Civil society monitoring report on implementation of the national Roma integration strategy in the United Kingdom

Assessing progress in key policy areas of the strategy

Prepared by:
National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups
Friends Families and Travellers
Roma Community Care
Roma Support Group
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Assessing progress in key policy areas of the strategy
The report has been prepared by the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, Friends Families and Travellers, Roma Community Care and Roma Support Group.

Lead organisations for the individual chapters are as follows:

- Employment: Roma Community Care,
- Housing and Essential Public Services: National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and Roma Support Group,
- Impact of Health Care Policies on Roma: Friends, Families and Travellers,

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Although the Roma Civil Monitor pilot project, as part of which the report was prepared, is coordinated by CEU, the report represents the findings of the author and it does not necessarily reflect the views of CEU. CEU cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BME</td>
<td>Black and Minority Ethnic</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCG</td>
<td>Clinical Commissioning Group</td>
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<td>DCLG</td>
<td>Department for Communities and Local Government</td>
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<td>DFE</td>
<td>Department for Education</td>
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<td>DWP</td>
<td>Department for Work and Pensions</td>
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<td>EEA</td>
<td>European Economic Area</td>
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<td>EHC</td>
<td>Education, Health and Care Plan</td>
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<td>EHE</td>
<td>Elective Home Education</td>
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<td>FFT</td>
<td>Friends, Families and Travellers</td>
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<td>GRT</td>
<td>Gypsy, Roma and Traveller</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCSE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMRC</td>
<td>Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs</td>
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<td>HMO</td>
<td>Housing in multiple occupation</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSNA</td>
<td>Joint Strategic Needs Assessments</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHCLG</td>
<td>Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly DCLG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMR</td>
<td>Measles, Mumps and Rubella</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATT</td>
<td>National Association of Teachers of Travellers</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFGLG</td>
<td>National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
<td>Not for Profit</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
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<td>NHS</td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
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<td>PMQ</td>
<td>Prime Minister’s Questions</td>
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<td>PRS</td>
<td>Private Rented Sector</td>
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<td>RCC</td>
<td>Roma Community Care</td>
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<td>RSG</td>
<td>Roma Support Group</td>
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<td>RSPH</td>
<td>Royal Society of Public Health</td>
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<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Whilst there has been some improvement in terms of acknowledgement by wider society that Gypsies, Travellers and Roma (GRT) are amongst the most excluded and discriminated against groups in United Kingdom society today, the UK Government has taken no substantive steps to address those inequalities. Indeed, we believe that the situation of these communities has worsened across the four key policy areas (employment, housing, healthcare and education) rather than improved in recent years.

A key factor behind this is the UK Government’s continued refusal to develop a National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS). There is no overarching national strategy to promote Roma integration in the UK – the only clear “Roma” integration strategy to date has come from the Welsh government. Reliance elsewhere in the UK on existing mainstream laws and policies has demonstrably failed adequately to address the inequalities faced by Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in the United Kingdom.

Employment

Migrant Roma are overwhelmingly working in employment that is low paid, zero hours contracts, agency based often in factory-based environments. The consequences for large numbers of the Roma community are inconsistent working hours and therefore income; insecure contracts lead to vulnerability to abuse (work through NGOs has found Roma in these working environments can work extra unpaid hours, are too scared to make complaints and even cases of sexual harassment); Roma might be a desirable workforce at busy times but in lulls they are also the first to be dropped off. Furthermore, Roma may often find themselves working in the “grey” economy where they continue to be vulnerable, even invisible workers where it is difficult to assert employment rights. Due to socio-political and historic factors Roma can even be susceptible to modern day slavery whereby individuals are bought to the UK, applications for benefits are made in their names and they go to work but their income is paid to the individual(s) that brought them to the UK.

At the time of the last Population Census (2011) Gypsies and Irish Travellers were the ethnic groups with the lowest employment rates and highest levels of economic inactivity. Of those who were economically active, Gypsies and Irish Travellers were more likely to be self-employed than were members of other ethnic groups. Government legislation has, however, made it more difficult for community members to follow “traditional” trades.

Housing and essential public services

With regard to housing there are important differences between Gypsy and Traveller people, many of whom wish to remain in caravans and the Roma community who, as migrants, come within a differing policy and many of whom are resident in substandard housing. Consequently, we have covered the two communities in two distinct sections in the Chapter of this report.

Roma

Roma settlement in the UK is mainly concentrated in the worst/lowest quality private rented sector (PRS) housing stock. The most critical issues relating to housing conditions affecting Roma are austerity and regulation.

In terms of housing provision, government policy has been to reduce spending and investment in social housing; to reduce planning and related restrictions on private housing developments; and to allow/encourage the growth of a private rented sector, with few legislative controls. There has been a consequential crisis of affordability for housing, and a tightening of eligibility for social housing, including local authority or “council” housing. This has had a particular impact on recently arrived and migrant households when
seeking affordable accommodation. There are no funding streams in England to support neighbourhood renewal programmes – whether community or housing-focused. In Scotland however, an acquisition and improvement programme are supported by the national and local governments.

There is very little regulation of the private rented sector in England although, in Scotland the regulation of PRS housing stock is more fundamental, and in both Wales and Northern Ireland, all landlords are required to register with local councils.

**Gypsy and Traveller community**

The lack of sufficient provision of both permanent and temporary sites (whether transit sites, “tolerated” or Negotiated Stopping) is an on-going problem. A response to a recent parliamentary question stated that: “We [the UK Government] have not approved any new Traveller pitches since April 2016”.

Families who do not have a site and are at the side of the road find themselves without basic facilities i.e. water, sewerage and electricity although some NGOs in the country can work between the local authority and the families to try and put basic amenities in place such as portable toilets and access to a water pipe.

Concerns for “culturally appropriate accommodation” (term used in UK for living in caravans) have given rise to challenges concerning the rehousing of Gypsy and Traveller people in brick and mortar accommodation. A research suggests that approximately two thirds of the Gypsy and Traveller population are now living in housing; but for those families still on the road or on sites it is important to recognise that many have never lived in houses and have a cultural aversion to bricks and mortar.

Families who wish to remain nomadic are finding themselves with a reducing land pool as many councils are resorting to injunctions on vast swathes of land to prevent families from “pulling up”.

Planning policy for Gypsy and Traveller sites has seen some recent changes. Each local borough or district should identify a five-year supply of land for site provision, but in reality, there are few authorities who are doing

Housing benefit on Traveller sites is problematic and there are differences between local authority sites and private sites. Recent changes to UK housing benefit have also affected the security of some families. It has been reported to NGOs that families on private sites have moved off due to difficulties in covering the shortfall for rent and council tax.

Many of the sites created under the 1968 Caravan Sites Act were on unsuitable land such as land fill, close to railway lines or on contaminated land. Some local authorities are making efforts to rectify the situation and upgrade sites, but poor site conditions remain a problem.

**Impact of health care policies on Roma**

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are known to face some of the most severe health inequalities and poor life outcomes amongst the United Kingdom population. Data from the 2011 Census found that in England and Wales, Gypsies and Irish Travellers had the lowest proportion of people rating their general health as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ at 70 per cent compared to 81 per cent overall. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are thought

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to live between five and 25 years less than the wider UK population and experience around six less Quality Adjusted Life Years, that is, years lived in good health. They are significantly more likely to have a long-term illness, health problem or disability, which limits daily activities or work; experience higher levels of anxiety and depression; experience higher overall prevalence of reported chest pain, higher levels of respiratory problems, are more likely to have arthritis and more likely to experience miscarriage and the premature death of offspring.

Between 2005 and 2012, Roma Support Group found that 60 per cent of their Roma beneficiaries had poor physical health including cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, hepatitis B, cardiovascular and respiratory alignments and multiple sclerosis. Further to this, 43 per cent were suffering from mental health problems including depression, personality disorders, learning disabilities, suicidal tendencies, self-abuse, dependency/misuse of drugs.²

The reasons behind the poor health of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are multiple and complex. Chronic exclusion and inequalities across the wider social determinants of health are key factors putting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities at risk of poor health. However, failure on the part of the health and social care system to make a proportionate response to address these risk factors mean that little progress has been made in improving the health of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in recent years. Further to this, many mainstream health policies fail to take into consideration the experiences and lifestyles of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the UK, so fail to address the health inequalities of these groups.

The health inequalities facing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities fail to be addressed at both a national and local level because there is no real commitment made to change, no leadership appointed to elicit change and no accountability if change does not happen. For example, in January 2019, NHS England published a Long-Term Plan which sets out the strategy for the NHS over the next ten years. Whilst the plan contains specific commitments to many of the groups recognised as experiencing inequalities in England, there is not one mention of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the plan nor any commitment specific to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the plan. In the absence of any real leadership or accountability within the health and social care system, little or no progress will continue to be made.

**Education**

Education is a devolved matter in the UK. The changes in the English educational system after two decades of continual “reform” have posed real difficulties for many students and their families, especially for the poor and marginalised. The introduction of a quasi-market into education via performance league tables of schools and greater alleged autonomy for schools is the most significant. Since 2011, the government’s austerity programme, whilst ostensibly protecting school budgets, has become increasingly seen as the reason for a range of educational reductions. The consequences of these two factors has led to a crisis in educational performance/development of children from deprived backgrounds and/or communities, and a crisis in teachers’ retention, with the growing numbers of people leaving teaching early (for retirement or for other jobs).

The main issues facing Roma children in English schools are:

- Insufficient training of staff and employment of Roma staff at all grades in early years settings to respond to the particular cultural and developmental needs of young Roma children and their families

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• Insufficient school places available for children in the neighbourhoods (poor, working class, private rented, transitional) where Roma have settled in England – leading to newly settled families having children in schools some distance away (and in different schools too)
• Some evidence of separate provision for Roma students, especially for those children recently arrived and with little English – in contravention to formal government agency advice and guidance
• Some evidence of declining attendance in the last two years of secondary schooling (14-16)
• Some evidence of off-rolling of Roma students in secondary schools
• Extensive evidence of a greater use of exclusion (both temporary and permanent) against Roma students in both primary and secondary schools; but quite noticeable variations between cities in Roma exclusion rates
• Significant loss of contact and engagement with Roma students upon and after leaving school

In the updated figures taken from the UK government Race Disparity Audit website entitled ‘Ethnicity Facts and Figures’, the fact that Gypsies and Travellers have the lowest educational attainment out of any ethnic minority in the UK, stands out starkly.\(^3\) Although the educational attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in England has improved in recent years, the attainment gap for Gypsy and Roma children has widened, while the gap between Travellers of Irish heritage and white pupils has remained unchanged.

Evidence suggests that the majority of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers do not stay in formal education beyond age 16 and in fact many have left school prior to this or have been excluded, are attending a Pupil Referral Unit (or similar) or are attending on a reduced programme. The exclusion rates for certain groups of pupils are consistently higher than average. Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish Heritage are among the ethnic groups with the highest rates of exclusion.

Whilst there may not be institutionalised segregation within UK schools, the evidence still suggests that there are many barriers within education. Antigypsyism also reinforces negative stereotypes and exacerbates and bullying within schools.

\(^3\) See: [https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk](https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk)
INTRODUCTION

Our over-arching view is that, whilst there has been some improvement in terms of acknowledgement by wider society that Gypsies, Travellers and Roma (GRT) are amongst the most excluded and discriminated against groups in UK society today, the UK government has taken no substantive steps to address those inequalities. Indeed, we believe that the situation of these communities has worsened rather than improved in recent years. This is supported by research carried out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) which found Gypsies and Travellers to be one of the most disadvantaged groups in Britain (EHRC, 2016).4

In 2011, the EC requested the member states to develop their National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) but gave them flexibility to prepare it either as a special strategy or as policy measures within wider social inclusion policies. The UK government opted for the latter option and suggested that existing mainstream laws and policies already offered protection to Gypsy, Traveller and Roma populations and that these policies would in themselves promote integration. However, 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.

In 2010, the UK government did establish a Ministerial Working Group on preventing and tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. Rather than produce an Integration Strategy, the MWG produced “28 commitments from across Government that will help mainstream services work better with Gypsies and Travellers” (DCLG, 2012).5 Unfortunately, these commitments lacked specific funding, prioritisation or a timetable, i.e. any kind of real action plan. Further, they did not address the needs of East European Roma communities in the UK, except where they coincided with those of 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, NGOs or charities in operation. The Parliamentary Women and Equalities Select Committee has established an inquiry to look at the impact of the 28 commitments and what progress has been made in achieving them, the effectiveness of policy-making and implementation for these groups more generally, and how the government can tackle such continuing inequalities. This inquiry was established in November 2016 and has yet (in February 2019) to formally report.

In the UK, the executives of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are responsible for 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. The only clear ‘Roma’ integration strategy to date has come from the Welsh government,6 which has submitted a framework for action (and not just a gathering of policies and measures already undertaken).

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The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) following recommendations regarding the need for a National Roma Integration Strategy have not been adopted:

“ECRI strongly recommends that the authorities draw up, in consultation with Gypsy, Traveller and Roma groups, a detailed programme of integration strategies and measures to address the disadvantage suffered by all three of these communities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, including concrete targets, timeframes, and resources, in all areas of daily life, such as education, employment, health care and accommodation, in particular addressing the shortage of caravan sites.” (ECRI, 2016 para 109)\(^7\)

“Recalling its general recommendation No. 27 (2000) on discrimination against Roma, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Develop a comprehensive strategy, in consultation with members of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, to ensure a systematic and coherent approach in addressing the challenges that members of these communities continue to face in the fields of health, education, housing and employment, and ensure its effective implementation by adopting specific action plans, putting in place effective oversight and monitoring mechanisms to track progress, and providing adequate human and financial resources.” (CERD, 2016, para 25)\(^8\)

The report is based on data collected by various means, including the following:

- **Secondary data:** in preparing the report we made use of official government sources (such as the UK Government’s Race Disparity Audit and related “Ethnicity facts and figures” website); academic research; local government reports; research carried out by NGOs and specific case studies which highlighted good practice.

- **Primary data:** In order to obtain fresh data for this report depth interviews were carried out with service providers as was a housing-focussed survey. Additionally, discussions were held with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community members.

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\(^7\) European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI, 2016). *ECRI report on the United Kingdom (fifth monitoring cycle).* Available at: https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/United_Kingdom/GBR-CbC-V-2016-038-ENG.pdf

\(^8\) European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI, 2016). *ECRI report on the United Kingdom (fifth monitoring cycle).* Available at: https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/United_Kingdom/GBR-CbC-V-2016-038-ENG.pdf
Employment

The situation of migrant Roma communities throughout the UK has been well summarised by Friends of Romano Lav (Glasgow) in their annual report 2016/2017:

“Roma are often at the sharp end of poor housing, labour market precariousness, and exploitation. Specific challenges for Roma in this context include literacy and language barriers, which mean that any employment opportunities tend to be low-skilled and low-waged. Roma who are working are often engaged in casual labour in chicken factories, food processing plants, supermarket warehouses, car washes, and in the agricultural and hospitality industries. For Roma women, disproportionate levels of child caring responsibilities make finding employment or accessing education more difficult, although the recent establishment of Modern Apprenticeships for bilingual Romanes-speaking Teaching Assistants in local schools is cause for optimism.”

The 2011 Census illustrated the fact that Gypsy or Irish Travellers were the ethnic groups with the lowest employment rates and highest levels of economic inactivity. Of those who were economically active, Gypsies and Irish Travellers were more likely to be unemployed (20 per cent compared with 7 per cent for all adults in England and Wales) or were self-employed (26 per cent compared with 14 per cent for all adults in England and Wales).

Government legislation has, however, made it more difficult for community members to follow “traditional” trades.

Improving access to labour market and effectiveness of employment services

Anecdotal evidence and data from Roma Community Care in Derby illustrates that the majority of Roma are working in employment secured through agencies largely on “zero hours contracts”, in insecure and poorly paid environments such as factories on production lines. On a week by week basis through this employment the income a Roma person can earn will vary greatly. At busy times Roma might be gainfully employed but at quiet times they might find themselves with no income. This insecure labour leaves Roma particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

The main barriers impacting on Roma ability and opportunities to access safe and reliable work intersect with issues of education. As Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller are the groups with the poorest performance in terms of achieving GCSEs in the UK (Racial Disparity Audit UK, 2018) this can seriously impede their opportunities with regard to obtaining many occupations. Alongside this factor is that young Roma also face disproportionately high school exclusions (see Education Chapter) adding to a sense of marginalisation. In addition, written and spoken English, exacerbated by the two previous factors, can be limited. Roma Community Care (RCC) has often found that many young Roma have low self-esteem and do not believe that employment outside of factory work could be a possibility for them. Indeed, Roma parents working in factories will tell staff that they are grateful for the factory work in the UK as they were prevented in countries of heritage

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10 'Is Britain Fairer?: Key facts and findings on Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. Available at: [https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/is-britain-fairer-findings-factsheet-roma.pdf](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/is-britain-fairer-findings-factsheet-roma.pdf)

11 Under this type of contract, the employer is not obliged to provide any minimum working hours and the worker is available for work on call when required by the employer; at the same time, the worker is not obliged to accept any work offered.

from gaining any kind of employment. Often Roma will state that they do not feel like they have a right to complain or conversely are too scared to make complaints. As workers this leaves those Roma of working age vulnerable and with aspirations regarding future work.

