



Anglia Ruskin  
University

# **Gypsy, Traveller and Roma: Experts by Experience**

**Reviewing UK Progress on the European Union Framework  
for National Roma Integration Strategies**

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# Foreword by Helen Barnard

## Policy and Research Manager at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Poverty in the UK is a waste of human potential and a drain on the country's economy. Child poverty alone costs the UK £29 billion each year. The evidence that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has gathered over many years shows clearly the scarring effect that living in poverty has on people's health and well-being and on children's development and future opportunities. Over the last few years we have carried out a major programme of work examining the links between poverty and ethnicity. This has demonstrated that tackling poverty effectively requires us to understand how both the causes and the solutions to poverty affect people from across all ethnicities in the UK.

This report shines a light on the experiences of communities with some of the highest poverty in the UK. There are major gaps in research and data about Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people. However, the evidence that does exist paints a picture of very significant disadvantages facing these groups. Gypsy and Traveller people are much more likely to have long-term health conditions and poor health than the general population; their life expectancy is shorter by between 10 and 12 years. Nine out of ten children and young people from a Gypsy, Traveller and Roma background have suffered racial abuse, and nearly two thirds have been bullied or physically attacked.

There are important differences in the history and situation of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people, but this report shows that each group experiences serious problems in their employment, education, health and housing. The evidence gathered for this study suggests that policy responses have been inadequate and ineffective. This report draws on academic literature, policy documents and, crucially, the voices of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people across the UK. The problems it highlights demand a concerted response from all four nations. This study shows both the good practice that exists and the long distance that we have to travel to ensure that all people in the UK have fair opportunities and a decent standard of living.



*HJ Barnard*

October 2014



# Executive Summary

In 2011, the European Commission published a *Framework for National 'Roma' Integration Strategies* (NRIS) and this was adopted by all of the European Union Members. Consequently, all Member States were required to develop their own 'Roma' Integration Strategies tailored to the needs of the 'Roma' population in their country. This report reviews progress on the *Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies* from the perspectives of the Gypsies, Travellers and Roma communities living in the UK.

The UK Government has not established a National Roma Integration Strategy. Instead, they have chosen to use existing, mainstream policy and legal mechanisms to deliver inclusion. (However, the Welsh Government is to be commended on establishing the only clear Roma Integration Strategy and a framework for action in the UK). This report finds that mainstream policies in the areas of discrimination, accommodation, education, employment and health have consistently failed Gypsies and Travellers in the past and this report suggests that they are continuing to fail these and Roma communities today. In order to improve the lives of people from Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, there is an urgent need for changes in policies in all these areas to address inequalities and promote integration.

**The 'Roma' in the UK:** The EU use the word 'Roma' as an umbrella term in European policy and documentation to include a wide range of communities, including the Roma, Gypsies and Travellers. It is recognised that many Roma people share the same experiences of poverty, discrimination and social exclusion as Gypsies and Travellers in the UK. However in this report, the Roma are discussed separately from Gypsies and Travellers because the communities have evolved independently and their needs are often different. It is important to remember that although this report talks about the needs of different ethnic communities, people are individuals and have different needs and experiences. However, unfortunately, all three communities seem to commonly share experiences of racism, discrimination, poverty and social exclusion.

**Integration:** Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities in the UK are clear that they are calling for integration not assimilation into the dominant culture. Community members are seeking equality of rights, opportunities and access to services and to be treated as equal citizens.

**How was the report developed?** This report has been developed through primary research conducted with people from the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as with other professionals working with the three communities. Community members have actively been involved in the design, data collection and analysis.

**The research examined the experiences of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people in five key areas: discrimination, accommodation, education, health and employment.**

## Discrimination

Research for this report, and many previous studies, have shown that discrimination and racism towards Gypsies, Irish Travellers (and more recently against the Roma community) continues across the UK. This can involve verbal abuse through to violent and even fatal physical attacks. Abusive media coverage and overtly racist statements from local and national politicians add to the ignorance and prejudice of many members of the settled population, while those in authority frequently fail to challenge them.

## Accommodation

Being nomadic is an important part of Gypsy and Traveller identity and family life and many testified to this during this research. However, a lack of appropriate trailer (caravan) sites, combined with insufficient provision is having a significant detrimental impact on the lives of Gypsies and Travellers across the UK. Many of the community members interviewed spoke about the poor quality of many local authority sites. This caused particular problems for older people and people with young families.

- Successive Government policies have encouraged Gypsies and Travellers to purchase their own land. However, both the European Court of Human Rights and the House of Lords have cast doubt on the effectiveness of this policy approach. This is because while Gypsies and Travellers have to apply for planning permission (the same as any other citizen) but they are usually refused planning permission. Concern has also been expressed that recently the Government has been 'reviewing' (and refusing) Gypsies and Travellers planning applications even though they have been approved by local inspectorates. This level of intervention contrasts starkly with the governments' unwillingness to take positive steps to improve site provision, or force local authorities to meet their duties under the Housing Act to allocate land for site provision.
- Due to the lack of stopping places, many Gypsies and Travellers find that they are forced into bricks and mortar accommodation. However, for many members of the community, leaving their traditional life behind to move into conventional housing can produce social isolation and sometimes serious psychological and psychiatric problems, due to their cultural aversion to brick and mortar and separation from their family and community.
- Community leaders have expressed fears about the impact of the 'localism agenda', especially as many local communities are hostile to Gypsies and Travellers who have little access to local or national policy making processes.
- There are also concerns about a proposed change to the planning definition of 'travellers'. The discussion relates to whether or not the term "traveller" should only be applied to those people who actually travel and have a mobile or transitory lifestyle. There is a fear that the outcome of this proposed review will restrict the rights of Gypsies and Travellers, who are a recognised ethnic group, to culturally appropriate accommodation, if they are temporarily forced into housing because of children's education, health or other commitments.

The Roma in the UK are not generally nomadic however, they face serious problems in their accommodation. They are often located in poor and deprived areas and because of the shortage of social housing, tend to end up renting in the private sector. A number of respondents highlighted that unscrupulous landlords are charging Roma tenants high rents for low quality and overcrowded accommodation. There is very little research on the accommodation needs, or experiences of Roma communities in the UK.

## Education

Education plays a central role in the social inclusion and well-being of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children and their families. Yet Gypsies and Travellers have the highest proportion of people with no qualifications for any ethnic group (ONS 2011).

- The most common reason for the reluctance to send Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children to school is the prevalence of racist bullying, which can range from generalised abuse to physical attacks. Nearly 9 out of every 10 children and young people from a

Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background have suffered racial abuse and nearly two thirds have also been bullied or physically attacked. Evidence suggests that where Gypsy and Traveller pupils do transfer successfully to secondary school, their attendance is unlikely to continue beyond the age of 14.

- There is very limited data on the educational experiences and attainment of Roma children and young people in the UK. In Eastern Europe, Roma children have been disproportionately placed in segregated or special schools. However, a small-scale research study conducted in the UK found that the majority of the Roma students who had previously been sent to segregated or special schools in their countries of origin had successfully completed their education in mainstream schools in the UK. Most Roma families have high expectations for their children's education and future careers in the UK. However, many Roma parents and young people also stated that Roma children are also facing discrimination in the UK.



*Roma pupils* ©Ciara Leeming

## Employment

Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities share some commonalities in terms of their lack of employment opportunities and the discrimination they face in trying to access employment. There are also some distinctive issues for the different communities.

There is particularly troubling evidence that many Roma workers are being exploited in low paid wage employment within the informal economy.

- The Roma community feel strongly that they are discriminated against when seeking work because of their ethnicity. Many Roma in the UK are paid below the minimum wage and work in conditions that do not conform to proper health and safety standards. Some Roma workers are being exploited by unscrupulous gang-masters.
- The Department for Works and Pensions shows only very limited recognition of the employment needs of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities. Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities are not recognised, or categorised as an ethnic minority group by the DWP. Consequently they are not included in national DWP ethnicity data sets, or research relating to different ethnic groups.
- Traditionally Gypsies and Travellers have been self-employed and worked as seasonal workers and skilled labourers. However, many of the more traditional unskilled jobs are disappearing fast, such as seasonal work in agriculture. Scrap metal has been a traditional method of employment for many Gypsy and Traveller families. The new Scrap Metal Dealers Act (2013) allows the local authority to set fees for the licences to trade. Because many Gypsy and Traveller families are nomadic, and/or work in more than one local authority area, they need to pay a licence in each local authority and for each family member working in the trade. This is having a detrimental impact on families. Some fear that they will no longer be able to afford to trade, as they cannot afford the licences needed and as many people in the community are not literate they often do not have a bank account.
- Analysis by the Office for National Statistics (2014) revealed that Gypsies and Travellers were the ethnic group with the lowest proportion of respondents who were economically active. This can often be attributed to poor health, low levels of education and discrimination. There is no national data on the levels of Roma employment in the UK. Participants in the



*Roma waiting outside employment agency* ©Roma Community Care Derby

research feared that some welfare reform changes could further penalise those with large families and force some out of social accommodation and back onto unauthorised encampments.

- Among the Roma there are concerns that new welfare regulations could force more Roma into dangerous and exploitative work conditions within the informal economy or under the control of gangmasters and other unscrupulous employers.

## Health

Significant health inequalities exist between Gypsies and Travellers and the general population in England. Poor living conditions are the most influential contributing factors to the poor health status of Gypsies and Travellers with poor quality or inappropriate accommodation exacerbating health conditions. Research shows that children from Gypsy and Traveller communities are more likely to experience early death, poor childhood development and limited uptake and access of health services.

- Gypsies and Travellers are significantly more likely to have a long-term condition and suffer poorer health than the general population. Their life expectancy has been estimated to be between 10 and 12 years less than the general population. Yet despite greater health need, Gypsies and Travellers use mainstream health services less than other members of the population because of practical difficulties, such as complex procedures for registering and accessing services. In some cases health services allegedly refuse to register them.
- Research on the Roma population and their access to health care in the UK is very sparse. Once in the UK, many Roma lack familiarity with the NHS and face language barriers which can make it difficult to access health services.
- There is a lack of disaggregated data on the health of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities. The Department of Health does not include them as one of their 16 ethnic minority categories monitored

by the NHS. However, the information service division in Scotland now includes Gypsies and Travellers, but not Roma. There is a need to include Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in all NHS data capture.

- Health and Wellbeing Boards in all local areas should ensure that Gypsies and Travellers are included as key stakeholders. These boards will be relying on the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessments to inform their work. It is therefore critical that local Gypsy, Traveller and Roma health assessments are conducted and that these communities are fully involved in this process.

**We recommend a national strategy and specific policies, to address inequalities for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, especially in the areas of discrimination, accommodation, education, employment and healthcare and there is an urgent need to develop monitoring mechanisms, so that policy makers are working from evidence rather than supposition. The European Union has identified that the UK has consistently failed to establish any monitoring mechanisms for Roma integration. Indeed the absence of data collection and monitoring mechanisms on integration means that the experiences of poverty, social exclusion and discrimination experienced by Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people in the UK are often invisible to local and national authorities.**



# Part 1

## Introduction to Key Issues

This section of the report introduces the reader to some of the similarities and differences between Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities in the UK.

It also sets out the rationale behind the development of the EU National 'Roma' Integration Strategies (NRIS) for Member States and how the UK has chosen to respond to this.

In the UK, the Executives of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are responsible for different policy measures within their territories, and they have prepared individual documents regarding their policies to promote Gypsy and Traveller and Roma Inclusion. Consequently, this report aims to represent both the views and experience of community members and the different responses to the NRIS from the devolved Governments.

### 1.1 A note about terminology

The EU use the word 'Roma' as an umbrella term in European policy and documentation to include a wide range of communities, including the Roma, Gypsies and Travellers. It is recognised that many Roma people share the same experiences of poverty, discrimination and social exclusion as Gypsies and Travellers in the UK. However in this report, the Roma are discussed separately from Gypsies and Travellers because the communities have evolved independently and their needs are often different.

The first significant Roma from Central and Eastern Europe came to the UK in the 1990s often seeking asylum to escape widespread racial persecution and discrimination in their countries of origin. Since the EU enlargement, nationals coming from the new Member States have been able to exercise their right to free movement. The Roma are not a homogenous group as they originate from different Member States across Europe and so have different linguistic and cultural roots. Historically Roma people have been nomadic but in the UK, they tend to live in conventional housing (often in poor quality housing) and come under specific migration policies.

In contrast, Gypsies and Travellers have lived in the UK for centuries and they are traditionally nomadic and this continues to be important in their lives today and plays an important role both in terms of employment, as well as family relationships and community life. However as nomads, the lives of Gypsies and Travellers are dominated by lack of stopping places and planning laws. Some planning laws have even attempted to re-define who can be called a Gypsy or a Traveller, even though they are legally recognised as an ethnic group in the UK.

It is important to remember that although this report talks about the needs of different ethnic communities, people are individuals and have different needs

and experiences. However, unfortunately, all three communities seem to commonly share experiences of racism, discrimination, poverty and social exclusion.

## Integration

Significantly, the EU has used the term 'integration' in all of its 'Roma' integration documentation. Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities in the UK are clear that they are calling for integration not assimilation into the dominant culture. Community members are seeking equality of rights, opportunities and access to services and to be treated as equal citizens.



*Fire and food a traditional scene for all the communities* ©DGLG

## 1.2 What is the National Roma Integration Strategy?

The European Commission have identified that the 'Roma' are Europe's largest ethnic minority of about 10 to 12 million people. It is difficult to know how many 'Roma' people live in the UK due to lack of national monitoring data, although the Council of Europe statistics estimate the UK's Gypsy, Roma and Traveller population to be in the region of 150,000 to 300,000.<sup>2</sup> A recent study by the University of Salford indicated that there are 200,000 Roma in the UK.<sup>3</sup> While the last census (2011) indicated that there were 54,895 people who self-identified as Gypsies and Irish Travellers in England (and 2,785 in Wales), it is believed that this is a *significant* undercount<sup>4</sup> as many Gypsies and Travellers will not identify their ethnicity due to fear of racism and discrimination and in many other official data sets, Gypsies, Travellers and Roma communities are absent from ethnic monitoring data.<sup>5</sup>

Certainly evidence shows that across Europe the 'Roma' are some of the most disadvantaged people, frequently living in extreme poverty and often with limited access to education, healthcare and decent housing.<sup>6</sup> The situation of the 'Roma' has increasingly become the centre of political attention and their inclusion across the EU has increasingly become an issue of both moral and economic concern. In 2010 the Council of Europe issued the *Strasbourg Declaration on 'Roma'*, which recognised the fact that 'Roma' across Europe continued to be 'socially and economically marginalised'. In 2011, the European Commission published a *Framework for National 'Roma' Integration Strategies* (NRIS) and this was adopted by all of the European Union Members. Consequently, all Member States were required to develop their own 'Roma' Integration Strategies tailored to the needs of the 'Roma' population in their country and Member States agreed work to address the inequality between 'Roma' and non-'Roma' in access to:

- **Housing (Accommodation)**
- **Education**
- **Employment**
- **Healthcare**

These are sometimes referred to as the four pillars of 'Roma' integration<sup>7</sup> and under the Framework, Member States were required to set '*achievable national goals for 'Roma' integration*' and to identify disadvantaged regions where communities are most deprived. It was expected that sufficient funding would be allocated from national budgets to support integration and this would be complemented by EU funding. Importantly, the NRISs were supposed to be designed '*in close cooperation and continuous dialogue*' with 'Roma' NGOs and other stakeholders.

