

The Traveller Movement Annual Conference 2025

Who's Left Behind? Rebuilding Trust, Fairness and Opportunity

*"Exclusion by Design, Challenging a System that Fails Our
Communities"*

Thursday 20th November 2025 at Lambeth Town Hall

**Keynote Speaker: Rt Revd Stephen Conway,
Bishop of Lincoln**



Workshops to include:

- 1: Opportunity Gaps – Education, Employment & Exclusion
- 2: Poverty by Design – When Policy Fails Marginalised Communities
- 3: Criminalised Communities – Building Fairer Justice Systems
- 4: Changing the Narrative - Empowering Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller Youth Through Advocacy

Scan here to book



#TMconference25

Overview

Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities experience some of the worst outcomes of any ethnic groups across a huge range of areas, including education, health, employment, criminal justice and hate crime. Despite decades of inquiries, damning reports and policy papers our communities remain persistently left behind and underserved. It is clear that this is an issue of systemic exclusion.

This chronic exclusion and discrimination has a material effect on the lives of community members and the opportunities that they have access to. Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities have the lowest attainment of any ethnic group across all key stages and the highest rate of suspension and exclusions. Although Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller people have higher rates of self-employment than any other ethnic group they experience economic inactivity at a higher rate than the 'White British' ethnic group and are more likely than the general population to experience profound poverty. Lack of access to opportunities at a young age have profound lifelong impacts on individuals and their wider communities.

It is clear that accommodation insecurity, poor living environment, low education attainment, economic exclusion, community isolation and discrimination all have a negative impact on Romani (Gypsies), Roma and Irish Travellers physical and mental health, access to opportunities and ability to live full and happy lives. Life expectancy for Romani (Gypsies) and Irish Travellers is 10 to 12 years lower than the general population. Site provision in England and Wales is insufficient, with too few sites that are often overcrowded and in high demand. Mapping all permanent and transit sites across the UK reveals that a sizeable proportion present risks to residents' health due to their geographical proximity to pollutants.

The issues facing Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities are too often labelled as 'too difficult' or 'too niche' by many policymakers leaving our communities chronically left behind by legislation and interventions which are supposed to serve the most vulnerable in our society. Placing the most disadvantaged communities at the heart of any government action on equality is the only way to ensure no one is left behind.

This conference is an opportunity for government to engage directly with the communities and organisations working to tackle some of the most persistent and urgent inequalities in British society. Through our panel discussions and workshops we aim to bring the priorities of Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller people and communities to forefront of all policy discussions. We will present constructive, evidence-based recommendations on education reform, community safety, and tackling entrenched poverty with a focus on Romani, Irish Traveller and Roma communities, who remain at the sharpest edge of exclusion.

We invite cross-sector collaboration, fresh thinking, and accountability not blame as we work together to create solutions that work for everyone. Our workshops will bring together key experts, to discuss topics such as poverty, access to opportunities for young people, the criminalisation of our communities and building the next generation of community advocates.

Join us at our 2025 CPD certified conference to begin building trust, fairness and opportunities for our Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities.

CPD Certified

We are delighted to announce that this year's annual conference is officially CPD certified. This recognition reflects our commitment to delivering high-quality, professionally relevant content that supports the continuing development of our attendees. As part of this certification, all participants who attend the full duration of the conference will receive a CPD certificate of attendance, which can be used as evidence of ongoing professional development.

If you would like to find out more about this, please contact the Head of Operations on officeadmin@travellermovement.org.uk



Keynote Speaker: Rt Revd Stephen Conway, Bishop of Lincoln

Panels

Panel 1: Policy Gaps and Invisible Communities: Who Gets Left Behind?

Katharine Quarmby (Investigative Journalist); Jabeer Butt (Race Equality Foundation); Daniel Balaz (Connecting Roma CIC); Simon Jones (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government); Roxanne Lashley Allen (Impetus)

Despite decades of equality policy and investment, certain communities including Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Travellers remain persistently underserved by national strategies.

Whether in health, education, criminal justice or poverty reduction, the pattern is clear: some groups are not just overlooked, but systematically excluded.

This panel asks the uncomfortable questions: Why do these gaps persist, even in 2025? What structural biases remain embedded in policymaking? And what would it take to build a genuinely inclusive social justice agenda one that works for all communities, not just the most visible or politically convenient?