Gypsy and Traveller families have traditionally been self-employed and practicing traditional trades. This is likely because this labour could sit alongside the communities’ cultural practices and lifestyles far more than other forms of employment. However, market economies increasingly favour large companies and increasing regulations make it more difficult for small scale enterprises to follow old, “traditional” trades. All this is occurring in the midst of continuing antigypsyism.

Although the UN and Council of Europe recommended that the UK Government should reduce the use of temporary employment, precarious self-employment and zero hours contracts (UNCESCR, 2016; UNCRPD, 2017; UNCED, 2016; European Committee of Social Rights, 2018), there are still gaps in workers legal protection. Roma suffer from low wages, discriminatory treatment, bullying and harassment in the workplace. However, there has been little funding or resources put into uncovering the extent of discrimination in the workplace against Roma. Most data in regard to these issues is garnered through anecdotal evidence by agencies in communities that support Roma. Nationwide there are concerns over unscrupulous actions of agencies against their workers but the concerns over issues such as zero hours contracts placed within the context of Roma where there is added vulnerabilities results in Roma being potentially much more susceptible than other groups in similar working situations.

Unpaid but vital labour that takes place in the private sphere must also be acknowledged especially when considering the impact of labour in relation to gender. There would be detrimental impacts on individuals, families and the wider economy without the unpaid work in the home caring for children, the elderly and/ or disabled. According to the census (ONS, 2011) over half of economically inactive Gypsies and Irish Travellers were either looking after family (31 per cent) or, intersecting with the issues flagged in health, were long term-sick or disabled (28 per cent). Compared to the general population so called inactive Gypsies and Travellers were significantly less likely to be students or retired.

Despite issues or poor working conditions, exploitation, criticisms against agency working and added challenges of previous experiences of labour and language barriers there is no government response to supporting Roma to access safer, better paid, less exploitative labour.

**Fight against discrimination in employment and antigypsyism at workplace**

The Equality Act 2010 offers protection from discrimination in the workplace. Roma, Gypsies and Travellers are covered by “protected characteristics”. The work place can take

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13 For example, the “Gypsy Roma Travellers: Experts by Experience” report, available at: [http://www.nationalgypsytravellerfederation.org/uploads/3/7/5/2/37524461/e141126_experts_by_experience_report.pdf](http://www.nationalgypsytravellerfederation.org/uploads/3/7/5/2/37524461/e141126_experts_by_experience_report.pdf). The report notes that: “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 able to afford to trade, as they cannot afford the licences needed and they have to have a bank account.”

“positive action”. Positive action is legal for people with a protected characteristic such as GRT communities. There is anecdotal evidence that some Gypsy and Traveller people do not tell their employers their ethnicity for fear of not being given the job (this certainly happened to many Roma in their countries of heritage) and some Gypsy Traveller people have applied from a different address if they live on a local authority Gypsy site.

RCC received many complaints from Roma clients that they were not being paid the correct amount or quite often that they had not even been paid at all. What can complicate matters is that whilst agencies recruit workers in one local their Human Resources (HR) base is located elsewhere. The only way for advocates to assist Roma with resolving their employment issues is over the phone. If Roma do not have phone credit to call HR. Furthermore, confidence and the language barrier can make contacting HR by phone challenging. The agency has a very successful barrier preventing workers, especially Roma workers, from flagging issues like incorrect or non-payment. Even when supported by staff at RCC who are able to interpret, the HR staff on the phone were found to be rude, dismissive and/or made vague gestures to resolve matters but that this rarely led to an actual resolution. In a concerning emergence throughout 2018, RCC have been supporting female clients that have said they have been sexually harassed in work places but because of the nature of their employment (zero hours, agency) they do not feel safe enough to complain. Roma are particularly vulnerable to discrimination compared to other groups because of issues such as language, confidence, coming from countries with different systems and the uncertainty of Brexit looming that results in them being seen as easier targets.

There have been no large-scale UK wide surveys of unfair treatment, bullying and harassment in the workplace since the Fair Treatment at Work Survey 2008. However, some indication of the extent of this can be gleaned from studies by the Trades Union Council (TUC). The TUC indicate that levels of bullying are unacceptably high and that women, particularly young women of ethnic minorities are at greater risk than other groups of experiencing bullying and harassment. One Britain-wide TUC survey (2018) found that nearly a third of adults (29 per cent) reported that they had been bullied at work. Women (34 per cent) were more likely to report that they were victims of bullying than men (23 per cent) and those aged 40-59 were more likely to state that they had experienced bullying than those in other age groups (TUC, 2015). Another TUC survey found that 52 per cent of adult women reported experiencing some form of sexual harassment; women aged 18-24 (63 per cent) were more likely than average to state that they had experienced this (TUC, 2016). Moreover, 43 per cent of respondents did not feel able to report their experience of discrimination to their employers and 38 per cent did not report incidents of bullying and harassment (TUC, 2017b).

After completing a Race Disparity Audit (first published in October 2017), the UK government launched a website to shed light on ethnic disparities across society including in employment, unemployment, business and the public sector workforce. The government has announced a programme of work to tackle inequalities in youth unemployment highlighted by the Race Disparity Audit (Prime Minister’s Office, 2018). However, much like the governments lack of a specific policy approach to Roma integration nothing in

these former statements have suggested any targeted support in regard to Roma and improving employment opportunities and circumstances.

According to the UK government’s review in February 2018 to increase transparency in the labour market, agency workers and enforcement of employment still seems inadequate and not effective enough. On 29 October 2018, the government announced a new set of measures to tackle ethnic inequalities in the job market. These are welcome policies that we have supported for some time: a consultation on ethnic pay gap reporting and race monitoring as part of public procurement standards.

Addressing barriers and disincentives of employment

There is evidence that Gypsies and Travellers face barriers in accessing employment. The Coalition Government implemented measures intended to increase Gypsy and Traveller access to mainstream employment services, and to improve data collection on Gypsies and Travellers. Despite this, however, Gypsies and Travellers remain at a disadvantage in the job market. Some NGOs provide skills training through various projects: for example London Gypsies and Travellers, with their Step Forward project, aim to support traditional trades and create new pathways into employment; Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group ran a pilot project in relation to Chainsaw health and safety which enabled the Gypsy community to be registered with the local council as a trusted trader (however, while the pilot was successful the NGO could not obtain further funding to continue and develop the work).

RCC reported in 2018 that agencies were reportedly picking staff for jobs from the factory gates. The ‘pickers’ were accused of only selecting people from their nationalities (such as Russian and Latvian) which resulted in many Roma who had previously been gainfully employed for many years in agency work (with changing hours, locations and roles but consistent hiring) finding themselves in unemployment, with limited to no access to alternative employment. Roma may relocate to other cities and even countries if similar kind of work can be sourced rather than a different type of work. This indicates how severely the barriers to other forms of employment are felt by Roma and reinforces the sense that the only form of work they can access is low skilled, low paid, insecure employment.

According to UK government, 1,000 Gypsies and Irish Travellers started apprenticeships in England in the six years between 2011/2012 and 2016/2017 which appears woefully low. Furthermore, there is no additional evidence on what percentage of those that started apprenticeships successfully completed them. The ‘5 Cities Project’, launched in February 2018,18 aims to increase the number of people in underrepresented groups who take up apprenticeships but again there is little up-do-date data on the success of such an initiative. It would at least suggest that the Government at recognises that minority ethnic groups are not taking up apprenticeships. Gypsy and Traveller families indicate that they would like their children to take up apprenticeships. Roma school exclusions and underachievement in GCSE’s would act as additional barriers to the opportunities to Roma young people to apply for apprenticeship programmes.

Furthermore, the application of apprenticeships in general is not perfect and has been criticized by education professionals. In the House of Lords Careers Education and Advice Debate (6 September 2019),19 several factors regarding barriers of people’s perceptions of available careers were identified, such as an individual’s gender, ethnicity as well as socio-economic background. The careers publication strategy to improve access to good quality careers advice and education was criticised by the Director of Schools North East

19 https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/32147/
because of not being invested properly in careers advice services and not addressing skills gaps:

"ensure the long-term success of the strategy, [the] Government needs to be facilitating networks of careers leads, not just funding their training. The first tranche of leads will inevitably move on in time, so more consideration needs to be given to how we can support [continuing professional development and] the development of networks."

Based on eight years of support and intervention work with Roma, RCC argues that Higher education for better employment status is an essential tool for Roma progression. Though government has a strategy for youth, there is no specific approach for Roma youth who will not be able to meet the requirements for apprenticeship programmes. Therefore, this will also not lead them to go into further education.

RCC worked with the Gangmasters Alliance (GLAA) regarding Roma workers not being paid or being paid incorrectly. This did seem to offer some weight to the organisation’s concerns. Employment agencies working in those fields must be licensed by the authority since 1 October 2006. Therefore, this might be one piece of partnership work, if supported and encouraged, which could lead to better working conditions for Roma. Despite this, the majority of RCC Roma clients are still working zero hours contract with low wages and in inconvenient working environments. Roma workers do not feel as though they have many or any other employment options, they are not willing to complain or report any issues related with work. GLAA found it difficult to tackle abuse.

In addition, there has been a 35 per cent rise in the reported cases of slavery year on year (between 2016 and 2017), with the UK being one of the biggest destinations in Europe for trafficking of workers for labour exploitation. Zero-hours contracts have a strong connection to facilitating these abuses. Common issues in all forms of modern slavery are low wages, long shifts, dangerous working and poor living environments. 75 per cent of the workers in Leicester’s textile factories are paid less than the legal minimum wage and half of the workforce are undocumented night shift workers. These examples are exactly the circumstances and context that many Roma find themselves working in.

According to GLAA Director of Operations Ian Waterfield, increasing enforcement is an important factor for the welfare of employees who are potential victims of labour exploitation. As a part of a GLLA operation with police enforcement in 2018 in Wiltshire, 26 people were identified as potential victims of modern slavery, but no arrests have been made yet. He pointed that most of the victims generally are Roma and the operation demonstrates that the target people are desolate vulnerable workers and are not able to speak English.

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HOUSING AND ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES

Please note that with regard to housing and essential public services there are important differences between Gypsy and Traveller people, many of whom wish to remain in cultural appropriate accommodation, and the Roma community who, as migrants, come within a differing policy and many of whom are resident in substandard housing. Consequently, we have covered the two communities in two distinct sections in this Chapter.

Roma

Since 2008, and institutionalised in 2010, the UK government in England has pursued an explicit policy of austerity which involves both a sharp reduction in the levels of public spending, and a related commitment to shrinking the power and influence of the state. In terms of housing provision, government policy has been to reduce spending and investment in social housing; to reduce planning and related restrictions on private housing developments; and to allow/encourage the growth of a private rented sector, with few legislative controls. Shelter, a UK NGO, produced a briefing on affordable homes in October 2018, and said:

"Our research shows that the private rental sector has more than doubled between 2001 and 2018, from 11 per cent of the adult population to 28 per cent. The proportion of individuals living in their own property is also on the decline, falling from 73 per cent of the population to 59 per cent. This sudden shift in housing situation is largely unprecedented in recent history, and mostly a function of the decline of affordable public housing. The only near-equivalent in history is the inverse move - from private to social renting - that took place after World War II."

There has been a consequential crisis of affordability for housing, and a tightening of eligibility for social housing, including local authority or “council” housing. This has had a particular impact on recently arrived and migrant households when seeking affordable accommodation. The Housing Rights/Chartered Institute of Housing website summarises the issue:

"Rules about who can actually apply for a housing allocation in England vary between local authority areas, because on 18th June 2012 the Localism Act introduced changes which enable councils to set their own local rules about who can apply to be on a housing register or waiting list. In 2013, the government also issued guidance recommending that local councils require applicants for housing to have been resident for at least two years, but also to make exceptions for people with family or work connections to the area, among others. Some councils have introduced new residence requirements, and in some cases the requirement is longer than two years."

There is very little regulation of the private rented sector in England. What regulation exists is enforced by local authorities, many of which have seen their staffing levels seriously depleted since 2011. A recent Insight by the House of Commons library outlines the national position re housing quality in the private rented sector.

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23 The private rented sector is not regulated in England by e.g. registration of all landlords. But in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, all residential landlords are required to register.


25 https://www.housing-rights.info/obtaining-council-housing.php

26 https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/social-policy/housing/private-rented-housing-what-are-conditions-like/
A very recent report “Evolving Private Rented Sector, its contribution and potential”, said that one of the sub-markets in the PRS is for economic migrants. The authors suggested that:

“Little is known about how migrants access PRS accommodation, the geography and ethnic specificity of particular settlement patterns, how migrant experiences differ between nationalities, letting and management practices of landlords routinely letting to migrants, interactions between migrant housing and labour markets, and tenant expectations of the sector.”

However, in Scotland the regulation of PRS housing stock is more fundamental. In addition to the regulation of houses of multiple occupation (HMOs), which are also regulated in England, in Scotland all housing agents and all residential landlords are required to register with the local council, and meet a ‘fit and proper person’ test. The Scottish legislation also enables councils to apply for designation for Enhanced Enforcement Action powers if it is considered that more interventionist action is required. The first area to benefit from these powers was Govanhill (Glasgow) which is directly linked to the super-exploitation of Roma migrants by major local landlords.

In both Wales and Northern Ireland, all landlords are required to register with local councils.

Addressing Roma’s needs in spatial planning and access to basic amenities

Migrant Roma communities in the UK initially settled mainly in London in the 1990s, arising from fleeing the nationalist pogroms in e.g. Poland and Czech Republic and seeking asylum in the UK. A larger and more substantial wave of migration and settlement occurred after 2004 and EU enlargement, primarily from Slovakia and to a lesser extent, the Czech Republic. Since 2014, there has also been a growth of Roma migration from the so-called ‘A2’ countries, mainly Romania (and Bulgaria). Roma families moved to towns and cities in ‘link migration’, relying on contacts from friends and family, and in a few cases, living nearby families who had been granted refugee status, or were asylum applicants, prior to 2004. Roma families in the UK were and are significantly different to other EU nationals who have lived and worked in the UK; for many Roma, levels of hostility and exclusion in their countries of origin meant that the ‘push’ factors for migration are as significant – maybe more so – than the attractions (‘pull’) of the UK, in terms of access to work, good quality education, safety/absence of discrimination and decent housing conditions. Additionally, Roma migration tends to be whole family movement of multi-generation and access to work is structured by relatively poor vocational experience and relatively low educational standards of adults.

31 https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/landlord-registration-scheme
Roma settlement in the UK is mainly concentrated in the worst/lowest quality private rented sector (PRS) housing stock. As the IPPR study “Roma communities & Brexit” found:

"Roma migrants often live in large family units which, combined with poor housing conditions, can lead to overcrowding. Our interviewees highlighted the fact that, due to insecure private rental accommodation, there is a high turnover of Roma migrants – often driven by the ease with which landlords can evict them, rather than being of their own choice."  

In towns and cities with significant migrant Roma communities, the pattern is established in those neighbourhoods which have extensive private rented housing tenure patterns:

- Glasgow – Govanhill,
- Leeds – Harehills and Beeston,
- Derby – Normanton,
- Rotherham – Eastwood,
- Sheffield – Fir Vale and Darnall,
- Doncaster – Hexthorpe,
- London – Newham; Redbridge; Enfield.

Most housing in PRS has a physical integrity and basic services in the UK – sanitation, water supply, and gas/electric. More problematic is maintenance and meeting basic housing standards (e.g. damp; infestations; certifications etc.). Nearly one-third of properties fail to meet safety standards, and the proportion of tenancies which are unfit is growing. Fuel poverty, security of tenure, overcrowding and indebtedness are extensive problems throughout the Roma communities. For example, The Roma Support Group (London) annual report for 2017/2018 highlights the work of the advice and advocacy service. In the last year, the team supported 2,100 Roma clients, 80 per cent of beneficiaries had reduced poverty through debt management and access to welfare system, and 33 per cent of beneficiaries were prevented from homelessness. The annual report states that the main problems clients face are: "poverty, homelessness, housing issues, health inequalities and employability problems."

