his ill health. As neither he nor his wife could speak English – accessing any kind of help seemed impossible.

Ioana from the team is a specialist in many areas and speaks Romanian. Instead of just helping him with the problem he was presenting – she did more. She conducted a “Holistic Conversation”, a whole-person approach used by all Community Renewal staff. By asking these tried and tested questions, Ioana identified all the interrelated issues that were trapping the family in poverty and disadvantage.

She discovered that the family did not have settled status, even though they had lived in Govanhill since 2016. By supporting the family towards settled status (helping them with all the paperwork involved), they were entitled to increased financial support.

As Ferdinand's wife and son were in receipt of PIP, they could access Universal Credit. They were assisted in completing a limited capability for work form which gave them an extra £390 on top of their universal credit. Plus, they could apply for free bus travel due to their disability.

Ferdinand was declared a carer for his son, which gave him an extra £185 a month added to the Universal Credit payment.

As we supported the family towards receiving universal credit, we liaised with the DWP and HRC regarding the tax credit debt. They agreed to deduct a small amount from Ferdinand's Universal Credit payments to recover the overpayment.

As both parents were so ill, the 2 youngest children were struggling to make it to school. So, the team used their established networks with the local school to address this. The children are receiving additional support so they can receive the education they deserve.

The team also liaised with Cross Reach, Daisy Chain, Positive Action in Housing, and Housing Officers. Some family members have been referred for support around mental health issues that were identified by the team during the holistic conversations.

As a result of the support received, the family's income increased by over £25,000 per annum.

Ionna comments that when she explained how improved their life would be financially once all the action was taken:

"You could see they were blossoming in front of our eyes".