

First Romanian Health Multi-Stakeholder Roundtable

(24 November 2025):

Event Report

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Main author:

Adina Maglan, PhD Researcher, Bournemouth University

Co-Authors:

Riyad Karim, Assistant Director for Community Engagement and Health Equity, NHS England - London Region

Lorraine Chang-Edwards, Involvement Manager – Brent, NHS North-West London ICB

Galina Nguekam, Public Health Advanced Practitioner, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Amalia Manole, Viceconsul of the Consulate General of Romania in London

Foreword from organisers

Riyad Karim, Assistant Director for Community Engagement and Health Equity, NHS England - London Region

"The Romanian Health Roundtable emerged from a shared recognition that improving health outcomes for Romanian and Romanian-heritage communities requires trust-based partnership, not isolated action. From the outset, the intention was to bring together NHS, public-health, academic, diplomatic, and community leaders to create a space for informed dialogue, mutual learning, and collective problem-solving.

I was delighted to co-convene this Roundtable with Adina Maglan, Amalia Manole, Lorraine Chang-Edwards, and Galina Nguekam, whose leadership and commitment shaped both the depth and credibility of the discussions. Collectively we wanted the event to focus on understanding lived experience, barriers to navigating the NHS, vaccine attitudes, and the wider structural factors influencing trust and engagement.

Central to this work is the principle that health equity is built through trusted leaders, trusted places, and trusted voices, for respective communities, I call this the 3Ts, working in partnership with NHS and public-health systems across place, system, and region. The Roundtable reflects this approach in practice and marks an important step towards sustainable, community-centred action.

The rich conversations that took place at the UK's first Romanian Health Roundtable were timely and necessary. With the momentum now established, we look forward to translating insight into action and strengthening collaboration to improve health and wellbeing for Romanian communities across the UK."

Lorraine Chang-Edwards, Involvement Manger - NHS North-West London Integrated Care Board

"As the North-West London Involvement Lead, we began a series of conversations in late 2024, around the idea of convening a summit to explore the barriers and inequalities affecting NHS health outcomes in the Romanian community. What started as an initial discussion with Amalia Manole, quickly evolved into a shared ambition to create a space for open dialogue, collaboration and practical insights.

These conversations ultimately resulted in an inspiring and impactful co-produced Health Roundtable event, bringing together diverse voices and perspectives committed to advancing health equity. I was honoured to co-produce this event with Amalia Manole, Riyad Karim, Adina Maglan and Galina Nguekam. Thank you to all our attendees and presenters for your time, insights and valuable contributions. The discussions captured in this report reflect both the depth of expertise in the room and a collective determination to drive meaningful change."

Galina Nguekam, Public Health Advanced Practitioner, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

"As a Public Health Advanced Practitioner and Co-chair of the Eastern European Vaccination and Screening Group (VSG), I have helped scale the Barking & Dagenham Childhood Vaccination Project across London. Convened by NHS England, the VSG engages trusted leaders, places, and voices to reach underserved communities. Our work has strengthened MMR and winter vaccination campaigns, built trust through collaboration with the voluntary sector, local authorities, NHS, UKHSA, Romanian-speaking professionals, and improved health outcomes for Romanians in London. I was honoured to co-produce this event, bringing together academia, public health, NHS colleagues, and community leaders to develop sustainable solutions that reduce health inequalities. We cannot create meaningful impact by working in isolation on the same issue. True progress comes through collaboration, system leadership, and sustainable action — these are the foundations for building trust and driving positive change in health-seeking behaviour."

Amalia Manole, Viceconsul of the Consulate General of Romania in London

"This report provides an overview of an event hosted by the General Consulate of Romania in London focused on access to primary healthcare for Romanian citizens residing in the UK. The event brought together healthcare professionals, community organisations, and members of the Romanian diaspora to address key challenges, share information, and explore practical

solutions related to accessing general practitioner (GP) services and other forms of primary care, like vaccinations and misconceptions regarding vaccination programs.

