



# Roads to Success for Gypsy Roma and Traveller Youth

A peer lead research project to identify barriers and propose solutions for youth education, training and employment

# Acknowledgements

We want to say a massive thank you to all our peer researchers whom with their passion, expertise and hard work made this project possible and their own. Thank you Millie Cooper, Olivia Hammond, Samantha Donaldson, Cherish McInerney, Hynek Psenicka, Kaitlyn Handleigh, Ana Maria Ion and those who did not want to be mentioned by their name. Many organisations and individuals contributed to the survey analysis, and we would like to thank Article 21, BHA for Equality in Health and Social Care, Brendan's Bridge, Traveller Space – Cornwall, Cat Smith MP, Endeavour, Gypsies & Traveller WALES, Hampshire EMTAS, Drumgore Youth Centre, Leeds GATE, Herts GATE, London Gypsy and Travellers, Pride Sports, Southwark Traveller Action Group, Dreamscheme Northern Ireland, The Dukes Theatre, Northern Ireland Education Authority Youth Service, Youth Association, Connecting Roma, Alfie Best, Tom Hartley, Pauline Anderson OBE, Sally Carr, Lynne Tammi.

Finally, an enormous thank you to the Youth Futures Foundation for funding this project.



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## Foreword - *Millie Cooper*



Traveller Movement's Roads to Success mission is something that I hold very dear to my heart, and that's why I started on this project as a peer researcher. Throughout this process I have seen a cry out for help from my Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller peers for better life outcomes in education and employment. We found that many Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller young people feel underrepresented, underappreciated and left behind. This needs to change.

Bullying from peers and teachers greatly effects how Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller youth view the world around them and it is creating a mental health crisis. Just think how you would feel if even the people who are meant to support you and uplift you, are the ones who are treating you badly? How are we supposed to succeed when we are being failed from the very beginning?

Members of my community are hiding their ethnicity from employers because of fear of racism and discrimination. I know through my own experience growing up that talking about my ethnicity was hard, especially within employment. I never declared my ethnicity to my employers. I felt that I would be judged or not get the job in the first place. This is something that most Gypsies, Roma and Travellers know all too well.

How can we change this? We need better youth provision in order for our youth to feel supported. We need flexible teaching methods and cultural guidance for teachers, youth workers and employers in order for us to feel seen. We saw a massive need for business courses and training that can help guide our youth into successful self-employment, something our communities have been doing for hundreds of years. We need to know that there are other options for us. Options that are viable for our futures.

That's what I hope that this work with the Traveller Movement will achieve. Better outcomes for our youth, a youth that is equipped to feel as though they can achieve anything, a youth that feel they don't have to hide their identity and can be proud of their heritage. It's only by collaboration from government, organizations, educators and peers that this change can happen. It can happen and it will happen.

## Foreword - *Simon Woolley of Woodford CBE*



As is the case for a multitude of marginalised and minoritised groups, young people from Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller backgrounds face multidimensional disadvantage. In housing, health, education, employment, and criminal justice disproportionality and adverse outcomes for young GRT people are recorded for almost every conceivable indicator.

These problems are deeply entrenched and well evidenced but over the past decade there has been regression driven by austerity and, more recently, an uneven policy response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Government has acknowledged these inequalities with the announcement of a new National Strategy to tackle GRT inequalities in the Summer of 2019. The Traveller Movement annual conference later that year was titled “Waiting waiting waiting – Is the wait finally over?” As we move into 2022 the answer appears, sadly, to be no.

I was honoured to deliver the keynote address of that conference, and I spoke then of the importance of a comprehensive, cross-governmental strategy with significant planning and investment, and meaningful engagement with and from public institutions. This report is a timely and vital reminder of that need.

It is my hope and expectation that the Government’s work on the national strategy will begin in earnest this year, and the findings here should contribute to the Government’s approach for young people specifically.

But this report’s findings and recommendations are relevant for stakeholders working throughout the youth sector, and it should be considered by any organisation working to improve engagement with, or outcomes for, young people from GRT communities.

The reduction of inequalities should not just be seen as an opportunity for GRT people, but for wider society too. Everyone is entitled to respect and the chance to flourish, and cohesive communities are happier communities.

I endorse this report by The Traveller Movement and urge the Government and the youth sector to consider its recommendations closely.

# Terminology

This report uses the term Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller to describe specific ethnic minority groups, and is used in line with the terminology of the Equality Act 2010. It should be noted that the term Irish or Scottish Traveller does not confer or imply a national identity. No umbrella term can satisfactorily describe the complexities of communities, and individuals may identify themselves in ways that may vary from the terminology of this report.

The acronym Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish TravellerER is occasionally used as shorthand for reasons of abbreviation and readability only.



# Executive Summary

Youth services across the United Kingdom are not delivered uniformly or consistently. Organisations in the public, private, and voluntary sector who are involved in the commissioning or delivery of youth work services are missing opportunities for partnership and collaborative working, leading to a disjointed provision of services. Pockets of good practice exist, and these should be lauded and used as an exemplar for best practice, but this is not the norm; leading to a 'post-code lottery' of youth service accessibility. The provision of youth services frequently does not take into account individual need or circumstances, leading to a disconnect between young people and youth organisations. Funding pressures, the result of a decade of austerity and swingeing cuts to funding for vital public services, has made it increasingly more difficult for organisations to deliver sufficient and consistent provision.

This disadvantages all young people but the disproportional effect on young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people, who already experience multiple and compounding inequalities in housing, education, the criminal justice system, health, and the labour market, is pronounced.

A specific Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller youth strategy, either as an element of a broader youth strategy or as an element of the National Strategy to reduce inequalities, is urgently needed. To develop a deeper understanding of these issues the Traveller Movement co-designed a peer-led research project consisting of semi-structured interviews with young members of the Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities by peer researchers. Peer researchers worked with Traveller Movement staff to co-produce the recommendations of this report. To complement the peer-led research analysis of surveys conducted with youth work organisations across the UK was undertaken, which strongly echoes the lived experienced of community interviewees.

This report summarises the responses from community interviewees and organisations, and provides a series of recommendations which are applicable for organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors.



# Key Findings

The key findings cover not only the provision of youth work, but also focus on the barriers to economic inclusion in a variety of contexts, which reflects the understanding of community members that the discrimination and inequality they face cannot be neatly compartmentalised into standalone policy areas

1

Most interviewed young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers had experienced bullying and lack of support from their teachers which negatively impacted their learning and school experience, and left them without qualifications

The barriers and discrimination faced in education has significant negative impacts on the mental-health, self-esteem, and self-worth of young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people

2

3

Community interviewees reported frequently hiding their ethnicity in an attempt to avoid discrimination, echoing previous Traveller Movement research

Just over 20% of youth provision organisations identified tackling systemic racism as an important factor in improving youth provision

4

5

A majority (78%) of organisations provide mental health awareness and wellbeing services. Bereavement support services and sexual health drop-in services were far less common. Mental health support provided by organisations does not regularly take into account the specific needs of Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller young people

Gypsy and Traveller young people display a preference to establish their own business, or work for their family business, over developing a career; this is the reverse for Roma young people

6

7

An expectation to live according to traditional family and gender roles was cited by young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people as a barrier to pursuing ongoing education, training, and careers

Young Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers frequently lack role models from their own communities with degrees or successful careers independent of family run businesses

8

9

However, young Gypsies and Travellers who had gained a degree and/or developed a career felt they had gained their families' support and were breaking down barriers in their communities

Youth work organisations identified dissatisfaction with provision; lack of financial incentive; peer pressure/bullying; and seasonal movement as factors for young people leaving youth provision schemes

10

11

Over half of organisation identified funding difficulties as a significant barrier in improving youth provision

# Recommendations

Based on the themes identified through the research process, we worked with our peer researchers to develop recommendations which they believed would materially improve their lives. These recommendations consist of actions which are applicable for multiple stakeholders across the sector.

1

The Department for Education must drive behavioural change in schools, beginning with the implementation of a mandatory and uniform requirement for schools to monitor, record, and report instances of race/ethnicity-based bullying and discrimination; as is already the case for gender or disability-based bullying.

Headteachers, teachers, and school staff should implement the National Education Union's framework for developing an anti-racist approach in their schools.

2

3

Headteachers, teachers and school staff need to develop more comprehensive strategies for meaningful engagement with Gypsy, Roma, Traveller parents which take into account cultural norms and values as well as the structural barriers facing Gypsy Roma and Traveller people.

The Government should introduce legislation, and provide funding, to ensure all NEET young people have access to Math and English functional skills training.

4

5

Primary schools should partner with secondary schools or other youth provision organisations in order to provide introductory career guidance/education for Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller pupils at the primary level.

Youth provision organisations, including those not in the public sector, should align with ONS' best practice for ethnic monitoring with the implementation of an 18+1 ethnicity self-identification framework.

6

7

The UK Government must explicitly address economic inclusion for Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller young people as part of its National Strategy to reduce Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller Inequalities.

The UK and devolved Governments should consider developing explicit Youth Engagement/Youth Work strategies, which specifically take into account the need of minority groups.

8

9

The UK Government should undertake a root-and-branch review of the underperforming Kickstart scheme.

Organisations in the youth sector should work to establish roles for Gypsy Roma and Traveller mentors within their organisations.

