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Deaf Children from Roma families in the UK

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Background to the project

- Language and diversity in deaf education at Leeds
- An ecological approach to understanding educational experience and performance
- ...of 'marginalised' children and families
- The ESRC 'acceleration of impact' fund



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Project questions

1. What are the organisational (education and health) approaches to the identification and support of deaf Roma c/yp/
2. What are the precarities associated with being a deaf child and being Roma?
3. What are the wider societal issues that impact on the interaction between individuals/families and the contexts of education and health?



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Roma migrants –Central and Eastern Europe



- Diverse ethnic group
- Migrants to UK
- Roma Children



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Congenital deafness in the Roma population

Recessive gene:

- Spanish, Hungarian and Slovakian Roma populations (Araceli et al. 2005, Masindova et al 2015)
- High levels of visual and/or hearing impairment
- Moderate to profound hearing loss
- Low levels of the use of hearing aids and glasses
- Issues for social participation and mental health



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Our study methods

National Survey: A brief questionnaire to all Heads of Support Services for deaf children (132 authorities) and Heads of the 17 Schools for the Deaf in England.

2. Institutional questionnaires and interviews:

Detailed questionnaires - Bradford, Leeds, Peterborough, Rotherham, and Sheffield.

3. Case Studies: Four deaf children and their families willing to share their experiences.



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Demographic data - overview

- 10 out of 17 schools for the deaf responded; only one Roma child
- 73 out of 132 local authorities' deaf education services responded
- 38 reported they have no Roma children
- 25 had between 1 and 5 Roma children
- 11 (Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, Rotherham, Kent, Manchester, Medway, Newcastle upon Tyne, Derby, Doncaster and Warwickshire) had more than 5 Roma children



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Name of deaf education service	Total caseload	Deaf Roma children	Estimate of Roma community in LA
Bradford	805	41	6000
Leeds	920	8	5000
Peterborough	252	4	1500
Sheffield	643	110	5000
Rotherham	383	34	4000



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	Deaf Roma children	All deaf children (CRIDE 2017)
Mild	13%	26%
Moderate	42.%	32%
Severe	24.%	9%
Profound	14%	12%
Unilateral	7%	20%
Total number	344	45,631



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Demographic summary

- Number of deaf Roma children under reported
- Accurate data needed for policy change
- Need data collection based on empowering methodologies



Institutional overview

- Questionnaires and interviews with 5 deaf education services
- Additional interviews with 2 audiology departments, teachers of the deaf and 1 new arrivals service



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Families: biographies and experiences

- external circumstances, mobility, strong family networks

Education: past experience and current support

- early intervention, resourced provision, varied assessments, holistic approach



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Languages: home and school

- multi-lingual households, oral culture

Deafness: prevalence and understandings

- multiple deaf family members





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Audiological support and engagement

- attendance at appointments, late diagnosis, use of technologies

Relationships, communication and trust

- interpretation, employing Roma staff, advocacy, change over time, multi-agency approach



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Case studies

Martin	11 month old Roma Slovak boy	Bilateral moderate sensorineural hearing loss, diagnosed at birth.	Expected to start nursery at 3	Lives with father, mother, and two brothers (one deaf, one hearing)	Interview and observation with family Interview with teacher
Peter	3 year old Roma Slovak boy	Bilateral moderate sensorineural loss diagnosed at 2.	Will start nursery at 3	Lives with father, mother (both deaf) and younger brother	Interview and observation with family Interview with teacher
Zuzana	10 year old Roma Slovak girl	Moderate loss in both ears with burst ear drums diagnosed at 8	Year 5 mainstream primary	Lives with stepfather, mother and 5 siblings (all hearing except mother)	Interviews with girl, mother and teacher
Eva	12 year old Czech Roma girl	Moderate loss in both ears with burst ear drums diagnosed at 3.	Year 7 resourced provision	Lives with mother, father and three siblings (one deaf)	Interviews with girl and teacher



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Eva is a 12 year old Czech Roma girl. She lives with her parents and three siblings. She has a moderate to severe hearing loss which was diagnosed at 3. One sibling is also deaf. She goes to resourced provision in a secondary school and her favourite subjects are English and History. She likes hairdressing and watching YouTube videos. She uses sign language, English, Czech and Roma.



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Martin is an 11 month old Roma Slovak boy. He lives with his parents and two siblings. He has a moderate hearing loss in both ears which was diagnosed at birth. One of his siblings, his grandmother and his cousins are deaf as well. He likes playing with pots and pans. His parents speak Roma and Slovak and his older siblings also speak English.



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Zuzana is a 10 year old Roma Slovak girl. She lives with her mother, stepfather and five siblings. She has a moderate hearing loss in both ears which was diagnosed at 8. Her mother is also deaf. She goes to her local primary school. Her favourite subject is Maths. She likes riding her bike and dressing up. Her family use English, Slovak, Roma and Pakistani.



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Peter is a three year old Roma Slovak boy. He has a moderate hearing loss in both ears which was diagnosed when he was 2. He lives with his parents and younger sibling. His parents and his step-siblings are also deaf. He is looking forward to starting nursery soon. His favourite toys are bikes and cars. His family speak Roma, Slovak and a little English.