Equal treatment for the 'Roma' is an issue of human rights but the European Commission (2011<sup>8</sup>) and the World Bank (2014) have also suggested that there is a compelling economic case to be made for giving priority to 'Roma' integration. The World Bank has suggested that there are large economic and fiscal benefits from ensuring equal opportunities for 'Roma' because increased economic productivity results both in increased revenue from income taxes as well as reduced government payments for social assistance.<sup>9</sup> Across Europe, the 'Roma' represent a growing share of the working age population; with an average age of 25 compared to the EU average of 40, this young population are a valuable resource, especially with the demographic challenges that all European countries are facing.

<sup>1</sup>This report will use the word 'Roma' in quote marks when using the term in the EU definition to include a wide range of communities including Gypsies and Travellers but the term Roma (without quote marks) to denote this use of the term in the UK to include a wide range of people who have migrated to the UK from Eastern Europe.

<sup>2</sup>Council of Europe (2012) Roma and Travellers [http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/archive/documentation/strategies/statistiques\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/archive/documentation/strategies/statistiques_en.asp)

<sup>3</sup>Brown P, Scullion, L. and Martin P (2013) Migrant Roma in the United Kingdom [http://www.salford.ac.uk/sustainable-housing-and-urban-studies-unit/downloads/Migrant\\_Roma\\_in\\_the\\_UK\\_final\\_report\\_October\\_2013.pdf](http://www.salford.ac.uk/sustainable-housing-and-urban-studies-unit/downloads/Migrant_Roma_in_the_UK_final_report_October_2013.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (2013) Gypsy and Traveller population in England and the 2011 Census <http://irishtraveller.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Gypsy-and-Traveller-population-in-England-policy-report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>For example- The Department of Health does not include Gypsies and Travellers as one of the 16 ethnic minority categories monitored by the NHS.

<sup>6</sup>European Commission (2012) National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework - COM(2012) 226 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_nat\\_integration\\_strat\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_nat_integration_strat_en.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>European Council Conclusions (2011) EUCO 23/11 of 23 and 24 June 2011, following the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO). Council Conclusions on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 106665/11 of 19 May 2011.

<sup>8</sup>European Commission (2011) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions COM(2011) 173 final <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0173>

<sup>9</sup>World Bank (2014) Roma: Brief <http://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/brief/roma>

## 1.3 EU Funding to support Roma Integration

According to the European Commission, the UK has been given the following structural funds that are dedicated to all disadvantaged people, including the 'Roma'

- Over the 2007-2013 funding period, the United Kingdom has been allocated €14.4 billion under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund and the European Social Fund (ESF), and a further €6.4 billion through the Rural Development Fund.
- For the 2014-2020 period, the United Kingdom will be allocated a total of some €11.6 billion from the ESF and ERDF funds<sup>10</sup> However, there appears to be serious challenges in transferring the intentions into clear, operational and sustainable practices to include

benefits for 'Roma' communities.<sup>11</sup> It is disheartening to read that the European Commission monitoring report on UK 'Roma' Integration (2014) continues to show that a lack of monitoring data means that any progress on 'Roma' integration is difficult to identify.<sup>12</sup> While there have been some small local projects working to improve integration, the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities who were consulted for this report, consider that these major streams of EU funding are yet to 'trickle down' into their communities. From the perspective of the community members lived experience, there seems to be little discernable change in the quality of their lives and experiences of social exclusion.



*Article 12, Youth Equality Group Scotland* ©Article 12 Scotland

<sup>10</sup> EU Commission for 'Roma' Integration: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma-integration/united-kingdom/eu-funding/funding\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma-integration/united-kingdom/eu-funding/funding_en.htm)

<sup>11</sup> European Commission (2013) Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Steps forward in implementing national Roma integration strategies [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com\\_2013\\_454\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com_2013_454_en.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> European Commission (2014) The European Union and Roma: Factsheet- United Kingdom [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_country\\_factsheets\\_2014/united-kingdom\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_country_factsheets_2014/united-kingdom_en.pdf)

## 1.3 What was the UK response the National Roma Integration Strategy?

The UK has not developed a National Roma Integration Strategy. This is because at a EU Member States meeting (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council: 2011), it was agreed that Member States were not required to produce National Roma Integration Strategies, instead they could have the 'flexibility' to develop policy measures within wider social inclusion policies, as an alternative to producing national strategies. In response to a call for a NRIS, the UK Government have suggested that the mainstream laws and policies already offered protection to Gypsy, Traveller and Roma populations and that these policies would in themselves promote integration. However, as the community members testify in this report, this is often not their experience. Racial discrimination and social exclusion are common experiences in the lives of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people and many families find themselves living on the margins of society.<sup>13</sup>

The UK Government did establish a Ministerial Working Group ('MWG') on preventing and tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. However, this did not include addressing the needs of Roma communities in the UK, except where they coincided with those experienced by ethnic Gypsies and Travellers. Yet migrant Roma populations across the UK seem to be among the most marginalised in decision-making processes and there are few local Roma support groups in operation.

In the UK, the Executives of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are responsible for different policy measures within their territories, and they have prepared individual documents regarding their policies to promote Gypsy and Traveller and Roma Inclusion. Consequently, there is no overarching national strategy to promote Roma integration in the UK and the devolved Governments have taken different approaches to integration.

### England

Instead of a National 'Roma' Integration Strategy, the UK Government provided the European Commission with a section of general documents, which it considered satisfied the requirements for integration and additionally provided the EU with the *'Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers'* which contained 28 'proposed commitments' across a range of departments and its general integration strategy for minority communities, entitled 'Creating the conditions for integration'.<sup>13</sup>

### Scotland

Scotland has not yet developed its own National Roma Integration Strategy. In 2013 the Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC) of the Scottish Parliament held a hearing on Gypsies and Travellers and recommended that the Scottish Government "explore the suggestion of pulling together existing research into a single national action plan which allows the flexibility for regional variations. For this, and other recommendations, we would expect the Government to agree with all those involved a firm timescale for any action plan and provide regular progress updates".<sup>14</sup> In its response to the EOC report, the Scottish Government stated that "We feel that it would be timely to produce an overarching strategy document for a broad range of stakeholders" (2013:2). This strategy document is still pending.

### Wales

The only clear 'Roma' Integration Strategy to date has come from the Welsh Government, which has submitted a framework for action (and not just a gathering of policies and measures already undertaken). Their document, *'Travelling to a Better Future - A Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan'* (2011),<sup>15</sup> focuses on policy areas that impact on the lives

<sup>13</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) Creating the conditions for integration [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7504/2092103.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7504/2092103.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Equal Opportunities Committee Enquiry (2013) Where Gypsies/ Travellers Live (para 48) [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4/EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Reports/leor-13-01\\_summary.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4/EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Reports/leor-13-01_summary.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Welsh Government (2012) Travelling to a Better Future

<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/docs/learningwales/publications/121115gypsytravelleren.pdf> and update (2013) <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/ds/jlg/publications/equality/131105gypsy-trav-framework-en.pdf>

of Gypsy and Travellers in the areas of accommodation, education, training, health, social care, participation and engagement (but not employment). Yet ironically, their 'Roma' integration strategy seems to have neglected to include the Roma.

## Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has not developed its own National Roma Integration Strategy. There are some local initiatives in schools, health and accommodation.<sup>16</sup> It is clear, that with the exception of Wales, the UK

Government has chosen not to develop a strategy for integration but expects that mainstream policies and services will make the most impact on integration. Yet evidence from the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, as well as academic research shows mainstream policies have consistently failed to improve the outcomes for these communities. It is therefore difficult to understand how mainstream policies will improve the integration for these communities today (for details see sections below).



<sup>16</sup>For details of initiatives in the four regions see: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_uk\\_strategy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_uk_strategy_en.pdf)

## 1.4 Critical issues impacting on the UK approach to the National Roma Integration Strategy

As noted above, the UK Government has failed to develop a National Roma Integration Strategy and the absence of a national plan has resulted in many short-term, single-issue projects that are failing to make much visible change to the lives of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma populations across the UK. While the Government had envisaged that mainstream policies would deliver integration, worryingly, far from promoting more integration many of the new policy reforms seem to be impacting negatively on Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities. The most significant challenges are discussed below.

### The impact of the localism agenda

In 2011, the Localism Act was introduced to shift decision-making powers from central government towards local authorities and local communities. A range of poverty and race equality groups have raised concerns that there is a danger that many communities will be disadvantaged if they are not well linked to decision making structures, especially if they are small communities, or ethnic minority groups that are unpopular with other parts of the population. Significantly most of these groups don't have the skills, training or capacity to engage with local decision-making bodies and there are few mechanisms for protecting their interests against a local majority or powerful and vociferous groups. The majority of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma community members do not have access to local decision-making processes, and there are few local targets or monitoring systems for integration. In addition, many community members may choose not to self-identify as being Roma, Gypsy or a Traveller, due to fear of discrimination and therefore they stay 'under the local radar'. However, it has been suggested that some local Councils are unaware of their communities but prefer 'not to know', rather than have to spend resources identifying and helping minority communities such as new migrant Roma.

### Decline in national mechanisms to ensure equality and human rights

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has recently been stripped of its duty to promote a society with equal opportunities for all and in recent years it has had its staff and budget dramatically reduced.<sup>17</sup> In the past, the EHRC has played an important role in promoting the rights of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, especially in the areas of accommodation and land rights and there is great concern that they will no longer have the capacity to do this.

### Changes to the Judicial Review Process

In the past, Judicial Review<sup>18</sup> has been one of the most important means by which the Government and other public bodies can be held legally accountable for the lawfulness of their decisions and actions, including their compatibility with the requirements of human rights law and/or failure to comply with their housing statutory duties and the equality act duties. There are deep concerns at the Government's current proposals to limit funding for Judicial Review, as this represents a profound and constitutionally significant attack on the ability of individuals and community organisations to access Judicial Review. Indeed, the proposal to remove legal aid from cases, such as the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 sections 288 & 289, seems to target Gypsies and Travellers, since it is very difficult to imagine which other individuals might receive legal aid for such appeals. The vast majority of community members would not be able to represent themselves in legal proceedings, as many have not had a formal education, or very little formal education, and the law and procedures are extremely complex, even if you have had a formal education. Removal of legal aid in these cases (either directly or because legal aid lawyers will not be able to take the risk of running a case) will inevitably mean that many individuals in dire circumstances will be denied the right to a fair hearing and that unlawful actions and decisions by local authorities will go unchecked. These proposals will have a disproportionate impact on Gypsies and Travellers.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Unison (2013) Black members: Building a Stronger Union: Annual Report. <https://www.unison.org.uk/upload/sharepoint/On%20line%20Catalogue/22029.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> A Judicial review is a type of court proceeding in which a judge reviews the lawfulness of a decision or action made by a public body.

<sup>19</sup> Newsletter of the Travellers Advice Team at Community Law Partnership, No. 3 - November 2013

There are also additional concerns related to the integration of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, discussed below.

### **Lack of political engagement and funding and support for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma civil society**

Gypsies, Travellers and Roma communities across the UK feel that they are marginalised from national and local decision-making processes that impact on their daily lives. Much of the effort of their political engagement has been to motivate policy-makers to better understand their situation and the heterogeneous nature of their communities and to raise awareness of their experiences of inequality and marginalisation. Yet most community groups find that they have little access to policy makers. For example, in England, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is the national contact point and has led on coordination of different departments for the NRIS. It provides the secretariat for the Cross Government Ministerial Working Group (MWG) on preventing and tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Traveller and it was given the task of addressing the 'Roma' Integration Framework requirements. However, the Working Group decided to only focus on addressing the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and that it would only cover issues affecting Roma where they overlap with those impacting on ethnic Gypsies and Travellers.<sup>20</sup> Despite the EU's recommendation that the National Roma Integration Strategies were to be designed '*in close cooperation and continuous dialogue*' with 'Roma' NGOs and other stakeholders, there has only been limited consultation by the Ministerial Working Group with community leaders.

In **England** the DCLG has established a Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Group but community members and organisations feel that the lack of a National 'Roma' Integration Strategy, combined with very limited consultations with the communities, is restricting the value of this body. Whilst community members have been invited to comment on Government policy, there have been numerous complaints by community members that their concerns are ignored, or not acted upon.

In **Scotland and Wales** a strategic approach has been developed however, there is still a need for much greater

community involvement and there is a need to reach out to Roma communities to ensure that their voice is heard.

In **Northern Ireland** a range of stakeholders have been calling for a strategic group to be established.

Despite recommendations from the EU on the need for funding to promote Roma Integration, this report raises concerns about the lack of funding and support for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma engagement in civil society and the lack of community representation in the political arena. While there is evidence of a number of exciting and innovative small projects being led by community groups in the UK, these initiatives are predominantly underfunded and the administrations are also failing to disseminate and embed innovative positive practices that might further the integration of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities.

### **A Lack of National Monitoring Data on Gypsy, Traveller, Roma Integration**

There is a complete lack of national monitoring data to measure progress on integration. The lack of national monitoring for 'Roma' integration has also been picked up by the European Commission (2014) who have identified that the UK need to conduct '*monitoring of the impact of mainstream measures and activities undertaken on 'Roma'*'. Although the most recent National Census (2011) did include Gypsies and Irish Travellers for the first time, many people either did not take part in the census and the Roma were not defined as an ethnic category in the National Census.<sup>21</sup>

### **Summary of Critical Issues**

The UK Government has not established a National Roma Integration Strategy. Instead, they have chosen to use existing, mainstream policy and legal mechanisms to deliver inclusion. However, so far mainstream approaches have failed to facilitate equal opportunities for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities.

<sup>21</sup>It was also notable the Office for National Statistics did not run any campaigns for the community members explaining why their ethnic categorisation was important, nor did they offer support for many of the community members who are not literate.

