Charity registration number 1193506 (England and Wales)

UNION ROMANI VOICE

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

For the Year Ended

5 April 2026

Legal and administrative information

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Senior management	Simona Lazar - Chief Executive Officer
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Charity number	1193506
Legal form	Charitable Incorporated Organization (CIO)
Governing document	Foundation CIO Constitution dated 5 January 2021 Trustee update recorded 19 June 2026
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Chief Executive Statement

Union Romani Voice has continued to turn community trust into practical access to rights, services and opportunities. Throughout the reporting period, our priority has remained clear: to ensure that Roma people and others facing barriers can access support that is trusted, culturally informed, practical and responsive to their circumstances.

Our latest Reaching Communities monitoring records **950 people receiving direct support between September 2025 and August 2026**: **700 in Ipswich and Suffolk, and 250 in Suffolk and beyond**. Our team also handled **more than 3,500 calls, consultations and enquiries** by telephone, online, email and social media.

Much of our work supports **Roma people from Romania who are European citizens living in the UK**. We also support **Romanian migrants who are not Roma**, alongside other people who need our help. Our ability to communicate in **Romanian, Romanes and English** makes support more accessible. Behind every number is a person or family seeking help to understand their rights, overcome barriers or find a way forward.

During the reporting period, we provided advice, advocacy and practical support across safeguarding, education, health, welfare, public services, digital inclusion, community safety, immigration-related matters and employment. We helped people understand official correspondence, gather evidence, communicate with schools and health services, reach appropriate specialist support and report concerns safely.

A significant strength of Union Romani Voice is the trust built within communities over many years. People approach us because they can speak in a language they understand and be listened to without judgement. Others are referred by statutory agencies, schools, professionals and partner organisations. This trust enables us to act as a bridge between communities and institutions, and to identify barriers that might otherwise remain unseen.

Our work extends beyond individual casework. We have strengthened relationships with statutory bodies, legal and community organisations and other partners to improve referral pathways and help wider services understand the experiences of Roma people and Romanian migrants. Through these relationships, we seek both to address immediate problems and to improve accessibility, inclusion and equality over time.

My traineeship with the **Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe** strengthened URV's understanding of European human rights mechanisms and the connection between frontline experience and policy development. During that placement, I contributed Roma lived experience and frontline insight to consultations connected with the development of the **Council of Europe Strategy for Roma and Traveller Inclusion 2026–2030**. This experience continues to inform our advocacy in the United Kingdom, Romania and wider Europe.

Young people remain central to our work. Through weekly engagement, educational activities, volunteering, leadership development and our annual Aspirations Conference, we have created opportunities for young Roma people to build confidence, raise their aspirations and make their voices heard. We want young people to be recognised as contributors and leaders in shaping their futures.

Throughout the year, we have listened carefully to the people we support. What they share through casework, outreach and community engagement helps us identify recurring barriers and emerging needs. This evidence strengthens our conversations with public authorities, funders and partners.

I am grateful to our staff, trustees, volunteers, funders and partners, and above all to the people who place their trust in Union Romani Voice. As we look ahead, we will focus on sustainable, high-quality frontline services, effective partnerships and growth rooted in community need.

Union Romani Voice will continue to combine **practical frontline support with evidence-led advocacy**, working towards a future in which services are more accessible, rights are better understood, discrimination and exclusion are challenged, and the communities we serve have a stronger voice in decisions that affect their lives.

Simona Lazar
Founder and Chief Executive Officer

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 5 APRIL 2026

The trustees present their annual report, and the accompanying receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 5 April 2026. The report explains how Union Romani Voice pursued its charitable purposes for the public benefit, the outcomes achieved, its governance arrangements and the principal matters considered by the trustees. The accounts remain subject to final reconciliation, trustee approval and independent examination.

1 Objectives and activities

The Constitution restricts Union Romani Voice's charitable objects to the following purposes for public benefit:

- Promoting equality and diversity, particularly eliminating racial discrimination, by educating and raising awareness among the public in the United Kingdom about the Roma community through arts, culture and heritage, to improve community relations and understanding, especially within the public sector.
- Relieving need among members of the Roma community who live, or intend to live, in the United Kingdom and who experience disadvantage because of youth, age, ill health, disability, financial hardship or other circumstances. The Constitution provides free and confidential advice, assistance and representation on access to public services; opportunities for the community to engage with service providers; and programmers that improve living conditions through education, health, drug addiction support, employment and equal opportunities.
- Advancing education through the management and maintenance of a heritage Centre and exhibition gallery promoting Roma arts, culture and heritage.

During the reporting period, the charity pursued these objects through free advice and advocacy, practical casework, safeguarding, education and family support, engagement with public services, digital inclusion, health and wellbeing activity, youth participation, cultural work and partnerships that made specialist services more accessible.

Public benefit

In shaping our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the trustees have considered their duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The trustees consider that the activities described in this report demonstrate clearly how Union Romani Voice provides benefit to individuals, families and wider society.

URV's services are free and particularly accessible to people affected by limited English, low literacy, digital exclusion, poverty, discrimination, social isolation, insecure housing or difficulty navigating public and statutory systems.

2 Achievements and performance

Community context in the United Kingdom, Romania and Europe

Roma, Gypsy and Travellers communities are diverse and should not be treated as a single homogeneous group. They nevertheless experience overlapping barriers in education, health, housing, employment, access to justice and participation. Census categories and levels of ethnic self- identification also differ between countries, so population figures should be read as minimum recorded counts rather than a complete measure of need.

