



ROMANI CULTURAL & ARTS COMPANY

EXAMINING "NEETS" ROVER WAY AND SHIRENEWTON SITES, CARDIFF, SOUTH WALES

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Executive Summary

In February 2014 the Communities First (Star Cluster) and the East Cardiff, Llanederyn and Pentwyn Communities First (ECLP) commissioned the Romani Cultural and Arts Company to examine the phenomenon of the high rate of NEETs within the Gypsy and Traveller Communities at the Shirenewton and Roverway Sites in Cardiff respectively ("the Sites").

The aim of this short term research was to gather information and gain a snapshot of real life experiences of young people on the Sites to help to explore and identify additional resources that may be necessary and to inform the local authority and educational institutions of any need to change practice and find new ways of supporting a vulnerable group of people.

Structure of the Report

Section one of this report sets out the aims and objectives of the research; section two outlines the research design and methods used; section three sets out key responses based on interviews with Gypsy and Traveller children and young people and parents living on Shirenewton and Roverway Sites; section four summarises interviews conducted with Welsh Government Officers whose work directly impacts upon Gypsy and Traveller children and young people, the head teacher of a primary school, the head of a Traveller Education Service in West Wales; section five contains brief studies setting out the experiences and achievements of young Gypsy and Traveller individuals who have secured diverse and varying degrees of higher educational achievements and enjoy success in their chosen vocations, section six sets out the findings based on contributions of research participants, summarises conclusions from these findings and highlights issues or practices that could benefit from a closer examination, further consideration or action based on these findings.

1. Introduction

1.1 Young people who are not in education, employment or training are often referred to as "NEET". The Welsh Government's strategy on NEET is encompassed in its Skills and Employment Strategy, "Skills that Work for Wales" (2008) which outlined categories of young people not in education, employment or training. These range from "core" NEETs which include young people with social and behavioural problems or other more complex needs, including those who come from families "...where working is not an accepted

norm" to "floating" or "at risk" NEETs – young people who have most of the problems of the core group and have periods of being NEET but are more willing to accept support to "transition" or "gap year" NEETs which includes young people who are not in education, employment or training for short periods only and do not require Government intervention. The NEETs strategy also identified other groups of underperformers in schools that were at higher risk of becoming NEET down the line, namely "Gypsy Traveller young people", "certain ethnic minority groups" and "white males in some areas".

1.2 "Evaluation of Education Provision for Children and Young People Educated Outside the School Setting", a report of Edinburgh University following research commissioned by the Welsh Government to examine the process of exclusion from school in Wales and the delivery, planning and commissioning of education provision for children and young people educated outside the school setting (EOTAS; education otherwise than at school) identifies inter alia, "...Patterns of exclusion and disproportionality" and notes that the sanction of exclusion is applied disproportionately to children and young people who have a range of characteristics, of which being of "...of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller heritage" is specifically mentioned and adds that "...Such disproportionality is linked to inequitable educational outcomes (Riddell and McCluskey, 2012; Parsons, 2009)".

1.3 'Travelling to a Better Future' - Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan - highlights the Welsh Government's commitment to Gypsies and Travellers and its continued commitment to equality issues, community cohesion and human rights in Wales. In terms of education, the Welsh Government has stated that it is committed to promoting an inclusive approach to education and learning that is responsive to individual educational needs and which supports all children and young people to reach their full potential.

The Framework recognises that a mobile lifestyle can mean that many Gypsy and Traveller children have interrupted learning and poor attendance, without the opportunity to settle down at school. It notes that "...children often feel different and misunderstood in a school setting and very few attend secondary school" and accepts that Gypsy and Traveller children have the poorest attainment rates when compared with other learners.

1.3.1 The Framework highlights particular barriers that prevent these children from accessing education as follows:

- i. Gypsies' and Travellers' different attitudes to school education, especially towards secondary school;
- ii. the travelling patterns of Gypsies and Travellers;
- iii. inappropriate methods of communicating with the Gypsy and Traveller community leading to ineffective engagement and mutual mistrust between the community and local authorities; and

- iv. negative experiences of secondary education of some Gypsy and Traveller parents (Report by National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) 'Research into the Education of Gypsy Traveller Children in Wales' 2006)

1.3.2 The Framework also makes reference to Circular 003/2008 which addresses another important barrier to school attendance, namely that Gypsy and Traveller pupils are often the subject of name-calling, bullying and racism and notes that research suggests that of all the minority ethnic groups, Gypsy and Traveller children are the most likely to suffer racial abuse.

1.3.3 Noting that "low educational attainment within the Gypsy and Traveller young of Roverway and Shirenewton has led to a cycle of low income and poverty for families", the purpose of this research was to gather information and present an honest snapshot of real life for young people on the Sites to help explore and identify additional resources that may be necessary and to enable the local authority and educational institutions to consider the need to change practice and find new ways of supporting these vulnerable people.

1.4 The specific objectives of the research were to:

- i. Consider the reasons or the circumstances that prompt Gypsy and Traveller children and young people to discontinue with their education both at secondary school or further education level; their interest in educational attainment and their hopes and aspirations in this respect.
- ii. Consider the provision made by schools to help, support or motivate Gypsy and Traveller children to remain in school; consider the reasons identified by schools behind the high rate of such children dropping out of school; identify the issues if any, faced by schools in encouraging Gypsy and Traveller children and young people to remain in school and secure attainment and identify any areas in which they need help or additional resources.
- iii. Consider the provision made by the Local Education Authority, in this case Cardiff Council and more specifically, its Traveller Education Service in helping Gypsy and Traveller children and young people secure higher levels of educational attainment; identify any barriers in terms of engaging with such children and young people and the parents of such individuals; identify gaps in or any additional resources that may assist the Local Education Authority to effectively perform its statutory functions in the provision of education for these children and young people and to consider any appropriate modes of collaborative working with relevant stakeholders.
- iv. Consider the Welsh Government's objectives and framework for the promotion of educational attainment amongst Gypsy and Traveller children and young people and how the measures in any, put in place by

the Local Education Authority give effect to these objectives or accord with the framework.

1.5 Hence, this research focuses on the first hand experiences of young Gypsy and Traveller children living at the Roverway and Shirenewton Sites in Cardiff with a view to examining the reasons and / causes which have led to high level of NEETs amongst these children to help stakeholders understand the root cause(s) of such low levels of attainment. It is hoped that a snapshot of these experiences will assist stakeholders in devising practices that will encourage these children to secure higher levels of attainment.

1.5.1 Cardiff Council in its capacity as the Local Education Authority via its Director of Education and the Traveller Education Service respectively was asked to participate in this research. Local primary and secondary schools within the catchment area of the Sites were also approached to participate in this research, as was the Welsh Government. In addition, the head of a Traveller Education Service in West Wales was asked to participate in this research as were a number of young Gypsy and Traveller individuals, all of whom have enjoyed varying degrees of educational attainment and success in their chose vocations.

1.5.2 Resources both in terms of time and funding have not permitted a detailed analysis of Welsh Government policy and legislation in this area, although reference is made to a number of policies and initiatives. In the main, a narrative style has been adopted to encompass the responses of research participants as the aim of the research was to garner information and richness of evidence based on first hand personal experiences of the research participants.

2. Research Method

2.1 This research draws predominantly on qualitative data to answer the research questions and to make recommendations with a view to addressing the issue of NEET amongst the Gypsy and Traveller children in Cardiff. Limited reference has however been made to quantitative data.

2.2 The research was designed to focus on collecting evidence on:

2.2.1 the issues or barriers faced by children and young people at the Roverway and Shirenewton Sites

2.2.2 the issues or concerns that the Local Education Authority, in the case Cardiff Council and in particular, its Traveller Education Service have in terms of educational attainment of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people and how these impact upon delivery of education to such children

2.2.3 the issues and areas of concern that impact upon the delivery of education to Gypsy and Traveller children by primary and secondary schools in the catchment areas so that a clear picture could be established and recommendations made to address identified issues and areas of concern at either end of the spectrum and which could be used to help develop practices and procedures that could assist in reducing the high levels of NEET amongst Gypsy and Traveller children and young people.

2.3 Research Participants

2.3.1 A total of 14 children and 8 adults (parents) were interviewed face to face in their respective home settings. All were assured anonymity.

2.3.2 Cardiff County Council was approached but declined to participate or provide data for this research. Eastern High School, Willows High School and Greenways Primary School also declined to participate in the study.

2.3.3 With a view to gaining an overview of current Welsh Government initiatives aimed at addressing the high levels of NEETs within the Gypsy and Roma Community, the following Welsh Government officers were interviewed:

Theresa Davies: Based in the Support for Learners Division and responsible for policy matters relating to the education of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people.

John Davies: Legislation and Consultation Manager, Inclusion Team, Fairer Futures Division. The Division has the policy lead for the Gypsy and Traveller people of Wales.

Kara Richards: Head of Youth Engagement in the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in Cardiff. Lead on the implementation of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework across Wales with the aim of reducing the number of young people who are NEET.

Lowri Reed: Head of Pupil Wellbeing Branch (DfES) Cardiff. Lead on policy on attendance issues.

2.3.4 Jane Jenkins, the Head Teacher of Moreland Primary School was interviewed with a view to gauging the experiences from a school perspective.

2.3.5 Beverley Stephens, Head of Pembrokeshire Gypsy Traveller Education Service Priory Project based at Monkton Priory CP School Monkton in Pembroke, who has a proven track record in helping Gypsy and Traveller children and young people to achieve significantly high levels of educational attainment was approached with a view to learning about the measures and practices that the school has in place.

2.3.6 Four young Gypsy and Traveller individuals who have secured varying degrees of educational attainment and now enjoy success in their respective chosen careers, academic or vocational were also approached with a view to examining their experiences at school and in the educational arena were also interviewed. Survey questions were sent to the following four individuals:

Cherell Boswell
Kirby Jones
Daniel Baker
[James]

2.4 Whilst a structured interview approach was adopted, the interviews were conducted with a degree of flexibility particularly in relation to the Gypsy and Traveller community to encourage the flow of conversation and to enable participants to initiate discussion on areas of concern to them. To promote greater engagement with children and young people and indeed adults on both sites, interviews were conducted by a young person from the Gypsy and Traveller community to ensure a full and frank response to questions.

2.5 Interviews were recorded with the consent of participants and the option to remain anonymous was given. Anonymity was requested by the Gypsy and Traveller children, young people and adults interviewed on the Sites and by one Gypsy and Traveller research participant. Anonymity was guaranteed. All other participants agreed to waive anonymity.

2.6 Questions for children, young people and families focused on their experience within schools; school curriculum; relationship with fellow pupils/ students; relationship with teachers; support offered by teachers; support offered by the Traveller Education Service; reasons for withdrawing from school; their interests in terms of career and further development and their hopes and aspirations.

2.7 Questions for Welsh Government officers and Educational professionals included focus on Welsh Government initiatives and proposals to promote education within the Gypsy and Traveller community; data related to exclusions and withdrawals; intervention measures, general policy frameworks and documents, current policies in terms of education /cultural needs/ awareness of Gypsy and Traveller children and their respective impact on the children, school curriculum, community involvement and consultation, collaborative work with external stakeholders, measures for reduction of exclusion /discrimination relating to/against Gypsy and Traveller children school, budgets, funding, impact of media and negative press, officer knowledge/awareness of Gypsy and Traveller cultural needs and monitoring outcomes.

2.8 Existing Literature

2.8.1 An extensive literature review conducted recently on approaches to working with Gypsy and Traveller children, young people and families communities concludes inter alia, that a meaningful consultation with such communities should form the basis of all developments in matters that impact upon the community. It also notes that the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities engage with services if they see that successful and visible short-term outcomes are achieved, which in turn facilitate trust-building. Furthermore, basic needs have to be addressed concerning social justice and respect; and family members' involvement in training and supporting their children's learning could achieve value-added benefits, introducing them to life-long learning opportunities. Most important of all, consultation towards service development is needed both informally with individuals and groups of Gypsy and Travellers and more formally with Traveller organisations (Robinson and Martin 2008).

2.8.2 Challenges that have been highlighted in working with Gypsy and Traveller children, young people and adults are highlighted as follows:

- i. Lack of central involvement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in policy development.

- ii. Complexities of cultural awareness in that tensions persist around addressing the ambiguities of professionals' beliefs and understandings concerning cultural factors as an influence on good practice.
- iii. Lack of serious attempts to including Gypsies and Travellers in service development which perpetuates mutual mistrust and misunderstanding.
- iv. Lack of evaluation of training or evidence of what works with the resultant training often being underdeveloped, unsystematic and insufficiently resourced. Further examination of the most appropriate balance and best fit between formal training and structuring informal opportunities is required. Trainers may require more support and indepth evidence needed to examine how to implement Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' involvement in training effectively (Robinson and Martin 2008).

2.8.3 In terms of engagement, a need for focus on the following emerges:

- i. Effective communication where the importance of building trust is highlighted and the value of distance-based learning is emphasised; the need for challenging discrimination and prejudice and for cultural awareness and the importance of wider family engagement is stressed. The importance of understanding of the most appropriate media is also emphasised.
- ii. Supporting transition phases are highlighted at age 11 and 14 where school and parental expectations and desires may come into conflict and the importance of outreach work with families is emphasised for early years work.
- iii. Multi-agency work focussing on the establishment of inter-agency groups with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller representatives that have helped schools to continue actively engaging with children. Explore the value of working with a key professional trusted by community with an emphasis on the importance of networking within and between Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and professional communities.
- iv. Safeguarding and child welfare by implementing viable tracking arrangements; acknowledging anxieties from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities about specific service remits, for example, Social Services.
- v. Sharing information by adopting a process for consistent monitoring and use of ethnic categories; the use of hand held records of educational history for mobile Travellers, and the use of ICT to support distance learning children and young people's development.
- vi. Recognising family expectations of young people's learning and of developing their contribution to the family economy; and understanding

the impacts of exclusion, discrimination and cultural nomadism on child, family and community development (Robinson and Martin 2008).

2.8.4 In terms of formal and informal learning, research highlights the need for more systematic training with specific focus on:

- i. Quality assured training programmes with mainstream service/ partnership and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities' input, designed with sensitivity to key contexts around diverse professionals and diverse Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups.
- ii. Strategic embedding of training/awareness-raising within broader organisational objectives and reinforcement through training of existing best professional practice in order to effect lasting organisational change.
- iii. Provision of informal learning opportunities that can be anticipated and facilitated through multi-agency work, joint visits to families, job shadowing, exchange visits and inter-school partnerships (Robinson and Martin 2008).

2.9 Key Messages

2.9.1 Some of the key messages that emerge from this research emphasise the need for:

- i. the Gypsy and Traveller community to engage fully and participate in the development of education and training programmes for their children;
- ii. monitoring the impact of the policies and initiatives that have been developed to promote higher educational attainment for Gypsy and Traveller children and young people;
- iii. adoption of a curriculum that promotes the positive aspects of Gypsy and Traveller culture and an inclusive ethos in schools and training establishments

Further findings are set out in Section 6 of this report.

3. Views of Gypsy and Traveller Children, Young People and Adults

3.1 Gypsy and Traveller Children

3.1.1 Children and young people from the Shirenewton and Roverway Sites were interviewed over a period of three months. A total of 14 children and young people were interviewed, eight from the Shirenewton Site and six from the Roverway Site respectively. The ages of the children and young people from the Roverway site ranged between 14 to 23 years, and the ages of the children from the Shirenewton site ranged between 14 and 18 years. Each Site had one male participant; all other interviewees on both Sites were female.

3.1.2 Views were also sought from adults living on both Sites, and three adults from the Shirenewton site and five adults from the Roverway site were interviewed. All adults interviewed are parents, female and all aged over 21 years. All in all, some 22 individuals were interviewed.

3.1.3 With a view to securing a full and frank discussion of issues and a high level of engagement, the interviews were conducted by a member of the Gypsy and Traveller community. Whilst uniform questions were asked of all interviewees, responses to a high proportion of the questions were not forthcoming. However, for the purposes of this research, it is hoped that the responses will point to issues or matters that are of concern not only to the children and young persons, but also parents.

3.1.4 The schools attended by these children included Greenway Primary School, Trowbridge Primary School, St. John Lloyd Primary School and Rumney High school.

3.2 Shirenewton Site

Children and Young Persons

3.2.1 When asked about their favourite part of being in school, one responded by saying that it was "coming home"; two stated that their favourite class was English; one opted for mathematics, and one stated that they had no preference over the classes taught.

3.3 Reasons for leaving School

Of the eight young people that were interviewed, only two progressed from primary school to secondary school, but then did not complete their respective secondary school education.

3.3.1 The reasons given for leaving school were as follows:

"...because in school during breaks we were bullied, children called us Gypsies and teacher did not do anything about it. When we tried to protect ourselves we were told off".

"...because this is our belief, we don't go".

"...I don't believe in it".

"...because we have to learn how to cook and clean".

"...Because I came to a certain age when I could attend a course instead".

"...Because we were traveling a lot with the family".

"...Because we don't believe in going to there".

"...I did not want to go".

Two young persons said that they did not want attend secondary school, one said that that she did not mind attending secondary school, and another said that she now regretted not having gone to secondary school.

Four young people confirmed that they left school because they wanted to, one stating that the reason behind this was that [they] did not want continue to endure bullying in secondary school; one stated that [they] simply "stopped believing in it", and another said that "...it is always been made known that we do not go to school, so I did not expect to go to school after finishing primary school" One young person said that "...because I was bullied I just wanted to come home, I preferred to be home. Now I am getting home tutored".

3.3.2 **Bullying**

When asked whether it was bullying or any other specific reason that led to the young people not continuing with school, six of the eight young people interviewed confirmed that they were bullied in school; of these, three said that they were called names like "Gypo", "Gypsy" and "pickey".

One such person who was called names said that they did not consider this bullying and that in any event "the teachers sort it out, so that was really good". One young person who admitted to being teased by other children at school did not elaborate on what this entailed.