The European Commission has identified that the UK has consistently failed to establish any monitoring mechanisms for Roma integration (see European Commission Communications between 2012 and 2014). The absence of data collection and monitoring mechanisms on integration means that Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people are often invisible to local and national authorities and their experiences of poverty, social exclusion and discrimination is not noticed or challenged. Consequently, progress on 'Roma' integration in the UK is exceptionally slow, or absent, in many policy areas as evidenced by the European Commission Communications in 2012, 2013 and in 2014.<sup>22</sup> The Welsh Government are to be commended on establishing the only clear Roma Integration Strategy and a framework for action in the UK.

### The European Commission (2011)

'To achieve significant progress towards Roma integration, it is now crucial to step up a gear and ensure that national, regional and local integration policies focus on Roma in a clear and specific way, and address the needs of Roma with explicit measures to prevent and compensate for disadvantages they face.

A targeted approach, within the broader strategy to fight against poverty and exclusion - which does not exclude other vulnerable and deprived groups from support - is compatible with the principle of non-discrimination both at EU and national level. The principle of equal treatment does not prevent Member States from maintaining or adopting specific measures to prevent or compensate for disadvantages linked to racial or ethnic origin. Some Member States have already successfully used positive action in favour of Roma, considering that classical social inclusion measures were not sufficient to meet Roma specific needs"<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup>European Commission: Directorate-General for Justice (2014) Report on the implementation of the EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, European Union 2014 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_implementation\\_strategies2014\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_implementation_strategies2014_en.pdf)

European Commission (2013) Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions steps forward in Implementing National Roma Integration Strategies. European Commission, Brussels, 26.6.2013. COM (2013) [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com\\_2013\\_454\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com_2013_454_en.pdf)

European Commission (2012) National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework - COM(2012) 226 [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_nat\\_integration\\_strat\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_nat_integration_strat_en.pdf)

<sup>23</sup>European Commission (2011) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.COM(2011) 173 final <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0173>



# Part 2

## Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Voices: Experts by Experience

This section of the report explores the experience of integration from the perspectives of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma populations across the UK.

Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people taking part in the study were not asking for preferential treatment; they simply wanted to be equal citizens and live their lives with dignity. This research has found that members of these communities are experiencing the outcomes of the successive failures of mainstream policies to address inequality and discrimination in UK society and they are ‘experts by experience’ of successive policy failures.

### How was the report developed?

This report has been developed through primary research conducted with people from the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as with other professionals working with the three communities. Community members have actively been involved in the design, data collection and analysis and their voices are at the heart of this report.<sup>24</sup> Community researchers interviewed a wide range of community members across the UK; 97 through face-to-face interviews and a further 30 through focus groups, see below.

In addition, the community researchers also interviewed 40 non-community members including civil servants, politicians, local service providers, local authority workers and other agencies working with Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Two focus groups were also held in Northern Ireland, organised by the local community members: one consisted of 11 female Travellers and the other was composed of a group of 19 Roma men and women.

<sup>24</sup>All participants gave informed consent for using their quotes. Their names have been removed to ensure their anonymity.

## Face to face interviews conducted by community researchers/focus group participants (2014)

Region	Roma	Irish Travellers	English and Welsh Romany Gypsy	Scottish Gypsy Traveller
<b>England</b>	23 men 9 Women	5 women 2 man	17 women 5 men	1 man
<b>Wales</b>	1 man 1 woman	1 woman	1 man 1 woman	
<b>N. Ireland</b>	7 men 12 women	11 women		
<b>Scotland</b>	1 man 1 women			17 women 11 men
<b>Total</b>	<b>23 women 32 men</b>	<b>17 women 2 men</b>	<b>18 women 6 men</b>	<b>17 women 12 men</b>

The research team also engaged with community members at *the Gypsies, Travellers and Roma Communities' National Conference* (February 2014). Seventy nine conference participants were able to express their views on UK progress on UK Integration.<sup>25</sup>

Desk research was carried out to analyse a large number of UK policy documents.

The following sections of the report are structured around the 'four pillars of integration' identified by the European Commission: accommodation (housing), education, employment and health. However, this section starts by looking at discrimination because many Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people experience this on a frequent or daily basis and it impinges upon and shapes every aspect of their daily lives.



*Health expert Dr Patrice Van Cleemput (centre) with Janie Codona of One Voice for Travellers* ©Johanna Price

<sup>25</sup>For details about the consultation during the conference see <http://travellersaidtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/London-Conference-Report-1.pdf>

## 2.1 Discrimination

### Progress report by the Ministerial Working Group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers (2012)

**Commitment 14** We have published a new cross-Government hate crime action plan, setting out our vision and approach for tackling hate crime over the remainder of this Parliament. The plan is based on three core principles, which we believe are necessary to reach our long-term goal. We will focus on: i) Preventing hate crime – by challenging the attitudes that underpin it, and early intervention to prevent it escalating; ii) Increasing reporting and access to support – by building victim confidence and supporting local partnerships; and iii) Improving the operational response to hate crimes – by better identifying and managing cases, and dealing effectively with offenders.

**Commitment 15** The Home Office will promote better recording of all hate crimes helping us to target our work more effectively and help the police to better focus resources.

**Commitment 16** The Association of Chief Police Officers will develop an information pack and self-reporting form specifically tailored for Gypsy and Traveller communities as part of its True Vision Website resource. Working with external partners, the Association of Chief Police Officers will develop culturally suitable and accessible material for Gypsy and Traveller communities. This will aim to provide information about what hate crime is and how it can be reported. The material will take a rights-based approach aiming to send the message that victims have the right to expect a high standard of service.<sup>26</sup>

In the UK, technically all citizens are protected against discrimination through international legislation and the UK Equality Act (2010). This should provide citizens with protection against discrimination. It also imposes duties on public authorities to promote equality and prevent discrimination. However, the European Court of Human Rights and the UN have drawn attention to the discrimination that Gypsies, Travellers and Roma communities face in the UK. Indeed a former Commission for Racial Equality concluded that being a Gypsy or Traveller in twenty-first century Britain is analogous to being a black American in the deep south of the 1950s,<sup>27</sup> such is the level of racism. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has continued to highlight the fact that Gypsies and Travellers routinely face discrimination, and this can involve violent and even fatal physical attacks through to lower level abuse and harassment on a daily basis.<sup>28</sup> Research for this report and many previous studies have also shown that discrimination and racism towards Gypsies, Irish Travellers (and more recently against the Roma community) continues across the UK and the following voices highlight some of their experiences.

### Racism

Racism towards most ethnic minority groups is now less frequently expressed in public and widely seen as unacceptable. However, racism towards Gypsies, Travellers and Roma communities is still common and is frequently blatant. In addition, abusive media coverage and overtly racist statements from local and national politicians add to the ignorance and prejudice of many members of the settled population, while those in authority frequently fail to challenge them.<sup>29</sup>

*'They make us out to be dirty, filthy fighting robbers who have no respect. Well I think they have us all wrong and it's the papers, TV and professionals that make the settled community not like us. It would make our lives a lot happier if they stopped being racist we have lived here as long as everyone else.'*

Gypsy/Traveller: Scotland<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Communities and Local Government (2012) Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers.

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6287/2124046.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6287/2124046.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Cited in Foster and Norton (2012) Educational Equality for Gypsy Roma and Traveller Children and Young People in the UK. The Equal Rights Review, Vol 8, 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission (2009) 'Inequalities Faced by Gypsies and Travellers'

[http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/research/12inequalities\\_experienced\\_by\\_gypsy\\_and\\_traveller\\_communities\\_a\\_review.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/research/12inequalities_experienced_by_gypsy_and_traveller_communities_a_review.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> As above page 5.

<sup>31</sup> The Scottish community refer to themselves as Gypsy/Travellers, this is to define themselves as a people that originated from Scottish Travellers and Romany Gypsy people

*It's terrible how Police treat you in camps always moving you on no matter what time it is. Once Health Visitors find out you're a Gypsy/Traveller they're on your case right 24/7. I think the authorities should try to understand the Gypsy/Traveller culture a bit more'*

Gypsy/ Traveller: Scotland

Another Gypsy interviewee also provided a powerful insight into the discrimination experienced by Gypsies and Travellers:

*Newspapers follow you to camps and take photos of your property, which they shouldn't be allowed to do. When the Police find out you're Gypsy/Travellers it's like they automatically lose respect for you. They follow motors out of the campsite and pull us up for no reason....Some young ones from the settled community throw stones and give us verbal abuse."*

Gypsy/ Traveller: Scotland

Many Roma people face a different articulation of discrimination (often because they are new migrants). Yet many Roma have come to the UK because they are trying to escape the new waves of discrimination and oppression that have swept across Eastern, Central and Southern Europe.

## The Media

In common with Gypsies and Travellers, the Roma continue to be targeted and vilified especially by the right wing press. These communities have expressed considerable concern about the media acting as a catalyst for intolerance and discrimination. The use of racist language about Gypsies, Travellers and Roma community members in the media endorses and promotes prejudice and discrimination. The print media exists within a regulatory framework, which does not allow general complaints of racial offence. The Press Complaints Commission supervises a code of practice, which makes reference to racial offence but only considers complaints to be within its scope when the

offensive words are used in relation to an *identified individual* who then themselves complain. Effectively this means that the PCC never upholds any complaints on grounds of racial offence.<sup>31</sup> However, following the Leveson Inquiry, the Press Complaints Commission will soon be replaced by a new structure of independent self-regulation for the newspaper and magazine industries and it remains to be how they will address racist reporting against Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities. It is also notable that the media coverage of Traveller issues is exacerbated by regular negative comments by Government and senior ministers on Traveller issues.<sup>32</sup> Gypsy, Travellers and Roma people are consistently presented in a negative light in the mainstream media. Evidence from online media monitoring indicates that the issue of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation dominates the majority of coverage.<sup>33</sup>

*'The media are rubbish they just make a fool of Travellers and make up stories in their own head. There are good and bad in all cultures including the settled community so they shouldn't stereotype everyone. We're not criticising them, or telling them how to live so they should leave us alone'.*

Gypsy/Traveller: Scotland

*'In some place discrimination from the settled community is bad, you get verbal abuse and can't be settled for long. Government should raise more awareness about our culture to professionals and the media shouldn't be allowed to take photos of us on our property or in camps or sites'.*

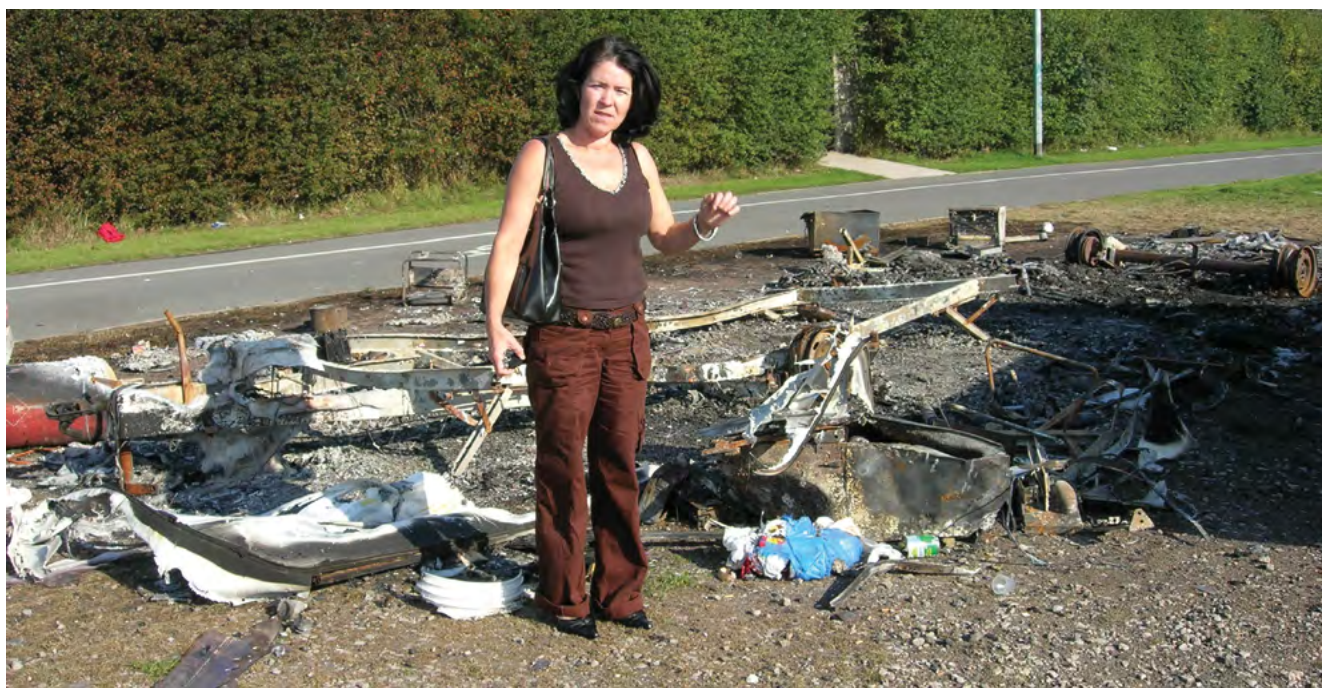
Gypsy/Traveller: Scotland

*'The media and the people's attitude become a circular self-fulfilling prophecy- one feeds the other. It is very hard to break into that you can't go to any news editor you might have better chance with TV or radio than with the newspaper. You can't just go to a paper and say can you write something nice about Travellers? It doesn't work this way. The possible and more*

<sup>31</sup> Morris, R. (2000) Gypsies, Travellers and the Media. Communications Law. Vol. 5, No 4 2000

<sup>32</sup> Joint submission by UK NGOs Against Racism to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) with regard to the UK Government's 18th and 19th Periodic Reports 2011. <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/pdfs/UK%20NGOs%20Against%20Racism%20CERD%20Report.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> Irish Traveller Movement in Britain. Media Monitor <http://www.irishtraveller.org.uk/media>



**Irish Traveller and burnt out trailer (arson attack)** ©Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group archives

*positive way would be to go down the path of the social media because with Twitter you have a flowing dialogue and somehow that dialogue might help to change attitudes. For example if a woman is abused she has made some opinion and then somebody sent abusive tweets to this woman and thousands of other people come down like a ton of bricks. And it might be that those of the sorts of the dialogues, particularly with the younger generations and those are the ones need to be heard now. If somebody came up with something abusive about Travellers it is continuously and vigorously challenged every time it happens. ‘*

**Irish Traveller :England**

The tabloid press has particularly targeted and vilified EU Roma citizens arriving in the UK. They tend to apply negative stereotypes to the whole ethnic group and used emotive and sensationalist language.<sup>34</sup> In addition there have been many distorted media reports of trafficking,<sup>35</sup> which often feeds into existing stereotypes and prejudice. One Roma participant discussed the

tabloid press hysteria which occurred in late 2013 (with reports which depicted unfounded perceptions of anti-social behaviour and child abduction) and how this had impacted on many members of their communities.