Geography	Recorded population evidence	What the figures mean
England and Wales	103,020 people identified as Roma and 71,440 as Gypsy or Irish Travellers in	The combined recorded total is 174,460, but the categories are

Geography	Recorded population evidence	What the figures mean
	Census 2021.	separate and do not provide a complete comparable UK total. [1][2]
United Kingdom	Government summaries cite wider estimates ranging from 150,000 to 300,000 and up to 500,000.	The range reflects inconsistent definitions and under-recording. [3]
Romania	569,477 people identified as Roma in the 2021 census.	Independent and European estimates are higher because many people do not disclose ethnicity. [4]
Europe	An estimated 10 to 12 million Roma live across Europe, including about 6 million in the European Union.	Roma are Europe's largest ethnic minority and inclusion requires action across borders. [5]

Persistent inequalities

- Education data for autumn 2025 to 2026 show an overall absence rate of 16.58% for Gypsy and Roma pupils in England, among the highest of all ethnic groups. In spring 2024 to 2025, Gypsy and Roma pupils also had the highest suspension rate at 13.86 and the second highest permanent exclusion rate at 0.12. [6]
- Census 2021 found that 30.9% of adults identifying as Roma and 56.8% of adults identifying as Gypsy or Irish Travellers had no qualifications, compared with 18.2% across England and Wales. [1][2]
- People identifying as Gypsy or Irish Travellers were more than twice as likely to report bad or very bad health as the England and Wales population, 12.5% compared with 5.2%. [2]
- The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights reported that 42% of young Roma in Romania were not in employment, education or training in its 2024 survey, while 23% reported discrimination when looking for housing. [7]

These figures reinforce the need for trusted Roma-led organisations that can provide direct support, strengthen youth opportunity and bring frontline evidence into the design of public services.

3 Significant activities

This year has been one of sustained community demands, growing trust and stronger institutional engagement. Union Romani Voice continued to provide a consistent Roma-led service from Ipswich while developing projects and partnerships that address the structural barriers experienced by many Roma and Romanian families.

Verified reach and outcomes

Measure	Verified evidence
People supported	950 people in September 2025 to August 2026 Reaching Communities monitoring period
Ipswich reach	700 people from Ipswich, Suffolk
Reach outside Ipswich	250 people from other UK locations, including Leeds, Luton, London, Birmingham, Manchester, and Great Yarmouth
Annual delivery target	500 people
Residency and EUSS	250 people received residency-related support, including EUSS information and practical assistance

Measure	Verified evidence
Council Tax and debt	170 people
Welfare benefits	65 people
Police and community safety	77 people received advice on police matters, safety, crime prevention and anti-social behavior
Health	52 people
Employment	45 people
Education	34 people
Child protection	17 people
ESOL	50 students attended ESOL classes and are included in the total of 950 people
Counting method	*Service areas are not mutually exclusive: one person may receive support in more than one area, so these figures should not be added together to calculate the total reach.*
Delivery capacity	Five staff and approximately fifteen volunteers during the reporting period
Public trust	Facebook displayed a 5.0 rating and 100% recommendation based on 78 reviews as of 11 September 2026 [8]

Roma Support free services

Monday to Friday drop in service

Union Romani Voice provides free support from Monday to Friday through an accessible drop-in service, appointments and follow-up contact. People can approach us face to face, by telephone, by message or email, and through community outreach and partner referrals. Support is available in Romanian, Romanes and English. This combination of language, cultural understanding and practical availability allows people to ask for help before a difficulty becomes a crisis.

People rarely arrive with one isolated issue. A letter they do not understand may affect housing, benefits, employment, school attendance, health care or immigration status at the same time. Our staff and volunteers listen first, identify the immediate risk, agree the person's priorities and explain the available options. With consent, we help to organise documents, complete appropriate forms, contact services, prepare for appointments and follow up. Where another organization has legal or statutory responsibility, we make a supported referral and remain a trusted point of contact while the person engages with that service.

Support available

Area of need	Practical support provided
Information and casework	Explaining official correspondence, clarifying next steps, helping people organise evidence and supporting communication with agencies.
Immigration and EUSS	Regulated immigration and EU Settlement Scheme information and advice within URV's authorised scope, including practical help with evidence and online processes.
Housing and financial hardship	Early identification of urgent needs, help to understand processes and supported referrals to the council responsible, welfare or specialist service.
Health and wellbeing	Help to register, book or understand appointments, communicate with services and access safe wellbeing and physical activity opportunities.
Education and family support	Support with school communication, attendance, bullying, safeguarding concerns, family understanding and young people's aspirations.
Digital access	Guided practice with email, online accounts, applications, appointments, document uploads, job search and safer use of the internet.
Safety and legal access	Listening to concerns, identifying when specialist or statutory help is required, preparing people for referral and maintaining language and cultural support.

URV does not replace the decision-making role of public bodies or the specialist duties of regulated partners. Our role is to help people understand the process, participate in it and reach the right service with the information and confidence they need.

Why people come to Union Romani Voice first

Many people come to URV first even when another institution will ultimately deal with their case. They know that our organisation is Roma led and that staff and volunteers understand the language, culture, country of origin and experience that shape the way a problem is presented. This shared understanding reduces fear and avoids the need for people to repeatedly explain their identity or experiences before they can describe the practical issue.

Trust has also grown through consistency. People have seen that we work with integrity, protect confidentiality, keep appropriate boundaries and care about what happens after a referral. Every person who enters the organisation is welcomed and treated with dignity. We listen without judgement, explain choices in clear language and work with the person to resolve the issue or reach the service that can do so. People often return to URV because they know we will tell them honestly what we can do, what another organisation must do and what evidence or action is needed next.