As one of the largest EU migrant communities in the UK, Romanian citizens often face specific barriers when navigating the UK healthcare system, including language difficulties, lack of information about eligibility and registration procedures, and uncertainty following recent changes in migration and healthcare policies. The event aimed to increase awareness of patients' rights, clarify pathways to primary healthcare services, and strengthen collaboration between authorities and local health stakeholders.

The purpose of this report is to document the key discussions, presentations, and outcomes of the event, as well as to highlight recommendations for improving access to primary healthcare for Romanian nationals living in the UK."

Adina Maglan, PhD Researcher, Bournemouth University

"As a Romanian migrant to the UK and a PhD Researcher studying the representation and visibility of Eastern Europeans in UK public policy, I was honoured to be invited by Riyad Karim to join him and his colleagues to co-organise and deliver this important event. In my work, I have too often come across people struggling to access healthcare due to barriers such as mistrust, lack of information, lack of language skills, cultural differences, or socio-economic challenges. This led me to suggest a multi-disciplinary approach, unpacking the various factors at play in building strong engagement with our communities. I am grateful to all partners and attendees for their insights, and I look forward to the event recommendations being actioned."

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1. Introduction

The first Romanian Health Roundtable Event took place on 24 November 2025 at the Romanian Consulate General in London. This was a multidisciplinary event consisting of two parts: presentations from experts (followed by a Q&A) and a workshop for reflections on potential solutions addressing health inequalities impacting Romanian nationals in the UK.

Aiming to bridge grassroots community initiatives, policy making and practice, this strategic event brought together over 70 public health practitioners, community leaders, policy makers, and researchers helping them to connect and explore three central themes, specific to the Romanian community: navigating the NHS, health inequalities, and attitudes towards vaccination. The shared aim was to highlight and progress existing work, generate insights, and co-design practical solutions for a common approach in tackling specific inequalities that this event aimed to address.

At the heart of this work is a single, unifying goal: building trust.

2. Background

Romanian communities now represent one of the largest migrant populations in the United Kingdom¹. However, they remain significantly under-represented in national health datasets, policy frameworks, and targeted public health interventions. Additionally, emerging research highlights specific barriers to healthcare access and important socio-economic challenges that shape health outcomes.

The existing corpus of research shows that Romanian communities are facing specific challenges in relation to health outcomes and access to healthcare, despite overall data showing that migrants are generally healthier than UK born citizens². Romanian communities have particularly low vaccination uptakes³ and have some of the lowest rates in accessing screening services such as those for cancer or other health related checkups.

The World Health Organisation reports a concerning decline of child immunisations uptake in Romania in the last years, with a significant decline of MMR vaccinations. This data shows that only 62% of Romanian children have received the second dose of MMR vaccine in 2024, significantly below the recommended level of 95%⁴. This decline in vaccination is likely also observable among the numerous Romanian diaspora communities, highlighting it as a transnational problem.

Measles outbreaks in 2017 and 2018 have been repeatedly linked to case importations in the UK from Romania, with subsequent spreading within the Romanian communities⁵ living in the UK. Furthermore, from those communities, infections have transmitted to other migrant communities which originate from Eastern Europe.

Other countries also conducted research on vaccination uptake among migrant populations which confirmed the low vaccination uptake of migrants from Romania, with a COVID-19 vaccination study in Norway showing that the vaccination coverage for Romanian migrants was at 45%, the lowest rate recorded amongst all migrant communities in the country⁶. This demonstrates the need for a coordinated approach to tackling the barriers experienced by the Romanian communities in accessing healthcare and for policy makers for combating misinformation and building trust.

At the same time, the data collected at a regional level by SYB Cancer Alliance showed that particular groups such as people with a Romanian background have significantly lower attendance rates for cancer screening⁷.

¹Waddington, Beth. "Language, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics," November 29, 2022. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/language/bulletins/languageenglandandwales/census2021>.