10

11

The UK Government should introduce local youth employment and skills boards as part of the levelling up strategy, with the explicit involvement of minority groups

Gypsy Roma and Traveller sector organisations should work more closely with organisations in the youth work sector to identify Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller-specific funding opportunities.

12

13

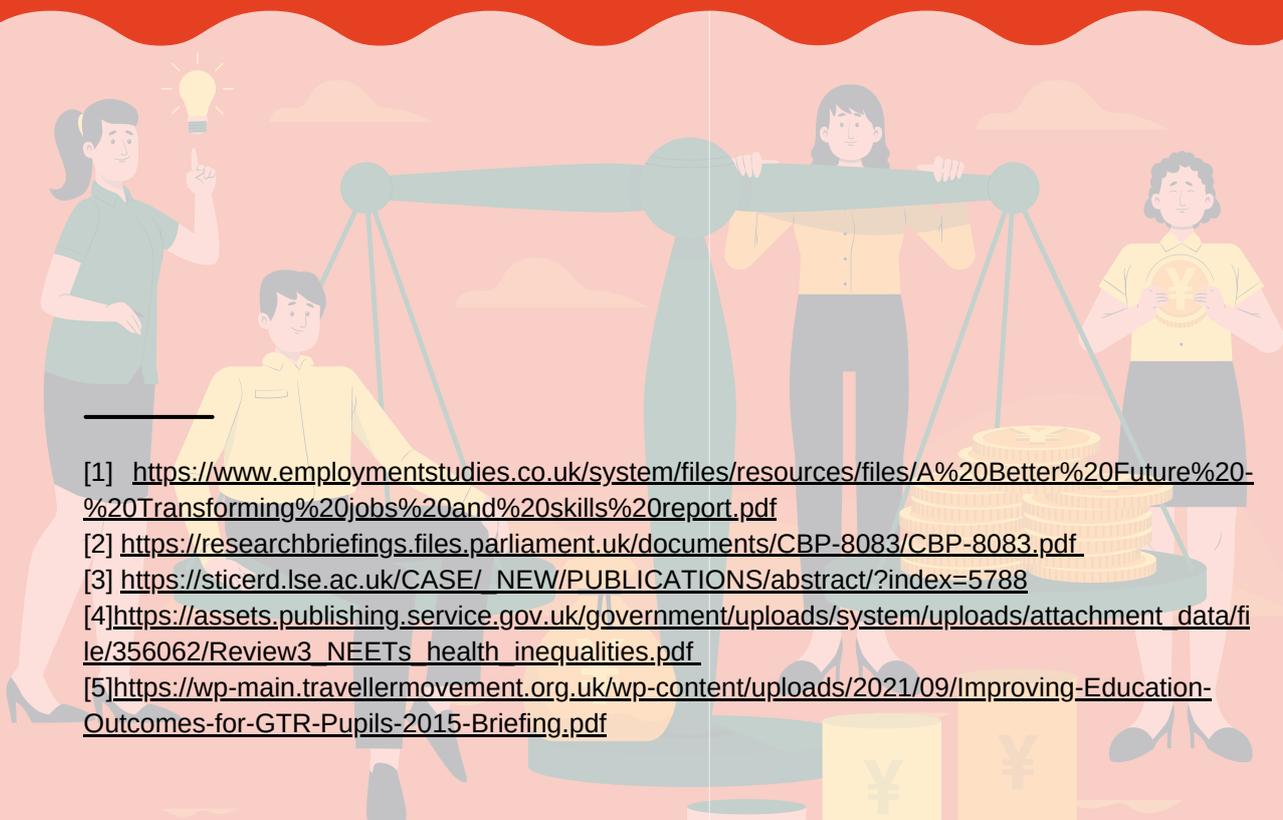
The UK and devolved Governments should introduce schemes to allow for the development of self-employment skills, and put self-employment training and education on a parity with training and education for employment.

# Introduction

Since the financial crisis in 2008, wage gaps between older and younger workers have been rising, leading the Institute for Employment Studies to conclude that “*generational progress is grinding to a halt*”. Young people are overrepresented in sectors dominated by low-skill jobs and unlikely to see significant wage growth in the future. The overall youth employment rate has fallen significantly, and 170,000 young people have been unemployed for 6 months or more [1]

These impacts do not fall evenly across different demographics. Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are the ethnic group with the highest rate of unemployment and economic inactivity; with just 40% of Gypsies and Travellers aged 16-64 employed, compared with a national average of 71% [2]. Even when controlling for factors such as poor educational attainment, childhood deprivation, high rates of poor health and/or disability, Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people were still three times at risk of being economically inactive [3]. Poor experiences and low attainment in school increase the likelihood of ending up not in education, employment, or training (NEET) [4], which has a disproportionate effect on Romany Gypsies, Roma, and Irish Travellers as the ethnic group with the lowest levels of educational attainment [5].

Prior research has stressed the importance of adopting a multidimensional approach when assessing root causes of Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller NEET, in order to adequately take into account, the overlapping disadvantages facing young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people, as laid out in fig 1.



[1] <https://www.employmentstudies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/A%20Better%20Future%20-%20Transforming%20jobs%20and%20skills%20report.pdf>

[2] <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8083/CBP-8083.pdf>

[3] <https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/CASE/NEW/PUBLICATIONS/abstract/?index=5788>

[4] [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/356062/Review3\\_NEETs\\_health\\_inequalities.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/356062/Review3_NEETs_health_inequalities.pdf)

[5] <https://wp-main.travellermovement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Improving-Education-Outcomes-for-GTR-Pupils-2015-Briefing.pdf>

“

I hope that our research will start the process so that GRT youth can feel confident, represented and that they have a place in this society. This can only come from collaboration between all sectors and communities

Peer researcher

”



Figure 1

| <b>Characteristics overrepresented in NEET stats (Coles, 2002) [6]</b>                  | <b>Analysis of 2011 census stats on young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people (Burchadt et al, 2018) [7] and research from the Traveller Movement</b>   |
|---|--|
| <b>Young people in care</b>   | "A third of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma boys (33%) in YOIs reported that they have been in local authority care."  |
| <b>Teenage parents</b>  | They are more likely to live in a household with 3 or more children, who are younger and require care, or be a young carer themselves  |
| <b>Young people with mental illness, chronic illness, disabilities or special needs</b> | Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller young people experience higher rates of poor health and disability than other ethnic group and are more likely to have a disabled person in the household (42.6% vs 25.9%) |
| <b>Young people involved in crime and the criminal justice system</b>                   | "Gypsies, Travellers and Roma (GTR) continue to be disproportionately represented in Young Offender Institutions, with 6-7% identifying as such [8]"   |
| <b>Young people with a high rate of suicidality</b>                                     | Travellers experience a 6.6 times higher suicide rate when compared with non-Travellers accounting for approximately 11% of all Traveller death [9]  |

[6] <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4619/1/RR347.pdf>

[7] [https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/CASE/\\_NEW/PUBLICATIONS/abstract/?index=5788](https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/CASE/_NEW/PUBLICATIONS/abstract/?index=5788)

[8] [https://wp-main.travellermovement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ROMANY\\_GYPSY,\\_ROMA,\\_AND\\_IRISH\\_OR\\_SCOTTISH\\_TRAVELLER-Children-in-the-CJS.pdf](https://wp-main.travellermovement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ROMANY_GYPSY,_ROMA,_AND_IRISH_OR_SCOTTISH_TRAVELLER-Children-in-the-CJS.pdf)

[9] [https://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/AITHS\\_SUMMARY.pdf](https://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/AITHS_SUMMARY.pdf)

A wide body research has provided a robust evidence base establishing the root causes driving NEET figures both with regards to Romany Gypsies, Roma, and Irish Travellers and the wider population. Despite this, outcomes for Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller young people are not improving and barriers to economic inclusion remain. The Traveller Movement believes this is chiefly attributable to a lack of political will, a misunderstanding of the needs of young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller individuals, and ignorance of Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller norms, culture, and values more broadly.

This report aims to both contribute to the existing body of research with new perspectives, as well as setting out a toolkit towards a Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller youth engagement strategy.

Part A consists of research carried out on a co-production basis. A team of peer-researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with young people, with findings closely reflecting existing research around economic inclusion. The collaborative approach gives **Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller** young people to articulate the barriers they face, the impact this has on their lives, and what needs to change in their own terms; a perspective that has often been overlooked in previous attempts to explore these issues. Peer researchers and interviewees remained active participants in the process following the conclusion of research, and recommendations have been formulated jointly between community members and the Traveller Movement.

Part B consists of findings and analysis from a survey distributed to more than 150 organisations in the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma; and youth sectors, with questions designed to assess the width and breadth of **Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller** youth engagement. This is not an exhaustive map of youth provision in the UK, which is beyond the scope of this project, but nevertheless serves as a helpful snapshot. There is considerable crossover between issues identified by community members in Part A, and the issues identified in analysis of survey responses in part B. This alignment clearly demonstrates the need for organisations to develop mechanisms for deeper, more substantive involvement of the Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller community in the design, commissioning, and delivery of youth work services.