**[This] ‘caused extreme distress amongst many Roma parents and led to some families even being too frightened to take their children to the doctor for fear of their children being seized and placed in care’**

**Participant from Roma support Group**

## **Hate crime**

In 2012, the UK Government published an action plan to tackle hate crime in England, Wales and Northern Ireland entitled ‘Challenge it, Report it, Stop it’ (2012<sup>36</sup>) that sets out key delivery areas until 2015. The Action Plan notes that there may be a significant problem of under reporting of hate crime amongst Gypsy, Irish Traveller and Roma communities although there is little disaggregated data.<sup>37</sup> The European Commission (2014) noted the prevalence of discrimination in the UK and states that ‘hostile attitude and negative stereotyping of

<sup>34</sup>Equality (2010) What do we think of Romani People? [http://equalityuk.com/Resources/files/what\\_do\\_we\\_think\\_of\\_romani\\_people.pdf](http://equalityuk.com/Resources/files/what_do_we_think_of_romani_people.pdf)

<sup>35</sup>E.g. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2207821/Roma-gypsy-children-trafficked-Britain-steal-international-criminal-network.html>

<sup>36</sup>In September 2011, the Association of Chief Police Officers published figures covering the five monitored hate crime strands recorded by the police in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2010. The figures show that there were 48,127 recorded hate crimes, with 39,311 recorded in relation to racist crimes. However, data on race cannot be disaggregated to specifically identify hate crimes against Gypsies and Travellers.

<sup>37</sup>Equality and Human Rights Commission. (2009) Inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller Communities: a review. (Research report 12). London: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hate-crime-action-plan-challenge-it-report-it-stop-it>

Gypsies and Travellers and newly arrived Roma should be carefully addressed. Effective measures should be taken to combat anti-Roma rhetoric and hate speech'.<sup>38</sup>

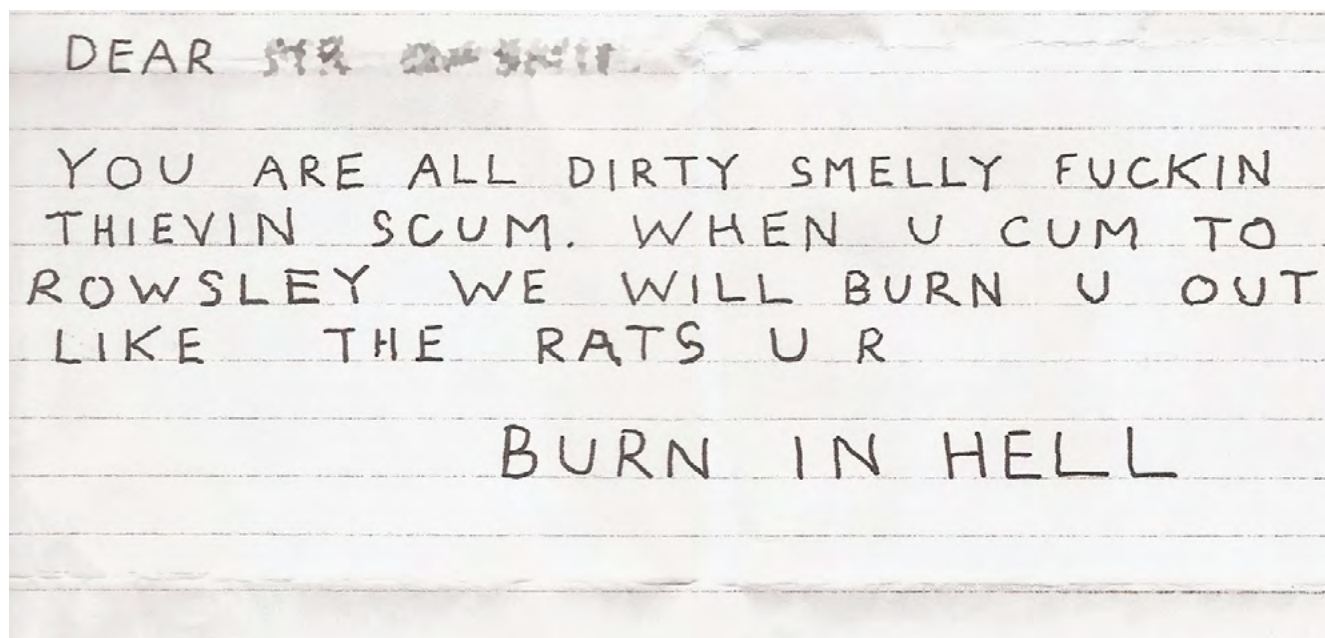
*'I have been discriminated against all my life. I've been attacked by thugs and nothing was done about it. I've been discriminated against by the Police on numerous occasions. Not good experiences'.*

#### Gypsy/ Traveller: Scotland

It is notable that the British Crime Survey only visits households and not trailer/ caravan sites, so their experience of crime is unrecorded. There are also concerns that funding cuts to Police force are likely to reduce the number and scope of race equality and liaison officers and services within police forces. This has the potential to weaken the impact of some of the positive new improved guidance and initiatives on working with Gypsy Traveller and Roma communities.

#### A safe site

In 2011, the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) noted that drastic inequalities and discrimination continue to be faced by Gypsies, Travellers and Roma communities across the UK. The CERD was particularly concerned about site provision, which they identified as the lynch-pin to many of the inequalities suffered by these communities<sup>39</sup> and the Equality and Human Rights Commission has shown examples of how local communities have mobilised to oppose legal Gypsy and Traveller sites. Housed Gypsies and Travellers are also exposed to racism from neighbours and this can have a negative impact on their health and well-being. Research suggests that Gypsies and Travellers may be more reluctant to report hate crimes or incidents because of distrust of the police.<sup>40</sup> Gypsies and Travellers we interviewed for this report frequently expressed concerns about their experiences of racism and discrimination.



**Letter received by English Gypsy** ©Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group archives

<sup>38</sup>European Commission: Directorate-General for Justice (2014) Report on the implementation of the EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. European Union 2014 (page 55)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_implementation\\_strategies2014\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_implementation_strategies2014_en.pdf)

<sup>39</sup>UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2011)

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/human-rights/international-framework/international-convention-on-the-elimination-of-all-forms-of-racial-discrimination>

<sup>40</sup>Equality and Human Rights Commission (2009) 'Inequalities Faced by Gypsies and Travellers'

[http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/research/t2inequalities\\_experienced\\_by\\_gypsy\\_and\\_traveller\\_communities\\_a\\_review.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/research/t2inequalities_experienced_by_gypsy_and_traveller_communities_a_review.pdf)

*'I wish we didn't have to stay in a house but we have been forced to with the discrimination we receive on camps.'*

**Gypsy/Traveller: Scotland**

*'I've had Police coming into camps late at night putting their sirens on then driving back out again. The Police don't believe anything you say, they always think the bad of you. I've seen newspapers being racist and blaming everything on Gypsy/Travellers even though it wasn't them. It would be good if the media stopped harassing us at camps and sites and the Police were not allowed to move us on during the night or in the early hours.'*

**Gypsy/ Traveller: Scotland**

*'We have difficulty getting a house you know, when people knows you're a Traveller in the street we get hassle all the time, sometimes the people in the street will get social workers to come down, we get accused of being cruel to the children.'*

**Irish Traveller**

## The Issue of Trafficking

In the UK, people often associate human trafficking with people from Eastern European; however, trafficking is an international crime with potential victims coming to the UK from over 80 countries.<sup>41</sup> There are no reliable statistics on the occurrence of trafficking in general and there is absence of disaggregated data in the UK .

*'The police often talk about Roma as being heavily involved in people trafficking. That's wrong as there is little evidence behind it.'*

**Equality Spokesperson**

However, across Europe the Roma are significantly overrepresented as victims of trafficking. Roma communities across Eastern Europe do face extensive

and endemic social exclusion and this often renders women and children vulnerable to trafficking. As many Roma in Eastern Europe have been excluded from registering with state authorities, they are deprived of social assistance, access to adequate housing, medical care and educational opportunities. This, in turn, results in poverty and unemployment, both of which make individuals, especially women and children, vulnerable to trafficking.<sup>43</sup> The UK Government does have a strategy on human trafficking (2011)<sup>44</sup> but there is a need to both work to educate potential Roma victims about the dangers of trafficking and to work with community groups in the UK to help victims of trafficking from the Roma communities find support. Clearly this is an issue of serious concern and it is a very sensitive area and one that requires effective government action, working in partnership with civil society organisations.

## Combatting discrimination: Examples of positive practice

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is responsible for the promotion and enforcement of equality and non-discrimination laws and for recording and processing complaints and allegations of violations in England, Scotland and Wales. While in England there have been no specific measures to combat anti-Gypsy, Traveller and Roma discrimination and racism, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are starting to make some limited progress in this area.

**The Scottish Government has** accepted the recommendation of the Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee to launch a national public awareness-raising campaign aimed at tackling discrimination and racism against Gypsy/Travellers. This forms part of a 'One Scotland' campaign to promote cohesion.<sup>45</sup> The Government published its equality outcomes in 2013 and one of the targeted outcomes relates specifically to Gypsies/Travellers. The Scottish Government is currently working with the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) to

<sup>41</sup>HM Government (2010) Human Trafficking: The Government's Strategy. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/97845/human-trafficking-strategy.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97845/human-trafficking-strategy.pdf)

<sup>42</sup>The UK is a signatory to the European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005) and has legislative provisions in immigration legislation, which criminalise trafficking <http://www.inbrief.co.uk/offences/human-trafficking-uk-law.htm>

<sup>43</sup>[http://www.2ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/ERRC\\_2\\_CzechRepublic\\_CEDAW47.pdf](http://www.2ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/ERRC_2_CzechRepublic_CEDAW47.pdf)

<sup>44</sup>Human Trafficking: The Government's Strategy (2011) [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/97845/human-trafficking-strategy.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97845/human-trafficking-strategy.pdf)

<sup>45</sup>Scottish Government response to recommendations. Equal Opportunities Committee - 1st Report, 2013 (Session 4) "Where Gypsy/ Travellers Live". June, 2013

Roma Integration Strategies Brussels, 24.2014. COM(2014) 209 final (SWD(2014) 121 final) [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com\\_209\\_2014\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com_209_2014_en.pdf)

deliver Scotland's first National Action Plan (SNAP) on human rights and although this is at an early stage of development, it will seek to integrate public service delivery through a systematic approach towards the realisation of human rights in practice. The Scottish Equality and Human Rights Commission has updated its guidance to the media on Gypsies, Travellers and Roma to reduce the incidence of unfair reporting (2013)<sup>46</sup>

**The Welsh Government** has published a consultation document (2013) for a Framework for Action on Hate Crime,<sup>47</sup> which made a number of references to the risks faced by Gypsy and Traveller communities and the high level of under reporting of hate crime. The final version of the framework was launched in 2014 with an accompanying delivery plan. As part of the 'Travelling Ahead' project, (a Wales-wide project that seeks to improve the participation of young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in decisions and services and advocate for their rights), a film was made by young people talking about their experiences of hate crime <http://vimeo.com/97508610>

**Northern Ireland** has a separate Equality Commission and a Human Rights Commission. A review of the annual reports of the ECNI for 2012/13 indicated that no major or targeted projects had been undertaken with Traveller and Roma communities, but they did note that

the 'Do You Mean Me?' survey of public attitudes to and experiences of equality in Northern Ireland revealed negative attitudes towards Travellers.<sup>48</sup> One Health and Social Care Trust in Belfast is the lead partner in the European Union funded '*I am Roma*' programme, which seeks to promote social inclusion and address issues of discrimination of the Roma community through partnership working to cultivate positive changes in outlook about Roma in Belfast.

**European perspective:** In 2013, the European Commission acknowledged that the 'Roma' face particular challenges and that without systemic measures to fight discrimination and racism towards the 'Roma', the implementation of the national 'Roma' integration strategies cannot yield the expected results.<sup>49</sup>

### European Commission (2014)

'The principle of non-discrimination is one of the core principles of our European Union. Thirteen years after the EU's landmark anti-discrimination directives were adopted in 2000, discrimination against Roma is still widespread. This has no place in the European Union. The situation of Roma women is often worse than that of Roma men, as they tend to face multiple-discrimination. The situation of Roma children often raises additional concerns'.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup>Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2013) Gypsies and Travellers in Scotland: A resource for the Media. Update June 2013

[http://www.amnesty.org.uk/sites/default/files/ehrc\\_gypsy\\_travellers\\_in\\_scotland\\_media\\_resource\\_june\\_2013.pdf](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/sites/default/files/ehrc_gypsy_travellers_in_scotland_media_resource_june_2013.pdf)

<sup>47</sup>Welsh Government - Framework for Action on Hate Crime <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/equality/rightsequality/hate-crime/?skip=1&lang=en>

<sup>48</sup>Equality Commission Northern Ireland, Annual Report and Accounts 2012-2013 <http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/AnnualReport2013.pdf>

<sup>49</sup>Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Steps forward in Implementing National Roma Integration Strategies, June 2013

<sup>50</sup>Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Report on the Implementation of the EU Framework for National

## 2.2 Accommodation

### Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers (2012)

**Commitment 12** The Department for Communities and Local Government will help Gypsy and Traveller representative groups showcase small private sites that are well presented and maintained. Subject to site owners agreeing to have their homes included we will help produce a case study document which local authorities and councillors, potential site residents and the general public could use. It could also be adapted and used in connection with planning applications.

**Commitment 13** The Government will continue to promote improved health outcomes for travellers through the planning system<sup>51</sup>.

Being nomadic is an important part of Gypsy and Traveller identity and family life and many testified to this during this research.

*'Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers often means somewhere to put a caravan so that they can live in a traditional way and it needs to be viewed the same way as bricks and mortar accommodation is and when there's a duty on a local authority to provide accommodation that doesn't mean provide bricks and mortar accommodation, for Gypsies and Travellers it means somewhere to put a caravan and to be able to live in a way that's culturally suitable.'*

Gypsy: England

*'You know the majority of people that still want to stick to their roots and to travel and to live in a trailer as well rather than houses. I don't think there's enough room to do that at the minute, I think there should be more sites available.'*

Gypsy: England

However, a lack of appropriate trailer sites, combined with insufficient provision is having a significant detrimental impact on the lives of Gypsies and Travellers across the UK. For Roma people, who are not generally nomadic in the UK, the real issues are poor quality housing, discrimination and the high cost of housing for families who are usually living on low wages.