² <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/the-health-of-migrants-in-the-uk/?utm>

³ Bell, S., Saliba, V., Ramsay, M. et al, "What have we learnt from measles outbreaks in 3 English cities? A qualitative exploration of factors influencing vaccination uptake in Romanian and Roma Romanian communities", *BMC Public Health* **20**, 381 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-8454-x>

⁴ World Health Organization, *Immunization Coverage: Romania* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2024).

⁵ Public Health England, *Measles Outbreaks in England Linked to Importations from Romania, 2017–2018* (London: Public Health England, 2019).

⁶ Kraft, Kristian Bandlien, Anna Aasen Godøy, Kristin Hestmann Vinjerui, Prabhjot Kour, Marte Karoline Råberg Kjøllesdal, and Thor Indseth. "COVID-19 vaccination coverage by immigrant background." *Tidsskrift for Den norske legeforening* (2022).

⁷South-East London Cancer Alliance, *Cancer Screening Uptake by Ethnic Group: Regional Data Analysis* (London: South East London Cancer Alliance, 2022)

It is estimated that there are significant research gaps, as vaccination coverage reports in London showed that some ethnicities (e.g. Romanians) are not captured, even though the same report captured backgrounds such as “White Polish” as a separate ethnic group⁸.

Given the size of the Romanian community (with estimates placing the number of Romanian ethnics at more than one million – one of the largest in the UK) and the health challenges they experience, a number of programmes have been developed to address health inequalities and facilitate access to healthcare. These include translated literature and information leaflets⁹, community outreach programmes¹⁰, and, more recently, the London Romanian Community Vaccination and Screening Group (VSG) initiated by NHS England - London Region.

This context informed the decision for organising this roundtable event and co-designing interventions with the aim to address key barriers faced by Romanian migrants in relation to healthcare in the UK.

3. Event overview

Starting from two converging initiatives launched mid-2025 by Riyad Karim (Assistant Director for Community Engagement and Health Equity, NHS England - London Region) and Lorraine Chang-Edwards (Involvement Manager – Brent, NHS North-West London ICB) alongside Galina Nguekam (Public Health Advanced Practitioner, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham) and later co-opting Adina Maglan (PhD Researcher from Bournemouth University), the event took shape following 10 weeks of planning. Amalia Manole (Viceconsul of the Consulate General of Romania in London) also joined the planning team and contributed to multiple areas of planning and delivery. The multi-disciplinary team brought together diverse perspectives and resources that led to the successful delivery of the event.

The roundtable event was opened by the General Consul of Romania in London, Mr. Robert Marin, followed by speeches from Ethnanda Manley-Browne (Senior Involvement Manager (Outer Boroughs) NHS North West London ICB), and Riyad Karim (Assistant Director for Community Engagement and Health Equity, NHS England - London Region) on behalf of Jacqueline Walker (Operational Director, Covid-19 and Influenza Programmes, NHS England - London Region).

“The Consulate General of Romania in London is honoured to have contributed to the planning of the first Romanian Health Roundtable Event. The event, hosted by our newly launched Hub, is aligned with the consular strategic priorities on partnerships and institutional collaboration. We will continue to support initiatives that benefit the Romanian communities in the UK and will advocate for inclusive and accessible services for all.”

Mr. Robert Marin, Consul General of Romania in London

Ethnanda Manley-Browne reflected on the importance of partnership working and building trust with communities, while also ensuring high standards of practice are maintained across the board.

Riyad Karim introduced his innovative 3Ts Model of Community Engagement he coined:

Trusted Leaders – mobilising respected community and faith figures to champion vaccination and health.

Trusted Voices – ensuring culturally resonant, community-informed communication.

Trusted Places – delivering outreach in familiar, safe, and trusted community settings.

