

Appendix A1.2:

Background information about inequalities and disadvantage faced by Gypsy Traveller Communities

The below information is taken from a report given to the Bristol Race Equality Strategic Leaders Group on 18 January 2023 by Ian Bowen (GRT Service Coordinator, Bristol City Council), Paula Gombos (Vendor Data Lead, Big Issue Group) and Alex Raikes MBE (Director, Stand Against Racism and Inequality).

General Information:

- 25% of the ethnic Traveller population in the southwest live in the Bristol city area with only 5% residing in caravans.
- Bristol is part of a large and historical Traveller trade route.
- Most of Bristol's GRT communities are housed in bricks and mortar accommodation (this is due in part to lack of site provision).

Discrimination and Hate Crime:

- A survey carried out by Traveller Movement, a national Gypsy, Roma and Traveller charity, found that, in 2017, 91 per cent of the 199 respondents had experienced discrimination and 77 per cent had experienced hate speech or a hate crime.
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission stated in a 2009 report that:
 - Racism towards most ethnic minority groups is now hidden, less frequently expressed in public, and widely seen as unacceptable. However, that towards Gypsies and Travellers is still common, frequently overt and seen as justified.

Health:

- The 2011 census for England and Wales revealed that 14% of Gypsy/Travellers described their health as "bad" or "very bad", more than twice as high as the white British group.
- The health status of Gypsies and Travellers is much poorer than that of the general population, even when controlling for other factors such as variable socio-economic status and/or ethnicity.
- Life expectancy is 10 to 12 years less than that of the non-Traveller population
- 42 per cent of English Gypsies are affected by a long-term condition, as opposed to 18 per cent of the general population.
- One in five Gypsy Traveller mothers will experience the loss of a child, compared to one in a hundred in the non-Traveller community.
- Deaths from respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases and suicides were more markedly increased in GRT groups compared to the general population.
- High levels of imprisonment – less than 1% of the UK are GRT and yet they represent 5% of the prison population.
- Levels of Domestic Abuse within the Traveller communities are nearly twice as high as in non-traveller (62% in Romany Gypsies and 81% in Irish Travellers as opposed to 33%).

- Highest maternal death rate of any ethnic group.
- Higher prevalence of miscarriage (16% compared to 8%).
- Higher number of carers for dependent relative(s) with chronic illness or disability (16% compared to 8%).
- Higher mean number of children (4.3 compared to 2.6).
- Higher prevalence of anxiety & depression (28% compared to 4%).
- The suicide rates are 7 x higher than the general population (most common in young Traveller men aged 15-25 and women).

Education:

- Nationally, there is a 62% illiteracy rate amongst adult Gypsy Travellers (Dorset, 2017). This means many people cannot read prescriptions, information leaflets, and letters and may miss appointments etc. Children also suffer as many parents do not have a level of education needed to help with written homework assignments or to listen to their children read.
- According to the House of Commons report, pupils from Gypsy or Roma backgrounds and those from a Traveller of Irish Heritage background had the lowest attainment of all ethnic groups throughout their school years.
- Fewer than 10% of Gypsy/Roma pupils and fewer than 20% of Irish Traveller pupils achieve 5 GCSEs graded 9 – 4, compared to approximately 60% of all pupils nationally (Mulcahy et al, 2017) and “only a handful” are recorded as attending higher education in any given year (House of Commons, 2019).
- According to the DfE document National curriculum assessments at key stage 2 in England, 2019 (revised) (2019):
 - “Gypsy/Roma pupils are the lowest performing group with 19% reaching the expected standard in all of reading, writing and maths in 2019.” No Bristol specific information is available on this.
- Gypsy and Traveller children leave school at a much earlier age than children in other ethnic groups (12.6 years compared to 16.4 years for comparators (DfE, 2015)); they have worse attainment outcomes than any other ethnic group.
- Almost half of Gypsy/Roma students are classed as persistent non-attenders. After key stage 4 (usually aged 16), a quarter of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children go into neither education nor employment (House of Commons, 2019).
- The 2019 House of Commons study found discrimination and bullying against GRT children in school nationally to be higher than in any other ethnic group and is tolerated by schools rather than challenged more than in any other group.
- The levels of exclusions of GRT children from schools, is considerably higher than other ethnic groups. Using Department for Education data, held within the document Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England: 2019 to 2020 (DfE, 2020) The number of Gypsy Roma pupils nationally with one or more suspension was 6%, but in Bristol was 13.8%.
- Access to free school meals (FSM) is often used as a measure to reflect deprivation. In Bristol, the average number of children in receipt of FSM is 25.9% (BCC, January 2021) but across the GRT community in Bristol, 45.1% receive FSM.
- If this is broken down into GRT subgroups, 29.7% of Gypsy/Roma children receive FSM as do 82.9% of Irish Travellers (BCC, January 2021).

- The next highest groups behind Irish Travellers are “Black Caribbean” at 49.8%, “White and Black Caribbean” at 47.6% and “Black – Somali” at 42.9%. In comparison, 23.7% of “White British” receive FSM.
- Previous reports have found that GRT children are four times more likely to have SEN or SEMH needs. According to the document Special educational needs in England (DfE, June 2021):

“National data shows that SEN is most prevalent in the Traveller of Irish heritage ethnic group with 24.4% of pupils recorded as having SEN support in 2021, and a further 5.6% with an EHC plan.”