When asked whether the experience of bullying affected them, one young person confirmed that it did. The individual added that:

“...when people say that I am Gypsy, they are being racist against me. I feel embarrassed when someone calls me a Gypsy, I feel embarrassed to tell people that I am a Gypsy”.

3.3.2 Relationship with Teachers

When asked about any difficulties that the young people encountered in terms of their relationship with teachers, one responded by saying that it was “brilliant” and another added that whilst their teachers did not make their school life difficult, they did not intervene either when support was needed. Two young people said that their teachers did nothing in order to resolve any problems or issues that they were experiencing at school; one said that their teachers told off the children who were bullying them or calling them names; and another confirmed that there was no difference in the way their teachers treated them when compared with other children in school. Two children confirmed that they were not called names by their teachers.

3.3.3 Travellers Education Service

In terms of interaction with the Traveller Education Service, six young people confirmed that they received help from a Traveller Education Service officer, and all confirmed that she had been very helpful in helping them to enrol on ACT hairdressing and beauty training courses. Three of these young people expressed great satisfaction with the help that they had received from that officer and one confirmed that another Traveller Education Service officer had helped them with reading. Two young people said that one officer was always there to help them when they needed help, and only one young person said that more could be done by Travellers Education Service.

3.3.4 Importance of Education

Four young people confirmed that they thought it was important to attend school, although one pointed out that it bullying made it impossible to attend school; one young person said that they “...just cannot see sense” and that [they] don’t have friends who go to high school.

The importance of going to school was identified as:

"...because when you get older you can get a job".

"because you want a job and you don't want to be sitting at home and being married only".

"...to get GCSEs and get a job in your life".

Six young people confirmed that they could read and write and use the computer.

3.3.5 Hopes and Aspirations

When asked about their long-term ambitions, one was uncertain, and two said that they wanted to undertake hairdressing. One young person said that "...I am hoping that I am going to get a job and get a hairdressing qualification. I do not want to be a young girl cooking and cleaning and have children. I want more from life...". Two young people were already attending a hair dressing course, and one was waiting to start a course in September.

Another added that:

"...I don't know at the moment, I am only 16 but as long as I am not getting bullied I do not mind what I do.

One young person said that she was:

"...doing nothing at the moment. I was looking for a job but as soon as they find out that I am a Traveller and a Gypsy, they do not want anything to do with you".

Another one young person said that:

"...I have been trying to get a few cleaning jobs but as soon as they know that you are a Gypsy or that you are from a Gypsy site, they do not trust you, they think that you steal. ... They just do not give you the time a day. I am trying to get in an ACT hairdresser course with [name of Traveller Education Service officer]'s help". One young person said that "...I was in a nursery and I had a chance to be on placement in the nursery on the site where I live. The college was not really helpful, they did not help me anymore [after] I left" adding that she would like to continue working in childcare. One young person said that she would not like to work when older but "...would like to get married and settle down" but when asked if there was more to life than marriage, she responded by saying "...maybe in some ways".

When asked what could be done to improve matters, three young people responded by saying that:

“...there should be a class for Gypsies” and

“...training courses should provide with useful qualifications that can be used later on in life”.

3.6 Shirenewton Parents/Adults

3.6.1 The three adults that were interviewed on site had between them 11 children, aged between five and 20. Of these, four children were of compulsory school attending age. The schools attended included Trowbridge Primary School, Greenway Primary School and Woodland High School. A parent advised that one of her children hoped to attend the Cardiff and Vale College in the near future.

One parent advised that all her children attended primary school but then discontinued because no other children from the Gypsy and Traveller community were attending secondary school. She advised that one of her children subsequently attended a “Travellers only” class, and two children were home educated, one of whom had recently enrolled onto a hair dressing course. Two parents confirmed that their children were happy in school.

Another parent advised that her older children are home educated whilst the younger children attend primary school. She stated that she removed her children from school because:

“...I would like to protect them against being bullied”.

She added that her daughter had started attending a training course but stopped when “somebody tried to hit her with a chair”. She said that her family had initially received support from a Traveller Education Service officer in connection with home education and help with securing a place on the training course off site. However, during this training course, the incident with the chair occurred. She said that the Traveller Education Service had provided advice in relation to seeking redress, but because of her family’s fear of consequences, she and her family opted against pursuing matters.

One parent said that she found that teachers at the school made it difficult for their children to continue with their schooling. She said that when her son was being bullied, and the teacher in question “turned a blind eye”. She said that when her son stood up for himself, he was expelled but no action was taken against anyone else. She said that the headteacher did not intervene.

3.6.2 Parents' Educational Attainment/Experience

Parents were asked whether they attended school, and two confirm that they did. One parent progressed to high school, but only did so for a short period of time. One parent said that her mother had taken the decision not to send her to school, quoting "cultural reasons" for this, and another parent stated that "...it was not a normal thing for Travellers to go to high school". Two parents confirmed that they could read and write, with one also adding that she could use the computer.

One parent describes her experience at school as follows:

"...I felt awkward and there was a general discrimination against Travellers. There were two classes for Travellers. One was for older children, the other one was for younger children. You had to enter/leave through a separate entrance. Also, you had to have separate meetings. We had our separate playground and we were not allowed to go to their playground. We were regularly checked for head lice, it felt like we were in a prison camp. Also, they checked our nails and teeth like we would not know how to clean ourselves...".

When talking about her own formal education, one parent said that although she did not have the opportunity when she was younger, she would have liked to have such an opportunity, and even today, was:

"...open to new ideas, it depends on what projects [they] could offer and also I am concerned about transporting issues getting from A to B. I would like a project that could offer qualification for a better future...".

3.6.3 Education for Children

When asked whether they considered it important for their children to attend school, two parents confirmed that it was important to receive education beyond primary school level. One said that it did not necessarily have to be at a high school and added that "... they need to do something more" and another emphasised the importance of "... further education for further needs...".

One parent stated that:

"...I think you should have education but it should not be forced and schools should be more aware of the Gypsy and Traveller culture".

One parent proudly stated that her son was studying for a diploma in sports at college, and that he had managed to secure a place for himself without anyone's help.

3.6.4 **Issues faced by Children**

In terms of problems or issues faced by children at school, one parent stated that these were

"...no more than any other issues as a typical student would have in school".

When talking about improvement measures, one parent stated that the training courses currently available were not relevant to the Gypsy and Traveller community. She added that no courses were offered that were culturally consistent with the Gypsy and Traveller way of life.

Two parents confirmed that they have contact with two Traveller Education Service officers, and one parent said that she had personal contact with school teachers. When asked what the Traveller Education Service could do to make conditions better for the Gypsy and Traveller communities, one parent responded as follows:

"...Obviously there should be more effective help. They think that Travellers are really thick. They think that helping us filling up a form that is the end of their duty, meanwhile the majority of us can perfectly read and write. They are trying to force us parents to send our children to high school. There should culturally consistent training courses available for young children...

"...I think that there are enough children in [the] Cardiff area to have a Travellers' only class...I think a lot more children would attend".

Another parent thought that "...More home education could help improve matters for Gypsy and Traveller children who do not attend school"

3.6.5 Hopes and Aspirations

When parents were asked about their hopes and aspirations for their children, the following responses were received:

"...I would like them to not be discriminated and not live in a racist society just like we did and our parents did. I would like the situation to change..."

"...it depends on what way you look at it. It is because some schools do not respect our culture..."

"...[it] would be easy if Travellers could get decent education, opportunities and jobs". As long as [they] are happy I do not mind ... as long as they do something..."

In terms of living conditions, one parent said that there was no quiet place for the children to retreat to in order to do their homework, and that it would be a good idea if such a provision could be made on site. Another added that the children had after school clubs - two hours a week and that there was a play area on site. She added however, that the refuse bins were not being emptied on a regular basis, and that there were issues with the drains with smells emanating therefrom. She said that this adversely affects the health of young children who then become asthmatic.

One parent said:

"...There should be more people involved on the sites. They should give Travellers better chances for the future. It would be also nice if the Government would involve Travellers in [to] the discussions".

3.7 Roverway Site Children and Young Persons

3.7.1 Reasons for not attending School

None of the six children currently goes to school.

When asked if they could read and write and use a computer, only two young persons responded in the affirmative. One said that she could not, and another said "...not really well."

One young child, when speaking about problems encountered in school and how that affected their home life and their relationship with their friends said that "...I thought that everybody was against me. I came home, went to my bedroom and stayed there on my own because I thought that everybody was against me...".

The reasons cited for not attending school are as follows:

"...I always got bullied and the teachers did not support me. I was known as "Gypsy "X" [first name of interviewee]. I got the blame for things in school I [haven't] even done. I was attending school regularly, but the school said that I was not in school, that was very concerning...People called me picky and all sort of things and then I got into fights".

"...In high school I got bullied because of my culture and the teachers did not take much interest in me. The teachers did not really do much about me being bullied..."

"...Because I was getting bullied everyday. I was called a picky, Gypsy, smelly. I am a Gypsy not an Irish Traveller. Picky is racist term used towards Irish Travellers. I was depressed about this everyday..."

"... Because I was getting bullied and the teachers never done anything about it; therefore I dropped out of school..."

"...Because I am a Gypsy, they used to bully me in school; the teachers did not listen to me, they thought I was a liar..."

"...My mom would not allow me to go there because nobody from the community went to school.

"...I did not believe in going to secondary school..."

Two young persons said that they were planning on finishing school, with one of them adding that "...I wanted to go all the way through to get a job". Art classes and sports respectively were quoted as favourite classes in school. One of these young persons confirmed that the decision not to go to school was their own and that nobody made them or influenced them to make this decision.

One 14 year old said that she liked going to school because:

"...They taught me how to read and write".

3,7,2 Relationship with Teachers

Three of the young persons interviewed said that their teachers made it difficult for them to attend school at times. Three young persons said that their teachers did not do anything to stop the bullying behaviour towards them.

One said that:

"They [the teachers] do not have any room for me. I had to keep changing schools..."

Another said that:

"...When children called me picky I got into fights and the teachers never listened to me. They did not listen to me because I was a Gypsy..."

One added:

"...There was a tension between Czech students and us, when I told the teachers, they did not do anything..."

Another said that:

"...I did not get called names by my teachers. However, other children did tease me and the teachers did not stop that..."

One young person said that:

"...There was one teacher who called me names. Also she hit my sister. She and I were the only gypsies in the class..."

And when asked about support received from teachers, she added that:

"...Only one teacher... I still remember her name, Mrs [Teacher's name]" listened to or made time for her".

Describing her relationship with her teachers, one young person said:

"...It was bad, they never had time for me. Also, they did not listen to me..." and another added that

"... Although the teachers did try to stop the bullying, ... it did not work, it was not effective..."

When asked if their teachers made any effort in trying to stop the bullying by other children, one young person said:

"...Unfortunately they did not. They always turned their faces the other way when they were supposed to stop the bullying which happened even in their presence. During my studies I did not have any other problems. I only had difficult times because of the attitude of the children and the teachers towards me. It was an awful time in my life...

"...I went to my bedroom to cry after school. I did not want to go to school anymore. My mom took me in my pyjamas and I got changed in school..."

3.7.3 Current Education/Training

One young person said that she had received assistance from a Traveller Education Service officer to get on to an ACT training course for hairdressing. She said that she had stopped attending the training course because the tutors did not treat her fairly. She added that:

"...When I was there, they wanted us to clean up. We were accused that we used swearing words and [they] gave us a warning but we did not [swear].

She said that she would now like to train for childcare and that a Traveller Education Service officer was going to help her secure a place for such training.

Another said that she whilst she was not currently doing anything, she was:

"...Going to start college with [name of Traveller Education Service officer]'s help, it will be a hair and beauty training"... I would like to get my GCSEs".

One young person said that:

"...I clean up for my mom most days and I go to town, looking for a job, and I don't get accepted. That really upsets me because the reason for that is that I am a Gypsy".

3.7.4 Hopes and Aspirations

When asked what they would like to do in the future, one young person said:

"...Hairdressing mostly, but whatever is available really. I am willing to take any paid employment."

One young person said that they would like to become a child minder, and added that

"...I would like to pass some tests; get a good job and be successful in life... In my opinion listening to children can improve the situation. If my teachers would have believed in me, I could have stayed in the school..."

Another young person added:

"...I would like to work in a school, providing relevant support for teachers and non-gypsy students on how to work effectively with gypsy and traveller students..."

One young person said that it was important to attend school:

"...to learn the basics such as how to read and write" adding that when she was at school, she had wanted to "to become a hairstylist",

and that:

"...I very much like to work in the school...with the school on how to [effectively] approach gypsy children and their families,...to provide quality education".

She said that if she had a choice, she "...would like to be a teacher. Training on Gypsy and Traveller Education would be great..." and in terms of improved facilities on Site that could help children focus on education, she said:

"...Play area for the children would be nice. A place where we can read and write would be great...such as a homework club. I do not understand why there is one in Shirenewton Site but there is no homework club in Roverway...it seems like that we are different but actually we are the same. It is also difficult to get to the other site, I cannot drive and I have two little children who I cannot leave at home. Therefore building and maintaining a homework club here, would be great... [I] did try to get a job. They told me because I cannot read and write, I could not get it. Also employers say that they do not trust gypsies who live on Roverway site... [I] would like to work in education. However I do not have a lot of opportunities, therefore if I could have a proper job in the future I would be grateful for that, even if it is hairdressing..."

In terms of available help, one young person said "...I don't know if there is any help out there, I don't know who I [should] contact. I don't have any contact with Traveller Education Service. Also, I don't know how to contact the

Traveller Education Service” and another added “...Traveller Education Service claims that they do visit the Roverway site, but it is not true”.

3.8 Roverway Parents/Adults

3.8.1 Three adults in their late 30s and 40s were interviewed. Between them, these adults have 19 children aged between six and 27 years. The children attended at various times, Greenway Primary and Moorland Primary Schools. The children of two adults currently attend Moorland Primary School.

3.8.1 Reasons for Children not attending School

When asked why their children were no longer at school despite being of compulsory school education age, the following responses were received:

“...I don’t believe in going to high school. I don’t want my children to pick up any bad habits from non-gypsy people. There are cultural differences”.

“...She was getting bullied and I don’t believe in going to school. I stopped them from going to school”.

“...My 14 year old daughter attended high school for about half a year, I wanted her to have a good education. The time she was there, she did not get any education that she needed. I was getting complaints of the teachers. We need the support for our children, because we, who live on Roverway Site do not get any support from local Traveller Education Service or anybody at the moment. We need the support for the children to attend school, even if it is only primary school. However I do want the children to attend high school as well...

“...[My three children] went high school for half a year but after they left. [X child] did not go to high school because we had too many problems with the high school. Because of racism and the abuse... the school said that they were in school when actually they were not in school. Also they never got fair treatments in the school”.

The point made by this parent was that school records indicated that the child was in school but the parent subsequently learnt the child had been absent from school and was seen walking around in the street. The child who was being bullied at school had managed to get out of the school during school hours but the school records indicated that she was in school. The parent felt that this raised child safety and child protection issues and believed that this was in direct contradiction to the parent's expectation that the child was in the safe care and control of the school.

Two of the adults interviewed had personal experience of attending school; one had attended high school two years. When parents were asked why they had not attended school or had stopped attending school, one said that their Parents in turn had made the decision to stop them from attending school and also because:

"... I don't believe in [it].

Two adults said that it was their decision, although one added:

"...Yes, I was bullied. That stopped me from attending school any longer...yes...we were bullied and called names"

When asked whether anybody made it difficult to attend school, one adult said:

"..Yes, very difficult. My family was very poor. The school [has] regularly checked our head looking for lice. We were a little bit dirty, therefore they gave us showers. The school never asked me whether I want to take a shower or not," adding that this was not challenged "...because I thought it was normal".

Two adults said that they could not read and write or use a computer, although one said that:

" ... I am starting to re-engage with my education.

Another adult said:

"...Thankfully I can read and write. Also, I can use a computer".

One adult said that they would have liked to receive some training in sports after they came out of school, and another said:

"...I don't know what course would I like for myself, but I do want my children to achieve some qualifications.

One adult said that about their children:

"... One of them would like to become a solicitor. They did not let him to go to secondary school".

When asked whether anybody made it difficult for their children to attend school, the following responses were received:

"...Yes, in a way that they got bullied. They were called names and they had fights in the school".

"...Yes. When they were getting bullied, the teachers did not listen."

When asked whether their children were happy attending school, one parent confirmed this.

3.8.2 The Importance of Education

When asked whether school education was important for their children, the following responses were received:

"...Yes, for a certain age".

"...Yes, because then they can get some kind of education".

"...I do think it is very important for the children to attend secondary school".

In order to improve school attendance, one parent said that:

"... bullying should be stopped"

and another said:

"...travellers should have their own classes in school"

3.8.3 Discrimination and Prejudice

When asked about discrimination and prejudice in their day-to-day life, one adult said that they had not experienced any whereas another confirmed that they had experienced both. Speaking about their children's experience, the following responses were received:

"...Sometimes they do [face discrimination and prejudice]...".

"...Yes. They only went to primary school but they were bullied there".

"...My [child] did face discrimination and prejudice in school. Something has to be done against these present issues. We tried to talk to the teachers but nothing seemed to be done..."

"...Because of racism and the abuse... the school said that they were in school when actually they were not in school. Also they never got fair treatments in the school".