How support leads to practical change

Starting situation	URV response	Change sought or observed
An official letter or process is not understood	Explain the content, identify deadlines and help organise documents	The person understands the decision and can take the next step on time
A person cannot use an online service independently	Demonstrate the task and support repeated practice	Greater confidence in applications, appointments and accounts
A matter needs specialist legal or statutory action	Prepare a supported referral and provide language and cultural help	Earlier engagement with the correct service and better prepared appointments
A young person feels unheard or uncertain about education	Provide a safe group, trusted adults and opportunities to contribute	Stronger confidence, participation and future planning
A woman is isolated or inactive	Offer a regular women centred physical activity session	Improved routine, social connection and self reported wellbeing

A trusted gateway to services

This model turns community trust into practical access to rights. It helps institutions reach people who may otherwise disengage because of language barriers, low literacy, digital exclusion, previous discrimination or uncertainty about how services work. It also helps URV identify recurring barriers and raise them with partners through advocacy, training, consultations and public events.

Our Reaching Communities Year 2 monitoring recorded 950 people supported against an annual target of 500. Of these, 700 were from Ipswich, Suffolk, and 250 were from other UK locations, including Leeds, Luton, London, Birmingham, Manchester, Clacton-on-Sea and Great Yarmouth. The recorded service areas included residency and EU Settlement Scheme support, Council Tax and debt, welfare benefits, community safety, health, employment, education, child protection and ESOL. Because one person may receive help in more than one area, the service area figures are not mutually exclusive and should not be added together to calculate the 950 people. The 50 ESOL students are already included in the total. The 950-person figure relates to the September 2025 to August 2026 monitoring period and is used here as the strongest verified service-volume evidence available rather than as a figure restricted solely to the financial year.

Behind these figures are people who were able to understand official correspondence, access school or health services, make progress with an immigration matter, raise a housing or community-safety concern, reach specialist legal help or become more confident using digital systems. Our wider impact lies in helping people become better able to engage with institutions independently and in helping those institutions understand the barriers experienced by Roma communities.

Changes experienced by individuals and families

URV's contribution is visible in the practical changes achieved with individuals and families. People have been able to understand letters and decisions, organise evidence, attend appointments, communicate with schools and health services, progress immigration and settlement matters, reach regulated legal advice, report crime or safeguarding concerns and use digital systems with greater confidence.

The longer-term effect is increased independence. A person who learns how to access an online account, communicate with an institution or recognise when specialist advice is required is better equipped to manage the next issue. Supported referrals also reduce the risk that someone disengages between community support and a statutory or specialist service.

Community feedback consistently describes URV as trusted, compassionate and effective. Reviews and messages particularly value the team's persistence, clear communication and willingness to remain alongside a family when a process is difficult. At the date this report was prepared, URV's Facebook page displayed a 5.0 rating and 100% recommendation based on 78 reviews. [8] Feedback is reported thematically and anonymously to protect confidentiality.

Supporting individuals and families

At the heart of URV's work is a practical advice and advocacy service delivered through face-to-face contact, telephone, messaging, email, outreach and partner referrals. Romanian, Romanes and English language capacity enables the charity to work with people who may otherwise struggle to explain complex situations or understand formal processes.

People rarely arrive with a single isolated problem. Housing insecurity can affect children's education; digital exclusion can block access to benefits, employment or immigration systems; domestic abuse can create urgent safeguarding and homelessness risks; and low literacy can make every official letter or online process difficult. Our response is therefore holistic while maintaining professional boundaries and specialist referrals.

During the year we supported people with welfare benefits and financial hardship, employment and workplace issues, housing and homelessness, school admissions and attendance, health access, safeguarding and domestic abuse, anti-social behavior, discrimination and hate-related concerns, documentation, banking and digital exclusion.

The practical nature of our support matters. We help people understand letters, organise evidence, prepare for appointments, communicate with agencies and identify the right next step. Where specialist assistance is needed, we use supported referrals rather than simply giving a telephone number and expecting a vulnerable person to navigate the system alone.

EU Settlement Scheme and access to rights

Residency and EU Settlement Scheme support remained one of our most significant areas of work. A total of 250 people received residency-related support, including EUSS information and practical assistance.

URV helped people understand Home Office correspondence, identify evidence, organise documentation, navigate digital processes and understand the next steps required. This was particularly important for people affected by low literacy, limited English, domestic abuse, bereavement, digital exclusion, poverty or unstable housing.

For many beneficiaries, the issue was not the absence of a legal route but practical inability to use it. A digital-only process can be inaccessible to someone who cannot read confidently, lacks a device or email account,

or does not understand what evidence is being requested. Trusted support can make the difference between disengagement and meaningful access to a process.

URV maintained clear boundaries around regulated legal advice. Where a matter required legal advice or representation outside our permitted scope, we referred to appropriately regulated specialists.

Access to justice

From summer 2025, our collaboration with Suffolk Law Centre strengthened access to specialist legal support from within a trusted community setting.

For people who are anxious about formal legal environments, have limited English or literacy, or have previously struggled to explain complex circumstances, the way in which legal help is offered can determine whether they ever reach it. URV's role was to bridge that gap through trusted engagement, language and cultural support, preparation of information and connection to specialist expertise.

The clinic demonstrates an important principle of our model: we do not seek to duplicate specialist services. We help make those services reachable and usable by people who might otherwise disengage. The charity received £12,500 from Suffolk Law Centre during the financial year in two payments of £6,250.

Children, education and family support

Education is central to long-term inclusion. During the year URV supported parents and children with school communication, admissions, attendance, inclusion, bullying, aspiration and family circumstances affecting education.

Many parents are deeply committed to their children's education but may not understand written communications, school systems or expectations. By explaining processes and supporting communication, URV helps reduce misunderstanding between families and schools and keeps children's education at the centre of the conversation.

Our work recognises that education is often affected by wider pressures such as housing instability, poverty, health, domestic abuse, transport and language. Education advocacy therefore frequently connects with safeguarding and family support.