Drawing on lived experience, frontline practice, and policy insight, our speakers will explore the root causes of exclusion and offer forward-thinking solutions that challenge complacency and inspire action.

This is not just a policy conversation, it's a call for urgency, ambition, and accountability.



Panel 2: Around the Campfire: Reclaiming Identity, Belonging and Pride

Michael Riley (Outdoor Sports and Diversity Inclusion Officer) Pauline Melvin Anderson OBE (Traveller Movement); Charmaine Abdul Karim (Pride of Romany); Annalise Corcoran (Traveller Movement); Virgil Bitu (Roma Organisation for Training and Advocacy)

In this powerful and personal session, we return to the fireside to explore the deep and often painful questions of identity, authenticity, and belonging within Romani (Gypsy) and Irish Traveller communities.

Too often, those who speak out, pursue education, take up leadership, or challenge injustice face not only external discrimination but also internal criticism. Many are told they are “not Traveller enough” or ridiculed for daring to raise their voice. Putting your head above the parapet is never easy and for our communities, it can come at a real personal cost.

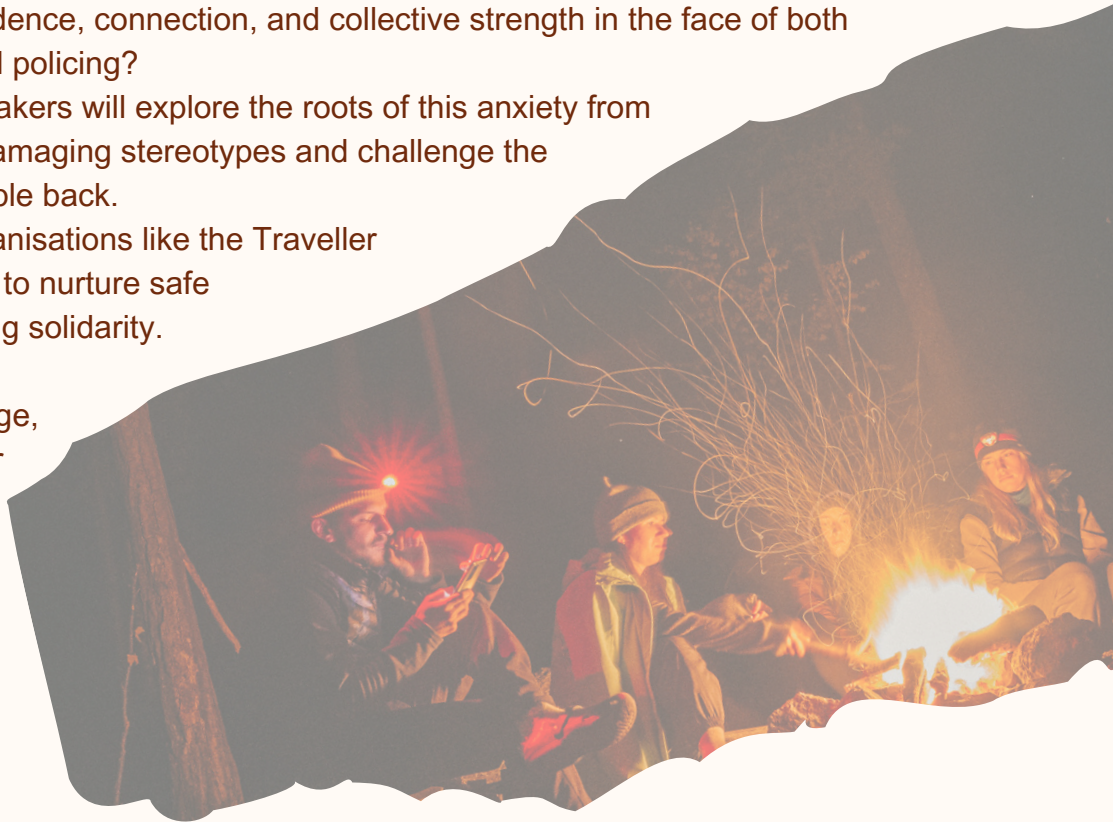
This discussion centres those lived realities and asks: What does it mean to claim your identity with pride? How do we build confidence, connection, and collective strength in the face of both societal prejudice and internal policing?

Our expert panel of changemakers will explore the roots of this anxiety from intergenerational trauma to damaging stereotypes and challenge the false narratives that hold people back.