The circumstances of many Roma households in small, overcrowded pre-1919 housing, absentee landlords, with little storage space, considerable ‘churn’ of family members with relatively high proportions of children and extensive poverty has meant that waste and recycling issues are frequently problematised. A continuing commentary throughout the country, by local authorities and by the press (including the broadsheet press), has been the effectiveness of waste/garbage collection in those neighbourhoods settled by Roma. One local authority in South Yorkshire had variously responded with increasing the frequency of residential rubbish collection; requiring landlords to be more pro-active with tenants’ waste; pioneered street collection bins/units; arranged regular deep clean street cleaning exercises; and targeted ‘bulky collection’ services in relevant neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhoods with significant Roma settlement are not segregated as much as marginalised (along with other poor, migrant, recently arrived families and tenants).

37 Roma Strategy 2011-2014, Chief Executive’s Department, Manchester City Council (March 2013)
40 Meeting with officers, October 2018
There has been some housing in informal/temporary settings e.g. some Romanian Roma single male migrants in/around London. There have been localised examples of (mainly) Roma men sleeping rough or in tents around London for a number of years. In fact, the local authority – London Borough of Brent – explicitly referred to the Roma in their consultations in 2015 for a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO):

"In addition to this, the congregation of people looking for casual work is causing problems in the community. The individuals harass and intimidate passers-by and are responsible for other anti-social behaviour in the area. In the last 12 to 15 months we have received many complaints from residents and businesses about groups gathering in the street and in car parks [...]. Workers are attracted to DIY shops, builders’ yards and similar locations, in places like Cricklewood Broadway and the surrounding roads. The Roma Community from Eastern Europe have been identified as the main cohort in this area, frequently congregating to tout for work on a casual basis. [...] The casual labour market is having a sizable, and detrimental, impact on your area. This consultation will consider whether the proposed PSPO will be an effective and proportionate measure to stop workers congregating in places like Cricklewood Broadway and surrounding roads."

It is not illegal to work informally in the UK. For more about this whole operation (involving both the Met Police, the Romanian police and the UK Visa & Immigration teams), see the joint report of Roma Support Group & the AIRE Centre.

Roma Support Group carried out research into Roma rough sleepers in central London in 2016. This was commissioned by St Mungo’s which is an NGO providing support and advice to homeless people in the UK, and rough sleepers in London. The research found that of the 64 women and men interviewed, the overwhelming majority were from Romania and had left extremely poverty-stricken situations behind, often with dependent children/family members and sometimes with high levels of debt (arising from poor health). All wanted to work, but only three were in work when interviewed. Not one person had an understanding of access to social security, welfare support or homelessness services; many thought that they had to pay to gain access to such services. They slept rough in Westminster (central London) as they felt safer there than elsewhere. The entire cohort believed that finding employment was crucial – they did not want support finding housing – and then they would find a place to live. Some of the rough sleepers received help from churches and charities; many spoke of the negative experiences of interaction with the homeless services.

At the time of this research, there was a policy (particularly focused on London) initiated by the Home Office for the removal of rough sleeping EEA nationals for alleged breach of treaty rights. This policy was removed in December 2017 following successful legal action.

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43 London Borough of Brent; proposed Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) consultation document, 12 June 2015
44 https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2lw1_Krq5gneDhWYzhOZ1U2VXM/view
45 https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2lw1_Krq5gnGphTTY3TnlBTnM/view
Improving Romas’ access to secure and affordable housing

The whole thrust of government policy is to marketise housing and rely on the private sector to lead house building. Social housing is being either privatised and/or not replaced. A recent House of Commons library policy briefing states:

"Historically, homes for social rent (with rents set at around 50 per cent of market rents) and affordable home ownership have been the main source of new affordable housing. However, the introduction in 2011 of social sector development with rents of up to 80% of market rents has, according to some, undermined the ability of even the social sector to supply housing that is truly affordable."

Many Roma families are denied access to council (municipal) housing due to eligibility criteria (see above). Additionally, waiting lists are invariably extremely long and much available council housing (e.g. one-bedroom flats) would be inadequate for many Roma families – as well as being distant from the ‘traditional’ neighbourhoods which Roma had settled in for the last approximately ten years.

We are not aware of Roma families being able to access social (housing association/not for profit) housing tenancies either, apart from in Glasgow (see below).

Effectiveness of housing benefits and social assistance to access and maintain housing

Since 2015, the government’s policy to social assistance has been recently summarised by the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. He said after his recent visit to the UK:

"While the labour and housing markets provide the crucial backdrop, the focus of this report is on the contribution made by social security and related policies. The results? 14 million people, a fifth of the population, live in poverty...... For almost one in every two children to be poor in twenty-first century Britain is not just a disgrace, but a social calamity and an economic disaster, all rolled into one."

Friends, Families & Travellers (FFT) published a briefing on the impact of Universal Credit (UC) – the new instrument for social security in the UK – on Gypsies and Travellers. They concluded:

"It is clear that Universal Credit has a negative and disproportionate impact on Gypsy and Traveller communities, resulting in indirect discrimination and a potential breach of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The lack of consideration of Gypsies and Travellers in the rollout of Universal Credit can and will have a major impact in the lives of those that the British welfare system seeks to protect; our society’s most vulnerable groups. If urgent and decisive action is not taken, Universal Credit will have a major impact on the lives of men, women and children, pushing hard working families deeper into poverty."

For all GRT communities and populations, digital by default and language competences will hinder access and take up of UC. An extract from the August 2018 report from Gateshead Kavarna Roma project gives a flavour of the complexity and marginality of the lives of some Roma families:

"Again, we have seen families with all sorts of issues with Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payments, housing benefit, council tax, homelessness and as ever debts. In one case the landlord has given a family a one-week notice, as he has

sold the house and family didn’t know that they can raise the issue and cannot be evicted in this time span. Many families do not know what they are entitled to... They are getting paid under the minimum wage and often there are two families in the same home. a while ago, there was one family working for a landlord in a car wash with the children not in school, but didn’t know they could get help. The children were in school within two weeks.”

Access to social assistance and housing support for Roma families in the UK has been primarily defined by their migrant status. Under the terms of the EU enlargement in 2004, all EU nationals from A8 countries were required to sign up under the Workers Registration Scheme (WRS). This allowed access to some social assistance (e.g. housing benefit (HB), council tax benefit (CTB), tax credits) whilst employed. But access to wider social assistance, including job seekers allowance (JSA), was only available when 12 months continuous employment had been undertaken, after which registration was not required.

This clearly created an inequality between Roma households (and other A8 nationals) and others in need of social assistance. Anecdotal evidence at the time suggested that professionals like health visitors were witnessing levels of poverty in Roma families that they had never experienced before, and only read about when they were students. A report from a local health visitor at the time describes the circumstances of one family in Sheffield:

"...Igor lost his job after eight months and was unable to find alternative employment for several weeks. As he had not completed the one year of continuous work, he was not entitled to claim JSA and his break of more than 30 days without working meant he had to start the one-year qualifying period under WRS again. He suffered from repeated episodes of muscular pain and was admitted to hospital on two occasions with palpitations. He was unable to sustain regular employment and his family returned to Slovakia, having been unable to become established in the UK."

The WRS ceased to apply to A8 nationals after April 2011, although more exacting restrictions applied to A2 nationals until 2014. However, by 2014, the government had introduced further limitations on all EU nationals’ access to benefits. Primarily, this created a more restrictive interpretation of the right to reside by agencies – like Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and local authorities who administer housing benefit – satisfying the minimum earnings threshold, and meeting ‘genuine and effective work’ tests. All EU nationals who are jobseekers (not in employment) were prevented from claiming any housing benefits from April 2014. All EU nationals who pass the habitual residence test can claim Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), but only for a maximum of 91 days.

These restrictions clearly applied to all recent EEA nationals, including Roma, but not UK citizens, or EU nationals who had had a longer history of settlement and work in the UK. However, studies have suggested that Roma families were more likely to be affected by these restrictions on access to social assistance. The authors conclude:

"Sadly, the impact of the 2013-14 welfare benefits changes, as viewed by EU/EEA Roma migrants we interviewed, is that the Government’s aim is not just about limited access to benefits, but also to reduce access to UK territory in general,

49 https://www.amnesty.org.uk/groups/yorkshire-and-north-east-england/living-tradition-gateshead-roma-kavarna-project-report-may

50 Gillian Gill, "The health needs of the Slovak Roma community in Sheffield"; Community Practitioner, (March 2009), 82: 3, pp. 34-37

replicating the centuries of discrimination and economic exclusion experienced by these vulnerable minority groups.”

There is some evidence that local initiatives – led either by NGOs or local authorities, have been developed to target all families (but including Roma) facing extreme poverty and/or indebtedness. We have referred elsewhere to the programme at Annette Street primary school in Glasgow – aimed at securing access to school meals, clothing grants and maximising entitlement to other social assistance. The emphasis on securing such assistance lies with the applicant, and newly arrived families invariably do not apply. As the head teacher explained:

"Most of our families are from either a Romanian or Slovak Roma background and have come to Glasgow in search of work and opportunities for a better life. Most parents don’t speak English and find it challenging to access support and to ascertain what their financial entitlements are.”

The school organised special welfare rights sessions for Roma parents, with interpreters and school language assistants present, together with welfare rights staff and council staff who could then process applications quickly and smoothly. Around 150 pupils – mainly Roma – benefited directly from this initiative. The head teacher concluded:

"It’s much more interactive, the parents are enthused about the school. I’ve always found Roma parents to be aspirational for their children, but I think they have a better understanding now of how they can support them in that.”

The Govanhill community has also been running a canteen providing free food three days a week.

**Fight against discrimination, residential segregation and other forms of antigypsyism in housing**

There is no national or local mapping of the settlement of Roma families. Central government has only recently acknowledged that (migrant) Roma constitute part of the Gypsy Roma Traveller ethnicity. In the Tory/LibDem Coalition government (2010-2015) policy statement re ‘Roma integration’ in April 2012, there was no mention of Roma outside of the education domain. The only commitments in relation to housing provision were in relation to showcasing private sites and supporting the improved health of Travellers through the provision of ‘suitable accommodation’.

The clearest written statement of current government policy re Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and populations (April 2018) is the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) submission to the current inquiry, “Tackling inequalities

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55 Idem
56 [https://www.facebook.com/ghillcommunitycanteen/](https://www.facebook.com/ghillcommunitycanteen/)
experienced by Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities”. MHCLG is the lead government department re GRT integration and supports the current National Roma Contact point. The section in the MHCLG submission on housing and planning only refers to issues about traveller site provision.

We are not aware of any analysis of the extent of discrimination facing Roma families in the housing sector. As a leading NGO, RSG continually represents families in dispute with letting agents and landlords over tenancy issues, and in particular, assured shorthold tenancies (including s21 notices where no reason for re-possession is required). We are not aware of any example of Roma successfully challenging landlords’ discriminatory practices via equality legislation in the courts. There have been occasional flare ups in conflict and antagonism between non-Roma neighbours and Roma families in some communities. There have actually been relatively few in number. Examples include Page Hall (Sheffield) in October 2013, and September 2018; Hexthorpe in 2014 (where neo-Nazis led a march against “foreign Roma Gypsies”); and Rotherham, in 2016.

Leeds City Council private sector housing manager commented:

“There is no firm evidence of landlords or letting agents discriminating against Roma. Most landlords in the areas of Roma settlement accept that that’s the market that’s available. Maybe there’s some hostility between Asian landlords and local residents, the newly arrived Roma tenants, but I think that this is improving at a street level.”

Almost all regulation within PRS is the responsibility of local authorities. They have had massive cuts in employment levels with central government austerity and frequently, despite the growth of PRS, this means that regulation is not effectively monitored. Discrimination affects Roma particularly in terms of the role of letting agencies, deposits and (over-zealous) enforcement of breach of tenancies with informal overcrowding. The following section explores the latest range of housing initiatives that local authorities have taken, in those towns and cities with sizeable Roma populations. There is no government programme or initiative designed to explicitly target or support Roma tenants.

Improving housing conditions and regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods

One increasingly common response to local PRS neighbourhood decline has been the introduction of Selective Licensing (SL). This allows the local authority to use additional powers to make a requirement that within a neighbourhood, all residential landlords are

61 https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/eviction/eviction_of_assured_shorthold_tenants
62 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-24909979
63 https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/nov/03/roma-tire-shoudering-blame-boiling-pot-communities
64 https://tellmamauk.org/britain-first-supporters-shout roma-gypsy-streets-south-yorks/
66 Communications with a Service Manager – private sector housing, 29 October 2018.
67 https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN04634
registered with the local authority, and are required to let properties according to minimum standards, and also enforce tenancy agreements. In many town and cities with Roma communities, there is some co-terminous between areas of SL and Roma settlement (e.g. Sheffield; Rotherham; Doncaster; Peterborough). In Leeds, the present consultation for SL powers in Harehills and Beeston are the two neighbourhoods with Roma families. In Scotland, an equivalent policy is the ‘enhanced enforcement area’; and the only EEA in Scotland is in Govanhill (the main area of Roma settlement).

Neighbourhood regeneration and central government which has been a feature of government policy since the 1980s, is now completely absent, apart from in Scotland. Any regeneration is solely market-led.

For the purposes of this submission, we undertook a short research survey (see Annex 1) with the 11 cities and towns in England and Scotland with sizeable (migrant) Roma communities. The research had one main purpose; to seek information from local councils that would shed light on the impact of national government policy re Roma integration. It also developed a secondary purpose – the extent to which local authorities would respond to an NGO-led initiative about Roma integration.

The main responses from local councils reveals the paucity and inadequacy of the national policy framework for responding to issues at a neighbourhood level re Roma integration, and particularly the quality of housing. There is a very localised programme of housing renewal supported by local councils own funding, but this is extremely small scale.68 The only integrated programmes that we have identified in this area – which might focus on Roma - is the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF). A number of initiatives have been supported by CMF concerning “rogue/absent landlords”, and their tenants. However, the cardinal feature of CMF is its prioritisation that programmes should benefit the “wider community” – suggesting a potential conflict between long term residents and the more recently arrived (e.g. Roma):69

"Successful bids must demonstrate a benefit to the “established resident community” in the first instance. The bids can include measures to support wider community cohesion and the integration of recent legal migrants, but cannot be of direct benefit to illegal migrants."70

The amount of funding released under CMF is derisory; the Trades Union Congress (the voice of organised workers in the UK) described it as “little more than ministerial spare change”.71 To our knowledge, a number of submissions for CMF funding have referred to Roma as a focus for activity. Nevertheless, some of the programmes72 are relatively benign:

"Parallel Lives project: Identifying the Roma community across the East of England and improving their relationship with resident communities. This research will inform actions to help Roma communities engage with public services in a more efficient way, and to improve the relationship between settled and Roma

68 In Doncaster, this covered 20-30 properties a year.
communities. This will result in improving the safety and feel of the town, as well as reducing anti-social behaviour, crime and noise.” (Fenland District Council)

"Better Life: A project to improve community cohesion between the migrant and settled resident population in Gravesham through the provision of English language lessons, in partnership with the Romani Slovak Czech community group. This project will improve the atmosphere of the neighbourhood and reduce anti-social behaviour; improve migrants’ opportunities to work and contribute to local economy; and reduce the amount of public money spent on interpreter costs, freeing up funds for other public services.” (Gravesend District Council)

"Targeted health interventions/Cultural Competency and Communication Skills in Kent: Funding will support new teams to work with migrant communities across Kent to ensure families are well supported. Targeted early interventions will improve the health and wellbeing of the migrant community and save money - encouraging healthier lifestyles and preventing the development of illnesses. The project will also deliver cultural awareness training to frontline NHS staff to provide targeted support and improve access to NHS services for the Roma community. This will also make more efficient use of resources by, for example, shortening appointment times and reducing the frequency of missed appointments.” (Kent County Council)

Derby Council have reported that they have concentrated their housing standards work in the two areas in the south of the city with the worst housing conditions, and the highest proportions of Roma tenants. They have received some support from MHCLG to undertake door to door visits to improve housing quality and combat rogue landlords. This work is programmed now to be extended thanks to CMF funding.73

There are no funding streams in England to support neighbourhood renewal programmes, whether community- or housing-focused. In Scotland however, an acquisition and improvement programme are supported by the national and local governments. This has been used quite extensively in Govanhill to improve properties that were neglected under private landlord and for their transfer to the NFP sector:

"Under the ‘Strategy for Govanhill Going Forward, 2017-2021’, Govanhill HA are acquiring properties from private landlords and if the accommodation is appropriate, the sitting tenants will then become HA tenants and the properties are then brought up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. The acquisition and improvement is jointly funded by Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Government."74

It is assumed that Roma tenants have benefitted from this investment work, but there is no ethnic monitoring of tenants which would confirm this.