3.9 Traveller Education Service

When talking about contact with the Traveller Education Service, two adults said that they had no contact, and one adult said:

"...[Name of Traveller Education Service staff member] wanted me to fill up a form to bring [child] out of school. I told [the TES staff member] that I wanted my child to have an education, not to be out of school. I wanted my [child] to get somewhere in life. It is very hard to get a job when you live on the site. At the end I was getting phone calls of the teachers saying that [child] was not in school. She was attending that day and I went in to the school to have a meeting with the head teacher and also [TES staff member] was present. They set up a plan for me to bring [child] home at lunch time, which I did. On [one] occasion I went to school to pick up [child]. From the reception I asked for her, when a secretary approached another student asking for [child]. He asked if she meant "Gypsy X" [child's name]. I did not even know what to say. She is a Gypsy, her name is ["XY"] [first and last name of child]. She [Child XY] should be not identified as "Gypsy X". This situation was very concerning. From that day, [my child] did not attend school. I thought that she did not get any education and the support she needed. I did not know who to approach for help, who to contact to. From that day until this day, nobody has contacted me about [my child] not attending school. There were no phone calls or anything about giving opportunity to [my child] to receive education.

"...[Staff member from] Traveller Education Service, approached me six month ago asking me if I want [my child] to attend a training course. I agreed for [my child] to attend a hair and beauty course. She attended for six months. I received a report that she was talking to a fellow student in her own language and the lady working along with [my child] in the training course accused them of swearing..."

When asked whether the parents had any contact with teachers in school, one responded in the negative and another said:

"...Yes. My daughter was not in school for two weeks, but the school kept contacting me and was giving her detention while she was not even there. None of the teachers [nor] the pupils [have] realised that she was not there. That was very concerning as I felt that the school has no interest in her".

3.10 Hopes and Aspirations

The following responses were received when parents were asked about their hopes and aspirations for their children:

"...I would like them to have proper jobs and the same respect in society as non-Gypsies have as well".

"...I hope they will be able to get a job".

"...I would have liked them to get their GCSEs and everything else, but because the school did not give the necessary support, I needed to take them out of the school".

One parent said that no training was offered to their children when they left school, and another said that:

"...My eldest [child] who is nearly 18, when he left school, he did not receive any information about available training and courses".

Some of the areas in which their children had expressed an interest and could benefit from were specialist or vocational training in landscape gardening, hairdressing and childcare.

In terms of living conditions, parents responded as follows:

"...There are [a] lot of rats, dust is everywhere that is why we have had chest. The site is smelly...".

"...Very poor... very smelly...very bad...When the drains get blocked it takes weeks for local authority to sort it out...".

"...There are health issues on the site. Children suffer with asthma, chest infection, bad skin conditions. Our living conditions on the site [are] very poor... especially during cold winter times...".

One parent said that these issues had been reported to the authorities but so far,

"...Nothing [had happened]... They keep on saying that they are going to move the site. They have been saying that for 15 years. Nothing happened yet..."

Two adults said that there was no playing area on site with one adding that

"...We live near by a busy main road [and despite the fact that this had been reported, no action has been taken] ...I would like things to get done on our site".

Parents also added that they would like an after-school club to be run for their children on the Site.

An elderly resident on the Roverway site was also interviewed and her contribution has been incorporated in this report to illustrate the resident's personal assessment of the level of progress if any made in terms of education for young Gypsy and Traveller children in the last 70 years.

The resident, a mother grandmother and great-grandmother said that she did not attend school as she and her family was travelling in wagons and she was not allowed to attend school. She said that the children attended school only from a short period of time. She said that she would have liked children to continue going to school but "...there was no learning there, therefore I took them out."

She said that she did get in touch with the school but was told that "...there was only one class for Gypsies only and they do not have time". Upon leaving school, her children went into scrap metal dealing. She said that none of her children have jobs and that they are unable to read and write, other than "...they can write their names down and that is it". She added that given the opportunity, her children would have wanted to get school education.

4. Views of the Professionals

This section sets out summaries of interviews with those professionals / stakeholders whose work has or is likely to have an impact on the provision of education to Gypsy and Traveller children and young people.

4.1 Primary School Level

JANE JENKINS

Head Teacher

Moorland Primary School

Splott

Cardiff

(In Jane's own words)

I am the Head Teacher at Moorland Primary School in Splott, and have been in post for some six years. My primary duty is to make sure that all the children in the school get the best educational provision that can be provide for them. We have some 425 children on our roll, with children starting at 3 years of age going up to 11 years. About 8% of the School's pupil population – 30 to 35 children are from the Gypsy and Traveller community who predominantly live at the Roverway Site. The School rarely attracts any children from the Shirenewton Site.

Relationship /Engagement with Gypsy and Traveller Parents

We have worked very hard to build positive relationships with families from the Roverway Site and I particularly enjoyed the daily contact with parents from the Roverway Site, when they come to drop off children in the mornings and then to pick them up in the evenings. I try to be outside the school every morning and then at the end of the day so that I can speak with parents. I'm always available if parents have got an issue, or want to speak to me about any matter.

Very regrettably, this daily contact has been lost since the introduction by Cardiff Council of a mini bus service to ensure safe carriage of the children from the Site to the school. The mini bus was introduced without consultation with the school, and whilst there are obvious benefits to the families, in the long term, the resultant lack of contact with the families will be very detrimental. I do have a very good relationship with the escort on the bus who is a very well respected parent from Roverway Site and she liaises with me on any problems or issues of concern.

We have been trying to encourage parents to drop in on a regular basis, but it does get more difficult as parents then have to make time to come in during the course of the day. We also hold class assemblies on a yearly basis and there is very good attendance from Gypsy and Traveller community. Parents always come in and enjoy supporting their children; overall, I think we do have positive relationships with the families but I just wish that we were able to meet more regularly. Also, even though the parents aren't coming into school on a daily basis, the majority of Gypsy and Traveller parents do attend parents evening which we were pleased about but the downside is that the parents evenings take place only once a term.

I am hopeful that once the Roverway Site is relocated and if there is then a safer walking route to school then the bus transport provision would be reviewed. I think, again, that would probably be the best situation all round and that we would maintain that contact with the parents because I think that's really important in terms of what we do with the children and the parents need to feel on board with that. There is not enough room on the bus for the parents to accompany the children on the bus, see the children off at school and then have the bus take them back home; in any event, that would then make two extra journeys a day.

We have children from many, many cultural backgrounds here. I think there are about 29 home languages spoken in the school. The Gypsy and Traveller community are very unique community but they are one of many minority ethnic communities within the school. In terms of dealing with problems or issues, I don't think I spend any more time with Gypsy and Traveller children than I do with any children from any other ethnic group or indeed with children from the settled community. Children respond very well to the support they have here. They know that the staff will listen to them if they have issues.

I try to be available at any time should a parent wish to see me. I try not to operate too much on an appointment system. If someone's got something they want to get off their chest then you need to see them. I do say that if they need to see the teacher, then they try and see them at the end of the day rather than the beginning as we're trying to get the class settled and school day started. And generally, parents do respect this. My deputy and I try to make ourselves available at the beginning of the day so that if a parent does have an issue, we encourage them to raise it with us; speak to us there and then rather than them going away and placing stuff on Facebook. Facebook presents a huge problem for us, with parents and children posting things. Sometimes, these posts involve the Gypsy and Traveller community. Parents have a different view of things. Sometimes, it can stem from parents making a comment about another child who they perceive as bullying their child. I have sometimes had to ask parents to remove comments about a child on a Facebook page failing which I would have not option but to contact the police. Parents tend to use the word "bullying" very liberally. Children get embroiled in an argument, and very soon, it becomes labelled as them being bullied. So I have to be careful about that and try to resolve matters before they the blow up into major issues. Every parent wants their child to be happy at school and

that is what we want as well, so I am very direct with them and just try and get things nipped in the bud if there is a problem.

Support for literacy is an issue for lots of our parents. Sometimes I am asked to fill in forms — passports applications which I am always happy to do. Sometimes they bring a letter in to read; school reports are an issue, so we always have an open afternoon where we hand out reports so that if any of the parents want any help with reading any of the reports, then teachers are present to help.

Issues that concern Parents

We receive a lot of visitors here. We try and raise aspirations for the children in terms of working in the community. We try to organise a lot of trips and bring visitors to the school to broaden their horizons and enable them to meet other people. I have some understanding of the Gypsy and Traveller culture and way of life, be this in relation to language, household duties, dating, marriage, or religion. Sex and relationship education curriculum is always an issue for the majority of the Gypsy and Traveller community. Parents choose to have their children withdrawn from that aspect of the curriculum, which does worry me to some extent. I think children need to be educated in this regard, but this is culturally a very sensitive area and we have to respect the wishes of those parents who wish to withdraw their children from those sessions.

Talking about reproduction and pregnancy is also an area that the parents do not want discussions on, which becomes quite tricky because reproduction is a compulsory part of the science national curriculum. I feel strongly that all young children should have sex and relationship education but we haven't found a solution to this issue yet, even though for the year 5 and 6 part of the sex education curriculum, we ensure that boys are taught by a male teacher and girls by a female teacher. Unfortunately the parents are still not happy with this and whilst I totally respect their views, I think we do need to prepare children to deal with these issues as they grow into teenagers and young adults

The children who attend from the Roverway Site do really well in the school. At age 11, they generally have really good reading and writing skills but then they do not continue with their schooling. I find that really sad and I have suggested to parents of children who have a particular academic ability that such children could go to high school and to university. If children miss those first few years of high school then they are just not going to get back into that system or it is going to be very hard for them to get back into the system. I always come up against '...We don't believe in high school'. I don't know quite where to go with it because even if there is a family who is very keen on getting their children into high school, the pressure from the rest of the

community is very extreme. I think that that is such a shame as I see such intelligence and talent there and it's not being nurtured. There are lots of courses for 14-15 year olds who go back into education and training, but by then, basic numeracy and literacy skills over some 3 years are missing. It's very hard then to recover on the missed years.

Attainment

I think the children themselves don't realise at age 11 that if they miss those crucial few early high school years, the career path that they can take will be very, very much restricted. They can of course sign up for the more practical courses like hair and beauty course at 14, as well as a mechanics course and building courses. However, children who are attaining level 5 for their coursework assessment at age 11 are children who will be capable of A*s at GCSE. I just feel that it is a real missed opportunity for the community as there are potential lawyers, teachers, doctors of the future and it would very powerful for the community to have a stronger voice.

Children progress from here to Willows High School. There is a higher rate of children living at the Shirenewton Site who attend Rumney High School. I have made quite strong representations to the parents over the years, encouraged them to allow their children to continue working on the skills they have. The children really enjoy coming to school, really get a buzz out of learning how to read and write. Many have parents who are not literate. So these children are the first generation in their family who are literate and their parents are thrilled to see their books; that they can write stories and do these things, but these children will not sustain these skills if they do not continue with school.

We have had a couple of students here from Roverway who are now studying for an NVQ in child care. They have come back at the age of 16 and 17. These young girls tell me that it has been really hard for them to return to education. They cope well with the practical side of learning, but they find the written side very challenging, as they have now been out of school for some six years. Both young girls say that if they could go back to being 11, then they would have gone on to high school but at the time that they dropped out, they were desperate to finish school. It was almost like a right of passage into their adulthood to finish school and to so become a bit of a young adult at the age of 11 or 12. I think these girls have realised that in reality, life for them is going to be very constrained on the Site, they clean, do household chores and by the time they are 16 they are starting to look for more. So now, they end up having to do a foundation course and this make things just a little bit more difficult for them.

Discipline

In terms of discipline, I find Gypsy and Traveller children very respectful on the whole. I think they are taught good values. I think that life on Site is much freer than life in school. There are fewer boundaries and restrictions; children become very independent and adapt really really well to the expectations in school. They do not have any issues with coping with different expectations. Religion is important to a lot of our Gypsy families. I am surprised that more young children do not attend a Catholic school not far from here but the majority of the children who come here from the Roverway Site do so because their parents came here so it's a sort of family connection.

I have been to the Roverway Site on quite a few occasions. I have taken children home when they have been unwell and attended on Site on other occasions. The families have always been welcoming; they have always invited me in. The Site seems very run down. I know that it is prone to flooding; the actual entrance to the site is really dangerous, being adjacent to a 40 mph speed limit. These conditions would not have been allowed near a housing estate. I do think that a relocation of the Site is long over due.

My knowledge of the Gypsy and Traveller community stems from working closely with the community. I want to get families on board, I want parents to feel comfortable within the school and this applies not only to Gypsy and Traveller families but also to all of our other families. Every year, upon the arrival of the Gypsy and Traveller month, I have made sure that the project workshops held within the school are accessed by Gypsy and Travellers children and non Gypsy and Travellers because I think that it is important that cultural understanding is shared. The children have always had an opportunity to perform and to show off what they have done and that has been invaluable. I think lots of schools don't have access to such workshops because they don't have Gypsy and Traveller children attending.

In terms of community perception of Gypsy and Travellers in general, there is a lot of racism. I think the Gypsy and Traveller community experiences a lot of difficulties. So it would be good if cultural awareness training were more broadly available, but it is regrettable that take up is limited to those schools with the Gypsy and Traveller children.

School Curriculum and Gypsy and Traveller Community

We always encourage children to share things from their own home background so we do try and recognise and celebrate everyone's life

experiences within our curriculum. The Gypsy and Traveller history month has provided us a great focus on an annual basis. It is something that the Gypsy and Traveller children feel really positive about and that celebrates their culture.

We teach through the national curriculum so that is all set out within the skills and range of things that we need to teach. But we choose the topics that we want to teach. Because the school is so culturally diverse, we are always looking at ways to make everyone feel included. For example, with religious education, we look at Prayer as we have children with many different faiths. We share experiences from every community; so our children feeling proud of their cultural background is a really key part to them feeling like a central part of the school.

The school is split into two ages, foundation phase is 3-7; then we have year three to six, that is the juniors who then leave us to go on to secondary school. Our Gypsy and Traveller children do not drop out in primary school, but all our children have dropped out of secondary school. The main reason is that parents feel very anxious that they won't be able to protect their children from dangers in high school. I think they have a very negative view as to what happens in high school. I think they are very frightened for example, about drug use and inappropriate sexual activity. This seems to outweigh any perceived benefits of carrying on in education. Drugs in school are not particularly a problem but there is a perception about this issue. Perhaps some work could be done to convince parents that drug taking is not acceptable in high school. Then there is the issue of lack of control. Your children live in your immediate vicinity and do not leave the area unless the parents take them some where, particularly as it is so dangerous for the children to get off Site. I think parents are concerned that the children will be out of their care and sight for many hours and what might become of them during that period. Children from the settled community certainly seem to have a lot more freedom to go out at an earlier age than those who live on the Roverway Site. They have a lot of freedom around the Site; they do not go off on their own into town and in any event are never un-accompanied.

Measures to encourage Children to remain in School

We do have quite good links with Willows High School where teachers come into our school and provide some drama lessons, music teaching, some Physical Education teaching to all our year 6 children so that our children have an opportunity to get to know some of their teachers beforehand and so that they can get a flavour of things to come. So every year we've had some more curriculum time from Willows High School and I think our year 6 pupils have really benefitted from that. We also take children from year 6, some from year 5 (from the ages of 9 through to 11) and those who live at the Roverway Site

to Willows High school. Thus, these children will have had many positive experiences through the music and drama curriculum in particular. It is a young age to make a decision, but then it is for the parents to make that decision for them. I think perhaps that parents feel that at 11 or 12 years, the children are making a transition from childhood to adulthood. So there is an element of "...oh they [the children] don't want to go". But the reason they don't want to go to school is because that is being instilled into them throughout the time they are in primary school. Also, there is the expectation that the boys will go out and help their dads in their work.

We don't really need any intervention measures to keep children in school. Children from Roverway have a very good attendance rate. Very few children from Roverway have poor attendance. We occasionally have families that go off travelling so they might be away for a few months and that does affect the overall attendance figures but for the majority of the children, their families are very well settled at Roverway and thus they attend school very regularly.

Special Education Needs - Wrongful Placement

I think wrongful placement of Gypsy and Traveller children in Special Schools can stem from behavioural issues. Children are put into a behavioural school because their behaviour in mainstream school cannot be dealt with. It needs to be a whole school response but some children find it very difficult to adapt to the expectations of home life to the expectations within school. We have done a lot of work and I think that the play based curriculum has really helped. We are not putting children into a formal learning environment too soon and this approach is applicable equally to all children.

For children who have not had the experience of sitting down and listening to stories or early writing experiences, the school is a completely alien environment. As a school we need to recognise when a child is not ready for those experiences and provide them with alternatives that will get them ready for that. I think the foundation phase has enabled us to do that. The Government's approach is that standards need to be raised and I would not dispute that at all, but we have to recognise this in the context of the child's life experiences. Unfortunately there is no national based line test at the present. We are not measuring the value added by the system; we are only measuring the point to which the children are not getting to, which I find really sad. I believe that there are a number of children who are misplaced in schools because the curriculum has not been right for them, and this is an issue for the school, not the families. Ultimately, it is the child that suffers from this.

If a child is placed in a school and the school is not coping with them, then, in Cardiff, we can call on the Behavioural Support Team and we could call on the Teulu team. There are a range of agencies that we can call upon. We also have

to put in place individual behavioural plans or learning plans, and if these do not work, then we can call on outside specialists. When a child has become permanently excluded, it becomes the Council's responsibility to put them in an alternative school. They may try an alternative mainstream school initially but if that didn't work out they would then look at a special school provision. The Welsh Government has a code of practice for the management for educational special needs and Cardiff Council has a 5 stage approach which we would work to. Stage one would be low level needs which would be managed in a normal classroom environment, leading through to stage five which is "very complex needs".

Pre-school Education

Pre-school education starts at the age of 3 years, but it is only part time at that stage. Many families find the part time nursery places very difficult to handle. If they are making their way from Roverway, then parents would have to bring children over to the school for about 2.5 hours and then return to collect them. This can prove to be very disruptive. Thus we often find that some children from Roverway wait until the age of 4 years to start in reception class when they can have a full time place.

This one year is very important as we find that the children who start in nursery are clearly ahead than those who don't attend pre school education. They miss out in a big way, especially those who come from families where literacy is not the norm. For such children, those early nursery experiences, songs and rhymes are very important, but then travel to and from school from Roverway presents a huge problem.