We'll also ask what more organisations like the Traveller Movement and others can do to nurture safe spaces, leadership, and lasting solidarity.

This is a session about courage, community, and claiming your place.

Pull up a chair, the fire is lit.



Workshops

WORKSHOP 1: Opportunity Gaps – Education, Employment & Exclusion

Facilitators: Sean Mongan (Traveller Movement); Olivia Hammond (Traveller Movement); Lib Peck (Director for London's Violence Reduction Unit); Sabrina Simpson (Coram); Polly Ellis (Education Consultant); (Network Rail)

Children and young people across the UK are in crisis, however, challenges of attendance, exclusion, a lack of special educational needs access and the resulting lack of opportunity do not affect all children equally. Structural racism means these issues are exacerbated for Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller children. Poor experiences and low attainment in school also increase the likelihood of ending up not in education, employment, or training (NEET), meaning poor experiences in education have a lifelong impact on a child.

During this workshop we will focus on bold policy interventions to close these opportunity gaps for Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities. However, our communities are so often forgotten in local and national policymaking meaning while other communities make bold leaps toward progress Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Travellers are left behind.

This workshop asks the question: how do we meaningfully include Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Travellers in national and local strategies, like the National Youth Strategy and London's Inclusion Charter, to close attainment gaps in education, skills and employment?

WORKSHOP 2: Poverty by Design – When Policy Fails Marginalised Communities

Facilitators: Charlie Doherty (Traveller Movement); Nannette Youssef (Runnymede Trust); David Enright (Howe & Co); Sophie Howes (End Child Poverty Coalition); Joseph Howes (Buttle UK)

This workshop explores the structural drivers of poverty and economic exclusion in the UK, with a focus on Romani (Gypsy), Roma, and Irish Traveller communities groups facing some of the highest poverty rates in the country. Despite the UK's economic strength, poverty has risen by over 50% since the 1970s, and government data from 2024 shows that over one in five people now live in relative poverty. Profound and deepening poverty has a direct impact on already marginalised communities and has a particular impact on children.

Participants will examine how insecure housing, site shortages, and limited digital access compound economic marginalisation. The absence of joined up policymaking in tackling the profound poverty experienced by many community members often leaves Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities trapped in an endless cycle, without the economic and social mobility of other communities.

The session will link community experiences to key policy areas including child poverty targets, housing and planning reform, and the unequal impact of the cost-of-living crisis. It will offer space to discuss how advocacy and policy change can better reflect and serve those most affected.

WORKSHOP 3: Criminalised Communities – Building Fairer Justice Systems

Facilitators: Grace Preston (Traveller Movement); Chief Superintendent Emma Maxwell (National Police Chiefs Council); Caroline Hunter (Academic); Benjamin Burrows (Leigh Day)

Romani (Gypsy), Roma, and Irish Traveller communities are overrepresented at every stage of the criminal justice system. From an early age, members of these communities face systemic discrimination, over-policing, and marginalisation that funnel them into contact with the justice system. This leads to disproportionately high number of community members in prison.

This workshop will explore how Romani (Gypsy), Roma, and Irish Traveller people experience criminalisation, focusing on the broader systems and structures that drive individuals into prison rather than on prisons themselves. It will examine the impact of legislation such as the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, alongside policing practices, court outcomes, and institutional biases that contribute to unfair treatment.

Bringing together lived experience, frontline professionals, and policymakers, this session aims to identify and discuss practical policy reforms needed to address these inequalities. Attendees will gain insight into the lived realities of these communities and explore how justice systems can be made fairer, more inclusive, and more effective for all.

WORKSHOP 4: Changing the Narrative: Empowering Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller Youth through Advocacy

Facilitators: Olivia Morrison (Traveller Movement); Lourdes O'Brien (Traveller Movement); Professor Geraldine Lee-Treweek (Birmingham City University); Alina Jantea (Luton Roma Trust); Annalise Corcoran (Traveller Movement); Iasmina Maria Mancas (Luton Roma Trust)

This workshop, "Changing the Narrative: Empowering Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller Youth Through Advocacy," aims to explore the importance of advocacy and discuss how young people can become confident advocates for themselves and their communities. Within this workshop, we will uncover what youth advocacy means, why it matters especially for marginalised groups and highlight examples of positive change driven by Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller youth.