All councils reported using either targeted programmes and resources,75 or using additional powers (e.g. with Selective Licensing) to improve housing conditions. However, these local interventions were not only trying to deal with poor quality and maintained dwellings, and absentee/rogue landlords, but also a whole set of behaviours that are frequently assumed to be the responsibility of the tenants and their households. These include waste management, fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance. These behaviours are not confined to areas of poor, old invariably private rented sector housing

73 Communications with DCC, Cohesion and Prevent manager, 30 October 2018
74 Letter from City Property manager, GCC, 19 October 2018.
75 E.g. Normanton in Derby. Available at: https://www.derby.gov.uk/environmental-health-licensing-trading-standards/environmental-health/housing-standards/housing-standards-news-updates/
but are also associated with Roma populations (extended families, numbers of children, irregular work patterns, overcrowded accommodation and the associated use of public space).

Unsurprisingly, few of the arguments supporting the need for additional powers (like SL) refer to the ethnicity either of the tenants or the local landlords. For instance, the only mention of “migrants” in the Hexthorpe SL review is:

"In 2014, Hexthorpe hit the national and international headlines after raised community tension due to an increase in anti-social behaviour, which some residents blamed on a recent influx of EC-migrants."\(^{76}\)

This makes assessing the impact of the programme in terms of Roma inclusion problematic. Doncaster Council reports a decline in fly tipping, nuisance complaints, noise complaints, and ASB comparing the year after SL was introduced to the year before introduction in 2015. But there is no analysis as to whether there had been any changes in the composition of the tenant population of Hexthorpe.

**Gypsy and Traveller community**

The lack of sufficient provision of both permanent and temporary sites (whether transit sites, “tolerated” or through Negotiated Stopping) is an on-going problem. A response to a recent parliamentary question stated that: "We [the UK government] have not approved any new Traveller pitches [under the Shared Ownership and Affordable Housing Programme\(^{77}\)] since April 2016".\(^{78}\) The antipathy towards site provision and, indeed the Gypsy/Traveller way of life more generally, is demonstrated by the fact that On 13 November 2018 Conservative Party MP Andrew Selous presented a "Motion for leave to bring in a Bill (Standing Order No. 23)"\(^{79}\) which included the following:

Part 1 of the Bill would "seek a unified planning system by amending the current periodical local authority reviews, which force councils to provide separate Traveller sites...Some 76% of Travellers already live in settled accommodation, and I have many positive examples of parents joining formal work and children attending school regularly when Travellers in my constituency have moved into settled accommodation. The measure would end the current policy of segregation, which pits community against community and leads to terrible outcomes for both settled residents and Travellers themselves”.

Part 2 of the Bill would "allow the conversion of current Traveller sites to settled accommodation to allow greater integration on existing sites”.

Part 4 of the Bill would "make unauthorised encampments a criminal offence”.

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\(^{79}\) [https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2018-11-13/debates/40321119-0293-4CD0-96A7-4468A15E5951/GypsyAndTravellerCommunities(HousingPlanningAndEducation)?highlight=traveller#contributio n-6679A52F-76B6-443B-9FF1-CDE744536EA7](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2018-11-13/debates/40321119-0293-4CD0-96A7-4468A15E5951/GypsyAndTravellerCommunities(HousingPlanningAndEducation)?highlight=traveller#contribution-6679A52F-76B6-443B-9FF1-CDE744536EA7)
As one critic of the proposed Bill has commented that “the process of assimilating the twenty-something percent of Gypsies and Travellers who have not conformed to the bricks and mortar lifestyle would begin by creating a segregated Gypsy housing project”.80

Addressing Gypsies’ and Travellers’ needs in spatial planning and access to basic amenities

Families who do not have a site and are at the side of the road find themselves without basic facilities, i.e. water, sewerage and electricity.81 Some NGOs in the country can work between the local authority and the families to try and put basic amenities in place such as portable toilets and access to a water pipe – for example Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison has undertaken this for a number of years. Some authorities may have a basic protocol that they work to, however many Local authorities are frightened that this will become an unofficial Traveller site at the side of the road with poor facilities for a long period of time.82

Recently after a pilot study in 2011, Leeds Gate launched its Negotiated Stopping approach.83 This encourages families and local authorities to work together, with an agreement to how much time they would like or need to stop. The pilot study demonstrated that enforcement cost Leeds City Council a substantial sum, their figures revealed that during 2003-2010 they spent over 3.43 million EUR on policing, clean-up costs and litigation. A pilot scheme was instigated by Leeds Gate whereby basic amenities are put in place for agreement on time.

The Leeds review (Leeds Gate, 2018) of Negotiated Stopping84 indicated that total potential annual savings of some 285,000 EUR in local authority and policing costs combined. Local politicians have been supportive of this initiative.85 Under negotiated stopping no site can be used more than once a year so that it will alleviate the worries that some of the settled community have, that the sites will become a permanent site.

In the past negotiated stopping was undertaken verbally whereby families would negotiate time with a land owner. However, as land became squeezed and traditional stopping places disappeared the size of travelling group have grown, it is this factor which makes it difficult and brings about a need for an agreement.86

Families that have applied for and obtained planning permission for a caravan or mobile home plot, can be in a better position as often the works needed to be connected to water may have been completed before they applied. But whilst many families have applied for planning permission, they sometimes have to wait a considerable time so do not feel secure. They can be without basic amenities, especially if an enforcement or Stop Notice has been issued by the local authority.87

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80 https://thenorwichradical.com/2018/12/14/sorry-andrew-selous-mp-but-gypsies-travellers-will-not-be-assimilated/amp/?fbclid=IwAR3NjItHchKA72r4T1lwD3nPEzFwyp8HmujxNnMWkAdCJzOKaw0UuAU3E4Qw
82 Example of protocol available at: http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?alId=2349
83 https://www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk/resources
84 http://leedsgate.co.uk/negotiated-stopping/whats-not-evaluation-negotiated-stopping-released
86 Annex 2: draft agreement.
Concerns for culturally appropriate accommodation have given rise to challenges concerning the rehousing of Gypsy and Traveller people to brick and mortar accommodation (Johnson and Willers, 2007). This often means that a report must be prepared about a person’s mental health in relation to the need to live in a caravan rather than housing (Johnson and Willers, 2007) and so Gypsy Traveller culture and personal needs have become medicalized.88

Gypsy & Traveller families feel that they have been forced to live on permanent trailer sites and compare them to the reservations of USA for Native communities. Additionally, research suggests that approximately two thirds of the Gypsy and Traveller population are now living in housing (Ryder, et al., 2014; CRE, 2006). The 2011 census recorded 61 per cent of Gypsies or Travellers being resident in a bungalow or house, (ONS, 2011), and recent research documents further illustrate the decline of a traditional way of life on the road (Smith and Greenfields, 2013). However for those families still on the road or on sites it is important to recognise that many have never lived in houses and have a cultural aversion to bricks and mortar - this concept was accepted in the case of Margaret Price.89

Families who wish to remain nomadic are finding themselves with a reducing land pool as many councils are resorting to injunctions on vast swathes of land,90 in an effort to curb any families from residing in their area.

As noted above, the MP Andrew Selous has promoted a Private Members Bill asking that unauthorised camping becomes a criminal trespass, as in Ireland.91 In Parliament there is often unhelpful debate, instead of concentrating on the issue of lack of sites.

**Improving Gypsies’ and Travellers’ access to secure and affordable housing**

Planning policy for Gypsy and Traveller sites has seen some recent changes.92 Each local borough or district should identify a five-year supply of land for site provision, but in reality there are few authorities who are doing this for a variety of reasons.93 Often there is an outcry by local gaje [non-Gypsy] residents if they live near any of the identified sites and some districts and boroughs are returning to the pre-circular 1/94 planning for Gypsy sites

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88 NGOs have started to lobby against a system where a person often has to have a combination of ‘ill health through the material considerations’ (i.e. with regard to planning, material considerations include health, education and other issues, are a consideration by the planning inspector when making a planning decision) and in planning law, Gypsies often have to prove a mental anguish with regard to a ‘cultural aversion’ to bricks and mortar to present their case (Johnson and Willers, 2007).

89 Margaret Price v Carmarthenshire County Council [2003] EWHC 42


91 Andrew Selous (South West Bedfordshire) (Con). Available at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-11-13/debates/403211A9-02B3-4CD0-96A7-4468A15E5951/GypsyAndTravellerCommunities(HousingPlanningAndEducation)#contribution-6679A52F-76B6-443B-9FF1-CDE744536EA7

92 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-policy-for-traveller-sites


This report contains the research findings of the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups and Friends, Families and Travellers into the progress made by local planning authorities to meet the requirements of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (August 2015) to provide a supply of sites for pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. It also complements more detailed research by the London Gypsy and Traveller Unit which considered the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers in London. Planning Policy for Traveller Sites sets out the requirement for local planning authorities to “identify and maintain a five -year supply of specific, deliverable sites, sufficient to provide 5 years’ worth of sites against their locally set targets”
in adopting criteria-based policies. If there is a support group to make representations to the local authority in the creation of criteria-based policies there may be some hope, but in reality there will be many districts that may return to a criteria-based policy which makes it impossible to create sites.

The revocation of the 1/2006 guidelines in 2015, alongside case law regarding Gypsy status has meant that women are at a disadvantage within the planning system. Status for planning relies on looking for work and many women who are raising, or who have raised, children are thereby not able to claim status – the same applies to carers. This is very discriminatory both to women and to those with disabilities.

Many families are only granted a short-term planning permission, for example, for three years; these short-term permissions can be reviewed and re applied for through the planning application process (please see case study in the text box below). This does cause a certain amount of stress as the planning application fees have recently risen considerably and if the application has to go to an appeal or enquiry then there is the expense of hiring planning consultants and in relation to an enquiry instead of a public hearing, solicitors and barristers.

Some local authority sites can be problematic, especially if they are too big. Due to the dynamics of families on sites or bad management, this can often result in families leaving a site en masse – studies illustrate that families do not feel secure in their day to day lives.

In England if you live on a local authority or privately rented caravan site you have security of tenure under the Mobile Homes Act, which means you cannot be evicted without your landlord going to court and obtaining a court order. The Mobile Homes Act 1983 excluded Gypsy sites specifically but after the case of Connors (2004) it was amended so that Gypsy families would have secure tenancy rights.

Planning case study

Mr and Mrs JJ and their family bought land and moved onto it; they lodged a planning application straight away. The application was turned down and the appeal took the form of an enquiry (more expensive than a Public hearing as you need solicitor and a barrister). The family were granted a three-year temporary permission; three years later the family had to apply for planning again. There was a further planning fee to pay and the planning consultant costs are not cheap. In this case an NGO assisted with the planning application and it was granted for a further three years. When this second planning permission expired the family had to pay yet a further fee and apply again and again an NGO assisted the family as advocate.

At the planning committee meeting held by the local authority, the local authority accepted that the family had been on the land for 13 years in total and that many local settled people had got to know the family and supported their further application. We thought the committee seemed to be very positive in their discussion. However, after some discussion one of the committee members persuaded the other members to think otherwise with a few seconds to spare. The NGO advocate threw a photograph onto the table which

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94 For an unworkable criteria-based policy see “Plan for Fylde-Plan for the Future: Fylde Council Local Plan to 2032 – Policy H5: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show people’s Sites”, at: http://www.fylde.gov.uk/assets/legacy/getasset?id=fAA3ADcAMwA2AHwAfABUAH1AdQBIAHwAfAAwAHwA0

95 Pressing for progress: women’s rights and gender equality in 2018, in: EHRC shadow report to CEDAW

highlighted a need of urgent health care. This action made the committee think again as they were sympathetic to the needs of this individual. However, the advocate has always felt bad that in order to get a planning permission (which should have been granted) it had been necessary to highlight an illness issue in this way although it did finally mean that the family have now got their permission for life.

Three times the security of the family had been at risk and the planning enquiry process in the beginning is slow, worrying and costly - many families end up spending all their money on the planning process.

13 years is not long compared to some struggles the longest one is 35 years, which is a constant worry and pressure on the families involved until they hear those magic words “for life”.

Because there has to be the presumption that Gypsy families want to travel in the future and that travelling may be in abeyance, they cannot use words like “settle down” in their application otherwise the application could fail on Gypsy status. Families by law have to illustrate that they may travel again in the future otherwise they lose Gypsy status and their application will fail.

Effectiveness of housing benefits and social assistance to maintain housing

Housing benefit on Traveller sites is problematic and there are differences between local authority sites and private sites. Recent changes to UK housing benefit have also affected the security of some families. It has been reported to NGOs that families have moved off sites due to difficulties in covering the shortfall for rent and council tax on private sites.

Many Gypsy and Traveller families are not literate and need assistance with form filling. Because many families cannot prove what income they have due to the hand to mouth nature of work, decisions on housing benefit are often delayed due to staff needing to see actual evidence of income as proof.97

Families have migrated from traditionally not paying any rent or council tax to being in a very regulated system. Historically, over the last 60 years, much of the community were excluded from the National Insurance Act 1946 which established a system of social security throughout the UK. The homeless, unmarried mothers and others were excluded from this Act so a further Act, the National Assistance Act 1948 (NAA 1948) was brought in. Both these Acts were brought in to improve living conditions after the World War II and whilst families who applied for conventional housing were assisted, through the NAA 1948 and subsequent homeless legislation (Tracada, Spencer and Neary, 2014),98 many Gypsies who remained on the road travelling were not, as people needed a fixed address. There was little assistance for people of persistent no fixed abode. In the last decade families have experienced difficulties on a number of levels – this can be due to lost paperwork, historic errors due to literacy problems, variances in surname spelling, not being able to prove income and the fact that claiming certain benefits has to be done on line;99 but many do not have the necessary technology skills (FFT,2018).100

98 http://www.academia.edu/13000777/Hidden_agenda_in_the_last_decade_Localism_and_Housing_Acts_in_the_UK_Where_is_the_good_practice_in_East_and_West_Midlands_case_studies.
99 Universal Credit has to be claimed on line at: https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/universal-credit/claiming/apply-for-universal-credit/
Gypsies and Travellers find this hard when claiming both housing benefit and council tax benefit. The local authority can take a long time in making the decision, so in a few weeks families can be in arrears and will owe the local authority the portion of rent that has built up that they have to pay. The rating valuation officers do not understand how Gypsy sites are run and often make mistakes in their evaluation of rent that should be paid and so families face a shortfall in the rent as the valuation officer may undervalue the plot in relation to rent. The family may just panic and move as they see a bill building up which they will not be able to pay. This is linked to employment as the employment of many families is erratic at times and difficult to prove at the benefit office when work is of an ad hoc nature (Smith and Greenfields 2012).

Gypsy and Traveller families, therefore, will find it easier to access housing benefit if they are on other benefits - this can cause a benefit trap and also trap them on local authority sites as occupiers of caravans on a site that is local authority owned receive a Housing Benefit rent rebate of the whole of the rent charged. Unfortunately, if the caravan is on a private site, then the rent on which Housing benefit can be claimed is subject to determination by a rent officer, and is normally substantially less than the full contractual rent charged. The new Universal Credit system is problematic, not just to the Gypsy community but the wider community as well. NGOs who assist in welfare rights report that families have had to wait a considerable time for benefits, including disability benefits, to be resolved.101

Fight against residential segregation, discrimination and other forms of antigypsyism in housing

This is a difficult issue as Gypsy and Traveller people are often segregated by default, i.e. the need to live in cultural appropriate accommodation with their own community. However, analysis of the 2011 England and Wales Census103 found that Gypsies and Irish Travellers are more likely to live in a house than a caravan. The issue here is that only 58,000 declared themselves as Gypsy or Traveller (of an estimated 300,000),104 with more than 60 per cent saying they lived in a house or bungalow. Even amongst these, some families feel isolated and prefer to live on housing estates where there are streets of settled Gypsy or Traveller people – for example, Darlington, Durham, Newark, Derby and London have streets where traditionally the Gypsy and the Traveller community have lived and return to live. There are studies of racism and discrimination to Gypsy Traveller families that move into housing (Smith and Greenfields, 2013). Often there may be a touring caravan outside and this can break the rules and regulations of the tenancy if someone uses it for sleeping in.105

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101 https://ukhumanrightsblog.com/2013/01/18/gypsies-not-entitled-to-full-housing-benefit-to-cover-private-rent/


105 Some Gypsy people will still prefer to live in a caravan rather than bricks and mortar housing.
Improving housing conditions and regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods

Many of the sites created under the 1968 Caravan Sites Act (300 in total)\textsuperscript{106} were on unsuitable land such as land fill, close to a railway line or on contaminated land.\textsuperscript{107} Some local authorities are making efforts to rectify the situation and upgrade sites – for example, after surveying residents, Fife\textsuperscript{108} and Ryedale in Yorkshire.\textsuperscript{109} One site in North Yorkshire\textsuperscript{110} had serious problems for many years.

