



The Traveller Movement

Resource for London

356 Holloway Road

London N7 6PA

Tel: 020 7607 2002 Fax: 020 7607 2005

Email: info@travellermovement.org.uk

Web: travellermovement.org.uk

Traveller Movement note on challenges and opportunities for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma in education, skills training and employment

May 2019 – updated

About the Traveller Movement

The Traveller Movement is a registered UK charity promoting inclusion and community engagement with Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (GRT). The Traveller Movement seeks to empower and support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to advocate for the full implementation of their human rights.

Introduction

In the last 50 years traditional Gypsy, Roma and Traveller work practices and culture have been under extreme pressure and seen significant change, in many cases having a negative impact on the education, skills and employment opportunities open to GRT young people. At the same time in recent years significant opportunities for improving skills and employment prospects have arisen, influenced by a tradition of self employment and entrepreneurship amongst GRT, greater educational participation, more GRT women entering work and the development of third sector agencies working with these communities. This note summarises the challenges and opportunities and follows with some brief recommendations.

Challenges

- Dramatic decline in Gypsies and Travellers traditional work areas in last 50 years due to mechanisation of agriculture, cheap labour etc (TM research found 50 per cent

decline of community members working in traditional practices over the space of just one generation.)¹

- Traveller Movement research uncovered high levels of discrimination and racism experienced by these communities.²
- Overrepresentation of GRT in the criminal justice system – despite being 0.1 per cent of general population³, 12 per cent of children in STCs and 7 per cent in YOIs identified as GRT⁴, while 5 per cent of male prisoners⁵ and 7 per cent of female identify as GRT.⁶
- Chronic shortage of Travellers sites nationwide with approximately 14 per cent of Gypsies and Travellers living in caravans stationed on unauthorised sites and legally classified as homeless.⁷
- Gypsies, Roma and Travellers historically have low engagement with formal education; school experiences are often characterised by discrimination, racism, early school leaving and exclusion.⁸
- Gypsies and Travellers have the lowest rate of economic activity of any ethnic group, at 47 per cent, compared with 63 per cent for England and Wales overall.⁹

Opportunities

- There is an increasing emphasis on the importance of participation and achievement in formal education within the communities. (TM research found that in 2011 Gypsies and Travellers were nearly 7 times more likely to have experienced formal education when compared with their parents.)¹⁰
- There is a strong tradition of self employment and entrepreneurship within the communities.
- There are now more Gypsy and Traveller women entering education, training and employment than ever before.

¹ Traveller Movement, 2011, *Roads to Success: Economic and Social Inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers*, Executive summary, p ii

http://www.irishtraveller.org.uk/images/roads_to_success.pdf

² <https://travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/userupload/equality-human-rights/last-acceptable-form-of-racism-traveller-movement-report.pdf>

³ <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/prisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/04/gypsies-romany-travellers-findings.pdf>

⁴ <https://travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/userupload/criminal-justice/Overlooked-and-Overrepresented-Gypsy-Traveller-and-Roma-children-in-the-youth-justice-system.pdf>

⁵

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629719/hmip-annual-report-2016-17.pdf

⁶ <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/prisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/04/gypsies-romany-travellers-findings.pdf>

⁷ MHCLG, 2018, *Traveller caravan count: July 2018*

⁸

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/726741/text_exc1617.pdf

⁹ <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/360/360.pdf>

¹⁰ Traveller Movement, 2011, *Roads to Success: Economic and Social Inclusion for Gypsies and Travellers*, Executive summary, p ii

http://www.irishtraveller.org.uk/images/roads_to_success.pdf

- There are significant opportunities for community members through GRT third sector training initiatives like the TM and Construction Youth Trust GRT youth construction course. For 16-24 year olds, the course involved six whole sessions resulting in participants completing a test to enable them to get a CSCS card¹¹ and gaining vital experience and future opportunities in a variety of trades.
- There are also key internship opportunities through third sector initiatives such as TM's Community Internship Scheme, which since 2010 has a proven track of providing community members with gainful employment and skills training.

Recommendations

Schools and early education

- Establish an inter-departmental government strategy to promote the social inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers in education, health and social care.¹²
- Re-introduce ring-fenced and monitored funding to Local Authorities to provide services to support the educational inclusion, engagement, transitions and opportunities of GRT communities¹³.
- Need for greater advocacy and training for GRT parents to support them to more effectively engage and develop relationships with schools.

Peer Support Networks

- Establish a GRT Graduate Support Network to guide and promote the increased numbers of community members pursuing further education and careers in the professions. Should also establish a GRT Business and Trades Support Network to guide and promote greater numbers of community members establishing business and better understanding existing legislation.

Skills, internship and employment opportunities through the third sector and policy development

- DWP should establish a joint working group with the Department for Education and BEIS to address the root causes and bring forward policy solutions to the inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers in employment, skills training, access to benefits etc.
- Fund GRT third sector initiatives to provide community members with gainful employment and skills training.
- BEIS to create greater access to the National Apprenticeship scheme¹⁴, including targeted GRT outreach through the provision of awareness raising materials.

¹¹ Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) This is the recognized construction industry recognized card the provides the holder access to work on construction sites, and it emphasizes all aspects of construction site safety and well being.

¹² <https://travellermovement.org.uk/education?download=122:a-good-practice-guide-for-improving-outcomes-for-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-children-in-education>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/topic/further-education-skills/apprenticeships>

- Similar to the Entitlement Framework¹⁵ in Northern Ireland (a post 14 curriculum), the Department for Education should introduce and give statutory effect to courses and qualifications for 14-19 year olds.

¹⁵ <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/entitlement-framework>