## Part A:

A peer led assessment of young Romany Gypsies, Roma, and Irish & Scottish Travellers' experiences in education, training and employment

### *Methodology*

The Traveller Movement recruited eight Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller peer researchers across the UK to: design interview questions; conduct interviews with 14 – 24-year-old Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers; analyse the data and to steer us with the report writing. Our Partnerships and Research Manager who has taught qualitative research methods at university, delivered basic qualitative research training for each of the peer researchers.

The peer researchers conducted 33 interviews, lower than was originally planned. Some of the peer researchers found it extremely difficult to identify anyone willing to be interviewed even after several troubleshooting meetings and the development of new and innovative methods to recruit interviewees. Partly in response to these issues we decided to launch an online survey to collect more data for the study. The survey was distributed regularly on TM social media platforms and sent to all Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller organisations in the country. The survey was also published in the Travellers Times. The survey collected 24 responses.

This report is based on 33 interviews and 24 online survey responses collected in May 2021 – September 2021. Whilst we recognise this is a small sample, themes identified by peer researchers and interviewees strongly reflect the quantitative data available. Our 20-year experience in working with Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people is used to further strengthen and contextualise the findings.



| <b>Ethnic group / gender</b>  | <b>Interviewed</b> | <b>Responded to survey</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Romany Gypsy girl/woman       | 13                 | 6                          | 19           |
| Romany Gypsy boy/man          | 3                  | 3                          | 6            |
| Roma girl/woman               | 3                  | 1                          | 4            |
| Roma boy/man                  | 5                  | 1                          | 6            |
| Irish Traveller girl/woman    | 8                  | 6                          | 14           |
| Irish Traveller boy/man       | 0                  | 3                          | 3            |
| Scottish Traveller girl/woman | 0                  | 2                          | 2            |
| Scottish Traveller boy/man    | 1                  | 2                          | 3            |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>33</b>          | <b>24</b>                  | <b>57</b>    |

The interviews and the survey address young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller's experiences in and feelings about the following areas of life:

- Education
- Training
- Employment
- Family / traditions / gender roles
- Self-esteem

# Findings

## 1. Education

“

I think they need more help from the teachers, and their parents need to leave them in school longer. Give them a chance to learn

Romany Gypsy/Traveller girl, 16

”

Our participants were asked for their opinions and perspectives as to why Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people have the worst educational outcomes of any group in the UK. Most young people said it was because of bullying, undermining and lack of support from teachers/authority figures at school, and a lack of understanding and support from family and community (see Chapter 4).

“The effect is the feeling that you're not good enough and it stays with you for the rest of your life. ... I knew I was good at a lot of subjects but they would just assume that just because I was a Gypsy, I couldn't do it.”

(Romany Gypsy woman, 23)

“Teachers, I think, because I don't think teachers understand our way like. Teachers give other people more time, whereas they don't give us as much time as what we needed. They have no expectations for us.”

(Irish Traveller girl, 14)

“Every single Gypsy person in that school went through some racism. I left that school, I think about two years ago now. And there were about 40% Gypsy people over there and now there's about just about 5%. So because all of them got kicked out for no reason. Because I was missing out of school because of personal problems so they just forced me to get home schooled and told me to revise at home, which I did. But then when the GCSEs came up, no one told me about it. So I just didn't have an opportunity to get my results.”

(Roma man, 18)

“You could just tell it was a different treatment towards you than it was towards the others, and you could just tell it was because of what or who you were. It wasn't a lot of teachers, it was probably like 2 in 10 or 3 in 10. But them ones had a big massive effect on me in school and to my education.”

(Romany Gypsy man, 19)

Our previous research [10][11] has shown that race or ethnicity-based bullying and discrimination by teachers and peers is a significant barrier to educational achievement for many Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, as well as contributing to mental ill health, poor self-esteem, and feelings of social alienation. Unfortunately, many schools are not taking sufficient steps to address racist bullying, and are not successfully discharging their Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) obligations outlined in the Equality Act [12].

Many Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller children do not feel welcome or safe in school as a result. When parents feel their children are not safe, they are more likely to remove their children from school. The Traveller Movement terms this “constructive exclusion”, in order to draw the deliberate comparison with constructive dismissal in the workplace, in which employees feel they have no choice but to leave their job as a result of a hostile working environment. Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller children are also excluded – both temporary and permanent - at higher rates than any other ethnicity [13][14]. This is often attributable to acts of retaliation against bullies.

**“Parents feel quite vulnerable to send their children to school because they don't really know what's going to happen to them. And that's the reason behind why I think a lot of Gypsies and Travellers are not in school because their parents are quite scared for them.”**

**(Irish Traveller girl, 17)**

Some of the Roma respondents explained how they have had to do everything for themselves, owing to a lack of capacity on their parents part, and a lack of support from their teachers or schools.

**“My parents because they're first generation immigrants, they don't really get the education system. So that's why we had difficult going to school as they didn't know how it was really. I went to school and everything and I had to do my thing, I had to look at my grades and everything, my mum never checked or anything. The teachers didn't really ever explain how the grade rating system works.”**

**(Roma boy, 17)**

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[10] [The Traveller Movement \(2020\): Barriers in Education – Young Travellers in London](#)

[11] [The Traveller Movement \(2021\): Barriers for Gypsies, Roma, and Traveller Pupils in Secondary and Further Education](#)

[12] <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

[13] <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/absence-and-exclusions/pupil-exclusions/latest>

[14] <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/education-skills-and-training/absence-and-exclusions/permanent-exclusions/latest>



Previous Traveller Movement research has assessed the bullying and discrimination faced by Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller children in school [15] at length. As such we did not plan to place too much emphasis on bullying in this project. However, it became clear early in the research process that negative experiences in school, and a subsequent lack of educational attainment, is one of the most persistent barriers to accessing further education, training courses, apprenticeships or employment for Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller young people. It is clear that fundamental change at the school level is required if we are to improve opportunities and outcomes throughout the lifecycle. It is certain that after these barriers are removed, most of these young people will have better chances to live up to their full potential.

**“My school is my life, I love it. I have been there for 7 years and I have enjoyed every minute of every day. My head teacher has been so good to me, she pushed me to achieve and go above and beyond. She’s put me on training courses and all sorts of things. I wish that all of us could have the same experience.”**

**(Romany Gypsy/Traveller woman, 18)**

The influence of **familial and cultural traditions and a lack of positive Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or**

**Scottish Traveller role models** with degrees and successful careers results in many people viewing academic subjects as irrelevant for them, and our interviewees expressed a desire that schools would do more to take their cultural and individual preferences into consideration. In fact, several young people mentioned that they were interested in going to college to attend more vocational courses but since they had not finished secondary school or got their GCSEs, they felt unable to do so. For many young people, further education was seen more useful than secondary education, and many interviewees expressed a belief that the skills and material taught at the secondary level did not effectively reflect the skills they require for their desired career or lifestyle. Those young people who had left school early felt that it would be more beneficial to learn about job and career options at the primary school level in order to skip secondary school and go straight into learning a profession, trade or how to set up a business for example.

**“[College/training should be] more accessible at a younger age. I think, if you want to get Travellers more involved in education, you got to kind of cater towards our lives as well. Because the way that the education system is now it doesn't really benefit Travellers and the life they want to live. So, you know, maybe providing that education sooner.”**

**(Romany Gypsy woman, 21)**

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[15] [https://wp-main.travellermovement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/TTM-Barriers-in-education\\_web.pdf](https://wp-main.travellermovement.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/TTM-Barriers-in-education_web.pdf)

Several young people talked about how there is a need for **career guidance** at school.

“I also think it should be mandatory that young Travellers are made to attend those like kind of career advice sessions and CV building sessions and personal money management sessions, so that they begin to get that independence and figure out for themselves what they want to do.”

(Romany Gypsy woman, 21)

“I would say like education, like to actually teach the students how to apply for work and the skills they actually will need, to apply for work and to develop like an earlier age. And then the skills will get better as they grow older. ... And also communication skills, leadership, those kind of things.”

(Roma man, 18)

When asked about **universities and higher education**, most young people we interviewed and surveyed didn't think it was relevant for Gypsies and Travellers but those who had been to college/university themselves, or knew someone who had saw the benefits.

“I've really seen the value in being in education, doing more and also have seen attitudes change from people, my community and my family, friends. The more you do and the more successful you become, people really support it.”

(Romany Gypsy woman, 21)

“I have experienced somebody close to me that's gone there [college] and thrived. They've got a brilliant job and gone to many places that nobody's gone before. So yeah definitely, I would say it is very important if they can get to that stage, and feel comfortable with it.”

(Romany Gypsy woman, 24)

All interviewed Roma spoke highly about the importance of education for their future.

“In my view, education is the key to success. So even though we, we don't see this as Romani people, the reality is that education can help us and can help us to integrate in society, and also help us to be role models in the community and change the lives of others.”

(Roma man, 23)



Some young people in further education found it quite alien that they were still been treated like children while family members at the same age were already living their adult lives.

**“I am 18 years old, I am still told to wear a uniform, and I was told to call the teacher sir and miss. And I know that it’s the school rules and everything but you know, my nan had two children by the time she was at my age. My cousins have children, and they’re 16, 17, 18. You know, like other people of my ethnicity in my family have gone and had their own lives by the time they’re 18. I’m still sitting there putting my hand out towards for a question.”**

**(Romany Gypsy woman, 18)**

Others mention having to move away from family as a barrier in going to college or university. Family is the most important thing in most Gypsies, Roma and Travellers lives and moving away from it is not considered as part of growing up or independence as it is in many Western cultures and communities.