Fenland (Cambridgeshire) is a good example of how sites should be run as they have developed well maintained sites.\textsuperscript{111} Initiatives to improve sites are ongoing.\textsuperscript{112}

A recent report (FFT, 2017) shows that there has been an increase in private pitches but negligible increases in affordable socially rented pitches. As stated above there has been none provided taking advantage of SOAHP (Shared ownership and affordable housing program) since 2016.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
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\bibitem{108} \url{https://www.thecourier.co.uk/wp/news/local/fife/708704/millions-to-be-spent-on-fife-gypsy-traveller-sites-after-sharp-satisfaction-dip/}
\bibitem{109} Tara Park Yorkshire (2013) \url{https://www.gazetteherald.co.uk/news/10805538.ryedale-travellers-site-upgraded/}
\bibitem{110} Woldgate. North Yorkshire. This site was on an old landfill and has its own methane warning system, The residents were finally relocated in 2012.
\bibitem{112} CAMBSTIMES, Fenland District Council work with Traveller sites to give areas a makeover (2017) \url{https://www.cambstimes.co.uk/news/fenland-district-council-work-with-traveller-sites-to-give-the-areas-a-make-over-1-5082339}
\end{thebibliography}
**IMPACT OF HEALTH CARE POLICIES ON ROMA**

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are known to face some of the most severe health inequalities and poor life outcomes amongst the United Kingdom population, even when compared with other ethnic minorities. Data from the 2011 Census found that in England and Wales, Gypsies and Irish Travellers had the lowest proportion of people rating their general health as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ at 70 per cent compared to 81 per cent overall.\(^{113}\) In a survey of Roma communities across Europe, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights found that one third of Roma respondents between the ages of 35 and 54 experience health problems limiting their daily activities.\(^{114}\) Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are thought to live between five and 25 years less than the wider UK population and experience around six less Quality Adjusted Life Years, that is, years lived in good health.\(^{115,116,117}\)

In the largest piece of research of its kind in the UK, Parry et al found that Gypsies and Travellers were significantly more likely to have a long-term illness, health problem or disability, which limits daily activities or work; experience higher levels of anxiety and depression; experience higher overall prevalence of reported chest pain, higher levels of respiratory problems, are more likely to have arthritis and more likely to experience miscarriage and the premature death of offspring.\(^{118}\) Between 2005 and 2012, Roma Support Group found that 60 per cent of their Roma beneficiaries had poor physical health including cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, hepatitis B, cardiovascular and respiratory alignments and multiple sclerosis. Further to this, 43 per cent of Roma beneficiaries of the above, were suffering from mental health problems including depression, personality disorders, learning disabilities, suicidal tendencies, self-abuse, dependency/misuse of drugs.\(^{119}\)

The reasons behind the poor health of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are multiple and complex. Without doubt, chronic exclusion and inequalities across the wider social determinants of health are key factors putting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities at risk of poor health. However, failure on the part of the health and social care system to make a proportionate response to address these risk factors mean that little progress has been made in improving the health of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in recent years. Further to this, many mainstream health policies fail to take into consideration the experiences and lifestyles of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the UK, so fail to address the health inequalities of these groups.

The health inequalities facing Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities fail to be addressed at both a national and local level because there is no real commitment made to change,\(^{119}\)


\(^{118}\) Ibid

no leadership appointed to elicit change and no accountability if change does not happen. For example, in January 2019, NHS England published a Long-Term Plan which sets out the strategy for the NHS over the next ten years.¹²⁰ Whilst the plan contains specific commitments to many of the groups recognised as experiencing inequalities in England, there is not one mention of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the plan nor any commitment specific to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the plan.¹²¹ In the absence of any real leadership or accountability within the health and social care system, little or no progress will continue to be made.

## Ensuring equal access to public health care services

Whilst in 2012, the Ministerial Working Group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers made five commitments to improve the health of Gypsy and Traveller communities in England, there has been little measurable progress towards achieving these commitments.¹²² Notably, the National Inclusion Health Board, which was considered to be one of the key vehicles for driving progress in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller health outcomes has not met since December 2013.¹²³ In Wales, the ‘Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers’ Plan which contains commitments to seven actions related to health was launched in June 2018. At the time of writing, it is too early to determine the progress made in realising the objectives in this plan.

### Promising practice: VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance (HWAlliance)

In June 2017, the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and Public Health England launched the HWAlliance which is a partnership between the voluntary sector and the health and social care system. The HWAlliance aims to amplify the voices of people with lived experience to inform national policy and to facilitate co-produced solutions to promote equality and reduce health inequalities. One of the 21 charities selected to be on the VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance is advocacy organisation Friends Families and Travellers who work on behalf of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This is a positive and welcome step towards ensuring that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller health issues are considered within national policy-making.

Since their appointment to the HWAlliance, Friends Families and Travellers have developed guidance on End of Life Care for Gypsy and Traveller communities, co-led the development of an Inclusion Health Audit Tool for the voluntary sector and are currently developing guidance for local commissioners on Mental Health and Prevention in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and on Suicide Prevention and Inequalities in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This represents a small portion of the work which has been carried out by Friends, Families and Travellers as part of the HWAlliance to date.

### Inclusive commissioning

In England, since 2012, local Health and Wellbeing Boards and their constituent members – Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and public health bodies – have responsibility for co-ordinating production of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) to identify and

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address local health inequalities. Inclusion of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in JSNA documents is critical for planning and commissioning services that work to reduce health inequalities. If Gypsy, Roma and Traveller health needs are not included in robust and comprehensive needs assessments they risk being excluded from strategies and commissioning seeking to address health inequalities.

In 2015, Friends Families and Travellers reviewed JSNAs from across the South East and South West of England to assess the extent to which Gypsy and Traveller health needs were included in light of the inclusive commissioning guidance. They found that in London, only two out of 33 boroughs had a chapter on Gypsy and Traveller health needs. In the East there was only one recent Gypsy and Traveller JSNA focus paper out of nine Health and Wellbeing boards. In the South East and South West, only 13 out of 29 JSNAs had chapters on Gypsy and Traveller Health need, two out of 29 had only a sentence on Gypsy and Traveller health need and five out of 29 had no mention of Gypsy and Traveller health needs. Whilst examples of inclusive JSNAs for Roma communities exist in Leeds and Sheffield, practice across the country is patchy.

Recommendations arising from the research carried out by Friends, Families and Travellers highlighted that strong leadership dedicated to addressing health inequalities and chronic social exclusion was key to more inclusive JSNAs and as a result of this, commissioning, particularly in a time of austerity. The report writers recommended that Health and Wellbeing Boards appoint an accountable officer with responsibility for health inequalities and social inclusion. The report also called for NHS England and Public Health England to take their role in overseeing and scrutinising progress made by Health and Wellbeing Boards more seriously.

**Health data available on Gypsies, Roma and Travellers**

A key issue for those wishing to inclusively commission lies in the lack of data available within the NHS on the health of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities across the UK. The health and social care system in the UK places a strong emphasis on using evidence to inform decision making around health and social care. In England, Scotland and Wales, the health service does not include Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities amongst the ethnicity categories they record so there is a lack of national data on the health status and needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This can ultimately render Gypsy, Roma and Traveller health inequalities invisible to policy makers and commissioners.

In Northern Ireland, guidance issued in 2016 advises staff working in Health and Social Care to record ethnicity of ‘Irish Travellers’ as in the 2011 census and to additionally record the ethnicity of ‘Roma Travellers’.

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125 Jeffreys, K et al (2016), "Health within the Leeds Roma Community: Final Report". Available at: [http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/2741/1/ROMA%20Report%20FINAL.pdf](http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/2741/1/ROMA%20Report%20FINAL.pdf)


Roma and Traveller communities could be included in the NHS Data Dictionary and that the exercise would be complete by the end of 2018. In Wales, the ‘Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Traveller’ Plan commits to working “with NHS Informatics and local Health Boards to embed the Census 2011 ethnicity categories (Gypsy and Irish Traveller) into local operational systems from 2018/2019”.

**Accessing healthcare**

Rights around accessing healthcare differ slightly in each of the four nations that make up the United Kingdom (UK). Whilst in principle there are adequate policy provisions for everyone who is ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales to access primary and emergency health and social care, sometimes the services involved in delivering this are unaware of their obligations or do not carry these out in practice. As a result, members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities across the UK can often fail to access health and social care. Despite repeated calls from the international community, including the UN Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, this issue has not been adequately resolved.

Across the UK, there is often a gap between policy and practice for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities seeking to access health care. For example, NHS England’s Patient Registration Standard Operating Principles for Primary Medical Care states: "When applying to become a patient there is no regulatory requirement to prove identity, address,

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131 Law Centre NI (2013), "Access to free primary (GP) and secondary (hospital) health care for migrants". Available at: http://www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Law-Centre-Information-Briefings/Community%20Care%20Briefings/CC-Briefing-29-Access-to-healthcare.pdf

132 Citizens Advice (n.d.), "NHS patients’ rights". Available at: https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/nireland/health/nhs-whatpatients-rights-ni/

133 Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (n.d.), "First steps to using health and social care services in Northern Ireland". Available at: http://www.belfasttrust.hscni.net/pdf/1stSteps-English.pdf

134 Law Centre NI (2015), "New Northern Ireland Regulations governing access to healthcare for migrants - A Summary". Available at: https://www.lawcentreni.org/Publications/Policy-Briefings/New-NI-Regulations-healthcare-for-migrants-SUMMARY-March-15.pdf


136 Scottish Government / Riaghaltas na h-Alba (2017), "Overseas Visitors". Available at: https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Services/Overseas-visitors


140 UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 2016, para 55 & 56

immigration status or the provision of an NHS number in order to register".142 Despite this, research carried out by British Red Cross in 2016, found that only ten out of 25 randomly selected GP practices successfully registered Roma and Gypsy mystery shoppers who either did not have a local postcode, did not have proof of address or who did not have proof of identification. A service user from the Traveller community told the writers of this report: “Due to no fixed address I’ve been turned away from multiple doctors, even though I’ve explained NHS policy the surgery either gave me a blank look or just said it is their policy.”

### An example from fieldwork:

Mr K is 54 years old and is from a Roma background in the Czech Republic. He lives with his wife who has asthma and diabetes. Mr K arrived in the country 8 years ago with no medical conditions.

In May 2016, Mr K began to regularly visit his GP explaining that he has breathing problems and feels very dizzy at times but was only prescribed paracetamol. Each time Mr K visited his GP practice he was advised that the surgery had no interpreters available which made it impossible for Mr K to explain his condition.

Mr K has been working in a factory during this time and one day he fainted while at work and an ambulance had to be called out. He was later diagnosed with asthma and diabetes.

Mr K was given a sick note for 4 weeks by the GP and told to return to work after this time. Mr K returned to work, however, his diabetes was in such a severe stage that he found himself unable to do his job. He was then given another sick note and ended up leaving his job.

Mr K then started to claim Employment Support Allowance. After this he was ordered to attend a Capability Work Assessment where the assessor decided that he was capable of working. As of this, his ESA has been stopped, even though he is still not able to go to work due to his condition. Due to this, Mr K has fallen into deep depression and this has affected his mental health. He has become socially isolated, he has stopped communicating with his whole family which has had an impact on the whole family.

This could have been avoided at an earlier stage when Mr K first visited his GP. Mr K feels that doctors have ignored him and his symptoms and that this is the reason why he now at high risk of losing his leg due to severe diabetes.

In some cases, people with low literacy can struggle to navigate the registration process at GP practices which requires form filling. Advocacy organisation Friends Families and Travellers found that around 45 per cent of their service users from Gypsy and Traveller communities had low or no literacy, therefore when help with reading and writing is not offered many of these people will simply be unable to access primary care. Some members of Roma communities have low levels of English and in some GP practices, staff offer translation to them, however this practice is patchy across the country and many Roma people with low levels of English will be unaware that this service is available. In some cases, children are relied upon for translation which can present problems when the nature of the health issue is not one an adult would want to discuss in front of their child and child translators may have to miss school.

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Hostile environment

In recent years, a number of leading human rights groups have highlighted the damaging effects of the creation of a “hostile environment” for immigrants in the UK.\(^{143}\) This refers to a series of policies brought in across government as a form of immigration control. Within health, the Home Office made a data-sharing agreement with NHS Digital and the Department of Health and Social Care in order to receive contact information from patients’ medical records. In 2016 alone, this resulted in 6,000 people’s NHS data being used by immigration to track them down.\(^{144}\) Whilst this practice has now been stopped amidst intense scrutiny of the “hostile environment”, it has undoubtedly created fear amongst migrant communities about accessing health services.

As part of the “hostile environment”, 20 hospitals in London have recently begun a pilot programme where patients are asked to present identification documents which support their right to receive treatment prior to accessing secondary care.\(^{145}\) This can present an issue for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities who are entitled to treatment but who do not have the relevant documents to demonstrate this, but more crucially presents an issue for Roma patients from outside of the EEA zone who do not have the rights to live in the UK. Fear around accessing healthcare in case immigration services are alerted means that some Roma families may be forced to take risks with their health which they otherwise would not. This is likely to have an impact on children and young peoples’ health, as well as women’s health in the perinatal stages.

Mental Health

Research from the Republic of Ireland finds that Irish Travellers are six times more likely to die by suicide than non-Travellers.\(^ {146}\) This likelihood increases to seven times when focused on Traveller men.\(^ {147}\) When writing this report, the authors heard of one Traveller family who had lost 17 family members to suicide. Findings from research conducted by advocacy organisation Roma Support Group in Roma communities is equally startling. Roma Support Group found that 43 per cent of their Roma beneficiaries were suffering from mental health problems including depression, personality disorders, learning disabilities, suicidal tendencies, self-abuse, dependency/ misuse of drugs.\(^ {148}\)

Despite the enormity of mental health issues experienced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, work which delivers targeted mental health support in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities has taken steps backwards instead of forwards in recent years. In 2005, the Department of Health launched the five-year programme ‘Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health’ which led to the creation of 500 BME Community Development


\(^{144}\) Ibid

\(^{145}\) Independent Newspaper (2017), "Patients at 20 NHS hospitals forced to show passports and ID in ‘health tourism’ crackdown". Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nhs-hospitals-20-forced-show-passports-id-health-tourism-crackdown-healthcare-jeremy-hunt-government-a7530931.html

\(^{146}\) University College Dublin (2010), “All Irel and Traveller Health Study – summary of findings”. Available at: https://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/AITHS_SUMMARY.pdf

\(^{147}\) Ibid

Worker posts, including posts in Gypsy and Traveller communities.\textsuperscript{149} The project ran for 5 years and then government withdrew funding for these posts following austerity cuts.

Whilst the prevalence of mental health issues amongst BME groups is widely recognised within government, commissioning of support for mental health for BME communities is patchy across the country. In their Mental Health Advocacy Project, Roma Support Group found that there was a lack of statutory and voluntary mental health advocacy provision that recognised the specific health, cultural and linguistic needs of Roma refugees and migrants in areas where they worked.\textsuperscript{150} This reflects a wider issue around resourcing mental health support in the UK, but undoubtedly has a greater impact on communities such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities who have greater mental health needs.

\textbf{Immunisations}

Public Health England recognises that Gypsy and Traveller communities are less likely to be vaccinated than non-Traveller communities. An immunisation audit in 2015 found that only 45 per cent of Irish Traveller children had two MMR doses by the time they were five years old, compared to 90 per cent of non-Traveller children.\textsuperscript{151} Whilst it was widely reported that the elimination of measles had been achieved in the UK in September 2017, in the following months, outbreaks of measles occurred in both Leeds and Birmingham.\textsuperscript{152} Whilst the origin of both outbreaks are unknown, it is known that in both cases, members of Roma communities resident in the cities who had previously not been reached by vaccination programmes contracted measles.