The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, adopted in March 2012, set out the government's approach to planning for the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites that must be met by local authorities in their development plans. One of the key principles of the national planning policy is to ensure collaboration between Local Authorities, stakeholders, community groups and their support organisations. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites aims to mainstream the provision of culturally appropriate accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers by requiring Local Authorities to develop fair and inclusive planning strategies. However, many community members feel that this is not happening. A study assessing the progress made in the South East and East of England in meeting the requirements, found that just four out of 115 surveyed authorities have implemented the policies<sup>52</sup> and consequently, there are a number of equality and human rights implications that arise from the national shortfall of stopping places and permanent sites. Gypsy and Traveller community members spoke out about their experiences and the impact on their lives of both poor quality sites as well as their experiences of being evicted and moved on.

*'I find it very hard for a place to stop. I always find like all the sites that we've got here have all like overcrowded the only other option is pull on the side of the road and then when we do that there the police is moving us on every day or two, work ain't coming in and it's just a hard way of going.'*

Gypsy: England

<sup>51</sup>Communities and Local Government (2012)Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6287/2124046.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6287/2124046.pdf)

<sup>52</sup>Traveller Law Reform Project. (2013)Planning Policy for Traveller Sites Implementation in the South East and East of England.

<http://offlinehplhbpl.co.uk/NewsAttachments/RLP/PPTS%20Implementation%20in%20South%20East%20and%20East%20England%20v2.pdf?HAYILC=INLINE>

*'We are treated like outcasts and always getting moved on like we are nothing. Governments need to make more transit sites and not judge us. Not all Travellers and Gypsies are bad or the same.'*

Irish Traveller

*'We are always getting arrested and charged for living on private land.- harassment and discrimination. There should be more camps and sites. The settled community should be punished for harassing us.'*

Gypsy/Traveller: Scotland

*'I've been put off camps all my life. While my husband was out working I've been physically dragged out of my home and forced to leave.'*

Gypsy/ Traveller: Scotland

*'I have had bad experiences. We've been driven out of our house for being Gypsy/Travellers, had to leave at 2 o'clock in the morning with all the family. In camps you're always scared in case the settled people come down and wreck your home.'*

Gypsy/ Traveller: Scotland

*'I like the outside experience; it's my culture but its punishment getting moved all the time. They always try to hide Travellers from the settled community. As long as we are keeping it clean they should leave us alone. They should build more sites.'*

Gypsy/ Traveller: Scotland

Many of the community members spoke out about the poor quality of many local authority sites that are often very isolated. This can be particularly difficult for older people and people with young families.

*'We were on a site that was 40 miles from a shop. If that's anything to go by, people want Travellers out of the way and no one wants us on camps beside them. The Government really needs to change things for Travellers'*

Traveller: Wales

Where local authorities do provide sites, they are legally expected to address housing issues, such as adaptations for disabled tenants, repairs, and safety issues etc. (in the same way as they would to any other social housing tenant). However, the Equality and Human Rights Commission found that 'some sites are also of poor environmental quality (under pylons, near industrial land or major transport junctions) and suffer from poor access and badly maintained approaches, making it hard for residents to get to local services and for local services to reach them. Facilities for children and older people can also be inadequate'<sup>53</sup> This was echoed by Gypsies and Travellers who spoke out in this research.

*'The campsites are always so isolated and hazardous. They're always built next to dangers like train stations, scrapyards and motorways. When building the sites they don't think of the safety of children or the mental or physical issues this causes Gypsy/Travellers. I think it would be better if they listened to Gypsy/Travellers and ask us where we would like to live.'*

Gypsy/ Traveller: Scotland

Gypsies and Travellers have been encouraged to purchase their own land. However, both the European Court of Human Rights and the House of Lords have cast doubt on the effectiveness of this policy approach because while Gypsies and Travellers have to apply for planning permission (the same as any other citizen) they are usually refused planning permission. 'Their [Gypsies and Travellers] attempts to obtain planning permission almost always met with failure: statistics quoted by the European Court [found that] 90% of applications made by Gypsies had been refused whereas 80% of all [of other] applications had been granted'.<sup>54</sup>

*'There is a lot of issues around planning and there are considerable amount of issues around people buying land and trying to get planning permission for that land and not being able to, for what seem to be trivial things ..... Council sites usually seem to be poorly run in the sense of where they are. For*

<sup>53</sup>Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2013) Gypsies and Travellers in Scotland: A resource for the Media. Update: June 2013 [http://www.amnesty.org.uk/sites/default/files/ehrc\\_gypsy\\_travellers\\_in\\_scotland\\_media\\_resource\\_june\\_2013.pdf](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/sites/default/files/ehrc_gypsy_travellers_in_scotland_media_resource_june_2013.pdf)

<sup>54</sup>South Bucks v Porter, Wrexham CBC v Berry and Chichester Dc v Keet and Searle, (2003) UKHL 26, (2003) 2 WLR 1547; HL, 19th May 2003.

*housed Gypsies and Travellers going into housing they tend to be putting into social housing in areas that no one else wants to go into so they tend to be in very deprived areas which obviously once you are in deprived areas it is quite difficult then to get out of it'.*

Gypsy: England

*We eventually did get planning permission with restrictions, so we haven't got full planning permission like a normal householder would have. We can't continue our lives like normal citizens we've got restrictions but still very happy to have permission and to be able to stay somewhere and continue our life in a traditional fashion.*

Gypsy: England

Due to the lack of stopping places, many Gypsies and Travellers find that they are forced into bricks and mortar accommodation. However, for many members of the community, leaving their traditional life behind to move into conventional housing can produce social isolation and sometimes serious psychological and psychiatric problems, due to their cultural aversion to this form of accommodation and separation from their family and community.

*'I am from a travelling background and I get very ill when I am static and I really would prefer to be in a caravan with other people of my ethnicity around'*

Gypsy /Traveller: Scotland



Gypsy family Site ©DGLG planning archives

*I think the majority of Travellers in London are in bricks and mortar and many of those are desperate to get out of housing on to sites. You've got young people who perhaps growing up on sites have always lived within that kind of extended family community on sites. Then because they got married and they need to have their own home and its overcrowded ... then they are forced into maybe going down the homeless route (or) they might get a flat or get into a hostel and that is causing all kinds of problems. I think break down within the community young people who are not coping with the isolation of living away from their extended family. It's not where they want to be so then they spend their time back on the sites and it is a very dysfunctional situation.*

Irish Traveller: England

*'Lot of the Travellers who live here in houses, even though now they'd rather live on sites if they have the choice'*

Irish Traveller: Northern Ireland

## Impact of localism

Community leaders have expressed concern about the impact of the localism agenda, especially as many local communities are hostile to Gypsies and Travellers and many Gypsies and Travellers find it harder to get planning permission than it is for other people.<sup>55</sup>

*One of the negatives is perhaps the localism bill which is a licence to practice nimbyism; localism allows people to say we're not having Gypsies in our back yard, our locality, that's had a detrimental effect.*

Gypsy: England

Concern has also been expressed that recently the Government has been intervening and 'reviewing' Gypsies and Travellers planning applications, even though they had already been approved at a local level (by local inspectorates). This level of intervention

contrasts starkly with the governments' unwillingness to take positive steps to improve site provision.

There are also serious concerns about a 2014 written Ministerial statement to Parliament that stated 'We also want to consider the case for changes to the planning definition of 'travellers' to reflect whether it should only refer to those who actually travel and have a mobile or transitory lifestyle. We are open to representations on these matters and will be launching a consultation in due course' There is a fear that the outcome of this proposed review will restrict the rights of community members to culturally appropriate accommodation if they are temporarily forced into housing because of children's education, health or other commitments.

## Roma accommodation issues

The Roma are often located in poor and deprived areas and because of the shortage of social housing, tend to end up renting in the private sector. A number of respondents in this report highlighted that unscrupulous landlords are charging Roma tenants high rents for low quality and overcrowded accommodation. There is very little research on the accommodation needs, or experiences of Roma communities.

*'Roma people feel it's very unfair that they all have such a bad name and request that landlords are monitored and 'punished' if found to treat people incorrectly'.*

Roma participant

*'People also need to present proof of address for national insurance-number purposes: but the Roma people find it difficult to hire a house: the landlords do not want Roma people'.*

Roma participant

*'When new families move in [to accommodation] conditions are appalling, we do a lot of referrals to housing standards, some of the properties are really unsafe, and overcrowding is a major problem. Some of the families are not even given*

<sup>55</sup>House of Commons Debate 17th Jan 2014 (c35WS) <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/201314/cmhansrd/cm140117/wmstext/140117m0001.htm>

*tenancy agreements and few know their rights. There are a lot of illegal evictions, which tend to happen at weekends when services aren't around. A lot of them feel very intimidated. It's the sort of accommodation that nobody else would rent.*

Health worker  
dedicated to provide support for new arrivals

**Sergeant** – *'Horrendous [housing conditions], again they [Roma] are being exploited in a lot of cases. The accommodation they are being put into is awful, you wouldn't....'* **[Inspector interjects]** *'No other sector of the community would have it'...* **Sgt-** *'and it's the amount of people living in each house as well which is unbelievable, overcrowding; and the rent that they are paying is extortionate, isn't it?'* **Inspector** – *'Compared to what they are getting, yes. We have gone back to living in Dickensian times...'*

Police spokespersons: England

## Examples of positive practice

It has been difficult to identify any positive practice in the area of accommodation. However, we note the following.

### Scotland

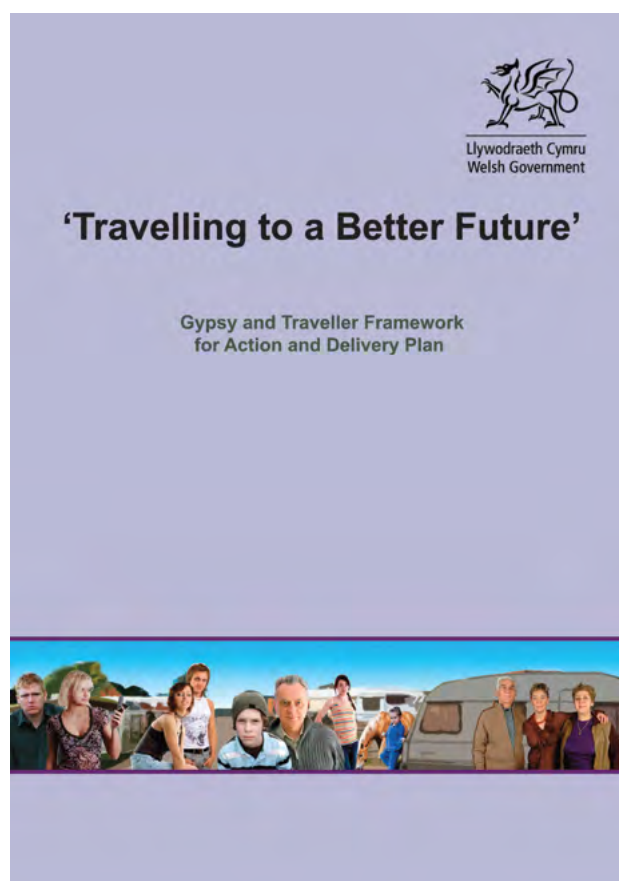
Although the Equal Opportunities Committee of the Scottish Parliament did not consider the issue of Roma, the following was noted in their report: "We heard, however, a distressing account of the living conditions that some migrant Roma find themselves in upon reaching Scotland. We see this as a crucial area for further work" (Para 5).<sup>56</sup>

### Wales

'Travelling Ahead to a Better Future (2012)<sup>57</sup> is strategically addressing accommodation issues for Gypsies and Travellers in Wales. The strategy does not discuss Roma accommodation but the Wales Migration partnership funded by the Welsh Government (and based in the Welsh Government Association) is exploring ways to develop Roma inclusion issues in Wales.

## European Commission (2014)

'To close the gap between Roma and non-Roma, the EU Framework calls on Member States to promote non-discriminatory access to housing, including social housing and public utilities (such as water, electricity and gas). Furthermore, the EU Framework underlined the need to address housing as part of an integrated approach to social inclusion and desegregation'.<sup>58</sup>



<sup>56</sup>The Scottish Parliament (2013) Equal Opportunities Committee: 1st Report, 2013 (Session 4) Where Gypsy/Travellers Live. [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4\\_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Reports/eor-13-01wp.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_EqualOpportunitiesCommittee/Reports/eor-13-01wp.pdf)

<sup>57</sup>Welsh Government (2012) Travelling to a Better Future

<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/docs/learningwales/publications/121115gypsytravelleren.pdf> and update (2013) <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/ds/jlg/publications/equality/131105gypsy-trav-framework-en.pdf>

<sup>58</sup>Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Report on the Implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies Brussels, 24.10.2014 COM(2014) 209 final (SWD(2014) 121 final) [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com\\_209\\_2014\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com_209_2014_en.pdf)

## 2.3 Education

### **Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers (2012)**

**Commitment 1** Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils are specifically highlighted as a vulnerable group in the revised Ofsted framework, ensuring that school inspections will pay particular attention to their progress, attainment and attendance.

**Commitment 2** The Department for Education will establish a Virtual Head Teachers pilot for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, along the lines of the successful Looked-After Children model. The pilot will run in a small number of Local Authorities with higher than average numbers of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, beginning in April 2012. Funding will be allocated to each authority for the appointment of a senior dedicated individual to champion the interests of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils across the authority and to monitor and respond to issues of low attainment and attendance. They will provide training and support to schools; work to identify and return to school those Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children who are missing from education and raise awareness among schools and others about the barriers to success which these children face - and how best to overcome them. We will carefully monitor the impact of the pilot on attendance, attainment and rates of permanent and fixed exclusions and will share the results with schools and local authorities.

**Commitment 3** The Department for Education will introduce the following measure designed to tackle poor attendance among Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. Existing legislation (set out in Section 444 (6) of the 1996 Education Act) protects mobile Gypsy and Traveller families

from prosecution for their children's non-attendance provided that: they are engaged in a trade of business of such a nature that requires them to travel from place to place; the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade permits; and any child aged six or over has attended school for at least 200 half day sessions during the preceding year. The Government believes that this concession has come to be seen by some schools - and by Gypsy and Traveller families themselves - as giving tacit consent for mobile pupils to benefit only from a significantly shortened school year. We intend to look again at the impact of this legislation and to consult on whether it should be repealed. In parallel with this action, we intend to review the statutory guidance in relation to Children Missing Education and will make sure this reflects the need to identify Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, who are missing out on their education.