**“If you’re not lucky to live in the same town as a college or even a University, it means you have to stay away from home. And some parents don’t want their children to do it. This includes boys as well. I know a lot of people, when they get in college they often move out from the parents. But as our way of life, our tradition, we don’t want to do that.”**

**(Romany Gypsy woman, 22)**



## 2. Training



As soon as you say you're a Traveller they don't want you on the course. Or they say that you need this and that to get on the course. And because you need GCSEs. They don't make it easy. That's why I don't bother

Romany Gypsy woman, 24



A majority of the young people in the project expressed interest in further training but most did not either know how, and/or were missing the necessary prerequisite qualifications. Those who had a family member or a friend working in the charity sector or with Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller community groups were more knowledgeable about available opportunities, though this is not reflective of the wider population. Most young people had never had anyone in their families to take part in training/courses and therefore the idea seemed quite foreign to them. It was clear that these pathways or a 'culture' of accessing courses and training was missing for most of the Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller young people we interviewed and surveyed.

**"I didn't look for any training courses after I finished school, I didn't know how to."**

**(Romany Gypsy girl, 17)**

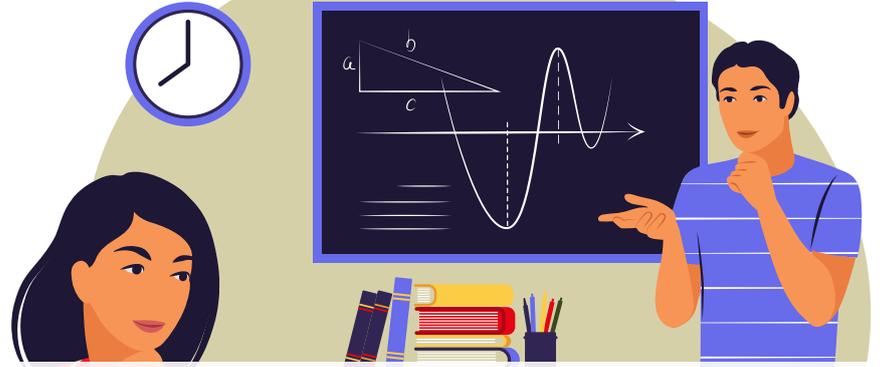
**"I can't generalise them all but many people that I know don't have basic literacy, and they can't read or write, so they'd find it quite difficult to find training courses."**

**(Irish Traveller girl, 17)**

**"Most Travellers don't [join courses or college] and so other Travellers make fun of them because they would be doing something that they're not used to. And they will also bullied in the classes by the non-Travellers."**

**(Irish Traveller girl, 14)**

When asked what training would be most beneficial for young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, the answers varied from **functional maths and English to IT skills, business studies, trades, hair/beauty, fashion and cleaning**. The responses reflected the cultural preference for self-employment and the traditional gender roles many Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller families still live by.



**“Definitely maths and English because you need them to be able to get onto courses. And we’re pretty good at most things to be honest, we’re good at finances and we’re good in most common sense stuff.”**

**(Romany Gypsy woman, 24)**

**“Business courses, because a lot of boys and girls end up setting up a business, they don’t really know what they’re doing, because they haven’t learned about it.”**

**(Irish Traveller girl, 14)**

**“IT computer skills, everything is done online nowadays. So I think that’s one thing that really needs to be pushed on. Everyone is learning. Having everything you do if you put your business you need a website, you need to decide computer skills, accounting, all of those.”**

**(Romany Gypsy girl, 17)**

**“Well, I think for girls, girls are always into makeup, and hair and stuff. And I think for the boys is building and any work traits. Training courses would obviously educate more and what they’re supposed to be doing. And, you know, just think it will put them on the right road, it would be showing the right way.”**

**(Romany Gypsy woman, 20)**

Several young people spoke about the need for career advice from a younger age than is currently being provided.

**“I also think it should be mandatory that young Travellers are made to attend those like kind of career advice sessions and CV building sessions and personal money management sessions, so that they begin to get that independence and figure out for themselves what they want to do.”**

**(Romany Gypsy woman, 21)**

Those young people who had taken part in training, or had a family member who had, said that good training is more hands on, less academic and in smaller groups. They appreciated to be treated respectfully and not as children. One respondent talked about his positive experience at Nacro:

**“Being at Nacro, they’ve helped me very much, they have been fine. I think they’ve must have had a few Gypsies and Travellers there, you can just tell. And you can tell it’s a different treatment as well because you’re older. They’ve just treated me with so much more respect, and they’ve let it be a lot easier. If there’s a time you getting stressed or anything like that, they can sit there they’re always constantly checking on you to make sure you are alright, and if you stress you can go straight away for a fag or a bit of fresh air or whatever you need to do. There is no pressure whatsoever in this place. ... You haven’t got to just sit there and do the constant maths and English nonstop like a robot.”**

**(Romany Gypsy man, 19)**

### 3. *Employment/Work*

When asked, most young Gypsies and Travellers said they would like to work for a family business or set up their own business. **Self-employment** within Gypsy and Traveller communities is a cultural tradition dating back centuries and that is what most young people know and are used to.

**“If it's not somebody that the family knows, and you start working for them, instead of your family's business, then you are looked down on. And, you know, it kind of seems as if it's sort of disrespecting your family, not working for them, but working for somebody else.”**

**(Romany Gypsy woman, 21)**

**“I don't really know anyone that has done that [got a job outside family business].”**

**(Romany Gypsy/Traveller girl, 16)**

**“I would prefer to work with family or myself. It can be hard to get on with other people sometimes yeah.”**

**(Romany Gypsy man, 19)**

Working outside the **family business** is particularly difficult for the boys and men whom are expected to continue in their elders' footsteps. Those who step out from the tradition can be considered disloyal to their family.

It is more acceptable for girls and young women to get part-time jobs (e.g. as cleaners) though this predominantly precarious employment, with exploitative conditions and a lack of opportunity for career advancement. A lot of Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller women are still expected to be housewives and mothers. Breaking away from traditional gender roles of a man as the breadwinner and the woman as the homemaker can be extremely difficult.

**“None of the women I know are career people but having the odd cleaning jobs fine.”**

**(Romany Gypsy woman, 24)**

**“A lot of people don't understand why I work outside the family businesses and think I'm not that loyal to my family. In reality the hours are just better for me where I am and it gives me more pleasure.”**

**(Scottish Traveller man, 20)**

**“It all depends on the culture and the background of their parents some are very old school and therefore don't follow the rules of women working.”**

**(Irish Traveller girl, 17)**

**“We are all looked at as housewives and not as working people.”**

**(Romany Gypsy/Traveller girl, 16)**

Family businesses were not familiar to the interviewed Roma who preferred to get jobs and careers. One Roma man stated that they would not even consider setting up a business because he felt that because of **discrimination and racism**, no one would purchase anything from a Roma/Gypsy.

**“They can't open their own businesses because of the bad reputation where people from, you know, different communities or different people who are outside from the community, when they will find out that this business is opened by Gypsies.”**

**(Roma man, 23)**

Some young people expressed the idea that, since many young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers don't have qualifications the same way others do, they don't feel jobs are available to them and therefore stick to what they know. **Lacking qualifications** is understood as a significant barrier in accessing the labour market.

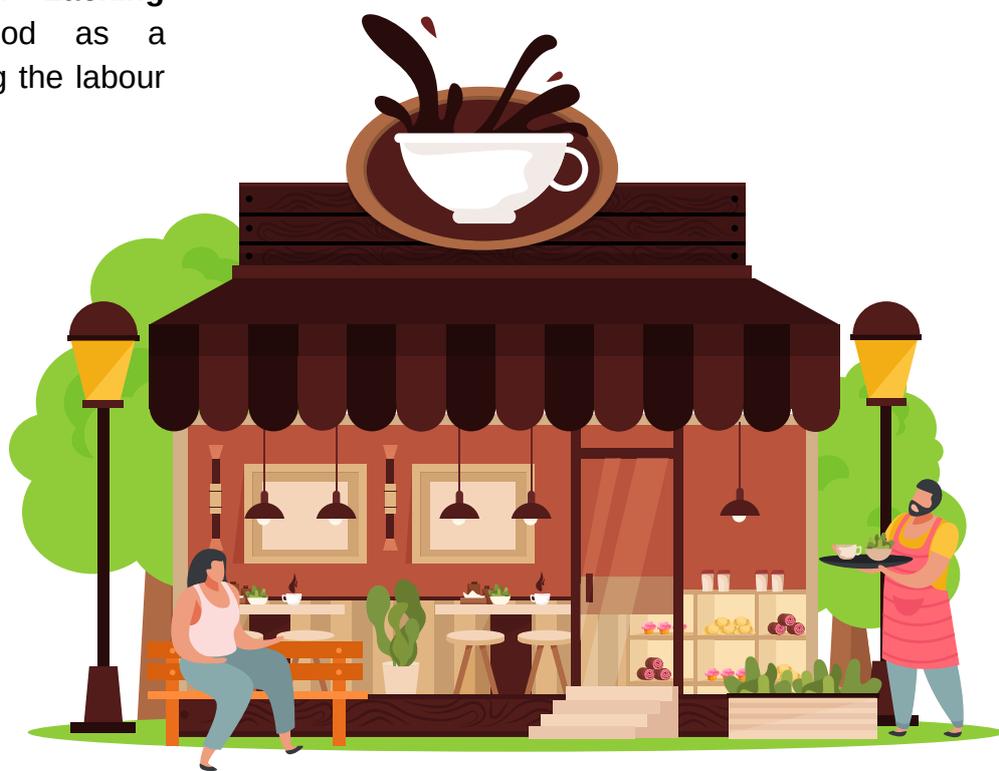
**“It's not easy for Gypsies to find jobs outside family businesses because they just don't get enough education and are always pushed aside. And it's just, it's not really that available for them as it is for other people.”**

**(Romany Gypsy woman, 24)**

**“Since a lot of members of the Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller community leave school early they may have less qualifications meaning it's harder to find a job”**

**(Irish Traveller girl, 16)**

Most of the young people we interviewed or surveyed, whom had jobs, said that they had chosen to **hide their ethnicity** in order to get the job, as previous Traveller Movement research has indicated. Many of those young people who hadn't had jobs said they knew they would be discriminated against and therefore didn't even want to try applying for jobs.