Marginalisation

I believe that Gypsy and Traveller families are marginalised by main stream society and this undoubtedly influences the perceptions of children at the school. Some specific cultural groups are marginalised. I think that there are some very prejudiced perceptions of different minority ethnic groups. I think a lot of our families experience a lot of very overt racism in the area. Mums will come to see me to tell me that they have had bricks thrown through their windows. I advise them to go to the police. Sometimes they think it is children from this school who are the perpetrators. I still urge them to report the matter to the police but then there is a fear of getting the police involved. There is a lot of commonly held resentment and stereotyping by members from the settled community. On a scale of 1 – 10, I would place this at 5.

I think sub consciously we are all prejudiced to a greater or lesser extent. We all have our own cultural background and expectations and I think programmes like the "Big Fat Gypsy Wedding" have really not helped. I would hope that none of the teachers share these attitudes. Certainly the relationships our staff have here with the children are very positive. They are very respectful of the children's culture but I think we constantly have to question our own perceptions and views. If you asked any parent of a child in this school if they felt respected and valued by the staff here, they would say "yes" and I would feel very confident that that would be the case. This would also be true for the Gypsy and Traveller parents.

Exclusions

We have only had 3 Gypsy and Traveller children temporarily excluded from our school over the last five years, that too, for only one or two days. None of these was a permanent exclusion. These temporary exclusions were prompted by physical violence towards another pupil. If a child has assaulted another child then you have to be seen to be dealing with that in a severe way because other parents need to feel that their child is safe in school. This applies equally to Gypsy and non Gypsy and Traveller children. We implement our behaviour policy fairly. If there is a fight, then I would not exclude any child. It is when a child has deliberately harmed someone else through physical assault and it is unprovoked, then that is not acceptable. I don't exclude lightly, but if a child assaults another child, I always try and see the reasons behind why a child is doing something and if a child lashes out, it is usually because they have some underlying emotional issues that need resolving. In any event, I don't think we should be excluding children up to 11, it's not the answer. If such an issue arises, I would normally phone the family and speak with one of the parents or carers. We would then put this in formally in writing and I would then inform the local authority. And of course, I would speak with both children first but I have never excluded for non-violent behaviour.

There is nothing I can do to prevent children from being temporarily withdrawn from school. When the children go away, some attend another school whilst they are away. This can be for any length of times ranging between 4 weeks, 6 weeks or 8 weeks. The longest period has been about 3 months.

Engagement with External Stakeholders

We try to get involved as much as we can. It is a really important aspect of the children's education. We have really strong links with Rubicon dance in Splott, the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, the Welsh National Opera and the

Food Cooperative in St. Saviour Church. We have people who come in and hold workshops with the children. I think people are increasingly realising the power of this sort of joined up thinking within communities. But then, the Roverway Site is very much on the fringes of the community, which in turn can make this sort of integration difficult.

We also work very closely with health professionals. We have a number of children in the school who have quite complex medical issues. Again some of the children on the Roverway Site are affected by these issues so we do try very hard to have a joined up approach, particularly if children have medical issues. The health partnership staff meet with the parents on a regular basis and if children are subject to Statements of Educational Needs, then we work quite closely with educational psychologists and specialist teachers to deal with any required specialist intervention. We are advised of anything we need to be doing to support the child to cope with matters in school. If the issues are quite complex, we might have a multi agency meeting, so we would have parents, health professionals and the school staff present at such meetings. Usually, statemented children would remain in school with one to one support from a teaching assistant. Sometimes, when the needs are really complex, the Local Education Authority advise that such children should attend a special school with specialist support for their needs. However, this cannot be forced upon the children and if a parent chooses to keep their child(ren) in mainstream school, then, we have to respect their wishes.

Additional Engagement Resources

We have a pupil counselling service in the school which was quite suspiciously regarded by the Gypsy and Traveller community and others when we first set it up. It was seen as meddling in peoples' private business in a lot of cases but in the five years that we have had the service, we have had a number of Gypsy and Traveller children who have accessed this counselling. I think they have really benefitted from this as have all of our children who have used that service. There is also a drop in self referral service so that if children are experiencing issues such as friendship issues around school, or there is something they are worried about out of school, then they can book an appointment to see our councillors. We have one councillor who deals with drop in sessions and she also supervises 6 other councillors who all work one day a week each. Thus we have all day cover for four days. This serves to support our children's emotional wellbeing.

During many of our assemblies, we use a values approach and we also adopt circle time social and personal education (PSE). Circle time is a discussion in the class based on what the children might be thinking about. There may be specific curriculum topics which will cover issues such as friendship, caring and bullying, but if there has been an issue within the class or within the school,

then staff can raise that through circle time and children can talk about it and express their feelings. We discuss wider philosophical issues with our children. They love it, they absolutely love it. They really think outside the box in such a creative way. I think what we have learnt over the years is that adults are sort of constrained but children have a very open mind.

Community Engagement

We work quite closely with Communities First. We worked with Save the Children last term when we were engaged in the FAST Programme - Families And Schools Together. This is an intensive eight week programme where families come in every week, teaching parents in play therapy techniques to support their children. It was funded through Save the Children. This was really successful but we did not manage to include any of the families from Roverway despite my efforts. We're going to run it again next Spring; a lot of the parents have been positive about it.

One of the biggest issues we face is lack of space. We have a lovely old library building just next to the school which has fallen into disrepair and someone has received lottery funding to develop it. I am hoping that from September onwards, there will be additional community space in that building that we shall be able to have free access to. We have also had additional funding this year to support children who are to receive free school meals - the Pupil Deprivation Grant. We have received had quite a large grant so we are looking at extending our family engagement work through that. But we need space to be able to do that.

We're hoping to set up some parent and toddler groups, initially with a view to getting parents through the door and then to try and gauge what support would be beneficial for them. This is because over the years we have tried a number of courses and training programmes, but the take up has been poor. I don't know whether it is because people generally are not interested or whether they feel anxious about how they would do on a course. We thought if we organised general coffee events which got people just used to coming into the school in the first instance, then things may develop gradually. If there were suitable accommodation at Roverway, then I would be happy to go there and meet with parents.

I believe that if we could get somebody from that community to help us engage with community members, then we might have more success with getting families in. I have in mind some community members that I hope to approach in this respect.

Benefit to the Community

I think the work that we do in the school does promote very positive relationships between the pupils within the settled community and those from Roverway and we hope that as those children turn into adults, then those positive relationships will continue.

The Gypsy and Traveller History Month and the work that we have done with that has engaged many of our settled community families with that event. This is something that such families would not have known anything about previously. Each year, we have had about a dozen families who have gone to St Davids Hall to celebrate the event because their children have been performing in it. So I think that has been very helpful in doing that. I think the perceptions in the community are very deeply rooted and I cannot with any confidence say that the work we have done in our school has in anyway broken those down. We are chipping away at it slowly, but from the children's perspective rather than the families's perspective. We communicate the benefits of our practice of working together, to help create this kind of cohesive approach through our website.

Budget

At present we do not have a designated budget for the work we do with Gypsy and Traveller children. So we rely on our main budget but two thirds of the salary of one of our teaching assistants is funded by the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Service. Hence, the school does have additional resources funded externally and sometimes we are given additional money to purchase materials to support our Gypsy and Traveller children.

Our school budget was not reduced last year because we had a very large amount funded through the Pupil Deprivation Grant but that was only doubled for one year. Next year it will be reduced by half again. So unless the rest of the budget is increased next year, by next April we will notice a significant reduction. The Pupil Deprivation Grant is based on the number of free school meals which is currently 58%. This is very, very high and because we are quite a big school, we have had quite a large sum of money through the Deprivation Grant. Other parts of the budget have been cut. It's very difficult as it feels as though you are constantly moving money around to provide the same service. If something does not happen to off set the reduction next April, then we shall have to lose some of our support services.

This will have a detrimental impact on the level of service that we shall be able to provide. We have a lot of children who have many complex needs. We use our budget to buy in additional support. We train a lot of teaching assistants in very specialist support programmes and when we screen all our children, we look at where the most needs are and put the support in place accordingly.

Policy Frameworks and Documents

We work within the parameters of the national curriculum, and then there are various policies and frameworks recommended by the Welsh Government, for example, the Literacy And Numeracy Framework. The emphasis is on childrens' wellbeing; this is very deeply embedded within the policy framework and we take that very seriously. Wellbeing is our starting point; getting that emotional wellbeing right is crucial. One of the biggest challenges that we face as a school is 40% mobility annually. We have some 150 children who come in and out of the school every year. Some come into the area and others move out of the area.

It is really difficult for us to track data; to have consistent groups. We set up the groups that require specific support in September, but then the make up of these groups change. Lots of children come to us who have been to six or seven different primary schools and there can be a lot of emotional issues around that. So getting the wellbeing right has got to be our starting point. There is a lot of temporary housing in this area, a lot of hostels and refuges so children might come in for 3 months and then go off again. There is also a lack of large family houses in the area, so some families may come to a temporary smaller house or flat and then be re- housed to the Llanrumney and St Mellons areas when bigger properties become available. This has a very disruptive impact on our work as it takes a while for children to settle down and for us to start to get a measure of them. So we find that we invest a lot of energy and emotion into this process. It's really difficult and it's not an issue that I feel is nationally acknowledged.

In addition, Cardiff Council is experiencing a shortage of school places. We have waiting lists for a number of years at our school. We also have children who are taxied in from Grangetown because there were no places in local schools. Then there are children in Splott who cannot get into our school because the children from Grangetown have taken those places. So these children are taxied to schools as far away as Llanedyrn.

Over the last year we have brought in quite a lot of additional music services. We have introduced African drumming and ukulele lessons. The Pupil Deprivation Grant has enabled us to make this provision. The foundation phase curriculum which was introduced a few years ago is applicable at nursery level and has worked its way through year 2; it is still relatively new and has

enabled us to have a much more practical approach to education. The emphasis is very much about learning through play and that has been really powerful.

I think for the Gypsy and Traveller community, this was a very, very important part of shift, in that when the children first came into school, they found that no one was forcing them to read. I think historically we have tried to push literary skills on to this community too soon and if you come from a home where no one reads, at first you need to just get used to coming to school and developing your oral language skills; reading can then follow on later. I think that the foundation phase curriculum has given us the flexibility to do this. I think all our children love this play based approach of learning up to age 7. Transitioning on to juniors, we then have confident learners who believe in their own skills. We can then really home in on giving that basic skills support. The children are at an age when it is important not to try to force them into things too soon. So I think that for this school and for that community in particular it has been a very, very powerful thing. We have really embraced this whole play based approach.

There are also very focused teaching elements that form part of everyday teaching when teachers conduct a focused teaching session for maybe 15-20 minutes for the 6 and 7 year olds; they might teach maths, then they might work with a group doing some follow up work, when the other 3 or 4 groups in the class would work independently. They may construct things or they may engage in role play activity in a shop — it could involve money; there would be learning elements to it but it would not be a formal sit down and filling in a work sheet scenario. Children have a lot more freedom to choose and to work in the style that suits them. This teaching concept, which is unique to Wales, has been very successful and I am really appreciative of the vision that the Welsh Government has had in introducing this curriculum. The key stage 2 scheme is being re written to try and reflect a little more of these experiential learning activities.

To fund this approach of learning through play, each school gets a grant every year. There is a much higher adult/child ratio for the foundation phase curriculum. It is supposed to be one adult to 1-8 children in nursery and reception and 1:15 in year 1 and year 2. We have always had a 1:10 ratio in reception as the funding was not enough for 1:8. These extra adults are invaluable in terms of support and the experiences that we can give to children. The average number of pupils is 30 in most classes. We have teaching assistants in most of our junior classes especially if the number of pupils is 30 or over.

Some of our staff have recently done some training called the "Family Learning Signature" which involves working with a family to identify what their strengths are and the areas in which they would like more support. It is early days yet but I am hoping we can explore with families to establish how to get them more involved in their children's education.

The Media

I believe programmes like "My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding" have had a very detrimental impact and have simply succeeded in reinforcing negative stereotypes. Interestingly, the children in the school from Roverway were quite thrilled with it and for a long time, the focus on weddings and bridesmaids was huge. They were topics for discussion in the playground and the children revelled in it, not quite understanding the negativity of the programme. The fact that the children's culture was splashed on national television was big buzz for them. For little girls, seeing these beautiful dresses gave them aspirations to own such dresses. I think a lot of work is necessary to change these aspirations. Children can still have a wedding and do all of these things after they have finished with their schooling and gone to college.

I think any documentaries that are made need to be more measured, more responsibly produced. Every stereotype that people have held of the Gypsy and Traveller community was reinforced loud and clear in that programme. That is a real shame. We have a theatre production, Crystals Vardo coming to our school. It is funded through the Travellers Education Service. I am really excited about this as this is the first time that we have had a theatre piece coming to the school from this community. It will be interesting to see someone from the Gypsy and Traveller community and how they portray the community in a positive light. There is a lot that could be done through the national media by working with people within the community who have a more broad life experience like for example, Isaac Blake, who has obviously got that pride in his cultural heritage and also has an understanding of the importance of education in order to give the community a voice.

Aims and Objectives

I would like to be able to ensure that we help every child to reach their potential really. This is much more straight forward for some children than it is for others. It is about every child achieving success. I would like to know the reasons behind why children are not progressing on to high school. Times are changing and being part of changing times does not necessarily mean losing your cultural heritage. I think the children are really missing out from not going to school from age 11 onwards. In my opinion, the fact that the authorities do not pursue this non-attendance in high school is a reflection of the regard in which the community is held or valued.

MORELAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

DATA

i. Number of Gypsy and Traveller children roll:

Dec 13	24 pupils	overall attendance 83.74%
Dec 12	27 pupils	overall attendance 87.16%
Dec 11	22 pupils	overall attendance 83.28%
Dec 10	20 pupils	overall attendance 80.2%

The data is significantly affected by a very small number of the GT pupils travelling but this brings the average down considerably in such a small group. The individual attendance range is 49% to 100%.

ii. Exclusions:

- a. Number of children excluded from school over the last five years: 3
- b. Exclusions prompted by: the Head or Deputy.
- c. Reasons for exclusion: Physical violence towards other pupils.
- d. Percentage of temporary exclusions that become permanent: None
- e. Comparison of temporary exclusions with children from the mainstream Community: Generally quite favourably.

iii. Withdrawals:

- a. Number of voluntary withdrawals of children from school: None

4.2 Welsh Government

4.2.1 JOHN DAVIES

Welsh Government Policy and Education Gypsy and Traveller Legislation and Consultation Manager (In post since September 2012)

John is on secondment from leading the Travelling Ahead Project at the Save the Children and he focuses on the rights of Gypsy and Traveller children. He has worked all over Wales, and has previously worked as a play worker with Cardiff Council, including at Splott Play Centre where he had extensive engagement with Gypsy and Traveller Children from the Roverway Site.

Whilst the responsibility for education within the Welsh Government rests with the Department for Education and Skills, John has a cross cutting role and works with the Policy Manager for Minority Ethnic Achievement in Education and other policy leads. His role is to provide guidance on any matter that is likely to affect Gypsy and Traveller learners/children and to ensure that any relevant policy that is developed takes account of specific circumstances of those children, that such policy does not disadvantage those children and ensures that their culture is accepted and is planned for. This may involve different consultation techniques and pointing policy managers in the direction of relevant research, depending upon the specifics of any issue. Whilst admitting that he is not an expert in the area of education, John has the expertise in terms of undertaking consultation, and advising on the impact of potential legislation in terms of whether it is likely to conflict with other legislation or whether it would work well.

John is currently the lead on the Gypsy and Traveller aspect relating to the Housing Bill – specifically Part III of the Housing Bill which places a duty on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers. He was responsible for implementing the Mobile Homes Act and has a role in ensuring that any legislation that the Welsh government is working on does not disadvantage the Gypsy and Traveller community, which he does by making sure the legislation takes into account of all or any specific circumstances that may arise because of the cultural needs of the community. John led on the consultation, the process through the National Assembly and then the implementation of the Mobile Homes and the Housing Bill. With regard to legislation like the Control of Horses Act, he adopts more of an advisory role. Thus, John and his team play a lead role in housing and accommodation issues; the inclusion of the Gypsy and Traveller community and have a watching brief across all legislation

and guidance that is developed to try and mitigate or prevent any indirect impact on Gypsies and Travellers.

John is also responsible for the "Travelling to a Better Future" Framework, which is the Welsh Government's underpinning document for the Gypsy and Traveller community. The Framework for Action, which is based on the European Union National Roma Integration Strategy, outlines 17 objectives that the Welsh Government hopes to achieve, and in essence encompasses the Government's vision of its commitments towards the Gypsy and Traveller community for the duration of its current Assembly Term. These objectives range from education to accommodation, health and planning. John convenes an internal policy network on a bi-annual basis when all responsible policy teams meet to make and discuss progress within these objectives.

The Minority Ethnic Achievement in Education team have a range of objectives that are contained in the "Travelling to a Better Future" delivery plan which the team is committed to achieving. John's team then ensures that the Minority Ethnic Achievement in Education team works towards and achieves these objectives, thus ensuring some degree of accountability. Some of the work of the Minority Ethnic Achievement in Education team is set out in the delivery plan of the "Travelling to a Better Future" Framework, originally produced in September 2011 and updated in November 2013. The update highlights all achievements to date and identifies those objectives that remain outstanding with the aim of ensuring that expected outcomes are achieved by the end of the current Assembly term in or about May 2016.

All relevant Welsh Government policies centre on the idea that Gypsies and Travellers may have a slightly different culture, may have a slightly different way of living, but that ultimately they should all be able to benefit from equal opportunities and John believes that this is reflected in these policies. He adds that the purpose of "Travelling to a Better Future" is not to present a positive image of the Gypsy and Traveller people; instead it promotes fair treatment of Gypsies and Travellers. Drawing a distinction between what is fair and positive, he states that the Welsh Government is trying to promote the principle that Gypsy and Travellers are people like anyone else, and that some policies or processes may need to be adapted to ensure that the community can access services equally.