**Commitment 4** In response to the unacceptably high levels of exclusion among certain pupil groups, the Department for Education will take steps to assess the impact of school-based commissioning, alternative provision and early intervention on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. In the Schools White Paper in 2010, the Government announced its intention to test a new approach to permanent school exclusion which will see schools, rather than local authorities, placing excluded pupils in appropriate alternative settings, funding the placements from a devolved budget and monitoring both attainment and attendance. The exclusions trial will take place in 300 secondary schools and will cover three school years, beginning in autumn 2011. It will have a particular focus on those disadvantaged and vulnerable groups who are most affected by exclusion including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

**Commitment 5** In line with its Schools White Paper commitment, Ofsted is conducting a survey on prejudiced-based bullying, which is now under way. This will involve inspectors talking to pupils about their experiences of bullying and the way in which it is handled in their schools. Bullying of minority groups will be picked up in this survey, and the results will be published in 2012.

**Commitment 6** The Department for Education has approached some of the higher performing primary and secondary schools for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils to find out from them what lies behind their success. The Department for Education will collect and publish brief case studies from each of these schools to be shared with schools, local authorities and education professionals around the country.<sup>59</sup>

Education plays a central role in the social inclusion and well-being of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children and their families. Indeed the Government has also recognised this in their own report on integration and 'what happens in the earliest years of a child's life can help to shape their long term views and values, and can influence their future success'<sup>60</sup>

Yet Gypsies and Travellers have the highest proportion of people with no qualifications<sup>61</sup> for any ethnic group (60 %).<sup>62</sup> In 2011, just 25% of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils achieved national expectations in English and mathematics at the end of their primary education, compared with 74% of all pupils. At the end of secondary education, just 12% of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils achieved five or more good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, compared with 58.2% of all pupils. Many families value education and feel it is important for their children.

*'I do think it's important for the children to have education...there that's like a thing of the past and this here new world what were living in. It's like if you haven't like got an education you're nowhere. So like unless you have got an education you have not got like a chance but if you got no like education your just like on the doorstep'*

**Gypsy: England**

It is notable that there is very little research on the educational experiences of Roma children in the UK but many in the Roma community also spoke of their hopes for their children.

*'My daughter is at school from five, I want that she will be educated here. I want to stay here. I will not return back to my country in Slovakia. I want that she will receive a good education here and then she will have a job. I want that she will not have to work hard like me and that she will have a better job, and easier job than me.'*

**Roma father: Northern Ireland**

## Bullying in schools

The most common reason for the reluctance to send Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children to school is the prevalence of racist bullying, which can range from generalised abuse to physical attacks. Nearly 9 out of every 10 children and young people from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background have suffered racial abuse and nearly two thirds have also been bullied or physically attacked. Clearly schools should have clear policies to do with the prevention of bullying but many schools are failing to address these issues.<sup>65</sup>

*'As a young Gypsy/Traveller I've always been discriminated by the settled community, in school and out of it.'*

**Gypsy /Traveller: Scotland**

<sup>59</sup> Communities and Local Government (2012) Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/62872/2124046.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/62872/2124046.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) Creating the Conditions for Integration [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7504/2092103.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7504/2092103.pdf)

<sup>61</sup> ONS (2014) 47% of Gypsy or Traveller young people aged 16-24 had no qualifications and for people aged 65 years and older this was 84% - ref below

<sup>62</sup> ONS (2014) What does the 2011 Census tell us about the Characteristics of Gypsy or Irish Travellers in England and Wales.

<sup>63</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) Reducing inequalities for Gypsies and Travellers: progress report <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-inequalities-for-gypsies-and-travellers-progress-report>

<sup>64</sup> Ureche, H. and Franks, M., (2007) This is Who We Are: A study of the views and identities of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller young people in England. The Children's Society.

<sup>65</sup> Foster, B and Norton P. (2012) Educational Equality for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young people in the UK. The Equal Rights Review. Vol 8

*'Most schools don't treat Travellers as equal. Teachers always assume that young Travellers have problems with literacy – they don't all have. It would help if the stopped separating young Gypsy/Travellers and young folk from the settled community because we are all the same, we should all be treated equally.'*

Gypsy /Traveller: Scotland

*'Some schools separate young Gypsy/Travellers from other children which isn't fair, they don't separate other students from other cultures/ races so why separate young Gypsy/Travellers? I think as time goes on and by raising everywhere so everyone can understand there is good and bad in every culture people will start understanding Gypsy/Traveller culture more and things will get better'*

Gypsy /Traveller :England

*'I put my children to full time education but it did not fit my children's cultural needs – very prejudiced'*

Gypsy /Traveller: Scotland

*'We want the children to get an education but there is a lot of prejudice especially since the My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding programme. We pulled them out of school while that was going on. It was a bad thing, the posters up all over the place was disgusting.'*

Irish Traveller

*'The reason Traveller children don't tend to stay on in secondary school is because they are frightened of secondary school, because of bullying inside the school'*

Irish Traveller: Northern Ireland

Evidence suggests that where Gypsy and Traveller pupils do transfer successfully to secondary school, their attendance is unlikely to continue beyond the age of 14 (DfES 2006).

## The educational experiences of Roma children

There is very limited data on the educational experiences and attainment of Roma children and young people in the UK and this is mainly on account of them being included within the national data collected for Gypsy children and young people. However, research concerning the educational attainment of Roma adults suggests that they often have very poor levels of education in their country of origin. However, one small study conducted with Roma children living in the UK suggests that they seem to be achieving relatively well and are often outperforming Gypsy and Traveller children<sup>66</sup>

*'Special attention is required for these Roma children who may not have received formal education or if they have, may have had a very negative experience and there can also be trauma from experiencing poor quality education, delivered in an openly discriminatory environment. For example, (in their country of origin, there may be) two schools under the same roof, one for Roma one for non-Roma, which shows discrimination in terms of policy and practices delivered in order to discriminate against these people, to marginalise them, to segregate them and to make them suffer.'*

Community worker

However, many Roma parents and young people also stated that Roma children are also facing discrimination in the UK.

*'My first day at X College was my first fight; I didn't know what it was about I didn't understand them but I know they were being racist to me. It was with White people and the Asian, and from that day it was two times a week that we had a fight. Yes it was because of cigarettes, because I used to smoke. They asked me for cigarettes and if I say I didn't have them they just slap me. I was unhappy. Even the Police were in X College many times.'*

<sup>66</sup>Ryder, A, Acton, T, Alexander, S, Cemlyn, S, Greenfield, M, Richardson, J, Smith, D and Van Cleemput, P (2011), A Big or Divided Society? Panel Review into the Coalition Government Policy on Gypsies and Travellers, Travellers Aid Trust, 2011



*Roma Teaching Assistant and Roma Pupil* ©Ciara Leeming

*It wasn't the fight with just Roma people it was the white and Asian people as well. They used to take into school like a knife.'*

**Roma student**

## Education in England

There are no nation-wide initiatives in England to promote inclusive education specifically for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children. Where good practice does exist, Traveller Education Support Services (TESS) usually champion it - but there are concerns that cuts to local authority budgets are undermining much of this work.<sup>67</sup> A significant number of poor Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children do not benefit from free school meals (FSM). Many Gypsy and Traveller families are too proud to claim what they see as a 'state hand-out' and so do not claim their entitlement to free school meals. Most Roma families, however, are debarred from claiming free school meals due to their immigration status and the increasing number of regulations penalising European Union migrants from state benefits. This reinforces their educational disadvantage and experience of discrimination. Since the Department for Education has repeatedly refused to specifically

include Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children within the criteria for the Pupil Premium, many schools do not feel that they have the necessary funds to make adequate provision for these children.

## Education in Scotland

The Scottish Traveller Education Project has noted that there are many concerns regarding successful outcomes in education for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma pupils that have not been addressed over many years. It remains to be seen whether the developing Scottish education strategy will address these concerns.

## Education in Wales

In Wales, the policy documents, *'Travelling to a Better Future'* (2012) *Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan* (2013) outlines the policy framework for Gypsy and Traveller education in Wales. Here the Traveller Education Support Services (TESS) seem to have fared better than their counterparts in England in terms of retaining service provision and supporting Roma pupils alongside Gypsies and Travellers (although the Roma have not been included in the Welsh strategy).

<sup>67</sup> The Independent newspaper (2011) used the Freedom of Information Act to find out about funding to traveller education services. They found that nearly half of 127 authorities have either abolished their traveller education service or drastically cut staff levels. This affects approximately 100,000 children in the travelling community. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cuts-threaten-traveller-childrens-schooling-2330282.html>

## Education in Northern Ireland

The Department of Education recently issued a Traveller Child in Education Action Framework (2013). It is commendable that an independent Monitoring and Evaluation Group will be established to monitor the Action Framework and the group will report directly to the Minister.

## A note on Roma education

For generations, Roma children have been disproportionately placed in segregated or special schools/classes across Eastern Europe. However, a small-scale research study conducted in eight locations across the UK (2011), found that the majority of the Roma students who had previously been sent to segregated or special schools/classes in their countries of origin, had successfully completed their education in mainstream schools in the UK. The UK Department for Education should consider how it could help to disseminate good practices that increase the academic attainment of Roma pupils.<sup>68</sup>

## Examples of positive practice

### Wales

The 'Travelling to a Better Future' Gypsy and 'Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan' outlines the policy framework for Gypsy and Traveller education in Wales and formed part of the UK submission for the EU Roma Framework. Key points include the provision of an annual grant for the education of Gypsy and Traveller children and the existence of a stronger Traveller Education Service. In addition, the Welsh Government's Department for Education and Skills provides the secretariat and chair for a Gypsy and Traveller education forum, which draws together local authority practitioners from across Wales who are working to support Gypsy and Traveller Education.<sup>69</sup>

## Northern Ireland

The Inclusion and Diversity Service in the Department of Education, provides interpreters, translators and a multi-lingual website for teachers and parents. It also gives direct funding allocations to schools to afford them the flexibility to determine the best way to welcome, value and support newcomer pupils and promote their inclusion. Roma and Traveller pupils in grant-aided schools are allocated additional funding of over £1,000 per year for each Traveller pupil. The Educational Welfare Service has put in place a programme to support Roma families and the schools attended by Roma children which includes: early intervention with Roma parents to improve school attendance; developing education resources for Roma families; developing protocols and collecting and assessing data. Across the country arts projects within Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities and the formerly government funded national '*Gypsy, Roma Traveller History Month*' have also been invaluable in countering prejudice and discrimination, improving cultural understanding and celebrating community heritage.

## European Commission (2014)

'In the EU Framework, the Commission calls on Member States to ensure, as a minimum, primary school completion, to widen access to quality early childhood education and care, ensure that Roma children are not subject to discrimination or segregation and to reduce the number of early school leavers. Member States were also called upon to encourage Roma youngsters to participate in secondary and tertiary education'.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup>Equality (2011) From Segregation to inclusion. Roma pupils in the United Kingdom: A pilot research project. November 2011 [http://equalityuk.com/Education\\_files/From%20segregation%20to%20integration\\_1.pdf](http://equalityuk.com/Education_files/From%20segregation%20to%20integration_1.pdf)

<sup>69</sup>'Travelling to a Better Future' Gypsy and 'Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan' [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma\\_uk\\_strategy\\_annex1\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_uk_strategy_annex1_en.pdf)

<sup>70</sup>European Commission (2014) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Report on the Implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies Brussels, 24.2014 COM(2014) 209 final (SWD(2014) 121 final) [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com\\_209\\_2014\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com_209_2014_en.pdf)

## 2.4 Employment

### Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers (2012)

**Commitment 23** The Department for Work and Pensions will provide personalised support to Gypsies and Travellers via the Work Programme and where needed, Gypsies and Travellers will have access to appropriate skills support.

**Commitment 24** The Department for Work and Pensions will include Gypsies and Travellers as a monitoring category in our IT, processing and management information systems with changes being made for the introduction of Universal Credit in 2013.

**Commitment 25** The Department for Work and Pensions will improve internal guidance and staff awareness of Gypsies and Travellers as ethnic groups. We will work to identify informative case studies and instances of best practice and review and promote the existing guidance on working with Gypsies and Travellers.

We will also work with Human Resources colleagues to update Diversity guidance and training materials on race to include mention of Gypsies and Travellers.

**Commitment 26** The Department for Work and Pensions consulted with the Ethnic Minority Advisory Group on the inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers. The Ethnic Minority Advisory Group agreed that Gypsies and Travellers should be represented and, following an application process, the Irish Traveller Movement in Britain now represent Gypsies and Travellers on the advisory group.<sup>71</sup>

Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities share some commonalities in terms of their lack of employment opportunities and the discrimination they face in trying to access employment. However there are also some distinctive issues for the different communities. There is especially troubling evidence that many Roma workers are being exploited in low paid wage employment within the informal economy. The Roma community also feel strongly that they are discriminated against when seeking work because of their ethnicity. Many Roma in the UK are working for below the minimum wage and/or in work conditions that do not conform to proper health and safety standards. Some Roma workers are being exploited by unscrupulous gang-masters.<sup>72</sup>

It is notable that the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) shows only very limited recognition of the employment needs of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities. The DWP currently categorise Gypsies and Travellers as a 'disadvantaged group' with responsibility for these groups falling under the DWP Labour Market Inclusion Division. However, Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities are not recognised, or categorised as an ethnic minority group by the DWP and consequently they are not included in national data sets, or research relating to different ethnic groups.<sup>73</sup>

### Gypsy and Traveller Employment Issues

Analysis of the 2011 national census by the Office for National statistics (2014) revealed that Gypsies and Travellers were the ethnic group with the lowest proportion of respondents who were economically active (47% compared to 63% for England and Wales as a whole).<sup>74</sup> However there is no national data on the levels of Roma employment in the UK.

Traditionally Gypsies and Travellers have been self-employed and worked as seasonal workers and skilled labourers, trading both inside their communities and

<sup>71</sup> Communities and Local Government (2012) Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6287/2124046.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6287/2124046.pdf)

<sup>72</sup> Brown, P et al (2013) Roma SOURCE (Sharing of Understanding Rights and Citizenship in Europe) Interim report. [www.romasource.eu/userfiles/attachments/pages/167/romasourceinterimresearchreport-en.pdf](http://www.romasource.eu/userfiles/attachments/pages/167/romasourceinterimresearchreport-en.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> For example, the DWP published the report Persistent employment disadvantage (2007). This study sought to find out if members of certain social groups were more persistently out of employment than other groups. The report made specific reference to ethnic minorities but as the DWP does not categorise Gypsies and Travellers as an ethnic minority group they were not included in this highly relevant study.