Case studies: method

Ethical challenges

An intersectional approach to analysis

- being Roma and being deaf
- ‘multiple jeopardy’ or ‘dual disadvantage’ as used in the literature

Thematic analysis and coding of all the interview data



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Case studies: Themes

- language and communication
- interaction with institutions (education and health)
- resources of the families
- navigation of complex systems



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Language and communication

- multilingual homes
- deaf and hearing interaction
- access to technology
- time of diagnosis
- written language
- professional knowledge



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Interaction with institutions

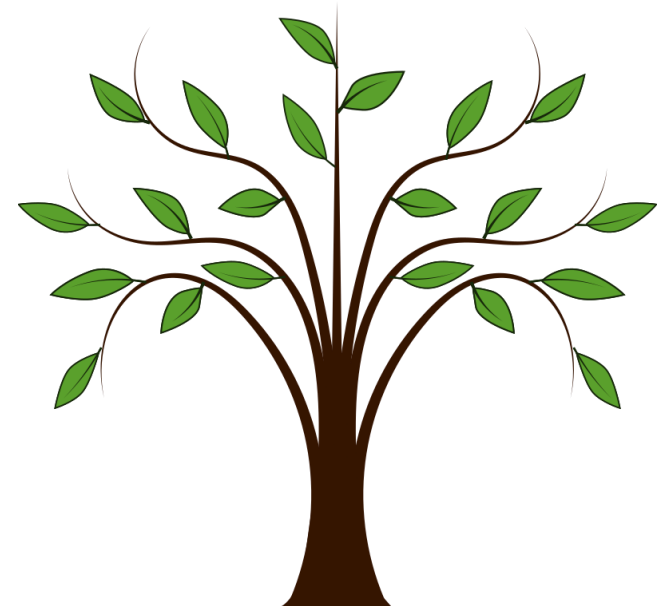
- Understanding of the systems and how they interact - roles of professionals
- Decision making and advocacy
- Previous experience of health and education
- Communication and interpreters



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Family resources

- Cohesion
- Experience and dissemination
- Communication
- Aspiration





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Navigation of complex systems

- family resources
- interpreting and mediation
- trust and confidence

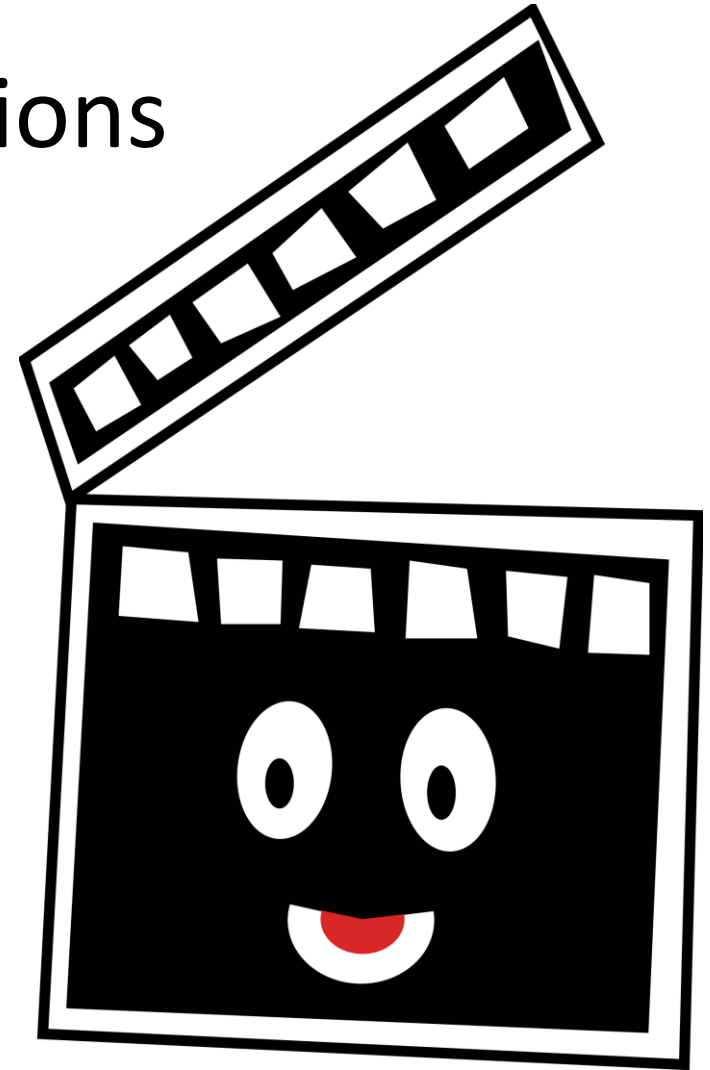




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Child reflections

- Getting the bus
- Starting secondary school





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Our reflections

- **Being deaf and being Roma**
- The significance of the research



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Our reflections

- Being deaf and being Roma
- **The significance of the research**



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Recommendations Schools and Services

- Data collection and ‘tracking’
- Language and communication assessments
- Shared multilingual resources.
- A multi-professional approach
- Positive Roma role models.
- Understanding of the exceptional circumstances and resources of Roma families.
- Employment of Roma staff
- Culturally representative services



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Recommendations

Policy makers

- Awareness raising
- Service delivery
- Wider policy development
- Commitment at Government level
- Adequate funding
- Specialist courses and materials



Thank you

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