**“Probably not [reveal my ethnicity to employer]. Like it's a little bit.. I should be a little bit braver, I could do that but when you've got so many people from so many different angles making it harder you can't do it, you just get knocked down too many times.”**

**(Romany Gypsy man, 19)**

**“I think Travellers applying for jobs they would be very discriminated against. Or even if a Traveller got a job, I would say even by co-workers they would be discriminated against.”**

**(Irish Traveller woman, 20)**

**“Depending on what they apply for. But wouldn't bother telling employers about your ethnicity, it makes it harder.”**

**(Romany Gypsy man, 20)**

**“I didn't disclose my ethnicity to him until after I'd already been employed, you know, contract had been signed and everything. ... I wouldn't say I'm better than other Romany Gypsies, but I'd just say that it's easier for me to hide what I am, because I've been to school when I've had that sort of worldly outlook.”**

**(Romany Gypsy woman, 18)**



## 4. Family traditions & self-esteem



Boys should be allowed to do more jobs and girls should be allowed a lot more freedom about what they are allowed to do. It would just make life a lot easier for Travellers

Irish Traveller girl, 14



It is clear from the interviews and survey that young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers lack prominent and visible role models in education and employment. The culture of attaining qualifications, going to college and university, and having a career outside the family business is less embedded than for other minority ethnic groups. Degree level (or equivalent) qualifications are still seen as something that are not meant for Gypsies and Travellers; although many young people we interviewed say they would have love to 'go all the way' with their education.

**"I would have gone the full way through high school. And I would have probably gone to college. ... But it's always just been known. I'm not gonna go to high school because obviously, nobody in my family did. So it's just kind of unknown.**

**It was just how it was. ... I would genuinely say the biggest reason for Travellers leaving school without qualifications and leaving earlier, is because of the pressure they feel from family."**

(Romany Gypsy girl, 16)

While discrimination, bullying and low expectations from teachers play a big part in this so does **family traditions and gender role expectations**. In more traditional families that have not had any role models of people going to college and having a successful careers, young people are often made fun of, or in the worst case scenario ostracised, if they decide to go to college and further.

**"There's a couple of things but the biggest one, I would say, is pressure from inside the community to leave school. Most Travellers will be made fun or ostracised. You know, generally just not allowed by parents or other elder figures in the community to attend secondary school, especially girls. Boys are kind of allowed to go to high school a little bit longer."**

(Romany Gypsy woman, 21)

Many young people feel there should be more support and awareness raising work

within their communities about the benefits of education and careers. Those young Gypsies and Travellers who have stayed in education against all odds say they have changed their families' minds after they have got more successful and started earning good money.

**“I think women should be allowed to work if they want to work, and if they want to go to school, they should be allowed. But the mums and dads need to be educated to know what that could mean, and what they could get for it.”**

**(Romany Gypsy woman, 24)**

**“I've really seen the value in being in education, doing more and also have seen attitudes change from people, my community and my family, friends. The more you do and the more successful you become, people really support it.”**

**(Romany Gypsy woman, 21)**

There are also those young people whom do not see the value of education and careers, they speak about wanting start their adult life earlier and not wanting be treated like a child at college. They also refer to their parents whom did not get an education but are regardless doing well in life.



**“If parents are wanting us to go to school and get that education and further education, then maybe things would change. But like right now, most people's parents didn't stay in school and are living absolutely perfectly fine. So that's what we've brought upon. That's what we're raised around. And it's what we know.”**

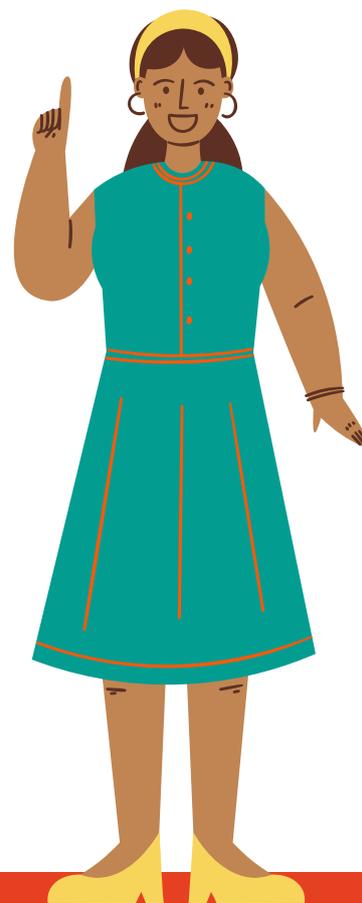
**(Romany Gypsy woman, 21)**

The interviewed and surveyed Roma young people see having an education and a good job / career as a way to a successful life. Although many Roma parents are not able to support their children in education because of their lack of knowledge about the UK education system and possibly their lack of English, they seem to agree with their children that it is the best guarantee for a good life. The tradition of self-employment is missing from the Roma communities in the UK and therefore not seen as an option.

The barriers and discrimination in education and the expectations and pressures from their families young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are facing, has a clear negative impact on their **self-esteem and self-worth**. Many young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are not able to choose what they want to do to earn money. They are missing the support and equal treatment they are entitled to, as well as most of the opportunities other young people have. They are also often missing family and peer support and expected to follow traditional culture and gender norms.

Many young people express how they would like to do something but are not able to because of who they are. When prompted, they speak about their dreams of becoming a vet, midwife or an engineer but immediately say it is not possible because of who they are. There is a sense of self-fulfilling prophecy.

Those young people whom have fought their way through education are now breaking barriers within their families by proving to them that having a career is a viable option that benefits the whole family. However, it is society's responsibility and obligation to guarantee that young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers should not have to fight their way through education to be able to access good training, employment and careers.



## Part B:

### A mapping exercise and strategy for moving forward

#### *Methodology*

The peer research team and the Traveller Movement undertook quantitative analysis of youth provision for Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller young people across the UK. In excess of 150 individuals, groups and organisations (127 England; 9 Northern Ireland; 13 Scotland; 6 Wales) were contacted to take part in a survey. In addition, further responses to the survey were collated via promotion of the survey online, both directly by the Traveller Movement and more widely through youth infrastructure newsletters e.g. NYA, IYW. Responding organisations included Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller sector specific groups and organisations, mainstream youth providers, equality and rights organisations, local authorities and policy makers. The survey was conducted between 14th July 2021 and 31st August 2021. Survey questions were designed with the explicit intent to establish a snapshot of:

- How organisations defined youth work, and how they conceptualised their own roles
- How organisations reached and engaged with young people
- The type and form of youth provision available to young people generally
- The extent of youth provision available to young people generally
- The extent of youth provision available to Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller young people specifically
- The effectiveness of youth provision in reducing NEET outcomes for young people
- The extent of employment of Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people, and of peer-led youth provision more generally

In total the survey generated 85 responses, of which 53 were fully complete and the remaining 32 responses were partially complete. Unless otherwise specified, the presented data is collated from fully complete responses. However, in some areas of analysis partially completed responses did add value to the quality of analysis. Where data generated from incomplete responses is presented it is clearly labelled and disaggregated from fully completed responses.

An exhaustive assessment of youth provision across the UK is far beyond the scope of this project and the following analysis should not be understood as such. However, the broad cross-section of respondents from across the public, private, and voluntary sectors, and the extent to which the data generated in this analysis reflects the lived experiences captured by the peer researchers, demonstrate the usefulness of this data as a “snapshot” of youth provision.

“

I would like to see more funding for educational institutions, arts institutions and charities that support GRT learners. I would like this funding to go towards alternative routes into education and more optionality for GRT families so that their children can learn, without compromising their culture and beliefs

Peer researcher

”



# Findings

## 1. Who responded?

Organisations taking part in the survey were largely made up of charitable organisations (32(37.6%)) or Local Authorities (34(40%)). There was however a good cross section including from the Private Sector (9(10.6%), NGOS (7(8%)) and NHS organisations (3(3.5%)).

Where indicated, 22 (26%) organisations had a local remit, 12 (14%) organisations had a regional remit, and 14 (16.5%) organisations had a national remit.