<sup>74</sup> ONS (2014) What does the 2011 Census tell us about the Characteristics of Gypsy or Irish Travellers in England and Wales <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census-analysis/what-does-the-2011-census-tell-us-about-the-characteristics-of-gypsy-or-irish-travellers-in-england-and-wales/rpt-characteristics-of-gypsy-or-irish-travellers.html#tab-Qualifications>

with the settled community. However, many of the more traditional unskilled jobs are disappearing fast, such as seasonal work in agriculture. Many Gypsy and Traveller communities now run small self-employed businesses providing specialist small services, such as tree cutting and fencing. A recent worry for Gypsies and Travellers has been the licencing of the scrap-metal industry through the Scrap Metal Dealers Act (2013). Scrap metal has been a traditional method of employment for many Gypsy and Traveller families. The new Act allows the local authority to set fees for the licences to trade. Because many Gypsy and Traveller families are nomadic, and/or work in more than one local authority area, they will need to pay a licence in each local authority and for each family member working in the trade. This is having a detrimental impact on families. Some fear that they will no longer be able to afford to trade, as they cannot afford the licences needed and they have to have a bank account.

*'In the last 2 years it's been a progression, it's been getting slowly more difficult to pursue traditional trades like gardening work, ground work, hawking, selling, collecting scrap because of policies brought in by the government that make it difficult to pursue the need for a scrap licence is disproportionately onerous to members of the Gypsy community because they work through several different regions sometimes in the course of a day and they need a separate licence for every region. It's supposed to be to prevent the theft of scrap metal and in my opinion people who are going to steal scrap metal wouldn't care whether they had licence or not, they would still do it, so I think it penalises Gypsies who have carried out that as a traditional craft disproportionately.'*

Gypsy: England



**Traditional Gypsy Employment** ©Tom McCready

*'The scrap licences that you've got to have and you've got to have scrap insurance now to carry scrap around and its very expensive for young boys, particularly our young boys starting out its very expensive for them to get scrap insurance so it's becoming more and more difficult for us to do traditional work.'*

Gypsy: England

*'Yeah, work's become very difficult to find since some of these scrap laws have come out because my husband does scrap metal in the winter and he's a gardener does gardening in the summer. So in the winter months, this new scrap licence has come out for each different council we live in like a borough where you go one mile one direction and you're in a different borough then you go a couple of miles, so for collecting scrap it's hard and they need a lot of information that I'm just not educated enough to deal with and he also never had a bank account. We've found it very difficult for him to open a bank account because we don't have utility bills because we live on a site and they need more than 2 forms of ID one of them being a utility bill and he just doesn't have one so and so they just basically just tell us straight out no for a bank account.'*

Gypsy: England

*'Well from my view it seems like a lot of Gypsy/ Travellers are finding it hard to make a living as we can't just go get a job, as because we are Gypsy/Travellers people sometimes don't want to work with us. People need to give us a chance and we will prove we are hard workers'*

Gypsy / Traveller: Scotland

*'There needs to be more work schemes aimed to help us. The old ways of earning a living are gone now.'*

Irish Traveller

Women have always been part of the family economy in Gypsy and Traveller communities, working to support the family in the home as well as contributing to the family income, although some families felt that employment roles are changing. As one community member reflected:-

*'In my own family I can see a little bit more family breakdown, either wives are being left because of their husbands' early death and the women had to get on and pursued men's businesses. More and more women taking the buying and selling cars and taking what were men's businesses.'*

Gypsy/ Traveller:Scotland

Traditionally many Gypsy women have hawked (selling lavender, lace, pegs, paper flowers etc. door to door) and *dukkered* [telling fortunes]. But the community have expressed concerns about the future of hawking.

*'Anyone should be allowed to hawk a door as long as they're not pressuring people into doing something they don't want to do. They need to stop stereotyping people just because you chap a door doesn't mean you're going to steal or hurt them.'*

Gypsy/ Traveller:Scotland

*'The new trading laws take away our Gypsy culture. Gypsy/Travellers have been brought up learning their own ways to hawk and it will be hard to adjust to the new laws. We should be allowed to keep our traditional ways of work.'*

Gypsy/ Traveller: Scotland

*'Yes I do think it's harder. I stayed home with the children and me husband works and we do find it very hard because when you're out or out going out hawking with all the cold calling and everything it's getting harder and harder so we've got to move around the country more, so then the kids miss more out on education and it just affects us as a whole family rather than just as an individual'.*

Gypsy/ Traveller: Scotland

*'My family has always told the fortunes but nowadays there is all rules and regulations that causes the proper Gypsy people problems'*

**Gypsy: England**

Many community members raised the issues of equality in employment and some community members in Northern Ireland talked about 'Section 75' (of the Northern Ireland Act), which states that all Government departments, agencies and councils need to take into account nine key groups that must be given consideration before any decisions are made. This policy has been developed to address an existing or historical inequality or disadvantage. However some community members in Northern Ireland felt this was being ignored.

*[there is a] 'need to make sure employers are adhering to section 75 to ensure Travellers are being treated with the same rights'.*

**Traveller leader: Northern Ireland**

## Roma Employment Issues

Roma migration to the UK has emanated from 'push' factors (such as unemployment, poverty, discrimination and fear) and 'pull' factors such as better opportunities for their children's education, more employment opportunities and an improved quality of life.<sup>75</sup>

In January 2014 temporary restrictions on the working rights of Romanian and Bulgarian citizens in the UK were lifted and media coverage prompted a great deal of public anxiety about 'the Roma' and their access to labour market and benefits. However, research shows, that contrary to the media predictions, most Romanians and Bulgarians currently in the UK are younger and healthier than the UK population as a whole and they are also more likely to be in work and paying taxes, and less likely to be drawing benefits.<sup>76</sup> However, the low levels of qualification, transferable skill and literacy and English language skills amongst Roma mean that their access to work at decent wages is very limited. Many Roma in the UK work for low wages on temporary contracts often organised by gang-masters and recruitment agencies.

Employment for Roma generally means low-skilled and low paid employment. Evidence from Scotland suggests that many Roma who are working are engaged in jobs that many British people no longer want to do, e.g. either on zero-hour contracts or as casual labour working in factories, supermarket warehouses, or agricultural labour. In Scotland more than 50% of the 'Big Issue' vendors are from Romania and are Roma.<sup>77</sup> There is very limited research on the employment experiences of the Roma in the UK, below however are some examples of Roma workers who spoke to our community interviewers.

*'When I come to agency they told me don't get now job, because it's very quiet. When they go in office, come back, and tell you there's no job - you come back in two weeks. You know, because looking at my colour you know, that's for no work.....'*

**Roma participant**

*'In X Job Centre, if don't speak English they no help you, just told job search agreement not filled in. Some Slovakia Roma peoples they have 4 or 5 children, if do not get JSA what to do, they no get housing benefit how they will live? Our Slovakia Roma want work, looking for work, they good worker, but no can find job'.*

**Roma participant.**

*'Work is not good, it's difficult to get work, especially regular work, Slovak Roma seem to struggle more than Czech and Latvians. Despite the change in policy so that employment rights for Roma nationals, the Roma people still find it difficult to access the employment market due to lack of English language, qualifications, experience required and also discrimination.'*

**Health visitor working with Roma families**

Participants in one of the Roma focus groups suggested that having access to employment was important but due to people's lack of educational opportunities and limited English language skills, they often ended up in jobs that were poorly paid and offered no opportunity for development.

<sup>75</sup> McGarry, A. (2012) The Dilemma of the European Union's Roma Policy. *Critical Social Policy*, 32, 1, 126-136.

<sup>76</sup> Institute for Public Policy Research (2013) In transition: Romanian and Bulgarian migration to the UK. [http://www.ippr.org/assets/media/images/media/files/publication/2013/12/in-transition\\_RomBulg\\_Dec2013\\_11688.pdf](http://www.ippr.org/assets/media/images/media/files/publication/2013/12/in-transition_RomBulg_Dec2013_11688.pdf)

<sup>77</sup> Mapping the Roma Community in Scotland (2012) <http://www.stepseducation.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Mapping-the-Roma-Community-in-Scotland-FINAL-REPORT-Sept13.pdf>

*'We used to work in the carwash, we are still in the carwash'*

**Roma participant.**

Yet, the community told us that even when Roma people had managed learn English, there still seemed to be few opportunities for them and many people in the community need some support in accessing training to improve their employment opportunities.

*'My brother-in-law has national insurance number, speaks English, has a good reputation, but he is still in the carwash.'*

**Roma participant.**

Many Roma participants felt that they faced discrimination when applying for jobs but that education could still make a difference to their prospects in the UK.

*'I am working at M&S warehouse packing and labelling clothes, its ok, but I want to be in administration; office work. It's really hard to find. I am better than many Roma people I got 5 GCSEs, and business level 1 & 2. I have been here nearly ten years, but I am unusual.'*

**Roma participant: Northern Ireland**

Professionals also spoke to us about the limited employment opportunities for the Roma in their community.

*'Dire, would be the one word I would use. We have a community of individuals trying to seek employment in a climate where they are really on the bottom rung of the ladder in terms of competition from other communities. Low skilled manual labour with no progression or opportunities and language as a barrier to employment and pre-employment skills are lacking. With little knowledge of how to access employment opportunities, how to deal with CVs or to impress potential employers leaves many in the Roma community without tools to comprehend and understand'.*

**Local authority cohesion and migration officer**

## Unemployment

The Office for National Statistics (2014) revealed that 20% of Gypsy and Irish Travellers were unemployed (compared to 7% for the whole of England and Wales). Evidence exists also that Gypsies and Travellers in Scotland and Northern Ireland experience high levels of unemployment. These figures can often be attributed to poor health, low levels of education and discrimination. There is no data on Roma unemployment in the UK.

## Welfare Issues

Gypsies and Travellers experience some of the worst outcomes of any group, across a wide range of social indicators, these include the lowest life expectancy, the poorest educational attainment and the highest infant mortality rates of any ethnic minority in the UK<sup>78</sup> and there are fears that the benefit cap, that has emerged as a result of the welfare reform changes, could further penalise those with large families and force some out of social accommodation and back onto unauthorised encampments.

For the Roma, it was hoped that the lifting of work restrictions on A2 nationals might ease some of the problems of exploitation. However, in response to the lifting of employment restrictions the Government has passed legislation to toughen the rules around migrants claiming benefits.<sup>79</sup> Under new, tighter rules that came into force January 2014, all EU migrants will have to wait three months before they can claim jobseeker's allowance and other out-of-work benefits (The 'right to reside' and 'habitual residency' tests are currently being challenged by the European Commission in court<sup>80</sup>). There are concerns that these new welfare regulations could force more Roma into dangerous and exploitative work conditions within the informal economy and or under the control of gangmasters and other unscrupulous employers.

<sup>78</sup>Ministerial Working Group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers, 2012, paragraph's 31-34 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-inequalities-for-gypsies-and-travellers-progress-report>

<sup>79</sup>Measures to limit migrants' access to benefits (2014). House of Commons Library [www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN06889.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN06889.pdf)

<sup>80</sup>Mednick, R. (2014) 'Europe takes UK to court over benefits', The Telegraph, 22 March 2012 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/10716824/Europe-takes-UK-to-court-over-benefits.html>

### Example of positive practice

The Ethnic Minority Advisory Group (EMAG) within the DWP invited a representative from the Traveller Movement (then Irish Traveller Movement in Britain) to sit on this group in 2012 and they have been advising the government to promote schemes to encourage Gypsies, Travellers and Roma to access vocational training and or higher education opportunities.

### European Commission (2014)

'To close the employment gap between Roma and non-Roma, the EU Framework calls on Member States to ensure Roma non-discriminatory access to the open labour market, self-employment and micro-credit, and vocational training. Member States were encouraged to ensure effective equal access for Roma to mainstream public employment services, alongside targeted and personalised guidance and mediation for Roma jobseekers, and to support the employment of qualified Roma civil servants'.<sup>81</sup>



*Czech Roma on Teesside* ©Ciara Leeming

<sup>81</sup>Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Report on the Implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies Brussels, 24.2014 COM(2014) 209 final (SWD(2014) 121 final) [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com\\_209\\_2014\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com_209_2014_en.pdf)

## 2.5 Healthcare

### Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers (2012)

**Commitment 7** 'Department of Health will work with the National Inclusion Health Board and the NHS, local government and others to identify what more must be done to include the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in the commissioning of health services.'

**Commitment 8** 'Department of Health will explore how health and wellbeing boards can be supported to ensure that the needs of Gypsies and Travellers with the worst health outcomes are better reflected in Joint Strategic Needs Assessments and joint health and wellbeing strategies'.

**Commitment 9** 'Department of Health will work with the UCL Institute of Health Equity and the Inclusion Health working groups to identify gaps in data and research, and look to identify the specific interventions that produce positive health outcomes'.

**Commitment 10** 'Department of Health will work with the Inclusion Health working groups to identify what more needs to be done to improve maternal health, reduce infant mortality and increase immunisation rates'.<sup>82</sup>

### The Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers

Significant health inequalities exist between the Gypsies/ Travellers and the general population in England. Children from Gypsy and Traveller communities are more likely to experience early death, poor childhood development and limited uptake and access of health services and *'there is*

*an excess prevalence of miscarriages, stillbirths and neonatal deaths in Gypsy and Traveller communities and high rates of maternal death during pregnancy and shortly after childbirth'*<sup>83</sup> Poor living conditions are the most influential contributing factors to the poor health status of Gypsies and Travellers<sup>84</sup> and poor quality or inappropriate accommodation as a result of forced movement, inevitably exacerbates existing health conditions as well as leading to new problems. As one Gypsy woman reflected:-

*'if you have somewhere to live all the rest seems to fall into place to be honest, your health gets better.'*

Gypsy: England

*'My aunt missed an important appointment about a kidney operation because she had to move before it was sorted'*

Irish Traveller

The life expectancy of the Gypsy and Traveller population has been estimated to be between 10 and 12 years less than the general population, although a later study has suggested, that their average life expectancy is 50 years, compared to the general population,<sup>85</sup> which is 78 years of age.<sup>86</sup> The only nation-wide health study conducted on their health found that they were significantly more likely to have a long term condition, suffer poorer health and experience an earlier death than the general population and their infant mortality rate is three times higher than the national average.<sup>87</sup> They are also significantly more likely to have a long-term illness or disability than members of the general population,<sup>88</sup> over twice as likely to be depressed, and almost three times as likely to suffer from anxiety, as others.<sup>89</sup> However, despite greater health need, Gypsies and Travellers use mainstream health services less than other members of the population because of practical difficulties, such as complex procedures for registering and accessing services and others allegedly refuse to register them.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Communities and Local Government (2012) Progress report by the ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6287/2124046.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6287/2124046.pdf)

<sup>83</sup> DCLG, MWG. (2012) Tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6287/2124046.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6287/2124046.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> The Royal College of General Practitioners (2013) Improving access to health care for Gypsies and Travellers, homeless people and sex workers: An evidence-based commissioning guide for Clinical Commissioning Groups and Health & Wellbeing Boards <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/common-elements/rss/-/media/Files/Policy/A-Z-policy/RCGP-Social-Inclusion-Commissioning-Guide.ashx>

<sup>85</sup> Parry et al (2004) The Health Status of Gypsies and Travellers: Report of Department of Health Inequalities in Health Research Initiative, University of Sheffield.