In 2016 and 2017, two studies were undertaken into the causes of the lower levels of vaccinations in Gypsy and Traveller communities. Smith and Newton found that there was “little support for explanations that emphasise cultural values or practices in shaping immunisation behaviour. Poor service provision, situational constraints related to living circumstances, and multifaceted and severe health issues, which precede and inform decisions over childhood immunisation, were more significant in explaining low uptake”.\textsuperscript{153}

In 2016, Bedford et al found that Roma communities experienced language barriers in accessing immunisation services and across all Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, low literacy meant that people could not read immunisation information, messages inviting them to appointments and people often struggled to make sense of conversations with health professionals.\textsuperscript{154}

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\textsuperscript{152} BBC News (2017), “UK ‘eliminates measles’ for first time”. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-41399850

\textsuperscript{153} Smith, D & Newton, P. (2016), “Structural barriers to measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) immunisation uptake in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the United Kingdom”. Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09581596.2016.1211254


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highlighted that many Roma parents whose children had already received some vaccinations in other countries or who had lost their vaccination cards were worried that it would be bad for their children’s health if they were vaccinated twice. Other studies found that differences in vaccine schedules between countries of origin and the UK sometimes led parents to believe that their children were up-to-date with vaccinations, but in some cases weren’t up-to-date with the UK schedule and therefore missed out on important vaccinations.155

Maternal Health

A study in 2001 found Gypsy and Traveller women to have ‘possibly the highest maternal death rate among all ethnic groups’ and maternal health risks and poor outcomes are known to be more common in Roma women.156,157 Issues around continuity of care, prejudice and discrimination, negative experiences of healthcare as well as language and communication continue to be an issue for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.158

According to a 2018 Maternity Action report commissioned by Public Health England, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women frequently told researchers that they had experienced prejudice and discrimination when accessing midwives – sometimes being denied access. One Roma participant said: “If you have your first child you don’t know to speak and you have difficulties communicating, you risk your child’s life in this. Health professionals don’t want to help and then even though they do have interpreting available, they do have means of helping, they just refuse to do that. In some ways it is even racist behaviour from the health professionals.” One Romany Gypsy participant said: “One day, my blood pressure was up high. I couldn’t get to the midwife because I was told to stay in bed by the doctor. And then she wouldn’t come because I was on site. Would she have done that with someone who lived in a house? No.”159

Notably, the NHS England Five Year Forward View review on Maternal Health contained only one mention of Gypsy and Traveller maternal health and no mention of Roma maternal health.160 The reference to Gypsy and Traveller maternal health said: “For women in the Gypsy and Traveller communities this might mean professionals taking extra time to discuss and understand their lifestyle choices and not make assumptions about their feeding preferences or about the safety of their home environment” but did not refer to any relevant structural issues around continuity of care, prejudice and discrimination or language and literacy nor committed to address these.

Fight against discrimination and antigypsyism in health care

The Equality and Human Rights Commission Barometer found that of all groups with protected characteristics Gypsies, Roma and Travellers were the only groups for which the most frequent sentiment amongst the public was openly negative – 44 per cent of over

159 Ibid
two thousand respondents openly said that they held negative attitudes towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. As the NHS is the biggest employer in the UK, without doubt, it will also be employing members of the public who hold negative attitudes towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This means that some members of the NHS workforce can hold attitudes which are based on prejudice and that this can manifest itself in their professional life. As a result, many Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members try to hide their ethnicity to avoid experiencing discrimination.

**Cases of Discrimination and Antigypsyism**

There is no public record with details of how many cases of discrimination against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities within healthcare have been reported, investigated and sanctioned, however, as mentioned above, many GP practices will not register Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities without proof of address, proof of identification and many fail to provide the necessary support for patients with low literacy or fluency in English. In general, when a complaint is raised, discrimination is usually recognised by the health services and action is taken. However, many victims of discrimination can be reluctant to make a complaint, may not know how to go about making a complaint and where discrimination has been verbal, then can find it hard to prove what has happened.

In England, advocacy organisation Friends Families and Travellers have supported a number of Gypsies and Travellers who have experienced discrimination from the health service, either as patients or as members of the workforce. In one case, a group of Romany Gypsy women who had worked for an NHS Trust for over a decade experienced what they felt was an orchestrated campaign against them led by a key member of staff. The member of staff was said to have called them names such as “pikey”, allegedly coercing other members of staff to make reports against them and treating them unfavourably when overtime was allocated. In another case, an NHS employee used the internal communications channel to spread a petition against Gypsy and Traveller sites in the area. In this case, the Trust leadership wrote a message to all of the Trust’s employees to apologise and reaffirmed their commitment and inclusion of Gypsy and Traveller communities. This prompted a number of Gypsies and Travellers who worked at the Trust to ask for their ethnicity to be recorded on their personnel files.

In Scotland, an internal memo was sent to staff at NHS National Services Scotland’s Edinburgh Gyle campus in August 2018 which warned that the hospital was going to lock up for the weekend as they had been “made aware of the presence of a travelling community in the local area”. The internal memo then advised “if approached consider avoiding dialogue with the travelling community members to prevent any possible issues” and said to “be vigilant on access and security to the building and site, reporting any breaches immediately”. Whilst the internal memo was challenged by members of staff on the Gyle campus and an apology issued, it seems highly unlikely that any health professional in the UK would feel that the statement was acceptable to make publicly about any other ethnic group.

**Training to address discrimination and antigypsyism**

Whilst the NHS has vocally expressed it’s commitment to being an inclusive and diverse organisation and taken a number of steps to achieve this, antigypsyism has often been an overlooked aspect of this. In Wales, promising steps have been made by the NHS who

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recently launched, 'Romani and Traveller Healthcare' E-Learning which is available to all Welsh NHS staff\textsuperscript{163}. As the programme has only recently been released, it is too early to determine uptake of the training but the Welsh government have committed to monitoring the numbers of health practitioners who have undertaken training on an annual basis from 2018/2019 in the 'Enabling Gypsies, Roma and Travellers' Plan\textsuperscript{164}. In other areas of the UK, whether or not health professionals are offered training on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller inclusion is highly dependent on an individual within the local health and social care infrastructure taking the initiative to ensure resources are allocated to this so whilst there are examples of good practice, there are many areas where little or nothing is done.

**Promising practice: Roma Support Group Awareness Training Programme for NHS staff**

Roma Support Group ran a training scheme from August 2016 to March 2017 which aimed to strengthen the quality and quantity of education for health and care workers through the delivery of an awareness training programme for NHS staff. The programme was supported by Newham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Health Education in North Central and East London (HENCEL). Participants in the training reported an increase in awareness of the Roma community, health status and culture, as well as increased confidence in applying knowledge gained in practice.

In recognition of issues with diversity in the NHS workforce, the Workforce Race Equality Standard was introduced in 2015, with the aim of addressing the inequality experienced by black and minority ethnic (BME) staff in the NHS.\textsuperscript{165} The 2016 NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard Data Analysis Report for NHS Trusts found that White shortlisted job applicants are 1.5 times more likely to be appointed than BME shortlisted applicants, but BME staff are significantly more likely to be disciplined more likely to experience harassment, bullying or abuse from other staff.\textsuperscript{166}

**Examples of positive practice**

**Belfast Health Trust – Accessing Health and Tackling Stigma**

Belfast Health Trust commissioned dedicated Traveller Liaison Officers who built relationships with Travellers and helped them to access health services. The Trust encouraged conversations about mental health among Gypsy and Traveller communities using a DVD resource and were able to use community choirs and creative arts to build confidence, tackle stigma and address mental health issues within Gypsy and Traveller communities.

**NHS in Leeds, Leeds City Council’s public health team and Leeds GATE – Community Outreach Work**

Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group created a position for a community outreach nurse to work closely with Gypsy and Traveller people in Leeds. Under the scheme, the nurse was able to build trusting relationships with local Gypsies and Travellers and support them to access health and social care. An evaluation of the project found that it had improved the


\textsuperscript{165} The King’s Fund (2018). "Closing the gap on BME representation in NHS leadership: not rocket science". Available at: https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2018/03/bme-representation-nhs-leadership

health and wellbeing of community members involved and in July 2018, it was announced that the scheme would run for another year.

**Friends Families and Travellers – Royal Society of Public Health (RSPH) Training**

East Sussex County Council and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government commissioned Friends Families and Travellers to develop bespoke public health training for Gypsy and Traveller communities. The aim of the training is to develop and embed ways of working that enable Gypsy and Traveller communities to actively participate in improving their own and their community’s health. Over 70 Gypsies and Travellers have taken part in the training to date and have received an accredited certificate, which is equivalent to a GCSE qualification. Friends Families and Travellers are currently developing and piloting an RSPH Young Health Champions qualification with a group of young Irish Travellers in Brighton.

**Roma Support Group - Mental Health Advocacy Project**

Roma Support Group’s Mental Health Advocacy Project worked with Roma people experiencing mental health issues and the local health and social care system to ensure the mental health needs of Roma individuals and the communities were understood and met. Roma Support Group gave Roma people referrals to and from mental health teams, social services, carers’ support groups, voluntary organisations, distributed information leaflets on Roma culture and health related customs to health professionals. The project was supported by a King’s Fund Partners for Health grant.
Education is a devolved matter in the UK. The changes in the English educational system after two decades of continual ‘reform’ have posed real difficulties for many students and their families, especially for the poor and marginalised. The introduction of a quasi-market into education via performance league tables of schools and greater alleged autonomy for schools is the most significant. Since 2011, the government’s austerity programme, whilst ostensibly protecting school budgets, has become increasingly seen as the reason for a range of educational reductions e.g. special needs provision, early years and post-19 provision, services for young people. Finally, the consequences of these two factors has led to (a) a crisis in educational performance/development of children from deprived backgrounds and/or communities, and (b) a crisis in teachers’ retention, with the growing numbers of people leaving teaching early (for retirement or for other jobs).

The main issues facing Roma children in English schools are:

- Insufficient training of staff and employment of Roma staff at all grades in early years settings to respond to the particular cultural and developmental needs of young Roma children and their families.
- Insufficient school places available for children in the neighbourhoods (poor, working class, private rented, transitional) where Roma have settled in England – leading to newly settled families having children in schools some distance away (and in different schools too).
- Some evidence of separate provision for Roma students, especially for those children recently arrived and with little English – in contravention to formal government agency advice and guidance.
- Some evidence of declining attendance in the last two years of secondary schooling (14-16).
- Some evidence of off-rolling of Roma students in secondary schools.
- Extensive evidence of a greater use of exclusion (both temporary and permanent) against Roma students in both primary and secondary schools; but quite noticeable variations between cities in Roma exclusion rates.
- Significant loss of contact and engagement with Roma students upon and after leaving school.

Improving access to quality preschool education and care

There is little or no detailed knowledge of the attendance of GRT children in early years provision. There is a widespread view in the sector that rates are extremely low, and that families are disinclined to encourage their children to attend before school age. This applies both to statutory settings (like primary schools) and other provision (private or NFP). Any attempts to seek from government any evidence of a strategy to secure greater attendance for GRT children in early years (e.g. PMQ HL7696) in May 2018 was met with a re-statement of the government’s generic position for supporting early years.

We are aware of particular initiatives that were extremely successful under the previous government’s SureStart programme, which aimed to provide provision, support and advice to parents and children particularly in disadvantaged communities in the UK. There were a number of best practice examples provided by Save the Children report (2007); but these have noticeably disappeared since 2010. Best practice was reported by Traveller Education teams in East Sussex, Northamptonshire, Durham, Cheshire and Norfolk; and by local SureStart centres (e.g. Oswestry; Beeston Hill, Leeds). Furthermore, whilst good practice examples still exist for working with Gypsy and Traveller children and parents,

there is little documentation about developing Roma families’ confidence and interest in early years provision. This can be a major issue as kindergarten provision in many countries of origin is unknown in Roma settlements and neighbourhoods, and the school age frequently begins at 6 years of age. As Save the Children in 2007 said: “...but practice in this area of work remains limited”; this is even more limited now in 2019.

**Early years foundation stage profile results: 2015 to 2016**

Evidence taken from the results above and utilised by the Race Disparity Unit show that Gypsies and Irish Travellers score significantly lower than all other ethnic groups in the foundation year. The majority of Gypsies and Irish Travellers are not likely to utilise early years education services, with many families preferring to keep their pre-school children with them.

In 2015/2016 (the latest year for which national data was available at the time of writing this report), show that while 67 per cent of all early years pupils met the expected level of development, 36 per cent of Irish Traveller children reached this level and only 24 per cent of Gypsy/Roma children did so.168

An online audit by Book Start stated that:

"**Gypsy, Roma and Traveller professionals should use their knowledge of a family to determine when a pack would be beneficial for a child, even if this differs slightly to the national model. Many Traveller families will not be in contact with health visitors/early years settings at gifting ages, therefore all Book Start partners need to be aware of the flexible policy for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families and adapt it as required.**"169

Where families are assertively outreached and where services work through trusted agencies, many families will take up resources and opportunities offered. Otherwise, the focus on increasing take up of places for GRT young children is entirely left to individual settings, schools and voluntary and community groups. There is no government focus on this critical issue.

**Improving quality of education until the end of compulsory schooling**

We recognise that whilst UK government policy states its support for improving educational provision and outcomes for pupils, there are still a number of issues which impact on access to, and the quality of, education for Gypsy, Roma & Traveller children. We note that the 2010-2015 coalition government made a number of commitments to progress Gypsy, Roma & Traveller needs within education, and tasked the DfE and Ofsted to make progress. The current Women’s and Equalities Commons select committee is taking evidence on assessing this policy at present. But otherwise, there has been no policy announcement re GRT educational provision since 2010. Ofsted produced a research report re Roma pupils’ education in 2014,170 and the DfE produced a series of good practice examples at schools supporting Gypsy and Traveller children.171

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School Attendance & Elective Home Education (EHE)

The Cabinet Office’s Race Disparity Audit notes stated that:

“Low educational attainment and progress is associated with poor attendance at school. The pupils most likely to be absent were Gypsy or Roma pupils, and those of an Irish Traveller background, with overall absence rates (that is, the percentage of all possible ‘sessions’ that were missed) of 13 and 18 per cent respectively in 2016. This compares with 4.6 per cent for White British pupils and 2.4 per cent for Chinese pupils.”

In the last ten years, the data suggests that there has been a reduction in the number of pupils who miss school for whatever reason. There has been a one-third (32 per cent) reduction in the number of all children missing through any absence, from 6 per cent missed days to 4.7 per cent missed days. Gypsy Roma and Irish Traveller children have always had higher rates of absence, and in in 2009/2010, Gypsy Roma children were about three times more likely to be absent, and Irish Traveller children four times more likely to be absent. These ‘gaps’ between Gypsy Roma and Traveller children and other children still remain, although the fall in authorized absence for GRT children has been greater than for all children; Irish Traveller children have seen a slight increase in unauthorized absence in the last ten years:

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Maybe little has changed in the proportion of GRT (compared to all children) missing school sessions, despite the government’s priority of decreasing pupil absence. The answers might not lie in parental attitudes, but in the attitudes and behaviours the GRT children encounter in the classroom and in the wider school estate.

There is no requirement in England to attend school, although under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 parents are required to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive an efficient full-time education tailored to their aptitudes, abilities and any special needs they may have. As such, home education is legal, and parents are not under any general requirement to notify the local authority that they intend to do this. The local authority is not under a statutory duty to routinely monitor the quality of home education, but they are required to identify children of compulsory school age who are not receiving a suitable education.

In April 2018, the Department for Education launched a call for evidence on greater oversight of children whose parents elect to home educate them, in England. Alongside

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172 Cabinet Office, Race disparity audit, updated March 2018, Pp. 22-23
this, it published draft guidance documents for comment. On Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, the draft guidance for local authorities says:

"Local authorities should have an understanding of, and be sensitive to, the distinct ethos and needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. It is important that these families who are educating their children at home are treated in the same way as any other families in that position. Home education should not necessarily be regarded as less appropriate than in other communities. When a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller family with children of school age move into an area, they should be strongly encouraged to contact the local Traveller Education Support Service for advice and help to access local educational settings. Further guidance can be obtained from the DfE’s report: Improving the outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller’s pupils. The Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers is another source of information."

The reasons for poor attendance are complex and varied but reasons given are often associated with bullying, racism and discrimination. In addition to this many Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (especially women and girls, although a number of families challenge this stereotype) will have additional responsibilities within the home, such as supporting relatives and caring duties. Also, for the many Gypsies and Travellers who have nowhere to live the added stress of enforced evictions is disruptive to school life. Additionally, many Roma families might arrive in a town or city in-year and as schools in those neighbourhoods with poor quality, private rented housing are frequently full, families might be allocated several schools for different children, and/or schools some distance from their home; none of this makes for maximum attendance.

**Example of promising practice: Brighton**

When Brighton City Council added permanent pitches to the transit site, FFT noted that there would now be around 40 children and young people on site. FFT worked with the local authority and site residents to look at how the children and young people could be successfully integrated into the local school communities.

In particular, FFT set up a homework club on site, to support the primary age Travellers. It was recognised that some of the children had previously experienced a disruption to their education due to the cycle of evictions that their families faced prior to the permanent pitches being set up. Some of the young people within this cohort found going to school intimidating and embarrassing as they were behind on some of the key stages expected from that level.