Where indicated, 17 (20%) organisations were from a delivery focussed organisation; 4 (5%) organisations had a strategy or policy focus; 1 (1.2%) organisation was infrastructure focussed.



## *2. Have the organisations currently or in the past employed any ethnic Gypsy, Traveller or Roma young people aged 16-24?*

28 organisations had currently or in the past employed an ethnic Gypsy, Roma or Traveller young person aged 16-24.

Given that the survey partially targeted the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma sector, the high proportion of organisations employing Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller staff is not surprising.

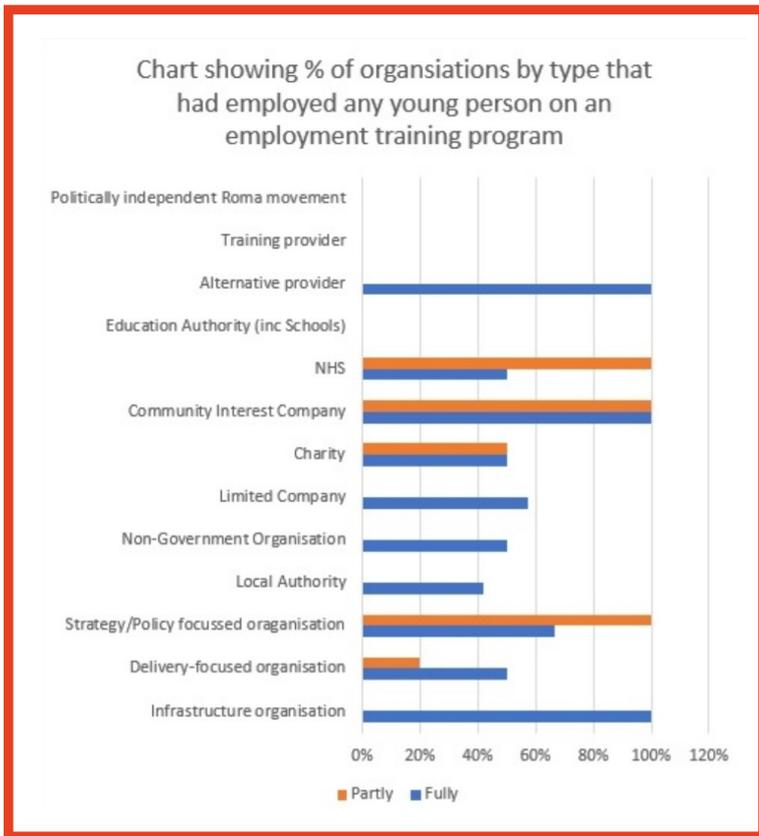
Despite generally being sustained by long-term funding to a greater extent than other organisation types rates of

employment of Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller staff in youth provision within local authorities are relatively low. Local authorities should consider expanding affirmative recruitment of Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller staff as a means increasing the visibility of role models from these communities Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller and improving service provision for Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller young people.

## *3. Have the organisations ever taken on a Trainee, Apprentice or Kickstart employee or other training employment program for any young people?*

The survey indicated that 31 (36.5%) of all organisations had employed a young person as part of a training employment program; 49 (57.6%) had not; and 5 (5.9%) organisations were unsure. It is reasonable to assume that organisations in the youth sector would have a greater awareness of Government sponsored youth employment schemes than employers in the broader labour market; engagement with such schemes is therefore significantly lower than expected.

Of the 27 Charities that responded to this question 16 (51.6%) organisations had and 15 (48.4%) had not. With Private companies 4 had and 4 had not (an even 50-50). Only 8 (23.5%) of all Local Authorities responding to the survey have employed a young person through a training employment program.



#### 4. *What types of training program have the organisations used for any young people*

Of the organisations who had employed a young person via an employment/training scheme, apprenticeships and trainee programs were the most commonly utilised mechanisms, used by 11 and 8 organisations respectively. Just 4 had used the Kickstart scheme, despite its status as a flagship Government policy. Written feedback from organisations indicated a willingness to engage with the scheme, but also highlighted the small numbers of young people moving through such schemes where they are being used. This echoes findings from the National Audit Office report on the scheme, which found *“limited assurance that Kickstart is actually having the positive impact intended.”*

**“We are currently recruiting a Kickstart apprentice”**

**“We have currently provided a Kickstart opportunity for one young person and have previously taken on apprentices and trainees”**

The commented feedback highlighted the variety of routes into employment – volunteering, part-time work, apprenticeships, work experience, and examples of bespoke programmes, giving young people the opportunities to train and move into employment.”

**“Within the LA there is an Apprenticeship Scheme providing opportunities to work in various areas of the Council with a view to maintaining full time employment at the end of the programme”**

**“We have also taken on young people as part of school work placement training program and we have trained 3 young people as youth workers: 1 at NVQ level 2, 1 at NVQ level 3, 1 at NVQ level 4”**

**“With funding from Manchester City Council, we set up a pre-recruitment training programme for Roma individuals (including young people) to access jobs in retail and the hotel industry. The training supported them to complete application forms, attend interview and improve their written/spoken English. We partnered with an organisation delivering ESOL as with local recruitment agencies. As a result we got 50 people jobs in warehousing and around 10 in the hotel industry. We supported those individuals that wished to go into self-employment and linked young Roma individuals to the Princes Trust.”**

**“We have a volunteer programme that can lead to employment if the young person is interested in that. We had a young person we were training in a range of duties including reception work, but she moved away unfortunately! (for us, anyway!)”**

The importance of mentorship in improving engagement with young people, particularly those who are from marginalised groups, was highlighted by many organisations. Despite this, no organisations surveyed currently implement a Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller specific mentor scheme, and do not have definitive plans to do so in the near future. The lack of mentoring for young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people strongly echoes experiences outlined in part A; namely a lack of visible role models, and a perception that they and their communities are not well understood by service providers.



*5. Do the organisations currently deliver youth work to Gypsy Roma and Traveller young people?*



37 out of 85 (43.5%) of the surveyed organisations currently deliver youth work to Gypsy Roma and Traveller young people and 37 organisations did not. 11 organisations did not respond to the question.

In identifying those that are and are not currently delivering youth work to Gypsy Traveller and Roma young people, by organisational type, there were some interesting findings. 7 Private Limited companies; 18 Charities; and 14 of all Local Authorities indicated that

that they were currently delivering youth services to Gypsy Traveller and Roma young people.

Of the 28 organisations that fully completed the survey and responded that they were not currently delivering youth provision to Gypsy Roma and Traveller young people 4 indicated that they would be delivering youth service provision to

Gypsy Traveller or Roma young people during the next 12-24 months; 7 indicated that they would not; and 17 that they didn't know. The high proportion of don't knows is potentially reflective of a widespread lack of explicit long-term organisational strategies for Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller youth engagement.

## *6. What were the organisations' definitions of Youth Work*

25 organisations provided commented feedback which highlighted subtle but significant variation of conceptualisations of youth work provision alternative models of youth work being described. Some organisations articulated definitions of youth work based on guiding principles, whilst others made reference to specific type of provision offered. The term appeared to mean different things to different organisations/individuals and includes, but is not limited to: educational support for those young people receiving home education; detached youth work; informal and formal learning; employment support; activity-based engagement:

**"This is currently being re-visited, but it includes the principles of social learning theory; Informal and non-formal learning; voluntary participation; empowerment; anti-discrimination and anti-oppression; and co-production"**

Non-judgmental support, for any young person. Regardless of ethnicity, circumstance or gender.

To provide a range of opportunities for young people aged 11-25 in their local community youth clubs, out on the streets, detached, local schools through youth activities and projects.

**"Providing one to one support, community building and peer connections and activities and groups."**

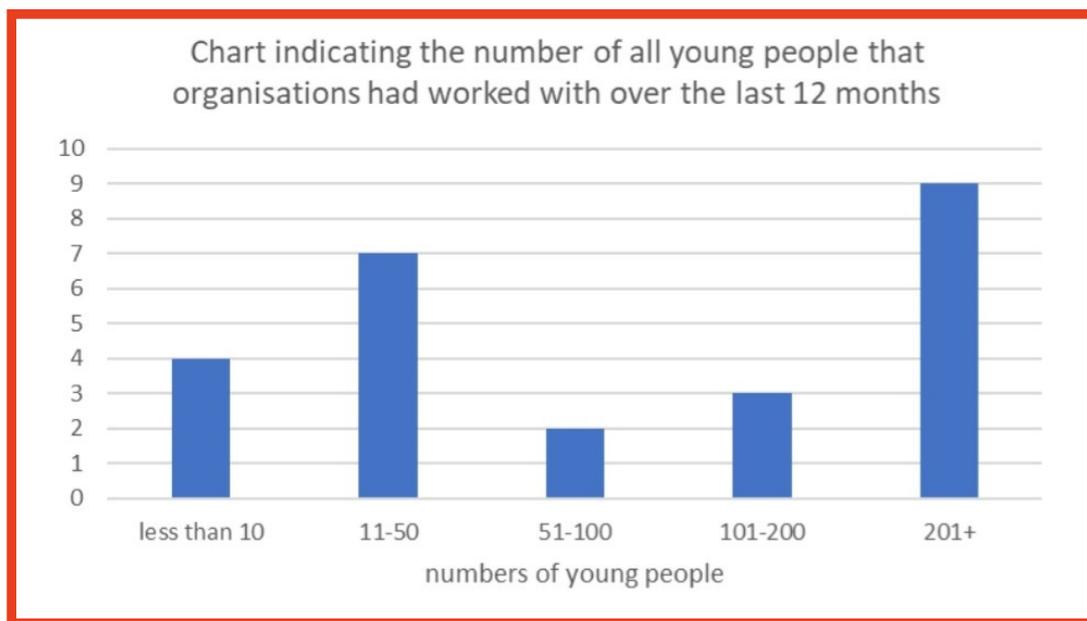
**"We view youth work as a non-formal educational activities in a wide range of settings that develop the physical, spiritual and mental capacities of young persons under the age of 25 with the result that they grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society and that their conditions of life improve"**

**“Youth Club. Trip, outings, training, education, outdoor activities, eco work, community work.”**

**“To inspire, support and challenge all our children and young people to be the best that they can be.”**

The wide variability of definition is perhaps reflective of organisations responding to particular demographic or geographic need. However, this can result in fragmentation of youth work provision, and we recommend the UK Government consults with the sector with a view to developing a statutory definition of youth work.