<sup>86</sup> Baker, M. Leeds Racial Equality Council, 2005, Leeds Baseline Census 2004-2005 <http://www.wgrtleeds.co.uk/information/census.html>

<sup>87</sup> Parry as above

<sup>88</sup> Clark, C. and Greenfields, M. (eds) (2006) Here to Stay: The Gypsies and Travellers of Britain, Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press.

<sup>89</sup> Parry et al (2004) As above.

<sup>90</sup> EHRC (2009) Research Report 12: Inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Traveller Communities: A Review

## The health status of the Roma in the UK

Published research on the Roma population and access to health care in the UK is very sparse. However, one report<sup>91</sup> has suggested that some Roma community members may be at more risk from mental health problems, due to their experiences of persecution, racist attacks, bullying, social exclusion and frequent incidents of rape in their country of origin.<sup>92</sup> Once in the UK, many Roma also lack familiarity with the NHS and face language barriers and this can make it difficult to access health services.

## Gypsies and Travellers' access to health care

Nomadic Gypsies and Travellers have always faced challenges in accessing health care services. Families living on unauthorised sites often have poorer health outcomes arising from limited access to amenities (such as showers and toilets) and to health care services and continuity of care.

*'Before we were settled it was even more difficult still the most difficult part; the doctors weren't bad it was difficult to get past the receptionists if you didn't have a settled address or you didn't have details that you should have or you didn't have your medical card that you had to carry with you all the time things like that and because of that we'd usually go straight to A&E; if we had any problems or we'd put up with whatever problems we had and just make do; which resulted in people missing things that were quite serious, quite serious illnesses and ailments and I'm sure contributed to the fact that members of the Gypsy community have 10 year less than I average life span. So yes we do and did have difficulty accessing healthcare*

Gypsy: England

*'I have many health problems I need to see a doctor about very regularly. It was very difficult doing that when I didn't have a fixed address. It shouldn't be that hard to see a doctor when you need to'*

Gypsy: England

*'when you're moving around they don't tend to keep records for people that are temporary residents even if you like to use the same doctor and travel quite a distance back to that actual doctor what you use all the time they don't keep your records for lengths of time as you're not a permanent record and you've got to be in one place for over 2 years as I have reason to believe to have the records held permanently by a doctor'*

Irish Traveller

Many nomadic Gypsies and Travellers also find it difficult to register with a GP because most surgeries only like to take people with a permanent local address.

*'Yeah, I am registered with a doctor and me family's registered with doctors, me husband and me two sons, they couldn't get a doctor we never had one at Burton on Trent. The doctor could only take two people on. He took me and me youngest son on but he wouldn't take me husband on and me other two boys. So this is the first time we have had a doctor for about 12 years since we left another site we was at in the past'*

Gypsy: England

Residence in housing is for many Gypsies and Travellers is often (but not always) linked to enforced settlement as a result of lack of sites. Gypsies and Travellers who lack access to authorised sites find that they frequently have to move and this impacts on their access to treatment, support and long-term care.

*'I have very bad kidney problems and not having an address has made getting the things I need hard. Governments need to understand that Travellers want to move around but we still deserve healthcare'*

Gypsy/ Traveller: Scotland

Research shows that many Gypsies and Travellers living in brick and mortar have considerably worse health outcomes than those of nomads.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Angus Fraser, Dzieje Cyganów, original title The Gypsies, PIW, Warszawa 2001, Chapters 8 & 9

<sup>92</sup> For example see Masseria, C. et al. (2010) The socio-economic determinants of the health status of Roma in comparison with non-Roma in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania <http://eurpub.oxfordjournals.org/content/20/5/549.abstract>

<sup>93</sup> Parry et al (2004) As above.



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However, one participant in this study reflected on the fact that Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar had more access to health care.

*'It's harder in a caravan, when you have no fixed address some Doctors and dentists won't treat you at all everyone should be treated equal but they are not'*

Irish Traveller

Because the NHS has been designed around the cultural needs of the settled community, it is not surprising that Gypsies and Travellers living in bricks and mortar have better access to health care. Yet this disadvantages those who continue a nomadic way of life.

### Access to health care for the Roma

Many Roma families are unfamiliar with the NHS and do not know how to access health services and many members of the community also experience language barriers that make it difficult to access services or communicate their health concerns. The attitudes of some health staff can also make it difficult for Roma families to access health services.

*'Some issues remain when dealing with medical practice, receptionists who do not treat us Roma people well'.*

Roma Participant

*'Being able to say a few words in English doesn't mean we can understand the medical words'*

Roma Participant

*'The only thing that has changed is that people can now register with a GP'*

Roma Participant

*"Health Visitors tend to disagree about the way I bring up my children. They think they know better for my kids when they don't understand it's the way we have raised our children for generations. I think they should have a better understanding of our culture'.*

Roma Participant

## Lack NHS data on Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities

The Department of Health / NHS does not include Gypsies, Travellers or Roma as one of their 16 ethnic minority categories monitored by the NHS. In contrast, the information service division in Scotland has adopted the 2011 Census Classification in the Scotland Data Dictionary and so now includes Gypsies and Travellers (but not Roma.) The adoption of the 2011 Census ethnic category classification in the NHS Data Dictionary would generate the classification of Gypsy or Irish Travellers across all current NHS ethnicity data collections. This would have a transformative effect on the capture of routine data on the health of Gypsy/Irish Traveller communities. If Roma were also added as a category, this would have a similar impact on understanding of their situation.

*'It is absolutely appalling that the NHS is not already monitoring Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people in its ethnic monitoring categories - because until there is proper monitoring they will never know the extent to which they are being successful or unsuccessful in including GRT people within their clienteles and we would urge that the ethnic categories as quickly as possible be amended so that the NHS is doing proper ethnic monitoring'.*

Health Professional: England

Since the 2004 report by Parry (see footnote 84 above), there has been a notable lack of research and data on Gypsy and Traveller health. Across Europe there is very limited data on the health needs of the Roma populations and this is also true in the UK. However, some people in Roma communities arrive in the UK with chronic health conditions due to lack of access to services in their country of origin and fears about reporting ill-health and disability to the authorities, in case their children are removed from their families.

*'A lot of health issues, a lot of very chronic conditions, a lot of disability, particularly hearing impairment, there are proportionately too*

*many severely deaf children. I have a public health contact in Košice, a doctor, and I have asked [him] about the frequency, is it they are presenting here and didn't in the country of origin? It seems so, they are at least confident to show us these conditions; in Slovakia I think they were hidden from public view. Other disabilities are cerebral palsy, disability associated with meningitis and in the older population polio. It has taken a lot of work to get to know this as a few years ago they would have hidden those children away for fear of them being taken into care, which I think may have happened over there [in Slovakia]. Now many are accessing services and doing very well'.*

Health Visitor: England

## New commissioning processes

New Health and Wellbeing Boards need to ensure that Gypsies, Travellers and Roma are included as key stakeholders. These boards will be relying on the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA's) to inform their work. It is therefore critical that local Gypsy, Traveller and Roma health assessments are conducted and that these communities are fully involved in this process.<sup>94</sup> Concerns are being expressed in Gypsy, Traveller and Roma community groups that the local Clinical Commissioning Groups will be putting out local health services to tender and there are worries that private companies competing to win NHS contracts will not meet the health needs of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma community groups.

*It's a fear but it's a fear generally and I don't know to what extent that's realized. If Gypsies and Travellers need hospital referral they are not getting one and they think they are entitled to one and that's going to intensify the stress. Although there was a fear when the new CCGs were coming in - and I don't really know to what extent it's happened. It's difficult to know until you start going out and asking which is what I'm doing.*

Health Visitor: England

<sup>94</sup>The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (2012). The Health and Well-being of Gypsies and Travellers.

## Examples of positive practice

The UK Government does not have a specific national strategy in place to improve the health outcomes specifically for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people.

**The Scottish Government** in 2013 made a number of commitments to reduce health inequalities (including Gypsies and Travellers), this includes the development of practice guidance for GPs on Gypsy and Traveller patients (but not Roma). They have funded NHS Education Scotland (NES) and Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to take forward work on workforce development in health and social care.

**The Welsh Government** informed this evaluation that objective 16 of *Travelling to a Better Future* aims to establish baseline health data for Gypsies and Travellers and provide guidance for health boards to make services more accessible, with the input of community members, during 2014. A weakness in this work will be the limited number of community organisations

in Wales who might be able to facilitate outreach and partnership as evidenced in other parts of the UK. The Welsh approach has also not included Roma groups.

**In Northern Ireland** there is some local good practice but once again, there are no national strategic plans to improve the health of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities.

## European Commission (2014).

To reduce the health gap between the Roma and the rest of the population, the EU Framework calls on Member States to provide access to quality healthcare, especially for children and women, and to preventive care and social services at a similar level and under the same conditions as the rest of the population. The poor health of Roma is very closely linked to social, economic and environmental factors. People in vulnerable situations often have trouble in navigating in the health system and in articulating their needs'.<sup>95</sup>



*Community groups work to disseminate health information as in this example by Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group*

<sup>95</sup>Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Report on the Implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies Brussels, 24.2014 COM(2014) 209 final (SWD(2014)121 final) [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com\\_209\\_2014\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com_209_2014_en.pdf)



# Part 3

## Recommendations

Mainstream policies have consistently failed Gypsies and Travellers in the past and this research suggests that they are continuing to fail these communities today. In order to improve the lives of people from Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, there is an urgent need for changes across several policy areas to address inequalities and promote integration.

This requires a national strategy and specific policies, especially in the areas of discrimination, accommodation, education employment and healthcare. It also requires the development of monitoring mechanisms so that policy makers have good evidence to base their decisions on.

### A coherent approach

As mainstream approaches have failed to facilitate equal opportunities for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities **we recommend that the UK Government establish a National Roma Integration Strategy (as recommended by the European commission and exemplified by the Welsh Government).**

- 1** In order to monitor the integration of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities in the UK, we recommend that the collection of such data be introduced as a matter of priority, especially with regard to the areas of racial violence and hate speech, accommodation needs and provision, access to health care, schooling and educational attainment, vulnerability to trafficking, employment and training.
- 2** EU structural funds have been allocated to the UK to support all disadvantaged people, including the 'Roma'. **Targeted funding should be allocated to Gypsy, Traveller and Roma community organisations in order to build capacity and promote civic engagement with authorities. This will help to support the integration of the communities and ensure they have equal access to services and civil society.**

## Discrimination

- 3 While UK government has adopted policy measures to eliminate hate speech, **a clearer strategy is needed to take action against the media or individuals that incite discrimination and racism against Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities and individuals.**
- 4 Both the European Court of Human Rights and the UN have drawn attention to the discrimination that Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people face in the UK. **The media needs to take urgent action to address the discriminatory reporting against Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people and refrain from stereotyping. Any media that incites direct or indirect discrimination, hatred or violence against these communities should be condemned and legal action needs to be taken against them.**

## Accommodation

- 5 Nomadic life is part of the culture and heritage of Gypsies and Traveller but inadequate site provision and lack of stopping places and poor quality accommodation is impacting on the education, employment and health of these communities. Local Authorities have sole responsibility for site provision but **central government needs to ensure that local authorities actually deliver site provision. An independent body should be established to monitor and benchmark needs-assessments and site delivery and monitor the outcome of Gypsy and Traveller planning applications across the UK.**
- 6 **The Government should take steps to ensure that the voices of the Gypsy and Traveller communities are at the forefront of any review of the Planning Definition of “travellers”.**
- 7 **Given the paucity of information regarding the accommodation needs, or experiences of Roma communities, there is a clear need for research to be conducted.**

## Education

- 8 Given the experiences of many Gypsy, Traveller and Roma school children of racist bullying, **all schools should have clear policies on prevention of bullying. The Department for Education and local authorities should ensure that specific policies are used effectively in relation to the bullying of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children.**
- 9 **Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children should be included as a specific group receiving Pupil Premium payments in England and Wales. This should also apply to the new Early Years Premium and to free pre-school education for disadvantaged two year olds.**
- 10 **To improve inter-cultural understanding and overcome negative stereotyping we recommend that central funding of Gypsy Roma and Traveller History Month should be reestablished. In addition, the culture and the history of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma children should be included in the broader curriculum.**
- 11 **Schools and education services should rigorously track and monitor the progress of all Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children. Local authorities should ensure that Traveller Education Services are appropriately funded and supported.**

## Employment

- 14** The Department for Work and Pensions should monitor outcomes for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people. This should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of employment services for these groups, and the impact of welfare reforms.
- 12** The Department of Work and Pensions should carry out trials of specific interventions to support these communities in claiming the benefits and tax credits they are entitled to; in moving community members into employment; and in improving their incomes and security in work.
- 13** The Government should monitor the impact on Roma people of the requirement that all EU migrants will have to wait three months before they can claim jobseeker's allowance and other out-of-work benefits, as this will have a significant impact on families with children.
- 14** The potentially disproportionately negative impact of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act needs to be reviewed. The current requirement to pay a licence in each local authority, for each family member working in the trade should be reviewed and one licence covering multiple areas and multiple family members should be introduced.

## Health

- 15** There is a need for both further research into the health of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people and also for interventions that improve their health. The Department of Health should fund a national Gypsy, Traveller Roma health survey, in order to understand the health status and needs of the communities in the UK.
- 16** Despite the evidence for poor health outcomes, the Department of Health does not include Gypsies, Travellers or Roma as one of the 16 ethnic minority categories monitored by the NHS. The NHS, across the whole of the UK, should adopt the 2011 Census ethnic category classification with the addition of a 'Roma' category, so that all three communities can be included in health monitoring data.
- 17** It is critical that local Gypsy, Traveller and Roma health assessments are conducted and that these communities are fully involved in this process.
- 18** Clinical Commissioning Groups, General Practitioners and health watchdogs should be proactive in developing services to ensure that Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities can access health services and that their health needs are met within the NHS.

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