John and his team work on matters when there is a particular cultural reason for policy to be different. For example, around the accommodation issues, John and his team are trying to achieve a level playing field for Gypsies and Travellers in terms of access to culturally-appropriate accommodation, which often includes mobile homes accommodation. John says that he and his team try to create a slightly different policy, the long-term aim of which is to ensure that the Gypsy and Traveller community can have an equal opportunity to access services and participate in Welsh society. John states that this process does not necessarily favour the Gypsy and Traveller community but in effect, it accommodates their needs. He says:

“...it is not about giving [them] an advantage, it’s about doing things in a slightly different way...”

Policy Frameworks and Documents

John points to a very wide suite of policy and legislation that governs education provision relating to Gypsy and Traveller children and young people, quoting the Welsh Government’s “Travelling to a Better Future” as a starting point which he says is in itself is based on a whole raft of international frameworks such as the EU National Roma Integration Strategy, all of the United Nations committee recommendations for the combating of racial discrimination, the rights of children, the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child, the United Nations Convention on the elimination of racial discrimination and some very specific key legal judgements, for example, Chapman - V- The United Kingdom, 2001, a decision of the European Court of Human Rights which provided that local authorities and the UK Government is under a duty to facilitate the Gypsy way of life.

In addition, the Welsh Government has produced the “Moving Forward - Gypsy Traveller Education’ guidance circular, which specifically deals with supporting Gypsy and Traveller learners. The Welsh Government’s policy for minority ethnic achievement relates to all children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds including Gypsies and Travellers. John believes that this is the correct approach, as policies create a framework which is accessible to all, thus the aim should be to develop a policy that is accessible to all communities including the Gypsy and Traveller community.

John believes that it would be an advantage if officers responsible for drafting policy framework documents for education to have some knowledge of the Gypsy and Traveller community, specifically in relation to children as this is very relevant in terms of drafting guidance such as the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework launched in October 2013. He notes that education framework documents that are produced relate to all children of Wales (currently circa one million children) of which 2,500 are Gypsy and Traveller children. Hence, apportioning time to ensure that there is interaction with Gypsy and Traveller children is not an easy task; however, he agrees that if a team were to be aware that their policy is likely to have a specific impact upon Gypsy and Traveller children, then it is important to fully comprehend the likely impact before the production of legislation or guidance.

Impact of Policies

John notes a direct and positive impact of the "Travelling to a Better Future" framework in terms accommodation, with new sites being built across Wales. In addition, the Mobiles Homes Act creates security of tenure for residents on local authority owned Gypsy and Traveller sites whereas previously, residents at such sites did not have security of tenure. Furthermore, all tenants will be entitled to formal pitch agreements that will bring them in line with other tenancies.

John states that the EU recommendation relating to an integrated approach to education is a non-binding recommendation which encompasses a list of optional ideas of how the Roma inclusion can be improved in terms of education. However, he points out that because of different issues experienced in each of the 28 of Member States, the recommendation has to operate in a very non-prescriptive manner. Nonetheless, he states that the Welsh Government has undertaken substantial work around engagement, for example the "Flying Start", "Families First", and "Communities First" initiatives and adds, that many Gypsy and Traveller communities benefit from funding in areas ranging from language to play sessions.

John notes the enormous impact of the Scrap Metal legislation on the Gypsy and Traveller community, a large number of whom engage in scrap metal work. Whilst he states that the UK Government's stated intention behind the legislation was not to create a detrimental impact upon the Gypsy and Traveller community but purely to prevent scrap metal theft, he accepts that the legislation has had a disproportionate impact on the community. He adds that his role in this regard was limited because this legislation impinged upon a non- devolved area of responsibility, but he adds that he and his team are monitoring the issue by engaging with the Welsh Government Association of Local Authorities to better understand the impact.

The Gypsy and Traveller Community

John has a very good knowledge of the Gypsy and Traveller community in terms of language, culture, attitude towards marriage and dating, the split between household duties, family life, dietary requirements and internal and external community interaction and the like. John says that the Roverway and Shirenewton Sites as well as several private sites are all spatially segregated from the Tremorfa and Splott areas by busy roads between Cardiff and Newport, which may lend itself to wider segregation. John recognises that there has been tension in terms of the wider community in the area of Cardiff where the Gypsy and Traveller sites are located, as some see it as the "Gypsy" area of Cardiff. Nevertheless, John believes that there is a good degree of

integration in schools, for example at Moorland School in Splott and at Greenway School in Rumney.

He says that he had met many members of the settled community who have grown up with members from both the Roverway and Shirenewton Sites, and notes that they have a better relationship with the Gypsy and Traveller community than the settled community in areas where there is less engagement. He states that the same is true of members of the settled community that interact directly with the Gypsy and Traveller community as they appear to have a better relationship when compared with the settled community in parts of Cardiff geographically removed from Gypsy Sites. John believes that this is due to preconceived notions, societal prejudices and probably more down to ignorance and lack of engagement and interaction than because of "pure racism", as the former can allow prejudices to grow. Nevertheless, John says that many people do not realise that they are being racist when their behaviour is dictated by their impression of absorbed stereotypes.

In terms of attainment levels in school, John recognises that there is an issue around Gypsy and Traveller children in a formal school setting, especially at secondary school level. He states that whilst the problem is not so significant at primary school level, but at the transition stage from primary to secondary school when there is a big drop-off which continues throughout secondary school education. He believes that part of the reason for that is that the Gypsy and Traveller community engage in traditional trades in respect of which there perhaps is no demand for a formal qualification in history or French. He suggests that there may be cause to consider the relevance of the basic five GCSE qualifications and that there may yet be another meter to judge attainment by. He acknowledges that there are other very useful different kinds of vocational learning but notes that there has been a lot of resistance by some members of the Gypsy and Traveller community to secondary education. He adds however, that with the increased regulatory requirements relating to trade licenses and more inclusive schools, the Gypsy and Traveller community appear to be engaging more in education.

On the issues of discipline, John says that during his various visits to both the Roverway and Shirenewton Sites, he has noticed the deference with which the younger community members have behaved towards the older, specifically female members of the community. Whilst he accepts that there is a perception amongst the settled community that Gypsy Sites are somehow "dangerous or exotic" in some ways, his personal experience has been nothing short of being very positive. He says that during the various consultations that he has undertaken with a view to engaging with the community, he has found the community to have been always "welcoming", save for an initial period of suspicion which he believes would have been inevitable, given the history of poor consultation with the community. He says that community members are now very happy to talk to him and disclose their problems and issues that affect them. He says that he has found all community members to be very respectful towards him.

Engagement

John emphasises the importance of engagement, adding that the less engagement there is, the more caricature-like one's perception of the community is likely to be. He believes that hands on experience in working with and engaging with Gypsy and Traveller children is essential and his work as a play worker for Cardiff Council and then at Save the Children when he received training in children's rights and engagement, coupled with the work he has been doing in the Travelling Ahead project has been invaluable. He accepts that whilst literacy and attendance issues at school are intertwined, he states that:

"...engaging with Gypsy and Traveller children is that much different from engaging with other children..."

and notes that Save the Children has recently established the National Youth Forum for Gypsy and Traveller children - the only national youth forum of its kind in the country.

With reference to education and attendance issues at secondary school, John believes that the answer is to engage with the children, learn more about the lived experience of those children and find out the reason behind the poor attendance rates. He adds that:

"...the children are the experts, the more time that you can spend with them the better".

Emphasising the importance of some direct experience, John says that:

"... there is no point in reading in books – because what some academic identifies as the issue - as soon as the book is in print, [it] is out of date especially when we are talking about lived experiences, especially on interrelated issues".

John feels that direct experience would be useful to colleagues across Welsh Government whose policy areas impact upon the Gypsy and Traveller communities.

When undertaking consultations, John's first port of call is the relevant local authority attached to the relevant Gypsy and Traveller Site. He gives the local authority the option to accompany him to the Site and this is followed up

either by letters advising residents of his pending visit which he or the local authority would send to Site residents or word of his proposed visit giving details of date and time is spread. John then uses available community buildings on site for meetings and in the absence of suitable meeting rooms, he says:

“...I will knock on the doors and try and communicate with them... and generally for those who are on the site when I arrive, [they] are very happy to meet with me...the general problem that I have is trying to convince men from the community to meet with me [rather than going to their work]”.

He says that he understands this, given current economic pressures, but says that it would be good to have more male engagement in certain aspects of the consultations. John adds that because the Welsh Government's current guidance suggests that consultations should take place in the early evening as men are at work during the day, evenings are equally bad timing as irrespective of what background one comes from, it is a time when families are busy with preparing for dinner and children's bedtime. He adds that it has not been possible to establish a good time for meetings and he has had little success in holding evening consultations so far. He feels that time is ripe to revisit this consultation guidance; focus on a system that illustrates to the Gypsy and Traveller community that it would be in their interest to participate in the consultation process and work around their availability by using an appointment systems for meetings. He adds that one of the "Travelling to a Better Future" objectives is to develop consultation guidelines, but notes this may not take place until the end of the current Assembly term.

Community Cohesion

The key documents that promote community cohesion are cited by John as the "Travelling to a Better Future" which focuses entirely upon Gypsy and Travellers; and the Community Cohesion Strategy for all communities in Wales and the Hate Crime Framework which was launched on the 12th of May 2014, both of which affect the Gypsy and Traveller community. John believes that "Travelling to a Better Future" has proved to have a positive impact on issues like accommodation but notes with regret that the process of implementing strategies can take a long time. He points out that the Welsh Government has provided capital funding for a new site for the first time since 1997 – the Kings Meadows [Gypsy and Traveller] Site which was opened in April 2014.

The Community Cohesion Strategy was first implemented some two years ago and until recently funded Community Cohesion Officers. Recent evaluation of these officers has meant that with effect from 1st April 2014, funding is being provided for eight Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators who will have a

role of regional significance with the key objective of ensuring engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller community in processes such as accommodation assessments and Local Development Plans. These Regional Coordinators are also responsible for identifying the need for and ensuring training in cultural awareness within local authorities. These roles are newly created and whilst some officers already have the requisite training, there are others who will need training in cultural awareness. These Regional Coordinators work across Wales and provide services to all local authorities (save for Ceredigion) with some Coordinators having responsibility for two or more local authorities.

Compulsory Education and Early School Leaving

John refers to elective home education and says that local authority Traveller Education Services have indicated that this seems to be on the rise, which is an issue of concern across Wales. Certainly from the Welsh Government's point of view, it is paramount that Gypsy and Traveller children maintain their attendance in mainstream schools, but John says that there is a need to establish and understand the reasons behind this increase.

John understands from the various Traveller Education Services across Wales that it is the parents who initiate these withdrawals, often with the support of their children. He believes that these withdrawals sit uncomfortably with Traveller Education Services, as in many cases, the Traveller Education Service would rather not have children withdrawn but they are able to do little to counteract this purely because home education is not against the law. Hence, Traveller Education Services recognise that parents are completely within their rights to home educating their children and as professionals, they will support this wish at the behest of parents.

On measures that have been put in place to help Gypsy and Traveller to complete compulsory education, John makes reference to the specific grants for the Education of Gypsy and Traveller Children which has led to a large increase in the number of Gypsies and Traveller children attending school. John states that according to Welsh Government grant figures, the number of Gypsy and Traveller children in education in Wales is the highest that it has ever been. He adds that although there is no strategy relating to early school leaving, the Welsh Government is aware that this is an issue for some Gypsy and Traveller young people and notes that a research project is currently underway exploring means of building better engagement with Gypsy and Traveller families to maximise school attendance.

Attainment

John states that there has been a marked increase (circa 450) in numbers of Gypsy and Traveller children over the last year which he believes is attributable to the fairly big influx in Newport and Cardiff of migrant Roma from various countries of origin. John notes that there is a sustained dropout rate amongst young people particularly around the transition between primary and secondary school and then throughout secondary school, with Gypsy and Traveller children of different ages dropping out. He thinks the causes for this could be varied, for example, economic, cultural or in terms of gender norms.

Elaborating further on the causes for school drop out rates, John says that the reasons may well be much wider than purely economic and cultural; he accepts that discrimination may discourage a minority from attending although he is not aware of any endemic discrimination that has forced Gypsy and Traveller children to leave school. He says that this may be down to lack of trust between the school and the parents or it may be due to discipline issues in instances where the school has sent written communication to the parents, but because of literacy issues this communication has remained unread, and as a result, the children have been removed from the roll.

John states that the specific Welsh Government Education Grant is unique with no comparable grant in England. This Education Grant involves the concept of weighting in favour of children who are in secondary education; thus local authorities will receive more funding for pupils in secondary education. This is in recognition of the fact that it is much easier to get Gypsy and Traveller children to attend and complete primary school, but there is a significant dropout at secondary school level. Thus, certain local authorities have the incentive to ensure that Gypsy and Traveller children remain in secondary school and this is accompanied by the resultant need to try and work collaboratively with parents so as to ensure that their children continue to attend school.

The "14 to 19 Learning Pathways" is another measure that provides more vocational education that is available to children regardless of their background. This programme provides an opportunity to keep children who have a more vocational way of learning in education which John believes could be very useful for Gypsy and Traveller children who are certainly capable of following this path. He adds that some of the specific Education Grant money is used to fund homework clubs and notes that such provision is made on the Shirenewton Site.

Marginalisation

John's past and current experience leads him to believe that there is a marginalisation of Gypsies and Travellers in general. John believes that there is no evidence to suggest that this is as a result of attitudes of teachers or other children but states that further research is necessary to discount any causal link. However, John recognises that if one takes into account school dropout rates and issues around marginalisation, then any causal link between teacher attitudes in secondary school provision or other children needs to be investigated.

In terms of measures taken to address discrimination in access to education and the discriminatory treatment of Gypsy and Traveller pupils in school, John states that all schools are under a duty to comply with the equalities legislation. In addition, he notes that the "Travelling' attendance Code may be used for the more transient Gypsy and Traveller community which provides schools with an opportunity to disaggregate data. Thus, whereas previously there may have been a disincentive for schools to register Gypsy and Traveller children, the 'Travelling' Code removes this disincentive and there is less reason for schools to accept short term school admissions. Estyn reports are also another useful accountability mechanism which enable identification of discriminatory practices and recommend solutions that have the potential of counteracting these practices. John also refers to the anti-bullying guidance that schools have adopted, which to some extent helps eradicate the problem.

Education and Accommodation

John says that the focus on accommodation is relevant when discussing education because it is the gateway, explaining that if one does not have a suitable place to live then, by extension, one will very much struggle to access the correct level of education, health, social security and other necessary and related services. John recognises the shortage of caravan sites, and based on recent census data, he notes that only about one quarter of Gypsies live on caravan sites. John believes that attendance in secondary schools, formal attainment and qualifications, issues around stereotypes that are often perpetuated by the media and issues around discrimination exist and he believes that these are all interlinked. John states that it is difficult to establish a causal link but that the lack of culturally- appropriate accommodation across Wales is likely to be a significant factor.

Making specific reference to the Roverway Site, John says that the site is not sustainable in its current form and therefore it has not been eligible for government funding. He says that it is now down to Cardiff Council to make

the final decision in providing an alternative site, as without suitable accommodation, one can only achieve partial progress on other elements.

External Stakeholders

In terms of the level of engagement with outside agencies / stakeholders/ community groups or indeed access to other resources to effectively carry out statutory duties and obligations relating to young Gypsy and Traveller children, John states that the Welsh Government engages with the Romani Cultural and Arts Company, the Cardiff Gypsy and Traveller Project, Save the Children, the Unity Project and other equality groups that focus on Gypsy and Traveller support, for example, Tai Pawb and the Community Law Partnership.

John says that this engagement is linked to working on real issues, surveys, public consultation and guidance on legislation and since he has been on board, he has reached out and undertaken substantial consultation. He adds that he has visited every local authority Gypsy and Traveller Site in Wales and endeavours to attend regional events involving these organisations. John and his team also attend regular meetings such as the Cross-Party Group on Gypsy and Travellers which is chaired by Julie Morgan, AM. John also highlights the bi-annual Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Forum that is convened by his team and comprises local authorities and many of the aforementioned organisations with a view to sharing good practice. At the last meeting, John says that there was discussion on specific data collection on caravan counts with many community organisations expressing their dissatisfaction with its inadequacy.

The caravan count is an account of all known Gypsy and Traveller caravans in Wales; these will include those on local authority sites, private sites, and unauthorised sites so as to help ensure maximum engagement. The Welsh Government has taken on board these concerns and is currently developing a revised Caravan Count system to support local and national policymaking. He points out that the Welsh Government has adopted a range of methods in engaging with external stakeholders and the Accommodation Forum is used as an opportunity to discuss and establish options to bring about change with the consensus of these organisations.

In terms of community involvement when working with external stakeholders, John says that the Welsh Government puts a lot of stock in consultation processes and that is the key process in which Gypsy and Traveller communities can become involved. He adds that at present there is not a specific panel of Gypsy and Travellers to consult with, but then he adds that "...we have never been able to come up with a way of making a representative panel".

He adds that the Welsh Government is looking to work with the National Youth Forum that is being set up so that key decision makers can meet with Gypsy and Traveller young people across Wales to hear their views. The work of the Youth Forums will be supported and training resources will be available for professionals. John states that he will be consulting with the Forum on future issues and believes that this will be the closest kind of representative panel with Gypsy and Traveller membership, albeit limited to engagement with children. He adds that a panel comprising adult Gypsy and Traveller community members remains to be developed. He says that:

“...I am not sure that that is something that we can develop - it’s something that I would feel uncomfortable to push [together], it is something that I think needs to come from the community members themselves...]....if there was a group that was set up of two or three Gypsy and Traveller community members who have their own particular points of view then I’m sure that we would involve in consultations [but] I wouldn’t consider them to be representative. There would need to be some kind of structure, a hierarchy and accountability to other Gypsies and Travellers...”

and he states that he would like very much to see this happen across Wales. John states that setting up such a panel would be of great benefit to the Gypsy and Traveller community in Cardiff, particularly for the purposes of the Mobile Homes Act, as there is a legal duty for local authorities to formally consult with properly constituted residents associations on any relevant management issues on sites.