Safeguarding and the Roma Child Protection Conference

Safeguarding remained embedded in everyday practice. Where concerns about children or adults at risk were identified, URV used appropriate recording, referral and escalation pathways. Maria Dolea held the Designated Safeguarding Lead function during the reporting period.

In June 2025 URV convened a Roma Child Protection Conference. The conference created a dedicated space where community experience and professional safeguarding responsibilities could be considered together.

The purpose was to strengthen effective safeguarding through better communication, cultural understanding and trust. Families are more likely to engage when they understand what is happening, why professionals are involved and what is expected. Professionals also benefit from understanding the barriers, fears and experiences that can shape a family's response.

Youth voice, education and future generations

Youth Voice is not a one-off project within Union Romani Voice. Regular Saturday engagement gives Roma children and young people a consistent place for discussion, informal learning, volunteering, social connection and confidence-building.

Young people explored issues including racism, bullying, health, community safety, identity, education, future aspirations and positive participation. They were encouraged to contribute ideas rather than simply attending activities.

Young people also supported URV events by welcoming participants, volunteering, helping organise activities, interpreting between English and Romani and speaking about issues that matter to them. This

develops practical leadership skills while enabling adults and professionals to hear directly from young people.

Youth leadership pathway

URV Youth Voice is designed for young people aged 10 to 25 and builds on several years of work with children, families and schools. The pathway connects regular engagement with practical responsibility so that participation can progress into volunteering, representation and leadership.

- Weekly youth engagement and wellbeing sessions provide a trusted place to discuss education, bullying, racism, mental health, community safety, identity and future aspirations.
- Educational engagement and annual Aspirations Conferences connect young people with schools, universities, training providers, professionals and Roma role models.
- Youth camps, residential programmes, sport, outdoor learning, arts and cultural activities build confidence, teamwork, resilience and a stronger sense of belonging.
- Youth Ambassadors, the Youth Advisory Board and the developing Youth Delegation give young people practical roles in shaping activities, representing their peers and contributing to consultations and public events.
- A specific focus on Roma girls and young women supports continued education, confidence, independence, career exploration and community leadership.

Young people have progressed from attending activities to welcoming guests, supporting event delivery, interpreting between English and Romanes, speaking about their experiences and acting as positive role models. These observable changes in confidence, communication, teamwork, aspiration and participation are the outcomes URV intends to measure more systematically in future periods.

Second Aspirations Conference 26 November 2025

The second edition of URV's Aspiration Conference was a major youth-led milestone during the year. The conference promoted educational achievement, aspiration, equality, leadership and future opportunities.

Roma young people were given a visible platform to speak, present, contribute to delivery and demonstrate their potential in front of peers, professionals and community representatives. The event built on the first Aspiration Conference and strengthened a longer-term model of youth participation rather than a single annual celebration.

Digital inclusion and Roma Digital Skills

Digital exclusion has become a barrier to almost every major area of life: immigration, benefits, employment, school communication, health services, banking and access to information.

For people with limited literacy or little experience of online systems, this exclusion can create dependence on relatives or intermediaries and increase vulnerability to misinformation, exploitation and fraud.

The Roma Digital Skills programme responded through practical, accessible support. Community members were helped to use devices and online systems, communicate more safely, complete essential digital tasks and become more confident in accessing services independently.

The financial records identify £18,100 of restricted Suffolk Community Foundation funding for Roma Digital Skills.

Health, wellbeing and physical activity

URV supported community members to access GP practices and NHS services, understand health correspondence and appointments and engage with health and wellbeing information.

Language, literacy, digital exclusion and fear of formal systems can delay healthcare. Our role was often practical: helping a person understand what a letter meant, how to contact a service, what an appointment required or where a further referral was needed.

We also recognised the importance of prevention and social connection. Inclusive physical-activity opportunities created accessible routes into exercise, confidence and community participation and helped reduce isolation. The draft financial records identify £15,000 of restricted ESC Lottery Fund income for physical activities.

Safer communities

Community safety work was shaped by concerns raised directly by residents: anti-social behavior, intimidation, exploitation, crime, discrimination and uncertainty about how to report safely.

Some community members may be reluctant to approach the police or another authority because of language barriers, fear, previous experiences or lack of confidence in formal systems. URV helped residents understand reporting routes, organise information and communicate concerns through appropriate channels.

Safer Streets Stronger Community

On 28 June 2025 URV hosted 'From Dialogue to Action: Safer Streets, Stronger Community' at Maple Park, Ipswich. The event created an accessible local setting for dialogue involving Suffolk Police, community members, young people and families.

The event was part of a broader approach to community safety: not only responding after incidents but improving trust, encouraging lawful reporting, strengthening prevention and creating opportunities for residents and institutions to speak directly with one another.

URV also supported people who raised discrimination or hate-related concerns by helping them understand their options, record information and access appropriate reporting or referral routes.

Culture, identity and belonging

URV marked International Roma Day on 8 April 2025 as both a celebration of Roma identity and a public-awareness opportunity. The activity included engagement with BBC Radio Suffolk and participation by Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner Tim Passmore.

Cultural visibility forms part of our equality work. Discrimination is challenged not only through individual complaints but also when Roma people are visible as parents, workers, students, volunteers, leaders and contributors to local society.

Events and public engagement delivered

URV combined recurring services with public events that created direct contact between communities, professionals and decision makers. The principal activities delivered during the reporting period were:

Roma Digital Skills

More than 200 people received practical digital skills support during the project. Sessions responded to real tasks that participants needed to complete, rather than teaching technology in isolation. Staff and volunteers worked alongside people at their own pace and repeated steps where language, literacy, confidence or limited previous access to devices created barriers.