*7. How many young people approximately had the organisations worked with over the last 12 months? How many of these young people are of Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller heritage?*



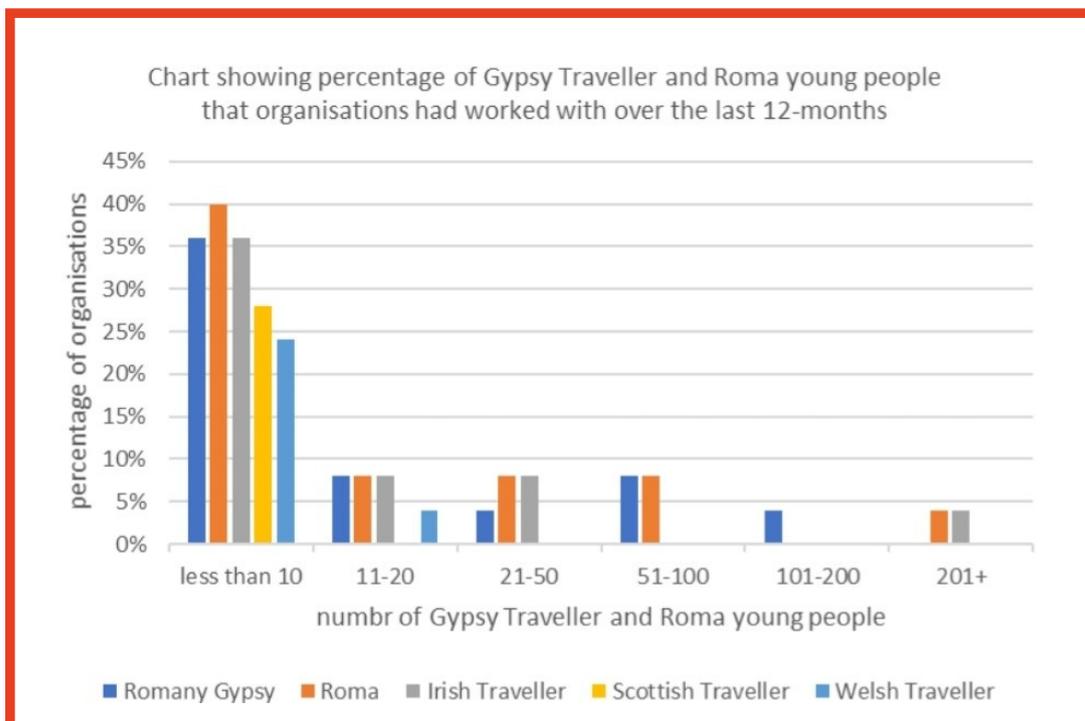
56% of respondents indicated they had worked with 51 or more of all young people during the last 12 months, with 36% of these indicating that they had engaged with 201 or more young people.

Generally speaking, organisations work with small numbers of Gypsy, Traveller and Roma young people. 40% of respondents indicated that they were

working with less than 10 Roma young people during the last 12 months, compared to just 4% working with in excess of 200 Roma young people during that same time period. The same is similar with Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller young people. 36% of organisations were working with less than 10 Romany Gypsy young people in the last 12-months, and only 4% working with

101-200 young people over the same time frame. 36% of organisations were working with less than 10 Irish Traveller young people in the last 12-months, and only 4% working with 201+ young people over the same time frame.

Given this survey was targeted in part at the Gypsy Roma and Traveller sector, these figures are lower than expected. The far higher prevalence of organisations working with <10 Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller individuals is potentially indicative of a lack of knowledge of how to effectively engage with Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller communities, or else is indicative of a failure to prioritise urgent need on the part of young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people.



### 8. How do ethnic Gypsy, Traveller and Roma young people you work with learn about your services?

The survey comments indicated that most organisations adopt a range of strategies to reach out to young people. Written feedback indicates that pre-existing community and youth outreach networks were the most commonly used routes for youth engagement:



## *8. How do ethnic Gypsy, Traveller and Roma young people you work with learn about your services?*

**“Through my outreach services within communities. Meeting gatekeepers and creating trust to engage with their children. Other means include coordinating group delivery in schools by targeting provision specifically with Traveller children.”**

**“We run a Centre near to a large site, which everyone can walk to, so it is predominantly used by residents of the local site. We’ve been around since 2002, so most Gypsies & Travellers know about us; mostly we communicate by word of mouth, but we also have an online presence”**

**“Leafletting, phone calls, social media posts, visits to camps and houses, door knocking, word of mouth”**

**“Through street youth work, word of mouth, and through local church links.”**

To a lesser extent there was also a public sector and inter-agency theme to the comments that indicated young people were coming to learn about services available to them through Police (4%); Interagency (8%); Schools (16%) and Local Authorities (12%).

**“via EMTAS (Traveller Education) and family connections”**

**“Through word of mouth and agencies who specifically work with Travellers”**

**“...through involvement with other youth agencies such as mental health projects”**

Young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people face severe and multidimensional disadvantage. Part A of this report, and a wide body of prior research, has highlighted the likelihood that young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people will encounter problems in school and in the delivery of other public services. As such, youth work organisations are strongly encouraged to implement a multi-agency approach and to develop meaningful relationships with e.g. local schools, police forces, probation officers, NHS organisations, charity organisations, local authorities to ensure that there is awareness of youth work provision for young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people where and when that awareness is needed the most.

## 9. What types of youth services do organisations provide?

In a reflection of broad conceptualisations of youth work, respondents indicated that a range of services were being provided.

72% of organisations were providing mental health awareness and wellbeing services. This is a welcome finding, given the extent to which interviewees in Part A discussed their mental health. However, there is little indication that mental health provision is resourced to respond to the intergenerational trauma experienced by Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people. Just 8% of organisations offered bereavement

support, strongly indicative of a gap in services.

68% of organisations provided Trips and Activities during Summer. As part of a wider program of youth provision this is understandable, though where organisations are only providing this type of provision we consider the offer too limited.

Other services that were frequently provided included After School Clubs (x 52%); Sports Activities (56%); Discussion Groups (60%); and Equality and Diversity understanding (52%).

## 10. Was youth provision peer led?

Of those 25 organisations responding to the question there was a roughly even split of 52% who provision was not youth led, and 48% whose provision was. The proportion of organisations delivering youth led provision falls to 22.6% when organisations who did not respond to the question were included.

Local Authorities and charities were the organisational type least like to deliver

Those organisations who were not providing youth led provision were mainly consisted of 6 Local Authorities (31.5% of all Local Authorities) and 4 Charities (16.6% of all Charities). We strongly urge organisations to transition to a peer-led model of provision to drive substantive engagement with Romany Gypsy, Roma, Irish or Scottish Traveller communities, and to ensure the youth work offer is seen as relevant and applicable for young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people.



## *11. How many ethnic Gypsy, Traveller or Roma young people approximately, that the organisations worked with over the last 3 years, have moved into Employment, Education or Training?*

15 organisations (60% of those answering this question) indicated that over the last 3-years ethnic Gypsy Traveller and Roma young people had moved on into employment; 40% of organisations indicated that the young people they have worked with moved into self-employment; and 32% indicating that their young people had progressed on to professional training.

44% of organisations indicated that ethnic Gypsy Traveller and Roma young people had moved into Further Education; 28% of organisations indicated that the young people had moved into Higher Education; and 36% of organisations indicated the young people had moved into informal education.