Within the workshop, participants will identify practical ways to amplify youth voices, encouraging participants to engage with various platforms such as social media, creative arts, and formal political spaces. We will discuss the importance of social media in providing young people with the platform needed to raise awareness, challenge stereotypes, and speak out on issues that affect their lives.

Through interactive activities like group discussions and action planning, participants will leave the workshop with a deeper understanding of the importance of youth-led advocacy, and the different platforms that are available. Participants will also discuss the role of allies in supporting youth advocacy efforts.



9.30 – 10.00: Registration and Networking

09.45: Speakers to gather at main reception desk for photographs

10.00 – 10.10: Welcome from the Conference Co-Chairs

Pauline Melvin-Anderson OBE (TM Chairperson) and Sean Mongan (TM Education Officer)

10.10 – 10.30: Keynote Address: Rt Revd Stephen Conway, Bishop of Lincoln

10.30 – 11.40: Panel 1: Policy Gaps and Invisible Communities: Who Gets Left Behind?

Katharine Quarmby - Award winning writer, journalist and editor

Jabeer Butt - Race Equality Foundation

Daniel Balaz - Connecting Roma CIC

Simon Jones - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

Roxanne Lashley Allen (Impetus)

11.40 – 11.50: Refreshment Break

11.50 – 13.00: Panel 2: Around the Campfire: Reclaiming Identity, Belonging and Pride

Michael Reilly - ESF+ Social Innovation in Sport Officer

Pauline Anderson-Melvin OBE - The Traveller Movement

Charmaine Abdul Karim - Pride of Romany

Annalise Corcoran - The Traveller Movement

Virgil Bitu - Roma Organisation for Training and Advocacy

13.00 – 14.00: Lunch and Networking

14.00 – 15.30: Workshops:

Workshop 1: Opportunity Gaps – Education, Employment & Exclusion

Workshop 2: Poverty by Design – When Policy Fails Marginalised Communities

Workshop 3: Criminalised Communities – Building Fairer Justice Systems

Workshop 4: Changing the Narrative: Empowering Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller Youth Through Advocacy

15.30 – 16.00: Closing Remarks

16.00: Conference Ends

CHANGES TO THE PROGRAMME: TM reserves the right to alter the programme, venue and the timing of the sessions without notice due to unforeseen circumstances.



To book your tickets, use the QR code below

If your organisation would like to book and pay by invoice, please ensure you have a [purchase order number](#) and email your request to officeadmin@travellermovement.org.uk

Booking requests by email must include delegates name and contact details, workshop choice and purchase order number for it to be confirmed.

For any enquiries, please contact the Office Manager at officeadmin@travellermovement.org.uk or phone 020 7607 2002

Conference Venue: Lambeth Town Hall, 1 Brixton Hill, London, SW2 1RW

Prices

BAND A: £189.00

Statutory/Commercial organisations and Voluntary/Community/Charitable organisations with a turnover of over £500,000

BAND B: £125.00

Voluntary/Community/Charitable organisations with a turnover up to £500,000 including Traveller Education Services

BAND C: £90.00

Voluntary/Community/Charitable organisations and groups with turnover up to £500,000 and less than 10 employees

BAND D: £75.00

Individual (self-funded) - Freelancers, or anyone attending in a personal capacity (paying the fee themselves rather than via an employer)

STUDENT RATE: £25.00

Limited number of free places available for Unwaged Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Travellers. Please contact the office.

BOOK NOW USING THE CODE



DATA PROTECTION

TM will use the information you provide on your booking form, and additional information you may provide in the future, for administrating our conference. We will not disclose this information to any other person or organisation, except in connection with the above purpose.

BOOKING CONDITIONS, SUBSTITUTIONS, CANCELLATIONS & CPD:

All cancellations must be in writing. Cancellations made more than 2 weeks before the event will receive a full refund minus a charge of 10% per ticket price per delegate. If cancellations are made after this time payment must be made in full. Substitutions can be made at any time without charge.

To obtain the CPD Certificate, you must have completed attendance at the whole conference.

The conference will provide an ideal platform for information sharing, and a vital space for discussion amongst Romani (Gypsy), Traveller, Roma community members; Elected members; Local Authority employees, planners etc; Prisons and Probation staff; Youth Workers; Police; Civil Servants; Teachers; Funders; Health and Community Workers; Voluntary Sector Professionals; Legal Professionals; Statutory service providers; Social Services; Media Professionals