Digital task	What participants practised	Intended benefit
Email and online accounts	Creating accounts, remembering secure login details, reading messages and attaching documents	More independent communication with employers and services
Employment	Searching for vacancies, preparing information, completing applications and responding to employers	Improved ability to look for work and maintain contact during recruitment
Appointments and public services	Booking and checking appointments and navigating health, council, school and other online systems	Fewer missed steps and less dependence on another person
Evidence and documents	Photographing, scanning, saving and uploading appropriate documents	Stronger ability to complete time sensitive applications
Online safety	Recognising suspicious messages, protecting personal details and asking for help before sharing information	Lower risk of scams, exploitation and avoidable account problems

Changes reported through the project

- Participants became more confident navigating online information and completing routine tasks.
- People learned how to search for employment and respond to opportunities without relying entirely on family members or advisers.
- Participants were better able to book appointments, access accounts and provide documents when a service requested them.
- Digital sessions created another route into wider advice where an online task revealed an urgent housing, benefit, health, employment or immigration issue.

Digital inclusion remains closely connected to poverty relief and access to rights. Many essential systems now expect people to manage an email address, remember several accounts, upload evidence and respond within deadlines. The project helped participants build practical independence while keeping face-to-face support available for complex or high-risk situations.

Physical activity and wellbeing for women

Fifteen women took part each week in a Pilates class delivered in a safe and welcoming environment. The regular session gave participants a manageable way to be active, establish a routine and spend time with other women without fear of judgement. For women experiencing isolation, stress, caring responsibilities or low confidence, the social safety of the group was as important as the exercise itself.

Benefits described by participants

- Improved movement, strength and confidence in taking part in physical activity.
- A positive weekly routine and time focused on personal health.
- Reduced isolation through regular contact with other women in a trusted setting.
- Better mood and a greater sense of safety and belonging.
- A comfortable route to discuss other health or support needs with trusted staff.

These are participant reported changes rather than clinical outcomes. They nevertheless show why culturally safe, low barrier activity matters. Women who may not use a mainstream exercise setting were able to take part consistently and connect with wider information and support when needed.

Adolescent and youth support

URV maintained regular engagement with adolescents and young adults, including Saturday activities and youth voice opportunities. Sessions provided a safe place to discuss racism, bullying, identity, health, safety, education and future. Young people could speak in the language they found most comfortable and develop relationships with trusted adults who understood their family and cultural context.

Participation progressed from attending activities to taking responsibility. Young people helped at community events, welcomed guests, shared ideas, supported younger participants and contributed to discussions with education and public service partners. The Second Aspirations Conference on 26 November 2025 gave Roma pupils direct contact with education, training and career routes and helped make achievement and leadership visible within the community.

Changes seen in young people

- Greater confidence to speak, ask questions and share personal goals.
- Improved understanding of education, training and employment routes.
- More opportunities to take visible roles in events and community activity.
- Stronger connections to Roma identity alongside positive participation in school and wider society.

Immigration and legal advice

Regulated immigration and EUSS support

URV is registered with the Immigration Advice Authority and provides regulated immigration and EU Settlement Scheme advice within its authorised scope. A total of 250 people received residency-related support, including EUSS information and practical assistance, in the relevant Reaching Communities monitoring period. Support included explaining requirements, helping people identify and organise evidence, navigating online processes and clarifying when further regulated or specialist advice was required.

Suffolk Law Centre partnership

From summer 2025, the Friday legal access clinic with Suffolk Law Centre brought specialist advice into a setting already trusted by Roma and other recent migrant communities. URV helped people recognise that an issue might require legal advice, understand correspondence, prepare chronology and documents, and attend the referral with language and cultural support. Suffolk Law Centre remained responsible for specialist legal advice and legal case decisions within its remit.

This division of roles protects quality and helps people reach the correct expertise. URV does not duplicate a partner's regulated service. It makes access possible by reducing fear, explaining what to expect and staying involved where practical communication or cultural understanding could otherwise cause the referral to break down.

Practical value of the clinic

Barrier	Joint response	Practical difference
People do not know whether a problem is legal	URV listens, identifies the issue and arranges the appropriate route	Earlier access to advice and fewer unsuitable referrals
Letters and deadlines are unclear	URV explains the immediate steps and helps organise papers	People arrive better prepared and understand what is required
Language or previous experience creates fear	Advice is accessed in a familiar community setting with cultural support	Greater confidence to attend and remain engaged
A case involves several services	The legal partner provides specialist advice while URV supports practical coordination	Clearer responsibilities and more consistent follow up

Legal work also informs wider awareness activity. Recurring questions help URV and partners identify clearer information, preventative sessions or institutional change may reduce future harm.

Awareness campaigns and public events

URV used public events as practical awareness campaigns. Each activity combined positive representation of Roma identity with information, dialogue and routes into support. Community members could speak directly with schools, police, legal services and other partners, while institutions heard concerns in a setting where people felt able to participate.

Date or period	Activity	Purpose and contribution
8 April 2025	International Roma Day	Celebrated Roma identity and increased public awareness through community participation, media engagement and dialogue with public representatives.
June 2025	Roma Child Protection Conference	Brought community experience and professional safeguarding duties together to strengthen trust, communication and culturally informed practice.
28 June 2025	Safer Streets Stronger Community at Maple Park	Created direct dialogue between residents, young people, families and Suffolk Police on reporting, prevention and community safety.
From July 2025	Suffolk Law Centre legal access clinic	Connected recent migrants and Roma community members with specialist legal advice in a trusted community setting.
5 November 2025	International Romani Language Day	Promoted language rights, bilingual education, cultural identity and transmission of Romanes to younger generations.
26 November 2025	Second Aspirations Conference	Gave Roma pupils a platform to speak, meet education and career partners, and see routes into further study, training and leadership.
1 December 2025	Romanian National Day community event	Celebrated Romanian culture and contribution while strengthening belonging and positive relationships across communities.
Throughout the year	Weekly youth wellbeing, ESOL, digital inclusion, health and physical activity sessions	Provided regular accessible routes into learning, confidence, social connection and essential services.