Measuring Outcomes

In terms of monitoring outcomes relating to formal education attainment of Gypsy and Traveller children and the services provided by multiple agencies, for example local, authorities and the Third Sector, John points to the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) that registers Gypsy and Traveller children in schools and from this data, the Welsh Government can track attainment. John accepts that it is more difficult to monitor the work of local authorities and the Third Sector. Whilst there is an absence of a reporting framework or mechanism, the Welsh Government endeavours to keep as close an eye as possible. He adds, however, that he often asks contacts in local authorities to share good practice and this often takes place at the Accommodation Forum.

Speaking about the benefits of the work that the Welsh Government does with the Gypsy and Travellers community and how these are measured, John refers to “Rights of Children and Young Persons Measure” which came into force on the 1st of May 2014. The impact of the legislation is that with effect from the

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1st of May, Welsh Ministers have been under a duty to take account of the rights of children and young people when exercising any function. Hence, it is important for the Government to undertake consultations in order to assess the impact of any legislation on children and young people. He adds that the benefits of this consultation will result in the development of policy or intervention measures that will address the needs of everybody in the community. He added the Government's aim is to ensure that any interventions that are made are sustainable in the long term and valued.

Media and Publicity

John states that the media does not have any direct impact on how Welsh Government policy is developed and policy development is not dictated by the media as Welsh Government policies are heavily evidence-based. Nevertheless, John believes that the media has succeeded in creating stereotypes or perpetuating stereotypes which can either influence public perception or open engagement at a local level. He accepts that negative reporting can have a negative impact on the Government's end goal but also states that certain elements in the media have been very good in terms of reporting, for example the Travellers' Times which projects a Gypsy and Traveller perspective on relevant news.

John says that he and his team now make increasing use of media such as Travellers' Times or [World's Fair] for Travellers and Show people when publicising consultations to secure increased participation of community members. He notes that stories, especially those relating to unauthorised encampments or opposition to Gypsy and Traveller sites being located in certain areas can result in adverse publicity but at the same time, he appreciates that the media is able to report local concerns. John said that he could not help but note the negative impact of "My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding" on the young Gypsy and Traveller children that he previously worked with. Nevertheless, John says that regulation of the press is a non-devolved matter.

John adds that the Welsh Government publishes all work that it undertakes in relation to Gypsies and Travellers and that nothing is kept undisclosed, adding that the usual media channels and social media are used for publication purposes and media enquiries are responded to. He says that the Government is proud of the work that has been done in terms of trying to improve things but recognises that:

it is "...very difficult to actually get positive media stories..."

He points out that the issue is about working with the media and that it would be useful to have a representative body of Gypsy and Travellers who could take a lead in trying to create positive media stories, as does the Travellers' Times.

As far as he and his team is concerned, John says that they just keep re-enforcing the fact that the Gypsy and Traveller community should have equal opportunities, like all other people. The answer, he says, lies in partnership working between government and community members.

When discussing successes that local authorities like Pembrokeshire or Torfaen have achieved in terms of attainment, John accepts that these local authorities appear to have done very well in supporting pupils in their strive to achieve. In reference to the EU Roma recommendation to remove forced segregation in education, John notes that parents and children elect for the set-up of discrete education provision for Gypsy and Traveller communities and teachers continue to encourage participation in mainstream education. These arrangements have ensured that children stay in education when their parents may have otherwise withdrawn them due to their opposition to mainstream schools. However, from the mainstream equality point of view, he states that the Welsh Government would ideally like to see all children in mainstream education. He adds that Estyn would agree with this, which then returns the focus on understanding the root cause(s) of why, if at all, attainment levels are better in certain local authorities. He says that the Welsh Government has research underway in understanding these root causes, although he believes that full mainstream education is possibly restricted primarily due to parental concerns and attitudes which have historically prevented attendance.

Budget and Financial Implications

John states that the measures aimed at encouraging school attendance are funded by education grants, and in terms of Roma children, by the Multi-Ethnic Achievement Grant. John says that the impact of the Pupil Deprivation Grants which have been administered over the last two years is in the process of being reviewed.

John's team has a specific capital budget which is ring fenced for the refurbishment and building of new sites as well as separate budgets for consultations and legislation development. "The Travelling to a Better Future" update outlines how the baseline budget has been reduced in recent years and has remained unchanged for the last two financial years. He advises that the baseline budget has had a reduction from its previous high because it had been under spent as it emerged that local authorities were not applying for it.

John says that there was a top up of £1.75 million recently to help with the development of the Brecon Site which currently has 10 pitches. He states that ground works are in place for a further four pitches that will at some time in the future, accommodate families of those already resident on the Site.

Aims and Objectives

John states that the overall goal for the Government is to ensure that the Gypsy and Traveller community have their culture respected and engage effectively and have equal opportunities in Welsh Society. He adds that "Travelling to a Better Future" is the Government's way of trying to work towards that goal. Whilst John accepts that a lot of work remains to be done, there has been real progress towards achieving this objective.

In order to achieve aims and objectives, John says that a change of attitude is required from many people across society, adding that this is not the sole responsibility of the Welsh government or local authorities. He adds that businesses, the public at large, the media and indeed the Gypsy and Traveller community themselves have an essential role to play in achieving this objective. He accepts that this is not something that can be achieved overnight but that the Welsh Government will begin by ensuring that the Equalities legislation is upheld and ensure that legislation that creates a platform for others to start to change their attitudes and their practices is brought in. He says that legislation must be very much evidence-based, and notes that the issue is not so much about money or other resources but about political commitment and about trying to change ingrained stereotypes.

4.2.2 THERESA DAVIES

Policy Manager

The Minority Ethnic Achievement in Education Welsh Government

The Minority Ethnic Achievement in Education is headed by Theresa Davies who has been in post for some seven years. The Minority Ethnic Achievement in Education (MEAE) leads on policy work and policy development and also administers two grant schemes, namely the Minority Ethnic Achievement in Education Grant (MEAG) valued at some £10,000,000 and the Education of Gypsy and Traveller Children Grant valued at £1.1million. European Roma children are eligible under both grant schemes as it is considered that their needs in terms of support in education are similar to those of Gypsy and Traveller children and they are also eligible under the MEAG for assistance in learning the English language. The total number of Gypsy and Traveller children registered on roll across Wales has risen from 1,471 (2013) to 2455.

Theresa advises the Welsh Government's goal for both Gypsy and Traveller children and children from minority ethnic communities are similar, that is to insure that all learners have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. The Welsh Government believes that each child must be given the opportunity within the Welsh Education system to achieve the best they can. Theresa states that

despite these common goals, upon closer examination, differences between the two groups become apparent. For example, she states that in respect of Gypsy and Traveller children that:

“...schools have to contend with quite bad attendance problems, although little by little attendance is getting better” and believes that there is “... a cultural resistance to formal institutional education beyond a certain age...”.

She adds that:

“...beyond a certain age [some] think that their sons and daughters have had enough formal education, they are literate and numerate to a point and it’s time to start helping at home and doing traditional work. The boys [are] typically helping their fathers and the girls [are] typically helping their mothers and it is these cultural dimensions that are quite unique to Gypsy and Traveller learners. There are certain barriers to learning for some other minority ethnic children as well, but those for Gypsy and Traveller children are quite distinct”.

Attendance

Theresa states that:

“the minimum acceptable level” of attendance for Gypsy and Traveller children in England and Wales is 200 per session per year which is approximately a 50% attendance rate...if the child falls below that the parents are open to prosecution for the non-attendance of the children. It [the minimum acceptable level] acknowledges that these children may be travelling and their attendance may not be as good as it could be”.

She notes that in recent times, the Gypsy and Traveller community appear to have lost some of its traditional sources of income, for example “...migrant workers hop picking in Kent” and adds that:

“..the communities seem to be travelling less and have become more static although there’s still an amount of travelling for cultural and family events such as horse shows, family weddings and funerals. That still goes on to an extent and will affect their attendance. The minimum 200 sessions may well be reappraised. But what we’re finding from end of year reports from local authorities is that some of their attendance figures are really quite

good, we're seeing figures of 90% attendance which is encouraging".

Policy Framework

Theresa advises that "Travelling to a Better Future - the Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery Plan" encompasses a range of areas (including education) that affect the Gypsy and Traveller community. This Plan was published in 2008 and is supplemented by the Welsh Assembly Government Circular entitled 'Moving Forward Gypsy Traveller Education'. More recently, in March 2014, a new policy statement - Minority Ethnic Achievement in Education in Wales which encompasses Gypsy and Traveller children was issued. Theresa advises that this is an over-arching document which covers many aspects of pupil support policy such as special educational needs, attendance, behaviour and bullying. She adds that there are "...numerous other programmes and initiatives which all sit within the Welsh Government's Programme for Action". Theresa also refers to the 2011 Estyn report on support for Gypsy and Traveller children in secondary education which was commissioned by the Welsh Government and the annual reports published by the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

When discussing measures to the aid Gypsy and Traveller children to complete compulsory education, Theresa says that:

"...there is evidence from practitioners to suggest that from the age of 14 onwards, it is relatively easy to engage with children and this is helped by "14- 19 Pathways Programme. For 11-14 year olds, transition can be a fragile time. Solutions can include building links between the primary feeder school and the secondary school so that it is familiar...In terms of keeping them on in secondary school in Cardiff the sole focus of one Traveller Education Service member is on keeping children in 3 secondary schools. They can speak to [the TES member] about any concerns and he supports the pupils fully".

Theresa believes that this programme has been successful as "...the attendance is improving significantly so it's showing a positive impact..."

As far as the impact of the policies and practices is concerned, Theresa advises that:

"...It is difficult to measure the impact of action to promote community cohesion. The key to that is to never become complacent. We've got a very good relationship with a charity called Show Racism the Red Card. They use famous sports people to run anti-racist workshops in school and they are excellent.

Sometimes racism can be apparent in a school and the Head can call the Charity in to address it. We all know it's not the children's fault and that they are simply repeating what they hear adults say. More generally our broader strategies for minority ethnic children in education are definitely paying dividends. We are finding now that certain ethnic minority groups are out performing the national average for Wales."

Theresa notes that:

"...children of Chinese heritage are always the top performers and Asian children meet the national average... sadly this isn't the case for Gypsy and Traveller children who remain the lowest performers. It is going to take a long time I think but we are taking heart that the numbers of Gypsy and Traveller children in school has increased again and more of them are receiving education and we are very heartened that 40% of the total are now attending secondary school"

and adds that this percentage has gone up significantly just in the time that she has been in post.

Exclusion/Discrimination

In terms of reducing exclusion/ discrimination relating to young Gypsy and Traveller children in schools, Theresa points out that discrimination in school amounts to:

...breaking the law... Children aged 5-16 have a [statutory] right to have an education that is appropriate to them. The Welsh Government's schools admission code says that local authorities must make school places available to children however brief their stay in the area. So that helps asylum children and Gypsy and Traveller children. Some schools might want to reject them as they may have an adverse effect on their attendance figures. But Estyn's advice is that these children's attendance can be disaggregated for the purposes of Estyn inspections as long as the school is making an effort to improve their attendance".

Theresa refers to the Teachers Resource Pack which is aimed at addressing these issues and adds that local authorities also have the option to use their grant funding to hold anti bullying workshops. She also refers to the "Show Racism the Red Card" Campaign and the Out of Site Education Pack created /

workshops held by the Campaign which aims to tackle racism towards Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Engagement

Theresa says that she and her team do not have any level of engagement with parents of Gypsy and Traveller children. When asked about marginalisation, whether by the settled community at large or in school by teachers or children, Theresa says that:

“ I think that anyone picking up most newspapers will gain an impression that Gypsy and Travellers are perceived as one of the most marginalised groups. It applies UK wide, but in the context of my work I am not aware of specific incidents”.

In terms of engagement with external stakeholders and community groups, Theresa points out that the Welsh Government develops policy and it is the local authorities that are responsible for the delivery of services. She adds however, that the Welsh Government has a strong relationship with Save the Children, stating that the organisation is a member of the Gypsy and Traveller Forum that she organises. She adds that this organisation is “...totally child-centric and works one-to-one with the children.”

However, on high level strategic and policy issues, Theresa adds that engagement takes place through consultation exercises and points out that the Welsh Government has a responsibility to ensure that communities have every opportunity to engage, thus community engagement is usually achieved by consultation.

Community Cohesion

Theresa advises that in 2011, the Welsh Government issued specific guidance in the shape of “Developing Community Cohesion; a common understanding for schools and their communities.’ She adds that during 2013, all Wales conferences focusing on “culturally mediated community cohesion” targeting a varied audience that included “...educational practitioners, police, housing officers, health staff” and “...anyone with an interest in safe guarding and protecting children” were held in North Wales and South Wales respectively. She states that whilst these conferences were well attended:

“...there was no specific focus on Gypsies and Travellers although there were workshops on children missing school which would have

been relevant to Gypsy and Traveller children and protocols around tracking children were discussed...”.

Theresa also refers to the introduction of a new online curriculum resource called “Travelling Together” which is intended to be used in all secondary schools and not just those schools attended by Gypsy and Traveller children. She adds that the curriculum aims to raise awareness of the Gypsy and Travelling community and to celebrate their history and culture. The curriculum includes guidance to enable teachers to build the curriculum into their lesson plans and Theresa says that:

“...the hope is that it will dispel negative stereotypes about the community which will make the Gypsy and Traveller children who are in school feel more comfortable and reduce racist name calling and bullying; we hope that that should have a knock on effect [with] children's attendance. We also hope that giving them a culturally relevant curriculum will encourage children to stay on in school... so we are very much hoping for a positive impact on attendance”.

Teresa also draws attention to the Teacher Resource Pack which offers a range of materials including DVDs and leaflets and includes material produced by Gypsy and Traveller children.

Theresa recently organised an All Wales Conference on Gypsy and Traveller Attendance Issues in North Wales which brought together Traveller Education Service leads from across Wales, Education Welfare Officers and Inclusion leads. She says issues affecting attendance were discussed, with a professional team of facilitators on standby that helped to keep the focus of the discussion on track. A report on the seminar has been produced and Theresa now proposes to bring together an internal working group to consider its recommendations and to see what measures can “realistically” be taken following which it is proposed to share the report with practitioners.

Outcomes

Theresa advises that measures are in place to improve the reporting and monitoring framework in respect of the grants so that accurate data is available on attendance and attainment. As for formal education attainment, Theresa says that end of year grant reports are an indicator of the qualifications achieved by Gypsy and Traveller children at Key Stage 4, those that leave with GCSEs, City and Guilds, NVQs, diplomas and the like.

The work undertaken or services provided by multiple agencies, local authorities or the Third Sector is not monitored. Theresa advises that:

"...as a public authority we are responsible for monitoring and measuring the effectiveness of the public money we administer through our grant scheme. We look at the outcomes of the grant but we wouldn't look at the detail analysis of a specific initiative outside that; that would be [a matter] for the local authority..."

Theresa summarises the benefit to the wider community of the work that she and her Division as:

"...I like to think we are breaking down the stereotypes to join people together".

Media

Theresa says that the media has limited if any impact on the work she undertakes. She adds that whilst she and her team are interested in news coverage on matters related to Gypsy and Traveller lifestyle, for example in terms of resistance to new Gypsy and Traveller sites, effort is made to engage with the media:

"...when we have something positive to say".

She recalls that when 'Travelling to a Better Future' was launched by the Minister for Equalities at a conference a few years ago, a press release was issued following which there was positive media coverage and several of the delegates were interviewed by the press. Theresa adds that:

"...We are very positive and respectful in the way we approach everything we do for the Gypsy and Traveller communities. It wouldn't support our policy aims to be anything else".

Aims and Objective

Theresa says that the Welsh Government wants to increase attendance and to see more Gypsy and Traveller children making the transition to secondary school; seeing it [education] through and ultimately leaving with some useful qualifications. She adds that:

"...we have a lot of things in place to achieve this but there are barriers... the main one being the reticence in some parts of the community to fully subscribe to formal education lasting until the statutory school age. We have got guidance in place, the initiatives I mentioned and the grant scheme... so there is a complete

package there. It is just going to take time... little by little it is making a difference...

“We are trying to instil cultural change. That takes time. But we have to keep working to raise awareness of the benefits of education and qualifications. This doesn’t have to conflict with cultural values held over generations, but it takes time for acceptance of that. We all - and that includes the Welsh Government, local government and schools - need to improve links with the community and gain their trust and convince them that formal education is the best for their children”.

Theresa says that engagement with families is key to the issues and to this end, she currently has a research intern who is looking specifically into engagement with parents and how bonds between the schools and families can be strengthened to gain the trust.

4.2.4 KARA RICHARDS **Head of Youth Engagement** **Department for Education and Skills** **Welsh Government**

Kara is the Head of Youth Engagement with the Welsh Government and has been in this post since December 2013. Kara, who has been working within the educational discipline for the last ten years, was previously responsible for developing a strategy for looked after children in education and school attendance and behaviour.

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Implementation Plan

Kara’s current role as Head of Youth Engagement focuses on delivering the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Implementation Plan, the main aim of which is to reduce the number of young people who are NEET. Whilst the Framework encompasses all young people with no particular focus on specific ethnic groups, the building blocks of the Framework focus on early identification, brokerage and support for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET. The Framework was drafted with input from local authorities and subsequently piloted within eight local authorities. It is based on building blocks of good practice that have been identified as being effective in reducing NEET numbers in a clear and understandable way; it brings about a structure and a common sense approach on how NEET numbers can be reduced and was received very positively by the local authorities that participated in the pilot scheme.