The variety of concerns about the impact of EHE on GRT children are ably set out by Arthur Ivatts in his research paper written ten years ago. However, we have recently begun to receive reports (e.g. from Derby) where schools have encouraged Roma parents to “request” EHE as a way of the child avoiding being excluded. This has also been identified as a worrying trend by the Office of the School Adjudicator:

"Elective home education (EHE): four local authorities reported significant increases in the number of children being educated at home and, in particular, concerns that this was not always in the children’s interests. There were disturbing references to children being removed from schools to be educated at home with the encouragement of the school as an alternative to exclusion. One local authority described it thus: “schools off rolling learners to EHE when the families have no means to educate in order to protect their results records and school performance.” One local authority with nearly 2,000 children registered to be home educated said,

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"the majority have had some form of local authority intervention with a large proportion known to social services." 175

Latterly, this trend has been identified by the national director of Ofsted, when giving evidence to the Commons Women’s & Equality select committee hearing.176 Sean Harford said:

"Exclusions are very high as well—exclusions, absence and a lack of previous education, certainly in the case of Roma children coming from eastern Europe—and there are elements of bullying and racism. There is a push and a pull factor here. Some schools push the children away and do not make them welcome, while with some the families are pulling the children away at the same time. It is a complicated picture, but those factors will overall have an impact."

The Committee on the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) 2016 para 34 & 35 states clearly that:

"While noting the adoption of guidance on bullying and exclusion, the Committee remains concerned at continued reports of racist bullying and harassment in schools across the State party, as well as the disproportionate rate of exclusion from school of pupils belonging to the Gypsy, Traveller, Roma or Afro-Caribbean communities."

**Educational Attainment**

In October 2017 the Cabinet Office published an overview of the main findings from the first release of data from the Race Disparity Audit. The analysis is intended to increase understanding of the disparities between ethnic groups and inform policies to address them.

These are the updated figures taken from the UK government Race Disparity Audit website entitled "Ethnicity Facts and Figures". The one area where comprehensive statistics on Gypsies and Travellers exist in in education, where the fact that Gypsies and Travellers have the lowest educational attainment out of any ethnic minority in the UK, stands out starkly:

- In reading attainment for children aged 5-7 (key stage 1) Gypsy/Roma were the least likely to meet the higher standard.
- In reading attainment for children aged 7-11 (key stage 2) Gypsy/Roma were the least likely to meet the expected and higher standards, and Irish Traveller children made least progress in reading between key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Gypsy/Roma are the least likely to achieve A-C in English and Maths GCSE. Only 10 per cent of Gypsy/Roma and 21 per cent of Irish Traveller achieved this, compared to 63 per cent of all pupils.
- Only 9 per cent of Gypsy/Roma boys achieved this, compared to 59 per cent of boys in all ethnic groups.
- Gypsy/Roma boys eligible for Free School Meals were the least likely to achieve (only 7 per cent) of all groups.
- Irish Traveller and Gypsy/Roma students were least likely to achieve 3 grade A levels, at 0 per cent. The number of students in these groups is extremely small, 17 Gypsy/Roma and 4 Irish Traveller students took A levels in 2015/2016, according to the statistics.

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• In 2014/2015 over 90% of pupils from nearly every ethnic group stayed in education, employment or training, for at least two terms after key stage 4, except for Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller where the figure was about two thirds. They were the least likely to stay in education but the most likely to go into employment or training (6 per cent of Gypsy/Roma and 9 per cent of Irish Traveller).

• In 2016/2017, only 6 per cent of all pupils did not have a sustained presence in education, employment or training two terms after leaving school, but 33 per cent of Gypsy Roma and 27 per cent of Irish Travellers did not have any sustained presence or were absent from the data altogether (“not known”).

• There is no dataset which explores gender and ethnicity.

The last ten years, the government has declared an expected level of performance to be reached by pupils at the age of 11 (known as key stage 2) and at age 16 (key stage 4, or GCSE). Data is available by ethnicity and by sex from 2007:

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<th>Attainment at Key Stage 2</th>
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<td><strong>English &amp; Mathematics: % reaching KS2 standard</strong></td>
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| **Reading, writing, mathematics: % reaching KS2 standard level 4 and above** |
| 2012                     | 74 | 571,226 | 71 | 78 | 24 | 21 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 28 |
| 2013                     | 75 | 571,226 | 72 | 79 | 23 | 21 | 25 | 35 | 28 | 43 |
| 2014                     | 78 | 571,226 | 75 | 82 | 29 | 25 | 33 | 38 | 37 | 39 |
| 2015                     | 80 | 572,367 | 77 | 83 | 30 | 1,877 | 26 | 34 | 44 | 448 | 40 | 47 |

| **Reading, writing, mathematics: % pupils reaching expected standard** |
| 2016                     | 53 | 598,997 | 50 | 57 | 13 | 11 | 14 | 19 | 15 | 24 |
| 2017                     | 61 | 598,997 | 57 | 65 | 16 | 2,165 | 13 | 19 | 20 | 462 | 18 | 22 |

Overall levels of pupils attainment at age 11 has increased by 10 percentage points from 2007 to 2015. For Gypsy Roma pupils, the improvement is much more modest, but for Irish Traveller pupils, the improvement is much more significant. However, since 2015, and the change in the definitions of ‘expected level of performance’, the gap between both Gypsy Roma and Irish Traveller levels of attainment and all other pupils has widened considerably and is now greater than in 2007.

In 2007, only just over one-third (35 per cent) of Gypsy Roma pupils reached the expected level compared to all pupils, and a similar proportion of Irish Traveller children. By 2015, whilst the proportion of Gypsy Roma pupils reaching the expected level (compared to all pupils) was very slightly better (37 per cent), the proportional improvement for Irish Traveller pupils was much greater – 55 per cent of all pupils’ attainment level.

Girls levels of attainment have always been higher than boys for the whole pupil population. The gap between the two has generally become larger since 2007. This is generally reflected by both Gypsy Roma and Irish Traveller pupils, but with a couple of differences. In some years, Irish Traveller boys have performed more successfully than girls – the last time in 2012 (although the following year it was the largest gap in the last ten years). And the gap between boys’ and girls’ levels of attainment might be less latterly amongst Gypsy Roma and Irish Traveller than for all pupils.
Finally, the data of the total numbers of pupils taking KS2 tests illustrates that Gypsy Roma pupils’ populations have more than doubled since 2007, whilst Irish Traveller pupil numbers have grown more slowly. This might reflect both an increased confidence in self-ascription throughout GRT communities, and also the growing number of migrant Roma in English schools.

### Attainment at Key Stage 4 (Age 16) in %
Pupils Achieving Grade 4/C In English And Maths GCSEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All N=</th>
<th>Gypsy Roma N=</th>
<th>Irish Traveller N=</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Attainment at Key Stage 4 (Circa 16 Years Old) in %
Boys and Girls Achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs Including English & Maths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All Boys</th>
<th>All Girls</th>
<th>Gypsy Roma Boys</th>
<th>Gypsy Roma Girls</th>
<th>Irish Traveller Boys</th>
<th>Irish Traveller Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012/13</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013/14</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014/15</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/16</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attainment data at age 16 (KS4 or GCSE) doesn’t show such changes. The proportion of all pupils achieving an expected level has slowly increased since 2010, but this improvement is not reflected for Gypsy Roma pupils, but it is mirrored by Irish Traveller pupils. Both Gypsy Roma and Irish Traveller pupils witnessed a declining proportion achieving expected levels until 2013/2014, after which there has been a small improvement. The differences between boys’ and girls’ achievement levels are not dissimilar to the outcome of all pupils.

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, adopted 2016, para 115 states that:

"The Advisory Committee calls on the authorities to effectively monitor the measures adopted to guarantee equal access to, and enhance achievements of, pupils belonging to national and ethnic minorities, with particular attention to Gypsies, Travellers and Roma children to ensure that they are not left behind."

However, the UK government’s responses towards addressing this inequality relies on generic approaches through the Special Educational Needs Programme and the Pupil Premium which provides some extra funding to individual schools for some pupils. This approach overlooks the well-founded learning through research in health and other fields and the previous Government’s own commissioned report – “Improving the outcomes for
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils: final report” (2010). This report sets out clear guidance on good practice and evidence on improving attainment.

The research found that there are complex, inter-related reasons why the outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils fall significantly below those for other children, and that some schools are employing a range of strategies in response. Findings from this study are a further reminder to policy makers and those responsible for providing education that much more needs to be done to achieve equality in educational opportunities for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. Without a framework of targeted support at both local and national levels, the improvement of outcomes for these pupils is likely to remain unacceptably slow. The research report notes a number of key factors:

- Local authorities need robust strategies to engage with pupils who are not on the rolls of schools, to ensure that their educational entitlement is safeguarded.
- Developing relationships of trust through dialogue with families and community groups is important, so that community and parental scripts can be used as a way of opening positive discussion.
- A co-ordinated response between primary schools, secondary schools and local authorities is essential in order to further improve transfer rates and maintain pupil engagement through the secondary phase.
- The use of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller role models to promote this message of aspiration and achievement in schools and in the community is a particularly important strategy, and one that could be further developed.
- Above all, given that successful retention was associated with inclusive schools that reached out to parents, working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents in equal partnership remains crucial.

We would suggest that the experience of the last eight years suggests that the recommendations above are still entirely relevant.

Since 2014 the government has introduced a variety of welfare reforms aimed at decreasing access to various social security benefits for EU nationals. This has had a disproportionate impact on Roma families. Being receipt of benefits – and not being in low paid or irregular work – is one of the so-called ‘passports’ which enable the school age child to claim free school meals, and therefore for the school to be eligible to claim Pupil Premium. For the government to claim that their ‘generic’ approach to disadvantage works, denies the reality for many Roma children, and the schools they attend which are unable to fully respond to their pupils’ needs.

Special Educational Needs and Free School Meals

Government statistics released about pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in July 2018, identified that SEN is most prevalent in Travellers of Irish heritage and Gypsy or Roma pupils.

- Pupils with SEN remain more likely to be eligible for free school meals at 25.8 per cent compared to 11.5 per cent of pupils without special educational needs.
- Pupils with statements or EHC plans are also more likely to be eligible for free school meals than pupils on SEN support (30.9 per cent compared to 24.5 per cent).
- Pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs are particularly likely to be claiming free school meals, making up 31.3 per cent of pupils with SEN support and 41.2 per cent of pupils with a statement or EHC plan.


179 [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2lw1_Krq5gnS3pqSGRnb0xRYJQ/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2lw1_Krq5gnS3pqSGRnb0xRYJQ/view)
SEN is most prevalent in travellers of Irish heritage and Gypsy or Roma pupils, at 30.9 per cent and 26.8 per cent respectively.

Travellers of Irish heritage and black Caribbean pupils had the highest percentage of pupils with statements or EHC plans, at 4.5 per cent and 4.3 per cent respectively, while Indian pupils had the lowest percentage of pupils with statements or EHC plans at 1.8 per cent, compared with 2.9 per cent of all pupils nationally.

**Curriculum**

According to Kalwant Bhopal, Professor of Education and Social Justice at the University of Birmingham, low attendance of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in schools is in part the result of the fact that the curriculum does not address the needs of Gypsy Roma Traveller children:

“**It’s not an inclusive curriculum. It does not represent adequately Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history, and research at Birmingham has found that many parents and indeed children talk about the ways in which they don’t feel they’re represented within an inclusive curriculum.**”

She goes on to state that:

“**I think that’s hugely important because that will help to break down stereotypes and barriers that continually depict racism, especially in the media as well.**”

The curriculum has an impact on school inclusion, and an inclusive curriculum can help reduce prejudices and intolerance, which otherwise reinforce social exclusion. An “Education for All Global Monitoring Report” examines some curriculum related school initiatives that could enable teachers to accomplish their role in ensuring Roma children and young people are equipped with relevant knowledge and skills in order to raise their potential and contribute to wider societal development.\(^\text{180}\)

As it currently stands there is no dedicated funding for GRT history month and no obligation to include any GRT history within the curriculum. Baroness Whitaker recently asked a question to the DfE asking whether funding would be reintroduced for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month in May 2018 – Question HL7490. The answer provided by Lord Agnew of Oulton stated that pupil premium provided annual funds of nearly 2.85 billion EUR to help schools improve the progress of their disadvantaged pupils and stated that ‘high proportions of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Pupils are eligible and will benefit from this support.

**Support of secondary and higher education particularly for professions with high labour market demand**

Evidence suggests that the majority of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers do not stay in formal education beyond age 16 and in fact many have left school prior to this or have been excluded, are attending a Pupil Referral Unit (or similar) or are attending on a reduced programme. The exclusion rates for certain groups of pupils are consistently higher than average. This includes pupils with SEN; pupils eligible for Free School Meals; looked after children; and pupils from certain ethnic groups. The ethnic groups with the highest rates of exclusion are: Gypsy/Roma; Travellers of Irish Heritage; and Black Caribbean communities.

The Cabinet Office’s Race Disparity Audit notes:

\(^{180}\) Education for Roma: the potential of inclusive, curriculum-based innovation to improve learning outcomes Dr S. Themelis and B. Foster 2013, p. 2
"Gypsy or Roma pupils, and those of an Irish Traveller background were [...] most likely to be excluded in 2015/16: 22 per cent and 18 per cent of pupils in these groups respectively were given fixed period exclusions, and 0.33 per cent and 0.49 per cent of each group respectively were permanently excluded. These figures should be interpreted carefully as these pupil populations are relatively small."\(^{181}\)

**Exclusion from schools**

Statutory DfE guidance on school exclusion stresses the importance of providing additional support to address the needs of children from groups at higher risk of exclusion, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, but figures from the Race Disparity Audit show that Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller had the highest fixed period and permanent exclusions from school. The DfE guidance states:

"Statutory guidance to the head teacher on the exclusion of pupils from groups with disproportionately high rates of exclusion:

21. The exclusion rates for certain groups of pupils are consistently higher than average. This includes: pupils with SEN; pupils eligible for free school meals; looked after children; and pupils from certain ethnic groups. The ethnic groups with the highest rates of exclusion are: Gypsy/Roma; Travellers of Irish Heritage; and Caribbean pupils.

22. In addition to the approaches on early intervention set out above, the head teacher should consider what extra support might be needed to identify and address the needs of pupils from these groups in order to reduce their risk of exclusion. For example, schools might draw on the support of Traveller Education Services, or other professionals, to help build trust when engaging with families from Traveller communities."\(^{182}\)

We are not aware of how routinely head teachers have followed this guidance re “extra support...to identify and address needs [...] of GRT pupils”. Also, much of the good work along these lines was being done by specialist Traveller Education Services but most have now been abolished due to the lack of funding and/or a misplaced desire to ‘mainstream’ Traveller education. This demise has also led to the closure in June 2018 of the highly respected National Association of Teachers of Travellers and others (NATT+).\(^{183}\) This contrasts with a very rapid increase in the number of Gypsy/Roma and Irish Traveller children in English schools. The numbers of children completing key stage 2 (age 11) had increased from 1,174 in 2007, to 2,627 in 2017 – a 124 per cent increase in just ten years.

The government has established a review\(^{184}\) of why some students from particular ethnic backgrounds appear to have very high rates of exclusion; this includes GRT children.

Data is available from 2005/2006 for all school exclusions for Gypsy Roma and Irish Traveller pupils, as well as for boys/girls and permanent and fixed term exclusions.\(^{185}\) This shows that over the last ten years, there has been a considerable fall in exclusions until 2013, but a recent rise subsequently. The reduction in exclusions had been greater

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\(^{181}\) Cabinet Office, Race disparity audit, updated March 2018, p. 23


\(^{183}\) https://www.natt.org.uk/the-final-natt-executive-meeting/


\(^{185}\) See annex 3: pupil exclusions – fixed term and permanent - Percentage of pupils excluded, as proportion of total number of each ethnicity.
for boys, and the recent rise in exclusions has been slightly greater for girls. The drive to reduce school exclusions has been more effective for fixed term exclusions and less effective for permanent exclusions.