4 Human rights and policy influence

The Council of Europe Strategy for Roma and Travellers Inclusion 2026 to 2030 was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 January 2026. It focuses on awareness and pride in Roma and Travellers identities; equal rights, dignity and gender equality; and active participation in public and political life. [5] These priorities closely match URV's model.

During her traineeship with the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe, Chief Executive Simona Lazăr contributed lived experience and community evidence to consultations related to the development of the Strategy. The placement strengthened URV's knowledge of European human rights standards, monitoring and institutional advocacy. It also connected local evidence from Ipswich and the United Kingdom with wider concerns affecting Roma communities in Romania and across Europe. [9]

Council of Europe priority	URV contribution	Evidence in practice
Knowledge, awareness and identity	Public education, culture, language and positive representation	International Roma Day, International Romani Language Day, media work and youth cultural activities
Equal rights, dignity and gender equality	Free advice, safeguarding, legal access and supported referrals	EUSS support, Suffolk Law Centre clinic, health access, family protection and work with Roma girls and women
Participation and democratic governance	Roma-led advocacy, consultation and youth leadership	Youth Advisory Board, ambassadors, public forums, institutional dialogue and contribution to European consultation

5 Organisational influence and service improvement

URV's impact does not stop with individual casework. Patterns identified through frontline work help us explain where systems that appear accessible on paper can remain difficult to use in practice.

Low literacy, language barriers, digital exclusion, fear of institutions, discrimination and previous negative experiences can prevent people from benefiting from services that formally exist for them. By bringing these recurring patterns to partners, URV contributes to service improvement as well as individual outcomes.

During the year we worked or engaged with Suffolk Law Centre; Community Action Suffolk; Ipswich Borough Council; Suffolk County Council services; Suffolk Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner; NHS and public health partners; schools and education partners; the University of Suffolk; The Hold and Suffolk Archives; Romanian diplomatic and consular representatives; the Council of Europe; the EU Delegation to the United Kingdom; and wider Roma equality and human rights networks.

Our role in these relationships is distinctive because it is grounded in daily community experience. We can help public bodies understand why a process is not working for a particular group, while also helping community members understand what institutions need from them.

Working as a bridge

This two-way role can improve communication, referral pathways and early intervention. It can also reduce duplication and crisis escalation. A resident who receives timely help to understand a housing letter, school concern or medical appointment is less likely to reach a later point of crisis.

For public institutions, culturally informed engagement can improve the quality of information received, increase attendance and cooperation and make services more effective. URV therefore sees partnership working as part of its public benefit, not simply as an organisational activity.

Community voices

The following statements are anonymised paraphrases of recurring feedback received through URV's services and activities. They illustrate common experiences and are not presented as verbatim quotations from identifiable individuals.

Support in a trusted language

> *"I came to URV because I knew someone would listen and explain the issue in a language I understood. Even when another organisation had to make the final decision, URV helped me know what to do next and did not leave me alone with the process."*

Digital independence

> *"Before the sessions I depended on other people for almost every online task. I can now use email, search for work, book an appointment and send documents with much more confidence.*

A safe place for women

> *"The Pilates class gave me a reason to leave the house and take care of my health. I felt safe with the other women, and the regular session helped me feel better physically and emotionally."*

A young person finding a voice

> *"At first, I did not want to speak in a group. Through the youth activities and events, I started sharing my ideas, helping other people and thinking more seriously about what I want to do next."*

Reaching legal advice

> *"I did not understand the letter or know which service could help. URV explained the immediate steps, helped me prepare my papers and connected me with specialist advice in a place where I felt comfortable."*

URV will continue improving its consent and feedback processes so that future reports can include more directly recorded testimony while protecting confidentiality and avoiding details that could identify a person or family.

Raising awareness and representation

Events, media engagement and professional dialogue enabled Roma experiences to be represented more accurately in public discussion. International Roma Day, the Roma Child Protection Conference, Safer Streets Stronger Community, International Romani Language Day, the Aspirations Conference, Romanian National Day and sustained engagement with policing, education, health and legal partners moved Roma voices into mainstream local conversations.

Our approach is constructive and evidence led. We use what we learn from frontline work to identify barriers and seek practical changes that make services more accessible, respectful and effective.

Our people and volunteers

During the reporting period URV recorded five staff and approximately fifteen volunteers. The charity's capacity is strengthened by professional skills, Romanian, Romanes and English language ability, lived experience, cultural knowledge and trusted community relationships.

Volunteers supported outreach, events, youth activity, information sharing and practical community work. Their contribution strengthened both our reach and the community-led character of the organisation.

Community participation and volunteering

Approximately fifteen volunteers provided regular support during the reporting period. They contributed to outreach, events, youth activity, information sharing, practical help and community engagement alongside the charity's five staff. Their consistency expanded the organisation's capacity and helped people encounter familiar, trusted faces when they attended an activity or asked for help.

In addition, more than 150 community members contributed informally to different points during the year. They shared accurate information, encouraged neighbours to attend, helped set up and welcomed people at events, supported food and hospitality, interpreted informally, assisted with youth and cultural activities, and brought community concerns to staff. This wider participation is separate from the approximately fifteen regular volunteer roles and should not be read as 150 formally recruited ongoing volunteers.