Based on a number of building blocks that were identified as being effective in the reduction of the number of young people who are NEET, the Framework provides early identification brokerage and support, helps in finding the right provision for these young people and ensures that they have the right support in place. Kara advises that local authorities are charged with the responsibility of early identification and the delivery of the framework. Local authorities work with schools, focussing on three areas that have proven to be effective in identifying problems early, namely attendance, behaviour and attainment. This works as follows:

Identification: of those young persons at risk such that if a young person has rates below a certain level, that could be an indicator that that person is becoming disengaged with education and is at risk of dropping out;

Behaviour: if a young person has been excluded from school on a temporary basis, then this raises the risk of that person becoming potentially, permanently excluded. Attainment: if a young person is not doing well in school, that could illustrate that they are not happy at school.

Hence, if a young person appears to indicate a combination of all of the above indicators, then experience has shown that such young persons would tend to be NEET at age 16.

The Framework Implementation Plan which was launched by Deputy Minister in October 2013 is a two-year plan. It requires each local authority to have in place early identification systems by September 2014 and to work with schools and local partners dealing with young people. Kara states whilst that the life of the Framework is two years, the building blocks should continue to provide local authorities with the ability to continue to reduce the number of young people who are NEET; however, identifying these young people early, finding them the support they need, making the right provision for their need, and monitoring the progress that they then make is essential. Kara says that now in the implementation phase, local authorities are just starting to adopt this new working practice and hopes that at the end of the two years, this practice will "...be embedded and will just be happening anyway" stating that that realistically, it is unlikely that they would cease this practice after two years. The success of the Framework is in the process of being evaluated following which it will be possible to judge its impact.

Kara and her team are charged with the accountability, early identification, tracking and progress as all these elements are intrinsically interlinked. Data is examined to assess how each local authority is doing with regard to a range of matters, for example, the number of young people who are NEET; tracking of early identification; its data systems, its data sharing and the team then assesses the implementation.

Brokerage is the process of identifying an appropriate lead worker to work with Gypsy and Traveller children; such lead worker could be someone from the Traveller Education Service operated by a local authority. The Traveller Education Service is usually considered to be best placed to work with the Gypsy and Traveller community as it is hoped that the Service has already set up a level of trust with the community. Local authorities must first identify and engage a Progression Coordinator who would be charged with the responsibility of considering data and to identify the number of young people potentially at risk and then to identify the most appropriate lead worker that can support young people through the barriers they face with a view to preventing from becoming NEET. Should such young people already be NEET, then the lead worker is required to help them to become more engaged.

Kara advises that the Welsh Government has issued guidance for the development and early identification systems but this is not prescriptive as each local authority has varied management and information systems and schools with specific issues. Schools play a key role in the process because it is unlikely that a young person will become totally disengaged at age 16 without some signs of disengagement becoming apparent well in advance of becoming NEET. According to Kara, the Framework has not been devised to apply to any specific group of children or community; it is all encompassing and hence any young Gypsy and Traveller person would benefit from such approach. However, she points out that the Welsh Government has provided statutory guidance to help prevent children and young people from missing education within which specific community groups including Gypsy and Travellers are identified. She reiterates that local authorities are ultimately responsible for dealing with educational issues affecting specific communities as this falls within their all broader responsibility for the education of all children in their area but adds that based on her previous experience of working on to attendance and behaviour issues, she is aware that Gypsy and Traveller children have statistically a relatively low school attendance rate when compared to the whole school age population.

In terms of personal experience of working with the Gypsy and Traveller community or training and awareness of working with the community, Kara believes that this is not relevant because of the level at which she works. She also adds that she does not have any particular awareness of issues and challenges faced by the Gypsy and Traveller community other than what she has been able to gather from the media and from Theresa Davies (The Minority Ethnic Achievement in Education). Kara believes that she has a level of knowledge that enables her to perform effectively although she states that she has liaised with Traveller Education Services specifically in relation to school attendance, listened to their views and the difficulties they encounter.

With reference to her previous work on school attendance, Kara says that not only are attendance rates for Gypsy and Traveller children poor when compared to the whole school age population, but Gypsy and Traveller children also have the poorest attendance rate when compared with all other ethnic groups. She adds that it is particularly difficult to calculate the precise number

of those who become NEET, for young Gypsy and Traveller children could be working in the family business or managing the home. She admits that from the Welsh Government's perspective, she would not even know how to go about gathering that data, although she believes that local authorities may be interested in doing so.

Attainment Measures

In terms of measures that are adopted to encourage children to remain in school, Kara believes that the Youth Guarantee Scheme is a key response as it enables young children and people to pursue further education or training free of any fees. As for intervention measures designed to keep children in school, Kara believes this is not something for the Welsh Government, but rather for local authorities that are responsible for education as a whole.

In terms of awareness of the number of Gypsy and Traveller children excluded whether temporarily or permanently from school, reasons for exclusion, voluntary withdrawals, levels of marginalisation, and comparison of data relating to children from the settled community, again Kara said that her work did not encompass this level of detail. However, she says that:

“...a number of parents have taken their children out of school and said that they are home educating them which legally they have the right to do; the fact that they are neither literate or numerate is clearly a concern but then you have to balance it with the community needs - do they need to be literate or numerate for what they actually will end up doing?”

Kara states that the Welsh Government does not provide specific support for excluded children or those withdrawn from school, although it provides guidance on the use of exclusion measures and good practice. In terms of actual support, if a young person is excluded, then Kara advises that the local authority is responsible for ensuring that these children are educated, often via the Pupils Referral Unit. She notes, however, that some local authorities provide Gypsy and Traveller children with a specific kind of “hub education service”.

Kara and her team do not have a budget that is designated to address Gypsy and Traveller related issues and she adds that over the last five years, budgets for the Education Division have been reduced across the board on education which then prevents other larger scale projects or certain projects from being undertaken and with an overall reduction in services. On a positive note, Kara adds that children from all communities benefit from the Pupil Deprivation Grant, the purpose of which is to help enable schools to tackle the link between poverty and low attainment primarily. The Welsh Government gives this grant to local authorities for onward transmission to schools and Kara

believes that it is up to schools to access this funding to put in measures to help the Gypsy and Traveller community; however, Kara adds that she is not aware of the kind of measures that schools put in place with such grant monies.

As for high levels of NEET, whether it is in Cardiff or indeed any other area, Kara says that whilst deprivation and poverty can be perhaps the indicator for becoming NEET, there are other local authority areas that also have high levels of deprivation, yet these deprived communities are "...doing a good job" and she believes that "...you need to be doing better".

Attendance Measures

Kara notes Estyn's agreement to make the rules relating to recording the attendance of Gypsy and Traveller children at school more flexible. She also refers to the local authority's powers to fine families in cases of poor school attendance and adds "...we bring in a policy, however, it is down to local authorities to implement..." She recalls that when she was responsible for managing attendance, rates had improved, but notes that then there was an overall general drive to improve attendance which was not restricted to specific communities. She says that policies relating to attendance could have had direct impact but because it is ultimately down to local authorities to decide whether they want to prosecute a family for poor attendance:

"...often they take the decision that they did not want to prosecute a Gypsy and Traveller family for the cultural reasons [because] they [have] built strong relationships with them...just because there is a policy, it does not necessarily mean that it has been consistently applied across the board and therefore it is hard to say exactly what impact it has had".

Referring again to the fact that of all the minority ethnic groups, the Gypsy and Traveller community probably has "... the worst attendance rates", Kara says that poor attendance is now a matter for the Policy Unit but wonders whether "...one should go in hard and actually bring in quite strict legislation that says it does not really matter what the cultural complexities are - that this is the policy,...that the need to go to school applies above all" but feels that "...this would be quite a tough decision politically".

Kara says that she does not know:

"... if it would necessarily have made an impact because often the Gypsy and Traveller community do not really care; they will say that the schools are not doing enough to support them and they don't want their young girls going there...it is complicated, it is very very complicated. But it's more of an issue for some

authorities than others, just depending on the size of the community in any given [local] authority so again from a national perspective, it's difficult".

Kara notes that local authorities have had the ability to prosecute and that fixed penalty notices were brought in as an additional measure in 2013. The fines range from £80 if paid immediately or goes up to £120; however, on prosecution, the maximum fine is in the region of £2,000. She adds that the penalty notice is like a "...short sharp shock" and that experience has shown that "...often the threat of a penalty notice has more impact than actually issuing a penalty" and says that ultimately, local authorities need to focus "...on early identification...its about schools using their own systems to monitor attendance, to identify but with regards to the Gypsy and Traveller community, it's a difficult one, it's very difficult, because there are many different reasons why they wouldn't..."

Exclusion/Discrimination

Kara advises that the Welsh Government recently commissioned Edinburgh University to undertake research into exclusion from school and the commissioning of provision for young people who are educated outside of school. She adds that whilst the Gypsy and Traveller community has not been specifically singled out, the Welsh Government has developed an action plan, which is effectively the Welsh Government's response to Edinburgh University's research. She states that:

"...the key recommendation was don't just exclude. It doesn't help anybody..."

Collaborative Working

With a view to effectively carrying out duties/obligations to Gypsy and Traveller children, Kara says that she and her Division are currently working with a range of representative bodies that include the Wales Council for Voluntary Action to explore how provision for those at risk of becoming NEET can be effectively delivered. Kara and her team also work in collaboration with Estyn - the Schools Inspectorate, the Welsh Local Government Association Careers Wales and training providers. As for monitoring SMART outcomes relating to work undertaken to secure formal education attainment amongst Gypsy and Traveller children or indeed the services provided by external agencies including local authorities and the Third Sector, Kara advises that this is a matter for local authorities to gauge.

Kara sums up the effect of the work that she and her team undertake, its benefits to the wider community and the extent its impacts upon the Gypsy and Travellers community as having the potential to lead to a "...more prosperous, skilled community". She adds that one way of establishing the impact of this work is to examine the reduction in the numbers of young people who are NEET and says that whilst at present the focus is very much on working closely with local authorities with the Framework documents out in the public domain, conveying the message of the Framework and other initiatives like the Youth Guarantee Scheme could lead to positive results.

Engagement

Kara refers to the Welsh Government's Communities First programme and believes that improved community engagement will lead to improved parental engagement and hopes that this will benefit the Gypsy and Traveller community and make a positive impact.

She notes the two way communication between the Welsh Government and local authorities and says that Welsh Government officers engage with local authorities and provide guidance specifically in relation to the development of data sharing protocols, the identification of the appropriate lead workers or mapping the kind of provision that they can make but accepts that it is:

"... always difficult for local authorities to work in a more co-ordinated way with their own partners."

Data Sharing

Kara believes that stakeholders including local authorities cannot work on their own, that they need to collaborate and share information, and because historically, this has been difficult to achieve, developing protocols specifically to help deliver on the Framework is a very positive step. Kara says that data sharing which plays an important part in the implementation of the Framework, whether this relates to local Further Education Colleges informing the local authority that a young person has dropped out or the Department of Works and Pensions or the Health Service providing relevant information can be a "struggle", and adds that sometimes even schools do not necessarily want to share their data. She emphasises that ultimately it is about getting partners to work together collaboratively and she finds that data is used as an excuse not to do so. She quotes some very good examples where local authorities like Ceredigion Council have developed robust data sharing protocols which she says have been recommended to other local authorities as good practice and

notes that some six local authorities have developed these protocols and are part of WASPI (Wales Accord for Sharing Personal Information), a Welsh Government initiative which relates to quality assured data sharing protocols.

Funding

Kara says that each local authority was given a one off lump sum of £50,000 in or about February and March 2014 to help them get started with the Framework initiatives. This funding was linked to the delivery of a couple of the early milestones within the Action Plan specifically around the identification of an engagement progression coordinator (EPC). Local authorities are expected to employ EPCs but are not specifically accountable to the Welsh Government in terms of how the money is spent. She points out that whilst not a statutory requirement, the Framework is based on best practice and hence the Welsh Government would expect local authorities to follow the recommendations and either confirm that this has been followed, state reasons for not implementing the recommendations or adopt an alternative course of action. Many of the EPCs that local authorities have employed are recruited internally, for example, from the Youth Service Team as they have already been working with young people on the ground. However, Kara is unable to comment upon the extent of engagement of the EPCs with the Gypsy and Traveller community, although she advises that Welsh Government officials who are lead contacts in certain matters communicate /meet with these local authorities on an annual basis to discuss progress and concerns and then, if local authorities are found to be struggling, support is then provided where needed. Kara says that the Welsh Government has issued additional guidance with regard to the identification, lead worker roles and EPCs as a means of further support.

The Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee is a new proactive and positive offer that will help to ensure that all young people have access to a suitable place in education and learning at age 16. It provides inter alia, a way to collect young people's information on their intended post 16 future; a follow up to check the progress of a successful transition; a clear process to ensure all young people receive a suitable offer of education and training and those needing support will receive personalised support.

It is described as the offer, acceptance and commencement of a suitable place in education or training and is accessible by any young person making the first time transition from compulsory education at age 16. A place in education or training includes a part / full time place in a school or college; an

Apprenticeship opportunity; a Welsh Government Traineeship place; a place on a re-engagement programme; a volunteering opportunity and a Level 2 training programme during employment.

A suitable offer for a young person is considered to be one that is appropriate to their individual needs, and this means it must be at the right level; geographical location; occupational sector and learning method and it must engage them in education, training or other activities, all of which will help progress them towards sustainable employment. Kara adds that The Youth Guarantee is proposed to be tested by several local authorities with effect from September 2014 and will be rolled out nationally with effect from September 2015. Kara explains that the Youth Guarantee scheme is linked to the development of the Common Application Process by Career Wales, which is an online tool that enables young people to access all options available to them in the area; this could be an apprenticeship opportunity, workplace learning or it could be studying at a Further Education establishment, thus providing young people with as much choice as possible. Kara believes that this process is more young person friendly, and it offers to young people career advice and guidance such that if a young person is interested in undertaking a specific activity, the online tool may suggest the kind of subjects that may be needed. Kara says that this:

“...certainly would be something that could benefit the Gypsy and Traveller community because you know they use the Internet, it is not something that you know they need to go into school to access, they can work it from home”.

She adds that advice is available from careers officers who are linked specifically to young people who have been identified as needing additional support, thus making this a more targeted support which can be easily accessed by the Gypsy and Traveller community.

Aims and Objectives

Kara says that the emphasis is on identifying all those at risk of being NEET and says that Gypsy and Traveller young people generally, just by the nature of their ethnicity, are going to be an at risk group and states that she would like to see just stronger links between the local authority and those individuals within the Education Welfare Service(s) and the Traveller Education Service respectively to ensure that the right provision is put in place for children when they attain the age of 16. Hence it is important to identify whether they would be interested in training or going on an apprenticeship programme.

Kara says that she does not know whether this would be an acceptable option for the Gypsy and Traveller children because she believes that:

“...they kind of employ within their own”

but adds that it is nevertheless important to ensure that young people in the Gypsy and Traveller community are at least aware of the options available to them. She emphasises the importance of linking in to the local authority's Education Welfare Service and the Traveller Education Service and working collaboratively to ensure that these stakeholders are aware of those at risk, and that those at risk are in turn aware of their options in the strive for a positive outcome.

4.4.4 MARGARET LOWRI REED
Acting Head of Pupil Wellbeing Branch
Department for Education and Skills
Welsh Government

Lowri is the acting Head of the Pupil Wellbeing Branch and has been in this role since March 2014. The Pupil Wellbeing Branch is responsible for a range of matters that include school attendance, behaviour, education other than at school, elective home education, Pupil Referral Units, anti-bullying work, ensuring healthy food in schools, primary school free breakfast initiative and free school meals. Lowri and her team are currently working on the issue of free school meals in context of the Welfare Reform agenda. Lowri has six staff members who cover 11 policy areas.

The work undertaken by Lowri and her team affects all children, irrespective of their ethnicity or cultural background; hence the work they undertake in terms of policies and initiatives has an impact on Gypsy and Traveller children in education. For example, elective home education and dual registration, the former being in instances when children attending school are required to attend a Pupil Referral Unit for a period of time. The work of the Branch affects a whole spectrum of learners, including children and young people with special educational needs, those who are generally disengaged and young mothers.

If children are not able to attend school for any reason, then she and her team have the policy responsibility for education other than at school (EOTAS), which in the main takes the form of Pupil Referral Units. She notes that there are some young children who are not able to attend these either, in which case they may receive tuition in small groups in a community centre.

Lowri has a good understanding of issues that affect the Gypsy and Traveller community, the traditional practice of young children learning the family trade(s) and is also aware of the strained relationship that can arise between the Gypsy and Traveller community and the settled community. Whilst not having had any formal training in terms of cultural awareness of the Gypsy and Traveller community, Lowri has received some on-the-job training and recognises that whilst gaps in knowledge or awareness may generally exist in

any given discipline or area, she and her team can seek guidance from colleagues with specialised knowledge.

Policy Framework

The policy framework and documents that shape the work undertaken by Lowri and her team are those that relate to improving schools and the broader strategies which set overall direction in respect of education. Specific policies are developed from the broader strategies which she and her team may assist in developing as Lowri and her team are frequently asked to feed into a range of strategies, particularly those which impact on their areas of responsibility. Lowri recently gave feedback on the Early Years and Child Care Plan and she and her team are currently re-developing "Inclusion in Pupil Support", a piece of guidance first issued in 2006 which specifically refers to the Gypsy and Traveller community, and which is due for publication next year.

Other documents that Lowri and her team have worked on/are working on include the "Food in Schools" guidance; counselling for children and young people; draft regulations on introducing management committees for Pupil Referral Units and guidance on elective home education. Elective home education is one policy document that specifically impacts upon the Gypsy and Traveller community. Lowri says that part of developing new policies may entail an equality impact assessment which could encompass consideration of protected characteristics, which in turn would include race and adds that:

"...equality gets built into the development of policy right from the start but it's not just the one characteristic..."