Though these figures are very positive, they must be seen in the context of organisations working with relatively low numbers of young Romany Gypsy, Roma and Irish or Scottish Traveller people, and as such are not wholly representative. Of

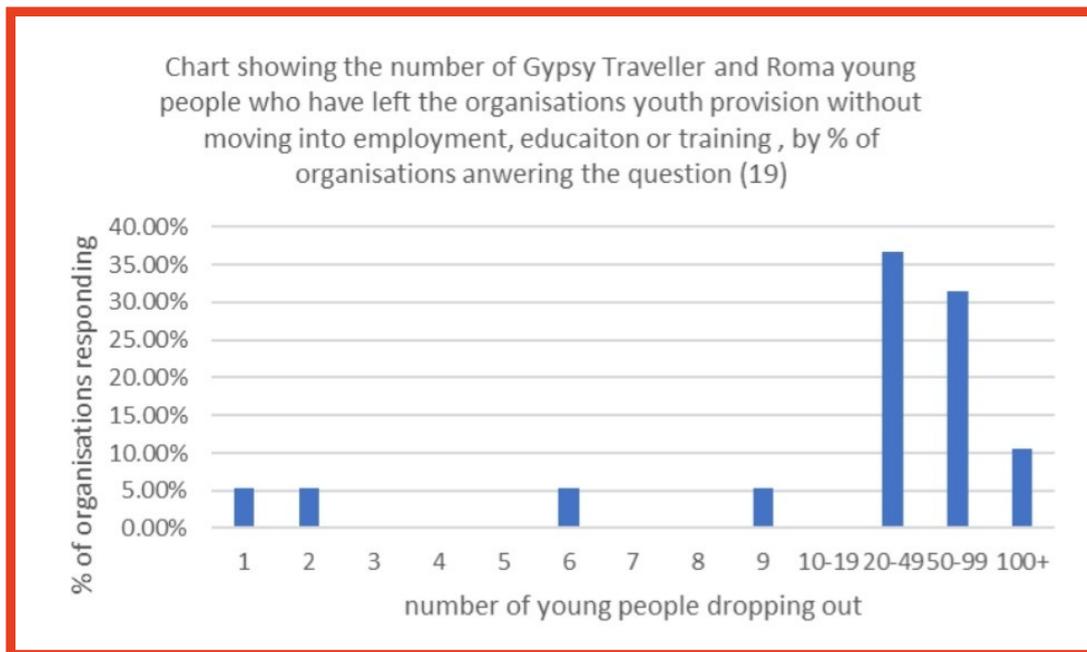
those 15 responses indicating that young people had moved into employment, 2 indicated that there were between 20-49 young people who had done this. The remaining 13 involved 8 or less young people moving into employment over that 3-year time period.

The same can be said of self-employment. Of the 10 responses indicating that young people had moved into self-employment, 2 identified that between 10-99 young people had done this, whilst 8 indicated this involved 8 or less young people over that 3-year time period.

With progression into further education the picture appears slightly different. Of the 11 organisations indicating that the young people they worked with moved into Further Education, 8 showed that between 10-50 young people had done this, compared to 3 that involved 3 or less young people over that 3-year time period.



*12. Approximately how many ethnic Gypsy, Traveller or Roma young people have left the organisations Youth Provision without moving into Employment, Education or Training over the last 3-years?*



There is a strong indication that young people are passing through youth provision without progressing onto employment, education or training.

36.80% of organisations answering the question indicated that between 20-49 young people had left their organisation without moving into employment, education or training.

31.50% of organisations answering the question indicated that between 50-99

young people had left their organisation without moving into employment, education or training.

In Part A, interviewees spoke at length about their experiences of finding employment, education, and training inaccessible. The efficacy of youth work provision should not be measured by labour market outcomes alone; nevertheless these findings indicate significant shortfalls in services currently offered.



in delivering targeted provision in schools or the home. Organisations spoke of flexibility in targeting services, and indicated the importance of meeting young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people 'where they are':

**" We are working on developing pathways-to-education and work as we've just started working with 18-24s"**

**" More funded projects where we can implement-skills-training to help improve-future- employment-chances for young people"**

5 organisations responding to this question commented on tackling systemic racism and more understanding Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller cultures as a factor in improving their youth service provision.

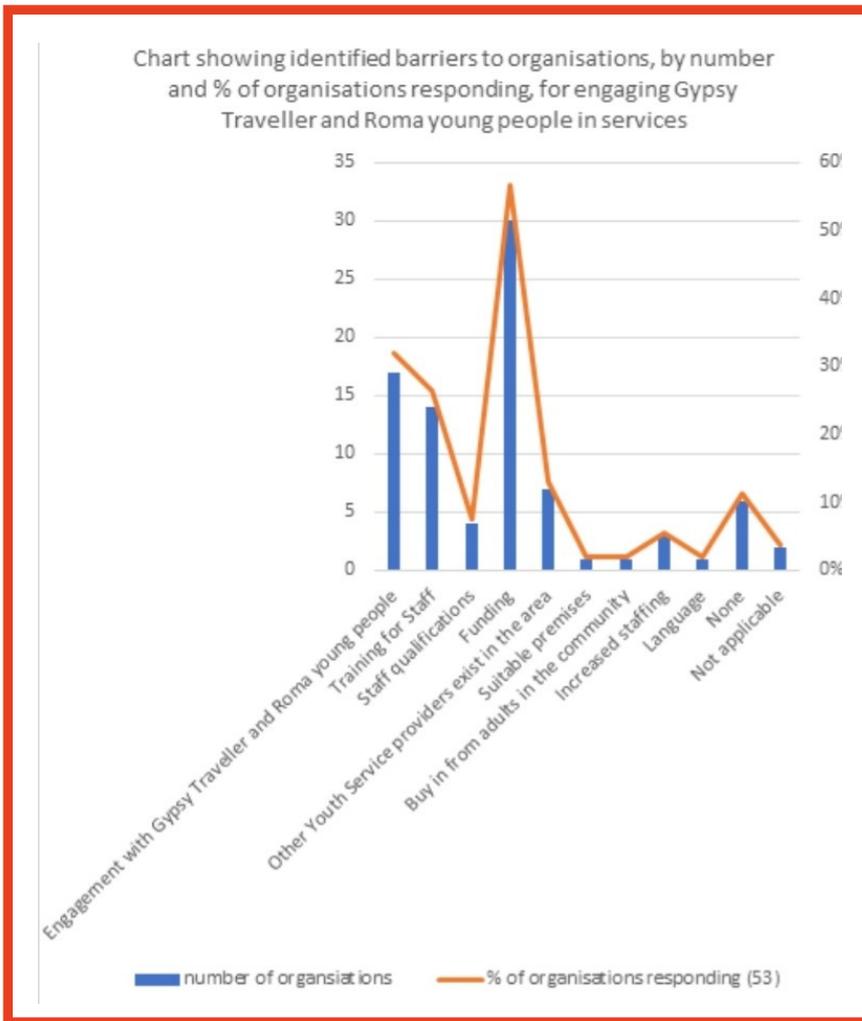
**" Understanding the nuances of the cultural-contexts of GRT lives.. Understanding the needs of young people. Using-tailored-approaches to supporting individuals... Recognize, understand and challenge the systematic-racism experienced by GRT people."**

Following on from this there was also some sentiment about employing more Gypsy Traveller and Roma people in the services that they use. 2 organisations answering this question specifically highlighted this as a factor in improving the youth service provision. Both of these organisations work primarily with young Roma people, as evidenced by their quotes:

**" Employ-suitable-Roma-role-models as part of the staff team; have an outreach team; find better funding sources to enable consistency of staffing and consistency of engagement; have an outreach team to take our work properly in to the community"**

**" More-Roma-people-employed by our service and other services to increase reach into community"**

*14. What are the barriers for organisations delivering Youth Service provision to ethnic Gypsy, Traveller and Roma young people during the next 12-24 months?*



57% of organisations answering the question indicated that funding was a barrier to delivering youth service provision to ethnic Gypsy Traveller and Roma young people.

32% indicated that engagement with Gypsy Traveller and Roma young people was a barrier.

26% indicated that Training for staff was a barrier.

# Conclusion

Prior research has demonstrated the extent to which Romany Gypsies, Roma, and Irish Travellers are beset by economic inequalities and uneven life opportunities. Data on individuals not in education, training or employment; indicators of economic activity; and poverty profiles all combine to paint an extremely stark picture for the Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller community, and for Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller the young people from these communities in particular.

Part A of this report adds to the existing body of research by making space for young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people to articulate their lived experiences and perspectives in their own terms. The contributions of interviewees reflects the complexity of the issues and were not limited strictly to economic inclusion. Interviewees spoke almost universally of a mental health crisis which cannot be disaggregated from economic inclusion.

Entrenched inequalities, a lack of opportunities, and the impact of racism and discrimination are significantly contributing to mental ill health and common feelings of hopelessness and low self-esteem amongst Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people; it is clear that economic, physical, and mental wellbeing are inextricably linked.

Interviewees spoke of a fundamental disconnect between their communities and service providers. Within their communities the importance of ongoing training, education, and employment was often not fully recognized, and many young people feel pressured into subscribing to traditional gender norms; or in some way placing the expectations of their family ahead of their own preferences. Conversely, many service providers do not understand either the needs and requirements – nor the cultural norms and values – of Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people. Taken together, this results in young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people feeling trapped, with no access to appropriate and relevant training, education, or employment.

Part B's analysis of the sector strongly echoes many of the themes developed in the peer-led research. These interconnected and complex problems identified cannot be for the youth sector alone to solve, but nevertheless the youth sector can play a pivotal role in bridging the gap for young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people. This report demonstrates the clear need for the development of - and commitment to – a specific Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller youth strategy at the National Government level; and the Traveller Movement believes this research can contribute to

the foundations of such a strategy. In lieu of a strategy, this report has also identified a number of recommendations, co-developed with our peer researchers, which public, private, and voluntary organisations can implement in order to improve outcomes for young Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Irish or Scottish Traveller people.





**The Traveller Movement would like to say THANK YOU to  
our funder Youth Futures Foundation for their support**

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