Positive changes created through participation

Contribution	Change for the community	Change for participants
Peer outreach and information sharing	More people heard about support through someone they already trusted	Community members gained confidence to guide others toward reliable help
Events and awareness campaigns	Larger and more representative participation in dialogue with institutions	People saw their language, culture and experience treated with respect
Youth and family activities	Young people had more adult encouragement and practical support	Informal helpers developed responsibility and leadership
Welcome and practical assistance	Activities remained accessible, organised and culturally familiar	Participants built relationships and a stronger sense of belonging

A route into leadership

Informal contribution is often the first step toward regular volunteering, training, paid employment or public representation. URV values this pathway because it allows people to contribute at a level that fits their confidence and circumstances. It also keeps the organisation accountable to the people, it serves community members who are active partners who shape priorities, identify barriers and help test whether information and services are understandable.

6 Financial reviews

The trustees are responsible for stewardship of the charity's resources and ensuring that funds are applied in furtherance for its charitable purposes. URV is preparing its accounts using the Charity Commission CC16a receipts-and-payments format.

The current bank-credit schedule identifies 22 credits totaling £190,302.81. Principal receipts included £117,000 from The National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities, £25,000 from Lloyds Bank Foundation, £18,100 from Suffolk Community Foundation for Roma Digital Skills, £15,000 from ESC Lottery Fund for physical activities, £12,500 from Suffolk Law Centre and £250 from University of Suffolk, together with donations and other bank credits.

The current working classification identifies £33,100 of restricted receipts: £18,100 for Roma Digital Skills and £15,000 for physical activities. Reaching Communities, Lloyds Bank Foundation, Suffolk Law Centre and University of Suffolk are currently treated as unrestricted based on the information supplied.

The current working expenditure schedule totals £150,678.57. Staff / personnel payments were £95,818.00, the largest recorded payment category and approximately 63.6% of total payments. Other recorded payments were premises / rent / events £24,092.80; ESOL classes £11,620.00; training / advice / digital skills £9,803.84; office, telephone, utilities and insurance £4,407.09; Engagement Support £1,998.00; travel and accommodation £1,916.84; and IT £1,022.00.

Reserves and Fund Management Policies

Reserves Policy

The trustees recognise the importance of maintaining an appropriate level of free reserves to protect the continuity and financial stability of Union Romani Voice. Reserves enable the charity to continue delivering essential services during delays or reductions in funding, meet employment and premises commitments, respond to unforeseen expenditure and manage periods of financial uncertainty.

The trustees aim, over time, to maintain free reserves equivalent to approximately six months of essential unrestricted operating expenditure. This target is reviewed annually and may be adjusted to reflect changes in the charity’s activities, staffing, financial commitments, funding arrangements and overall risk profile.

Where reserves are below the agreed target, the trustees will work towards rebuilding them through income diversification, additional unrestricted and core funding, responsible expenditure management and regular cash-flow monitoring. The trustees will balance the need to strengthen reserves with their responsibility to apply charitable funds appropriately and promptly for public benefit.

URV maintains clear distinctions between restricted and unrestricted funds. Unrestricted funds may be used at the trustees’ discretion for any of the charity’s purposes, including core staffing, premises, administration, service delivery, organisational development and unforeseen needs.

Restricted funds may be used only for the specific purposes established by the relevant funder or donor. URV reviews grant agreements and award conditions when income is received and maintains appropriate accounting records for material restricted funds. Restricted income and related expenditure are monitored separately and reported to the Trustee Board.

Funds designated by trustees for a particular purpose remain unrestricted and may be redesignated through a properly recorded trustee decision. Restricted funds are not included when calculating the charity’s free reserves.

Reserves Position

Based on the current draft accounts, cash funds held on 5 April 2026 totalled £39,624.43, comprising £6,524.43 in unrestricted funds and £33,100.00 in restricted funds.

The charity's current free reserves are therefore provisionally stated as £6,524.43. This is below the trustees' six-month target, and the Board is committed to strengthening unrestricted reserves while continuing to deliver essential services to beneficiaries.

The Trustee Board seeks to maintain an appropriate level of unrestricted reserves to protect continuity of essential services, meet employment and operational commitments, respond to unforeseen costs and manage delays or reductions in grant funding.

Principal funding sources

The charity's principal sources of income were grants and project funding, supplemented by partnership income, donations and other receipts. URV did not operate a material investment portfolio, social-investment programme or material public fundraising campaign requiring separate performance reporting during the period.

Improving practice and organizational resilience

The trustees will continue to strengthen governance, safeguarding, staffing, policies, financial controls, funding diversification and organisational resilience. High demand remains a challenge for a relatively small team, making triage, supervision, volunteer support and partnership referrals essential.

We will continue to use frontline evidence to improve practice. Where patterns in casework reveal recurring barriers, URV will seek constructive dialogue with schools, councils, police, health services and other institutions to identify practical solutions.

8 Structure, governance and management

Union Romani Voice is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales under charity number 1193506 and governed by its Constitution.

The governing document is a foundation CIO constitution in which the charity trustees are the only voting members. The trustees may create associate or other non-voting membership classes, but those participants do not become statutory members of the CIO.

The trustees are collectively responsible for strategy, governance, safeguarding oversight, financial stewardship, risk management and compliance. Day-to-day management is delegated to Chief Executive Officer Simona Lazăr within agreed policies, budgets and reporting arrangements. Delegation does not remove the trustees' collective legal responsibility.

Trustees

The trustees who served during the reporting period were:

- Vasile Macovei - Chair - whole reporting period.
- Ciprian Avram - Trustee - whole reporting period.
- Maria Dolea - Trustee - whole reporting period.
- Nicolae Lazar - Trustee - whole reporting period.
- Niculina-Londra Pompas - Trustee - appointed 24 July 2025.