⁸ Wagner, Karen S., Johan CJ Van Wijgerden, Nick Andrews, Khushbu Goulden, and Joanne M. White. "Childhood vaccination coverage by ethnicity within London between 2006/2007 and 2010/2011." *Archives of disease in childhood* 99, no. 4 (2014): 348-353.

⁹<https://find-public-health-resources.service.gov.uk/A%20guide%20to%20immunisations%20at%20one%20year%20of%20age%3A%20Romanian/2024QG1ROM>

¹⁰<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/B1779-Actionable-Insights-Tackling-inequalities-in-healthcare-access-experience-and-outcomes-guidance-July-202.pdf>

This is an award-winning¹¹, nationally recognised¹² approach that can transform how public health teams and the NHS work in partnership with underserved communities¹³. It improves vaccination uptake and access to screening, addresses misinformation, and restores confidence in the NHS. Moreover, 3Ts is all about building trust¹⁴.

The half-day event consisted of two key parts:

- a. Presentations from experts, followed by a Q&A session, and
- b. A practical workshop for co-designing interventions that can help progress the aims of the event

3.a. Presentations & Q&A

The four presentations part of the event programme provided a multi-disciplinary perspective on key challenges faced by the Romanian communities in the UK and more widely.

Adina Maglan's presentation set the context by discussing the relevance of accurate data in public policymaking and highlighted the issues of the ethnic categories utilised across various public sector organisations, the way these are presented, how they lead to instances of exclusion or reduced visibility of the communities, and create a context for exacerbating the issues at the community and practice levels. She stressed the ambiguity of data sources (e.g. ONS census data versus¹⁵ the EU Settlement Scheme nationality data¹⁶) and explained how ethnicities such as White Other or Eastern European can obscure important information that impacts Romanians in the UK. This is also corroborated by medical studies, which reference the inability to collect accurate data to inform vaccination campaigns¹⁷.

The second presentation from Dr. Stefan Dascalu (Postdoctoral Researcher in Immunology (Associate) and Public Health Expert, Oxford University) discussed vaccine hesitancy in Romanian populations living in the UK and presented a complex analysis of determinants for health outcomes while also providing a bespoke framework for understanding vaccine hesitancy. Key aspects involved correlations of diaspora health behaviours with country-specific tendencies, and stressing the need for community-specific studies aimed at improving understanding of health behaviours, especially on vaccination as well as sustainable childhood vaccination awareness campaigns

Thirdly, Valentina Kalanyos & Stefania-Ramona Capraru (Public Health Researchers, Local Voice) presented research findings from a local project in East London exploring the factors that influence Romanians' health choices in the UK. Their research engaged 236 Romanian nationals and discussed the following: the use of NHS and attitudes towards NHS services, vaccinations (including childhood immunisations and COVID), and smoking cessation. Key findings included a profound lack of trust of Romanians in public services (those provided by "the state") and the need for a respectful, culturally meaningful approach to engagement that also respects the individual autonomy of people (as opposed to messages that may be interpreted as coercion).

Lastly, Dr. Floriana Ellis (GP with an interest in Paediatrics, NHS) delivered a presentation on how migrants can navigate the NHS services and how they can identify trustworthy sources of information, with a special warning on how the use of AI can deepen inequalities by providing inaccurate information to those seeking medical advice via AI tools, rather than discussing with a healthcare professional or accessing reliable sources of information. She highlighted her involvement as a trusted community leader in COVID and childhood vaccinations campaigns.

Presentations were followed by a Q&A session chaired by Riyad Karim. Discussions evolved around navigating cultural differences, providing services with compassion and an understanding of different opinions while also building trust. Additionally, discussions focused on the impact of other factors on trust (such as political discourse, the media, and the

¹¹ NHS North central London, Integrated Care Board, Newsletter, accessed December 29, 2025, SSL CMA Advantage, <https://ssl.cmadvantage.co.uk/4C22A440-CMP219CON262-RCP217060121-4-TRK3647ENT219-1-Z-Z-0-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z>

¹² South Asian Heritage Trust, "Our Team," *South Asian Heritage Trust*, accessed January 5, 2026, <https://southasianheritage.org.uk/our-team/>

¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKRzv8yAy84>

¹⁴ <https://vimeo.com/1064712732?share=copy>

¹⁵ Office for National Statistics, *Census 2021: Ethnic Group, National Identity and Religion* (London: Office for National Statistics, 2022)

¹⁶ UK Home Office, *EU Settlement Scheme Statistics* (London: Home Office, 2022).