However, ‘Gypsy Roma pupils’ experience of school exclusion has remained pretty constant for the last ten years. There has been a slight reduction which might be accounted for by an increasing proportion of ‘Gypsy Roma’ children being actually (migrant) Roma pupils. In education authorities where migrant Roma children are living, the indications are that they had relatively very low rates of exclusion in the in initial years of settlement, whilst exclusion rates increase quite rapidly as the population grows. However, this trend is not uniform; some cities have high rates of migrant Roma exclusion (like Rotherham, Derby and Sheffield) whilst others have very low rates of exclusion (like Newcastle and Bradford).186

In evidence submitted, RSG outlined the recommendations from their previous report on exclusions, including:

- to investigate how the appeal system operates for Roma pupils, and especially with the involvement and awareness of their parents,
- to confirm the Department for Education is fulfilling its requirements under the Equality Act to ensure that particular groups (like Gypsy/Roma); and in particular, how Department is ensuring that its own statutory guidance issued to schools on school exclusions is being followed for Roma pupils. We believe that this requires a dedicated resource within the Department,
- to ensure that within each authority where there is a sizeable proportion of Roma pupils, there is a skilled and knowledgeable member of the leadership team who can work alongside of schools and Roma pupils and their communities, to improve the outcomes for Roma pupils. We would urge individual schools to similarly invest and develop the abilities and knowledge of the school leadership team re Roma pupils’ progression and inclusion,
- finally, to confirm that the exclusion procedures in academy schools are sufficiently strong and liable to oversight, which might have been eroded with changing balance between academy schools, academy trusts, RSCs and local education authorities.187

The Timpson review (due to report before the end of 2018) also received reports from Roma students in Derby and Rotherham about their experiences at school which had contributed to their exclusions.

The press reported (12 January 2019) that the Timpson review is behind schedule but is “likely to report in the next few weeks”.188 A recent Parliamentary Answer (15 January 2019) about the publication date said that “the review will report in early 2019”.

**Apprenticeships**

The Government states that the Department for Education is taking action to ensure that high quality apprenticeships are accessible to all. The Apprenticeships Diversity Champions Network and recently launched partnership with five major cities in England, aim to drive up apprenticeships among underrepresented groups.

FFT noted that the UK government launched its Careers Strategy in December 2017 and has earmarked 1.94 million EUR to improve uptake of career advice and support for children and young people from disadvantaged groups, specifically aimed at three

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186 RSG report
187 [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2lw1_Krq5gnell0TmdtUWcyTFE/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2lw1_Krq5gnell0TmdtUWcyTFE/view)
disadvantaged groups, including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, but to date this work has not been started with announcements of winning tenders due shortly.

**Higher Education**

In Higher Education, providers will now be required to publish application data broken down by ethnicity and those charging higher fees will be required to agree Access and Participation Plans. The plans will set out measures to support the access and successful participation for disadvantaged and under-represented groups, including those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Academic researchers of higher education based in the Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research (CHEER) at the University of Sussex recently submitted a response to the Commons Select Committee on Tackling Inequalities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, who they refer to as ‘the UK’s Forgotten Higher Education Minority’.

This can be summarised as:

- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities are significantly under-represented as a minority group in higher education in the UK.
- GRT communities are often excluded from widening participation policies, strategies and interventions for inclusion and support of under-represented groups in UK higher education.
- There is an urgent need to provide national direction and impetus for widening access, supporting retention and enabling the achievement of GRT students in UK higher education.
- Knowledge exchange/policy learning could be promoted between the UK and Central and Eastern Europe on how to encourage, support and prepare GRT communities to enter higher education in the UK.

In order to develop support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller students to access the broadest benefits of higher education in the UK, we recommend providing further national direction and impetus for higher education institutions to include GRT within their widening access policies and initiatives. This includes the following:

- A specific requirement for higher education institutions to list Gypsy, Roma and Traveller as a marginalised group in their Access Agreements. This would represent an institutional commitment to GRT educational success and result in more targeted initiatives (including information and guidance, outreach and funding) to support GRT communities to access and succeed in higher education.
- Development of training for university staff around diversity to address the lack of information about and understanding of GRT communities.
- Allocated funding to research the specific barriers affecting GRT young people to access, and succeed, in higher education opportunities. Funding also allocated to exchange knowledge of research findings from projects examining opportunity structures for GRT communities.
- Appropriate Access and Participation Plans, which set out measures to support the access and successful participation for disadvantaged and under-represented groups, including those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

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The education think-tank LKMco,\(^{191}\) commissioned by King’s College London, said that prejudice and poor exam results made progression to university hard for pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Jokes and prejudice were indulged or ignored by lecturers and even perpetrated by them in a way that homophobia or Islamophobia would not be tolerated, the report suggested.

**Fight against discrimination, segregation and other forms of antigypsyism in education**

Whilst Friends Families and Travellers does not believe that there is institutionalised segregation within UK schools, the evidence still suggests that there are many barriers within education. Antigypsyism also reinforces negative stereotypes and exacerbates and bullying within schools.

According to research by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission:\(^{192}\)

- Although the educational attainment of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in England has improved in recent years, the attainment gap for Gypsy and Roma children has widened, while the gap between Travellers of Irish heritage and white pupils has remained unchanged.
- Only one in five Gypsy and Roma children and fewer than one in three Traveller children achieve ‘a good level of development’ in their early years, compared to six out of ten other white children.
- A lower proportion of Gypsy and Roma children (13.8 per cent) and Traveller children (17.5 per cent) achieved the GCSE threshold in 2012/2013, compared to 60 per cent of other white children.

In January 2018 the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller stakeholder group was re-established (after a pause of three years) by the Department for Education to inform policy development to raise the attainment and participation of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils at all stages of education. In March 2018 a review of exclusions was launched, exploring why certain pupil groups, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils, are over-represented in exclusions statistics. The department continues to collaborate with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government on their 2018/2019 pilot programme to improve the social integration of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. In addition, as part of the Careers Strategy, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller youth will be included as a target group for a pilot testing ways of providing guidance on routes into careers to vulnerable groups.

**Promising practices**

The Department of Education highlighted seven schools in 2012 as evidence of good practice for GRT pupils.\(^ {193}\) Of these, only two focused on schools with Roma children. Both these schools – St Edmunds RC Secondary (Dover) and Pent Valley (Folkestone) – have closed in the last two years due to poor inspection reports and decisions taken by the local authority.

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The government education inspection agency – Ofsted – then published in 2014 a short list of schools which exemplified best practice in terms of GRT pupils. None of these schools had migrant Roma children.

**Babington College**

The British Council funded (but did not commission) a recent report outlining one English secondary school’s response to Roma students. Babington College has also been highlighted by another Ofsted report from 2014 re Roma students “Overcoming barriers: ensuring that Roma children are fully engaged and achieving in education”.

With slightly less fanfare, but with diligence and commitment, some particular schools might be worthy of attention. These include:

**Annette Street Primary (Glasgow)**

This school has the strong reputation for inclusion and supporting many children and their families from outside Scotland. The school has been particularly noteworthy for its prioritisation of engaging with Roma parents (2015); developing the potential of Roma pupils (2017); working to combat poverty amongst many of its Roma families (2017) and (2018).

**Owler Brook Primary, Sheffield**

This school was the closest to the area of Roma settlement in Page Hall. It quickly set up ways of encouraging Roma parents to feel comfortable in school, and as quickly as possible, started to try and encourage Roma to apply for any jobs in school. Their Ofsted (inspection report) says:

“Systems to check pupils’ progress are robust. Leaders, including governors, check individual pupil’s progress closely and initiate appropriate support so that all pupils have timely access to all that the school offers. Particular attention is given to supporting the many pupils who join the school part-way through their education, often with little or no English and with limited experience of prior learning. Skilled bilingual staff work with these pupils and their families to speed up learning and progress. A number of parents choose the school because it is particularly effective in supporting pupils of Roma/Slovak heritage.

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199 [https://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/16133143.govanhills roma-pupils-show-off-skills-after-photography-course/](https://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/16133143.govanhills%20roma-pupils%20show-off-skills-after-photography-course/)


This is a strong testament to the school’s caring approaches to supporting its pupils and confirms its commitment to ensure every pupil has an equal opportunity to achieve.”

Subsequently, the school along with others has been at the forefront of developing support for deaf children.

**Eastwood Village Primary**

A school recently rated as “good” by the Ofsted inspection which has circa 73 per cent of its pupils as Roma heritage – the highest proportion of any school in England. The Ofsted report stated that:

“Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic communities, the vast majority being of Roma heritage. Nearly all pupils speak English as an additional language and many of them have little or no English when joining the school. Pupil mobility is extremely high, and therefore cohorts of pupils continually change. A large proportion of pupils leave and enter school other than at the usual times, with some pupils not having experienced an educational setting before.”

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203 [https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/2445992](https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/2445992)


205 [https://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/file/2686/download?token=MiKIWfsA](https://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/file/2686/download?token=MiKIWfsA)
RECOMMENDATIONS

Employment

1. Links between barriers to education and employment opportunities for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers need further research. The link needs highlighting and strategies need developing to support Roma to bridge from poor educational experiences into accessible employment training programmes and for example apprenticeships.

2. 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.

3. The role of apprenticeships should be reviewed to see how they could better function for the benefit of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people.

4. Funded programmes for support and training within localised contexts to help overcome the systemic and years of damage caused by both school exclusion and marginalisation in employment.

5. Greater regulation of zero hours contracts and agencies employment practices.

6. Employers of large numbers of Roma could be encouraged to provide free work based English language classes. These could cover work-based topics such as health and safety, food hygiene but could also expand into topics of citizenship, rights.

7. The Department or Work and Pensions should carry out trials of specific interventions to support the GRT 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.

Housing

8. That the national government adopts a policy of housing renewal supported by a major grant programme, which targets the most deprived neighbourhoods throughout the country. This could be modelled on the current Scottish Government’s housing renewal programme, and previous English government programmes. All landlords of residential properties should meet registration requirements, including both a ‘fit and proper person’ test, and the property should adhere to certain, agreed, minimum standards of safety and warmth.

9. That tenant rights are strengthened, and a programme of education and development aimed at particularly migrant and vulnerable and marginal communities (with cultural and language support) is enabled to advocate on behalf of tenants to implement their rights.

10. That all communities and neighbourhoods where public service pressures are greatest as a result of migration and movement are able to access funding for both revenue and capital programmes to ease any restrictions on public services and adapt the nature of public services to both the existing and the newly arrived communities.

11. The Government should re-introduce targets, and a statutory duty on local authorities to meet the assessed accommodation need of Gypsies and Travellers, as formerly existed under the Caravans Sites Act 1968. This should cover both permanent sites and temporary stopping places (e.g. transit sites and Negotiated Stopping sites)
12. The Government should actively promote the provision of private sites in lines with other forms of social housing and consider using 106 agreements with larger housing developers.

13. The Government should adopt a definition (i.e. Gypsy status) for the purpose of planning law that incorporates all Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers who need a pitch to live on in order to recognise the traditional accommodation needs of Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers. This definition must ensure that women, the elderly and the disabled are not discriminated against.

14. The government must ring-fence Gypsy and Traveller pitch funding for local authorities to produce socially-rented pitches and promote awareness of such funding.

15. The government must begin to accurately record and monitor figures on actual net increase of Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

**Health**

16. NHS England, Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland, NHS Wales and NHS National Services Scotland must clarify GP duties of care with reference to registering Gypsy, Roma and Traveller patients, especially those with no fixed abode or no identification.

17. Named senior civil servants responsible and accountable for driving forward improvements in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller health should be established in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England.

18. NHS England, Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland, NHS Wales and NHS National Services Scotland must commission specific and targeted services to address the high prevalence of mental health issues in Gypsy, Roma and Traveller using learning from the ‘Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health’ programme.

19. Commissioning health and social care bodies should appoint an accountable officer with responsibility for health inequalities and a specific focus on Inclusion Health groups. National bodies who have a role to play in overseeing and scrutinising progress made by local commissioners in addressing health inequalities must take this responsibility seriously.

20. NHS England, Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland, NHS Wales and NHS National Services Scotland must work to address issues around continuity of care for nomadic Gypsy and Traveller communities who currently have to start from scratch in the health and social care system in every new area they go to.

21. Romany Gypsy, Irish Traveller and Roma categories need to be included in all service delivery and employment monitoring systems so that there is an effective way of measuring improvement.

22. Health and social care services must begin to monitor and address antigypsyism in the health and social care system through training, by recruiting and supporting the professional development of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and by explicitly setting out commitments to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities as part of the NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard.

**Education**

23. The UK Government should create and fund a national strategy to address low attainment, high levels of exclusions and secondary school dropouts amongst Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

24. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history and heritage should be recognised and celebrated in all schools.
25. Racism and discrimination in schools should be addressed and challenged by developing a coherent and effective anti-bullying strategy and by providing training to teachers, teaching assistants and school governance.

26. Specialist GRT support services should be developed in each local authority.

27. Dedicated funding for GRT pupils and in-service teacher training (e.g. Pupil Premium for all GRT pupils; equivalent to s11 support for dedicated posts, funded through DfE) should be identified.

28. Local authorities should assess the significance and extent of EHE for GRT children, and ensure safeguarding; and to take action to prevent schools ‘off rolling’ pupils.

29. The particular need for GRT parents to have confidence in schools via parental engagement programmes, especially in early years and primary stages, should be recognised and addressed by all schools.

30. GRT who have experienced disruption due to accommodation issues are likely to need additional support during the transition stages of the education cycle. Where such need is identified local authorities should provide the additional support required.
ANNEX 1: SURVEY

The local councils which were included in the “housing and essential public services” survey were identified as those which are ‘single tier’ (providing both housing and education provision), with the largest number of ‘Gypsy/Roma’ school age pupils in the 2018 school census (a “proxy” indication of overall community numbers used due to the lack of a separate “Roma” category in the 2011 Census). Some county councils were in this selection (e.g. Kent, Surrey, Worcestershire); but these are not ‘single tier’ authorities, and local intelligence suggests that the data identifies English Gypsy children/young people. The cities and towns included are:

- Bradford
- Sheffield
- Leeds
- Birmingham
- Derby
- Rotherham
- Coventry
- Newcastle
- Doncaster
- Manchester
- Glasgow

The initial invitations to respond were sent on 10 September with offers to meet, to have a phone call or to receive a written response. Fieldwork was to have taken place in October and first half of November 2018. Reminders were sent out on 25 September 2018. Further reminders (where necessary) were sent in mid-October. And again, in early November 2018.

By 18 November 2018, 2,018 replies had been received from all councils. Meetings have taken place with three councils; phone interviews with two councils; written response from two councils; and three councils have promised written responses but been unable to respond to a series of reminders. One council had responded twice to say that they would provide a response “by the end of this week” (once 19 October 2018 and once on 23 November 2018).
ANNEX 2: NEGOTIATED STOPPING AGREEMENT EXAMPLE

An example Negotiated Stopping agreement

This agreement is between [Local Authority] and [named head of family]

This agreement relates to the time limited toleration of your encampment on [Local Authority] owned land adjacent to xxxx. The land is shown on the appending map.

The Council is currently willing to tolerate your encampment on the site for a short period of time until xxxx. The Council recognises its legal obligations to carry out needs assessment prior to initiating legal action to recover possession of land.

[Local Authority] reserves the right to terminate this agreement, and to seek to recover possession of the land through court proceedings, at an earlier date if the terms set out below in this agreement are breached.

I ……………………….., and my family agree to adhere to the following terms:

1. You will be asked to park your caravan and vehicles in a designated place on the site. This is to prevent further caravans joining the encampment. Your family must stay within the boundaries of the site.

2. You will be issued with a toilet. This is for the sole use of your family, you will have to ensure this is kept in a reasonable condition. This will be emptied weekly.

3. You will be issued with a bin for all your domestic waste. You are responsible for keeping the area around your caravan clean and tidy. The bin is for the sole use of your family, you will have to ensure this is kept in a reasonable condition. This will be emptied weekly.

4. All dogs must be kept under control and tied up. Dogs must be tied up on a lead or in a kennel during the night or when you leave the site for any period of time. The dog wardens will visit this site if loose dogs are reported.

5. No fires larger than a small cooking fire are to be lit, absolutely no burning of commercial or domestic waste is allowed.

6. The nearest Household Waste for larger items is at ……. Trade waste can be disposed at ……..

7. Environmental enforcement officers will monitor the site and take action against any activity likely to cause environmental harm, inconvenience or
This agreement is between [Local Authority] and [named head of family].

This agreement relates to the time limited toleration of your encampment on [Local Authority] owned land adjacent to xxxx. The land is shown on the appending map.

The Council is currently willing to tolerate your encampment on the site for a short period of time until xxxx. The Council recognises its legal obligations to carry out needs assessment prior to initiating legal action to recover possession of land.

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5. No fires larger than a small cooking fire are to be lit, absolutely no burning of commercial or domestic waste is allowed.

6. The nearest Household Waste for larger items is at …….. Trade waste can be disposed at ……….

7. Environmental enforcement officers will monitor the site and take action against any activity likely to cause environmental harm, inconvenience or
### ANNEX 3: PUPIL EXCLUSIONS – FIXED TERM AND PERMANENT

Percentage of pupils excluded, as proportion of total number of each ethnicity

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<th>Permanent</th>
<th>Fixed</th>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
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<td>0.09</td>
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<td>0.08</td>
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