Trustee update after the reporting period

The trustee update dated 19 June 2026 in the supplied CIO document records Ciprian Avram as Chair and lists Niculina-Londra Pompas, Maria Dolea, Nicolae Lazar and Gheorghe Marius Dumitru as trustees. This post-year-end update is reported separately and does not change the list of trustees who served during the year ended 5 April 2026.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Constitution. In considering appointments, the charity seeks people who can contribute relevant experience, community understanding, lived experience, independence of judgement and skills required for effective governance. Eligibility and conflicts of interest are considered as part of the process.

Constitutional governance arrangements

- The CIO must have at least three charity trustees and the Constitution sets no maximum number.
- Apart from the first trustees, appointments are made by resolution at a properly convened trustee meeting for the term specified in that resolution. Selection must take account of the skills, knowledge and experience needed for effective administration.
- Trustee decisions may be taken at meetings or through an authenticated written or electronic resolution circulated to all trustees and agreed within the constitutional time limit.
- The meeting quorum is two trustees or the number nearest to one third of the trustees in office, whichever is greater, unless the trustees set a larger quorum.
- A trustee must declare relevant interests, leave any discussion where a conflict may arise, and must not vote or be counted in the quorum for that decision.
- The Board may delegate powers to committees under written terms. Each committee must have at least two people, including at least one charity trustee, and its work must be reported to the Board.
- Documents executed by signature on behalf of the CIO must be signed by at least two charity trustees.

Organisational structure

The Board retains overall responsibility for charity and delegates day-to-day operation to the Chief Executive Officer and staff. The Chief Executive leads service delivery, staff, volunteers and partnership engagement and reports to the Board.

Induction and training of trustees

New trustees are introduced to the charity's purposes, governing documents, trustee duties, safeguarding arrangements, finances, policies, risks, services and strategic priorities. Trustees are encouraged to remain familiar with Charity Commission guidance and undertake relevant external training.

Trustee remuneration and related parties

Trustees receive no remuneration for acting as trustees. Reasonable expenses may be reimbursed in accordance with the governing document and charity policy. Conflicts of interest, trustee benefits and related-party transactions are expected to be declared, managed and disclosed where required.

No material-related party transaction has been identified in the information used to prepare this report, subject to confirmation against the final accounts and declarations of interest.

9 Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud, error, safeguarding failure and service disruption.

The principal risks identified by URV include financial sustainability, safeguarding, advice and regulatory compliance, data protection, staff capacity and service demand, fraud and exploitation affecting beneficiaries, reputation and business continuity.

Financial risks are managed through budget monitoring, grant tracking, cash-flow oversight and efforts to diversify funding. Safeguarding risks are managed through Designated Safeguarding Lead oversight, recording, referral and escalation pathways. Advice risks are managed through service boundaries, supervision and referral to regulated specialists.

Data-protection risks are addressed through consent processes, confidentiality expectations, controlled access and secure records. Capacity risks are managed through triage, prioritisation, supervision, volunteers and partnership referrals.

The charity also works with people who may be vulnerable to fraud, exploitation or intimidation. Accurate recording, safeguarding awareness and liaison with appropriate authorities are therefore important elements of risk management.

10 Other matters

Grant making and social investment

URV did not operate a material programmed for making grants to third parties and did not undertake a material social-investment or programme-related investment portfolio during the period.

Approval of the Trustees Report

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Signed on behalf of the trustees:



_____

Name: _____GHEORGHE MARIUS DUMITRU _____

Trustee / Chair

Date: ___15/09/2026_____

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 5 APRIL 2026

1 Receipts

The figures below reproduce the current Section A figures in the charity's uploaded CC16a receipts-and-payments account.

Income source	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2026 £
Charitable activities	1			
The National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities		117,000.00	-	117,000.00
Lloyds Bank Foundation - core support		25,000.00	-	25,000.00
Suffolk Law Centre - Legal Clinic / Roma Advocate		12,500.00	-	12,500.00
Suffolk Community Foundation - Roma Digital Skills		-	18,100.00	18,100.00
ESC Lottery Fund - Physical Activities		-	15,000.00	15,000.00
University of Suffolk		250.00	-	250.00
Donations and other income	1			
Donations		2,453.00	-	2,453.00
Total receipts		**157,203.00**	**33,100.00**	**190,303.00**

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 5 APRIL 2026

2 Expenditure

Expenditure	Note	Staff costs £	Programme and delivery £	Premises and other costs £	Total 2026 £
Charitable activities	2				
Staff and personnel		95,818.00	-	-	95,818.00
ESOL classes		-	11,620.00	-	11,620.00
Training, advice and digital skills		-	9,803.84	-	9,803.84
Engagement Support payment		-	1,998.00	-	1,998.00
Premises, rent and events		-	-	24,092.80	24,092.80

Expenditure	Note	Staff costs £	Programme and delivery £	Premises and other costs £	Total 2026 £
Office, telephone, utilities and insurance		-	-	4,407.09	4,407.09
Travel and accommodation		-	-	1,916.84	1,916.84
IT		-	-	1,022.00	1,022.00
Total expenditure		**95,818.00**	**23,421.84**	**31,438.73**	**150,678.57**

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 5 APRIL 2026

3 Net receipts and fund movement

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2026 £
Total receipts	157,203.00	33,100.00	190,303.00
Total payments	150,678.57	0.00*	150,678.57
Net receipts / (payments)	**6,524.43**	**33,100.00**	**39,624.43**
Transfers between funds	-	-	-
Cash funds last year end - current draft	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end - Section A calculation	**6,524.43**	**33,100.00**	**39,624.43**

Approval of the receipts and payments account

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf:

Full name: ___Niculina Londra Pompas _____

Position: _____Trustee _____

Date: _____14/09/2026_____



Signature: _____

APPROVAL AND DECLARATION

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 5 APRIL 2026

The trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Annual Report above.

Signature(s)	Full name(s)	Position	Date
	Niculina Londra Pompas	Trustee	14/09/2026