¹⁷ Wagner, Karen S., Johan CJ Van Wijgerden, Nick Andrews, Khushbu Goulden, and Joanne M. White. "Childhood vaccination coverage by ethnicity within London between 2006/2007 and 2010/2011." *Archives of disease in childhood* 99, no. 4 (2014): 348-353.

professionalism of the community sector), and how to progress the outcomes of the roundtable event in order to achieve long-term impact.

3.b. Practical workshop

Participants were invited to reflect on two key questions:

1. What support, training, and tools would help healthcare staff/community organisations to have more effective conversations about health in the Romanian community?
2. How can we make communications/engagement culturally meaningful for the Romanian community?

Key themes and suggested approaches included:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Social media: | <p>Developing and providing training on responsible usage, identifying misinformation/disinformation</p> <p>Using social media inclusively (video resources are more effective engagement tools and can be understood by those who may be digitally excluded or have literacy issues)</p> <p>Engaging health professionals (preferably Romanian speaking) as trusted voices</p> <p>Disseminating information on WhatsApp groups, in addition to the other, more popular platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram</p> <p>Using existing translated resources already produced by the NHS & public health bodies</p> <p>Working in partnership and collaborating with NHS/public health communications teams for specialist input</p> |
| Community networks: | <p>Considering locations where the community already meets (schools, churches, social media groups)</p> <p>Being aware of sensitivities around faith and the political environment</p> <p>Understanding cultural norms</p> <p>Empowering community organisations to partner with public health practitioners and co-designing interventions</p> <p>Setting up infrastructures/networks that meet regularly and continue the key work areas set by the roundtable event</p> <p>Creating outreach events in schools to engage with parents and address hesitancy, misinformation, and the lack of trust in vaccinations</p> |
| Data and evidence for policy making: | <p>There was a consensus on the lack of visibility of Romanians in data sets and the ambiguity of the ethnic categorisations which prevents practitioners from correctly identifying health trends, key challenges, and demographic make-up of groups that are at high risk</p> <p>Working with researchers/academia media trusts, and other agencies to get more input on how to better advocate for the inclusion of Romanians in the process of data collection</p> <p>Navigating community tensions by ensuring recognition for both Romanian and Roma Romanian communities, with their specific needs and challenges</p> <p>Utilising the agency that communities hold (such as existing networks) to better understand the challenges ambiguous data collection bring</p> |
| Capacity building: | <p>Developing health advocacy trainings for community leaders</p> <p>Increasing the funding for the Voluntary and Community Sector organisations in order to create capacity for a more coordinated approach</p> <p>Setting up a Romanian Health Equity Forum</p> <p>Producing a Health Strategy for engaging Romanians in London/the UK</p> |

The event was closed by Myriam Watson (Team Leader, EU Citizens, EU Delegation to the UK) who reflected on the importance of Romanian nationals in understanding their post-Brexit rights as EU citizens living in the UK. She also spoke of the support that the EU Delegation offers such as free immigration advice sessions aimed at helping EU citizens to secure their status and enjoy their rights.

4. Outcomes

70 people attended the event, representing the voluntary sector, local government, academia, the Romanian consulate, healthcare professionals, community researchers, multiple NHS departments (local, national, and regional). Of these, 8 attended online.

Feedback for the event was submitted via Mentimeter and it was structured around 5 questions: which areas/services are most important for Romanians currently living in the UK?; which part of the event did attendees find most valuable?; how useful was the information shared?; how likely are attendees to join a similar event in the future?; and what could be improved for future events?

Responses demonstrate a strong interest in discussing other, connected themes that are relevant to the Romanian community and also for future events to be delivered on health topics or other priority themes.

Which areas are currently most important for Romanians living in the UK?

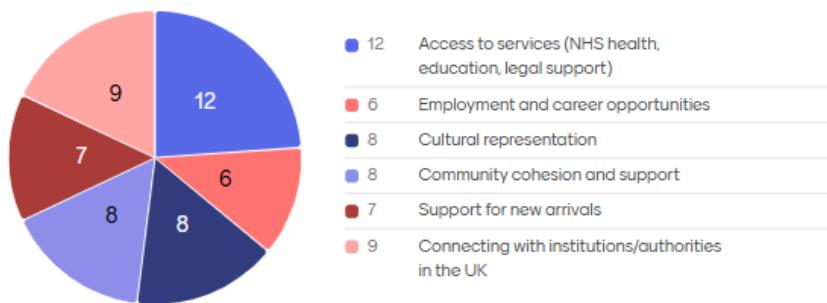


Figure 1: Mentimeter feedback form responses on question 1.

Attendees made suggestions on better time management, as the event ran over time due to the strong interest in the Q&A session which exceeded allocated times by 35 minutes.

5. Recommendations and next steps

Based on the feedback received and the recommendations captured during the workshop session, the following key recommendations are being put forward:

1. A yearly Health Equity event for the Romanian community is needed to address ongoing challenges and provide longer term solutions – to be taken forward by the event organisers.
2. Setting up a Romanian Health Equity Forum/Romanian Health Partnership to include trusted voices such as Romanian Public Health Professionals in the UK, doctors and other healthcare workers, and other relevant stakeholders and relevant expertise by also ensuring representation for an equitable governance (community-led and culturally informed strategic partnership) – to be taken forward by the event organisers.
3. Producing a multi-year Health Strategy which targets Romanian nationals – to be taken forward by the event organisers (with a view for this to be produced by Romanian Health Equity Forum once this is setup).
4. Developing health advocacy trainings for community leaders - to be taken forward by the event organisers (with a view for this to be produced by Romanian Health Equity Forum/Romanian Health Partnership once this is founded).
5. Involving trusted voices, represented by Romanian healthcare professionals, which can be featured in the resources produced for community engagement – for all stakeholders.
6. Creating toolkits such as a Romanian community cultural resource to help practitioners better understand effective, meaningful, and respectful ways of connecting with the Romanian communities – Adina Maglan is connected to expert working on producing a cultural resource informed by Dr. Alina Dolea's written evidence submission to the UK Parliament^{18 19} and the Government's response and will provide an update on this by March 2026.

¹⁸ Dolea, Alina, written evidence submitted to the UK Parliament on Eastern European community engagement, cited in a parliamentary report and government response (London: UK Parliament, 2025) <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/138050/pdf/>

¹⁹ ibid

6. Conclusion

The multi-disciplinary partnership approach to organising this event has proved to be effective and impactful. It connected diverse perspectives and networks in an unprecedented way. The key recommendations emerging from this event are strategic. They elevate existing grassroots work, serving as a foundation for the development of new and innovative infrastructures which, in turn, can continue to bridge communities and practitioners to enable more equitable access to healthcare for Romanians living in the UK. By centring lived experience alongside professional expertise, future initiatives can remain responsive, inclusive and grounded in the needs of Romanian communities.

While the roundtable event was a success, organisers reflect on the need for this work strand to continue and will responsibly action some of the key recommendations in this report to produce long-lasting impact. In doing so, this work aims to leave a lasting legacy that improves trust, access and health outcomes for Romanian communities across the UK.

For any questions about this report, please contact Adina Maglan, PhD Researcher at Bournemouth University at amaglan@bournemouth.ac.uk.

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