Lowri says that "food in schools" and counselling have transitioned from being grant funded to statutory obligations. She states that local authorities are now required to provide counselling services independent from schools such that children and young people between the ages of 11 and 18 within the area of a local authority can access and seek assistance or guidance on issues that affect them. This service is not restricted to children attending schools and is accessible by those children and young people who are NEET or being home educated. Information on accessing these counselling services should normally be available at local authority websites and Lowri believes that some local authorities have worked hard to take counselling to a "community setting", for example at libraries despite the fact that this obligation is limited to providing counselling services in school. She adds that local authority "Gypsy and Traveller workers" should be aware of this service and ought to be able to signpost Gypsy and Traveller children to counselling.

Lowri places emphasis on the collaborative way of working within the Welsh Government and adds that colleagues "feed into" each other's work and that it

is important to know who to communicate with when dealing with areas where existing knowledge or awareness of relevant matters may be limited. Lowri refers to a weekly magazine (DYSG) which is a useful tool that serves to share information. The magazine which contains links to Welsh Government publications and news of work that has been undertaken is emailed to more or less every school in Wales, but she points out that:

“...when you start specialising so much...it becomes to prescriptive. Local authorities have sometimes got to be able to react to their own local circumstances and it just becomes overwhelming, you are just providing reams of guidance...”

In terms of interaction with local authorities, Lowri states that:

“... we have contacts for the different policies. Someone from the team is generally talking to someone from the local authority every day, about one or other of our policy areas – we do rely on the local authorities ...to pass information to us and keep us in the loop on what is happening.”

Teacher Training and School Mediation

To help develop and improve teacher training and school mediation, Lowri says that there is a dedicated team of officers that deals with issues relating to teacher training. The team has developed a post graduate (Masters) Programme in Educational Practice for newly qualified teachers. One of the Programme modules is “behaviour management”, the purpose of which is to encourage teachers to think about the different cultural backgrounds of children and to consider how that varying cultures and backgrounds might impact upon their behaviour. This module is likely to be rolled out with effect from autumn 2014.

Compulsory Education

Lowri states that:

“...it is the duty of local authorities to provide suitable education for youngsters up to the age of 16”.

Pointing out that there is a statutory requirement for children to be in education, she states that education other than at school can sometimes become relevant although some children manage to move to another school. She says that a child might be excluded from one school but another school

may be willing to take them on, adding that sometimes, a fresh start could be exactly what they need. She adds that sometimes, if the child is violent, then some schools might be reluctant to take them on so they might look at other ways of managing their education, but there is an obligation on local authorities to ensure that all children receive education.

Lowri states that if children stop attending school, then questions should be asked as to what they are then doing. She states that there is a whole range of tools that the local authority can use to make sure they attend school. She says that local authorities are currently consulting on fixed penalty notices and whilst this is not something that would be issued across the board, in certain circumstances it could be deemed appropriate to issue a fixed penalty notice.

Exclusions

Lowri believes that the Welsh Government advice on exclusions is fairly broad and provides guidance on when it would or would not be appropriate to exclude. No specific suggestions are set out for dealing with children from specific community groups. The Pupil Inclusion Support guidance encompasses advice relevant to children and young people in school and those in education other than at school. Although schools are not required to collect data in terms of anti-bullying results, Lowri says that exclusion numbers are going down. Pupil Referral Units are not legally required to have in place a management committee, but consultation is underway on the introduction of legislation that will ensure that Pupil Referral Units appoint management committees, with guidance on how such committees should operate so that they are able to provide the right amount of challenge and scrutiny. At present, Pupil Referral Units are maintained predominantly by local authorities who have the overall responsibility for making sure that the education that is provided is suitable, although in some instances the local authority will contract out the provision of education other than at school.

Lowri says that the Welsh Government takes measures to share good practice with local authority leads that have responsibility for behaviour and attendance. Speaking about good practice, Lowri refers to a school which recently had a large intake of Roma children. This school created a nurturing environment; formed nurture groups; undertook work that fell within the parameters of behaviour management and was successful in getting children who came in at the point of not being able to speak English settled in by working in collaboration with parents.

Education Other Than At School

Lowri says her team is also currently examining the area of education other than at school and Pupil Referral Units and is engaged in devising improvements to secure a reduction in the number of children that are excluded from schools, and to ensure that those children that are excluded and find themselves in Pupil Referral Units or in other forms of education, receive the best possible educational experience. Lowri explains that Pupil Referral Units provide a more tailored learning environment, and some have the feel of a primary school. Lowri points out that this initiative has followed on from research that the Welsh Government recently commissioned Edinburgh University to undertake and which had resulted in recommendations to the Welsh Government and local authorities to consider and act upon. Lowri adds that whilst it may be impracticable to implement all these recommendations, many have already been adopted. She adds that one of the recommendations is:

“... putting in place a bench mark in the Framework for Pupil Referral Units so you can make comparisons and look at things like attendance, attainment and exclusions and value for money...”.

Kara believes that the research specifically refers to the Gypsy and Traveller community but points out that:

“... the kids that end up in EOTAS [(education other than at school)] generally tend to be from white- British ethnic background... For some children secondary school is a little bit too much, they might be school phobic...their behaviour might be very poor. There can be all sorts of reasons where they are not getting on terribly well in school and so they [would then] transfer to a Pupil Referral Unit...” .

Home Education

Lowri states that children must be in school until they are 16; be home educated or be in education other than school. She is aware that home education is given as a reason by Gypsy and Traveller children to withdraw from school, although she cannot say if that is the main reason for non-attendance. Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that a child is receiving a suitable education and this duty which applies to all children, and not just to Gypsy and Traveller children. Therefore, she believes that local authorities need to have good working relationships with the home educating parents in order to establish that a suitable education is being provided.

Lowri says that home education is a valid choice for a parent. It is not regulated as in other European countries; for example, in Germany, home education is not permitted, and whilst France permits home education, the education authority monitors the education provided by making annual visits and reviewing the education provided, and if then not satisfied, the child can be required to attend school. Lowri says that there is no requirement to register for home education in Wales, although she says that proposals have been put forward that every home educated child should be registered with the local authority and there should be an annual monitoring visit. She states that:

“there was some resistance to this proposal so we have moved away from that and we are really trying to look at non-statutory means of building relationships with the home educating community and the local authorities...”

Lowri says that “...home education is not properly defined in law” although she adds that according to case law:

“...it has to be suitable education that is appropriate to the community in which the child lives, even if that is not the wider community ... at the end of the education, it has got to leave the child with choices; it has got to leave them options to adopt some other form of life if the child wishes... We are trying to build relationships with local authorities and get home educators and local authorities working harmoniously together.”

Should children simply drop out of school, Lowri says that the local authority has a duty to secure their attendance at school and has a range of tools that can be used to try and secure attendance, for example, parenting contracts. If parents fail to send their children to school, they can be prosecuted and face the risk of imprisonment. If children just stop going to school, then the reasons behind this are investigated. Parents have the choice to electively home educate their children and a local authority will also use various other options to make sure that children attend school. Lowri advises that local authorities are currently consulting on the issue of fixed penalty notices and whilst such notices would not be issued across the board, in certain circumstances they could be deemed appropriate.

Emphasising that children are not allowed to just drop out of school, Lowri says that:

“...we need to either know [whether] they are being home educated, or if they are not, [then] they need to receive education because the local authority is obliged in law to make sure they get educated to [age] 16”.

Community Cohesion

Lowri says that the Fairer Futures Division within the Welsh Government is predominantly responsible for community cohesion, but she and her team have contributed to some of the policies emanating from that Division, for example "Tackling Hate Crime". Lowri and her team also provide the Division with periodical updates in terms of the work that they have undertaken in certain areas. Lowri's team published guidance in 2011 which focuses on specific aspects of bullying - cyber bullying or bullying on the grounds of race or disability. Lowri explains:

"...we don't ask schools to gather statistics on bullying. We are interested in schools focusing on building a really good ethos, a really positive relationship. Sometimes there are calls for us to do more to make schools monitor and I think it is good if schools do monitor - they can then maybe become aware that there is a problem, for example [whether there is] cyber bullying ...so [monitoring] can be a useful tool..."

Lowri believes that the work undertaken by her team has had a positive impact as there is a noticeable improvement in school attendance.

With regard to community involvement, partnership working or community forums, Lowri refers to the Families and Schools Together Programme. This entails schools selecting certain children and their parents who are then invited to take part in the Programme where:

"... once a week, they come together, they cook a meal, so they feed the families and they have activities and structured play. Some of the parents say we have never sat down at a table together before to eat and that is so important, [a] part of a child's development, to sit there and talk and share their stories and to encourage parents to play with the children...so the school is a community focus.we're aware of that happening and we have a role in [raising] awareness about this sort of programme..."

"...When a school looks at this type of programme and thinks '...you know this could really help me', they embrace it and take it on, but you can't make them do it. So all we can do is encourage and share good practice. You can't be prescriptive. What suits one school might not suit another..."

Budget and Funding Considerations

To assist with the implementation of these policies specifically in so far as this relates to minority ethnic groups, Lowri explains that the Welsh Government provides local authorities funding in the form of revenue support grants to enable them to effectively preform their respective functions and says that ultimately, it is for local authorities to decide how this grant money should be allocated to enable them to effectively deliver on their statutory obligations.

Media

Speaking about how the media could be used effectively to publicise the work undertaken by her team specifically in relation to vulnerable communities including the Gypsy and Traveller community, Lowri refers to the bad press received by those on benefits adding that "...people who are on benefits are getting vilified at the moment; it is not positive at all" and feels that programmes like "My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding" and the like are not very helpful. Lowri adds that the press could be more effectively used to project a positive image of the work undertaken by her team, but adds that "... whether they would want to is another matter..."

Outcomes

In terms of measuring improvement, Lowri says that:

"...attendance is an easy one to measure as it is a question of whether the child is in school, and we know that the attendance figures are improving. Behaviour is quite hard to measure if you are trying to talk about outcomes because whilst the work that we do might contribute towards outcomes it is not as measurable as attendance. If schools have been given the tools they need to help them manage behaviour better, you would expect to see fewer exclusions and so forth..."

Lowri says that performance relating to grant funding such as the Appetite For Life and counselling grants are monitored. Annual reports are required to illustrate the impact of a grant and at some stage, it may be inappropriate to continue to grant fund. Some grants are then transferred to local authorities and services are underpinned by legislation, as was the case with the counselling; thus, the Welsh Government's involvement diminishes over time.

As for communicating the benefits of the work undertaken by Lowri and her team to the wider public, Lowri says:

"...I think that communication is something we are having to look at and something we are going to focus on this year because we work hard and we do an awful lot and we need to ensure that our stakeholders get the right information; you don't want to bombard people with too much information either. With things such as the bullying side of things I think we do need to tell parents, so let us do that. One thing we have got to produce this year is a leaflet for parents to see the exclusions process, just target it at them so they properly understand it..."

As for the impact on Gypsy and Traveller children, Lowri states:

"...if we're doing our job properly and if what we're doing is working then that is an indicator...but sometimes it's quite hard to measure... you can't always measure, or you know your work contributes towards an area but you can't really measure it exactly.

"...if we, as a policy team, are doing our job right then we have more children in schools, their attendance is good, they'll be getting more out of education. Their behaviour will be good, there will be less bullying, fewer children being traumatised by bullying and they will not be school phobic; exclusions will be down. There will be fewer children being educated other than at school, for example, in Pupil Referral Units and when they are there, they will be getting a really good education and it will equip them; the food they're eating will be healthy, the little ones will be getting free breakfast in primary school; those who are entitled to free school meals will be getting their entitlement; they will have access to counselling, so if things happen to them they will be able to process it and deal with it. This is the area that our work is focused on - the school community and outside there will be good relationships between local authorities and the home education community and children who are being home educated are getting a suitable education.

"...that is what we are aiming for, that is our vision...I think we will be chipping away at it for a long time but you keep moving things forward, that is, doing a little bit more..."

With regard to the awareness of the cultural needs of Gypsy and Traveller children, Lowri says that she would "expect some things to get covered in the curriculum; the Personal, Social and Health Education lessons (PSHE)" but adds that "...there is also a wider ethos, it's about being respectful of everybody ...and it cuts both ways as well..."

She says that she is aware that:

"...Gypsy and Travellers are bullied and sometimes they can be bullies themselves. So it's everybody in the school community understanding that need to be decent with each other and behave properly."

Lowri refers to her experience of the "respectful manner" in which the Head Teacher of a school with a large group of Slovakian pupils interacts with the pupils and speaks with admiration of the relationship that the head teacher has built with the Slovakian parents, who she states:

"...have not attended school themselves and have been kicked around by society in their own countries and just not treated with respect. For them to come here with all this mistrust, and for her [the Head Teacher] to break down all those barriers...[is fantastic]".

Speaking about the impact of recent government policies on her work, Lowri refers to the Welfare Reform agenda and says that whilst she is not aware of the precise number of Gypsy and Traveller children who receive free school meals, she believes that a number of children would probably be eligible, saying that:

"...sometimes you get children where their families might be eligible but they don't want to apply. Free school meals are called a pass ported benefit. If you receive certain benefits then you're entitled to free school meals. Now I don't know if there is much of a culture in the Gypsy and Traveller community about applying for benefits, I am not really sure what the position is there. If you get certain benefits, you are entitled to free school meals but the benefits are changing. So job seeker's allowance, employment and support allowance, soon all these things will migrate and be replaced by universal credit, which is a different kind of benefit. That could have an impact. We are working towards developing new eligibility criteria for receipt of free school meals."

Lowri also refers to the work undertaken in respect of the hate crime framework; on work relating to violence against women and domestic abuse which she says:

"...feeds into bullying because one of the pieces of work that we are interested in developing is lesson plans for teachers on gender based bullying. For example, that is where boys call girls "slags" and are really nasty...sort of sexually abusive kind of language and a real lack of respect for woman that comes out of that language. So when we do the specification for these lesson plans I will contact Fairer Futures colleagues and colleagues who have policy responsibility for violence against women and domestic abuse and get them to look at the draft specification to ensure that it covers everything...".

Aims and Objectives

Lowri says that her big priority is examining Pupil Referral Units and measures relating to anti bullying and improving these. In terms of pupil referral, Lowri states that:

“...ideally we would like to reduce the number of exclusions so that more children and young people receive their education in school. In some cases Pupil Referral Units will be the most suitable education for them but ...we could certainly bring the numbers down. It is about the breadth and quality of education that they receive and having a broad and balanced curriculum. We are aware of one local authority, for example, [which] still has Pupil Referral Units but it does an awful lot more on nurturing groups and inclusion within the school - the mainstream school which can be a benefit to these children... the geographical location of the area has been a factor in [the local authority] managing the Pupil Referral Unit differently; there is such a spread that you don't want children and young people travelling half way across the county, so it is managed more within the school with the net result that lots of children stay in school...”

With regard to anti-bullying, Lowri says that:

“...I think we need to have advice that is more readily available for parents and children to say what they can do when their children are bullied, so they're clear [on] what the steps are because we do get letters coming in from parents [which indicate that] they are not really sure what to do...”

and emphasises the need for clear advice and guidance, which is published and easily accessible.

Welsh Government Framework/Policies/Initiatives

Set out below is a note of the Welsh Government frameworks, policies and initiatives referred to in the foregoing paragraphs:

Appetite For Life (See Healthy Eating in Schools Regulations 2013)

Children's Rights Scheme 2014 Arrangements for having due regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) when Welsh Ministers exercise any of their functions

[<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/cyp/140501-childrens-rights-scheme-2014-en.pdf>]

Cross-Party Group Gypsy and Travellers

[<http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mgOutsideBodyDetails.aspx?ID=30>]

Building a Better Future: The Early Years and Child Care Plan

[<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/earlyyearshome/building-a-brighter-future-early-years-and-childcare-plan/?lang=en>]

Elective home education

[http://wales.gov.uk/dcells/publications/policy_strategy_and_planning/schools/inclusionandpupilsupport/guidance/section6/section6inclusionpupilsup1.pdf?lang=en]

Evaluation of Education Provision for Children and Young People Educated Outside the School Setting", a report by Edinburgh University

[http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/education/creid/Reports/31_WAG_EOTAS_FinalRpt.pdf]

Families and Schools Together Early - Intervention Programme

[<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/about-us/where-we-work/united-kingdom/fast>]

Getting on Together – a Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales

[<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/people-and-communities/communitycohesion/?lang=en>]

Inclusion and Pupil Support National Assembly for Wales Circular No: 47/2006

[<http://wales.gov.uk/dcells/publications/publications/circularsindex/2006/inclusionandpupilsupport/inclusionpupilsupport-e.pdf?lang=e>]

Also see:

[<http://wales.gov.uk/about/cabinet/decisions/dl2014/julsep/education/hl0795/?lang=e>]

Minority Ethnic Achievement in Education in Wales

[<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/minority-ethnic-achievement-in-education-in-wales/?lang=en>]

Mobile Homes Act 2013

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/14/pdfs/ukpga_20130014_en.pdf]

Moving Forward - Gypsy Traveller Education

[<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/docs/learningwales/publications/121113travellereducationen.pdf>]

National Assembly for Wales Enterprise and Learning Committee: Young people not in education, employment or training October 2010

[http://www.assemblywales.org/young_people_not_in_education__employment_or_training-e.pdf]

The National Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2014–2018 Supporting young people to reach their potential and live fulfilled lives

[<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/140417-national-youth-work-strategy-en.pdf>]

Pupil Deprivation Grant Short guidance for practitioners

[<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/131216-pdg-short-guidance-for-practitioners-en.pdf>]

Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) Wales

[<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolhome/schooldata/ims/datacollections/pupillevelannualschoolcensus/?lang=en>]

Respect and resilience: Developing community cohesion – a common understanding for schools and their communities

[<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/respectresilience/?lang=en>]

Respecting Others: Anti Bullying Guidance

[<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolhome/wellbeing/antibullying/?lang=en>]

Proposed Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011

[http://www.assemblywales.org/children_s_rights_measure__as_amended_at_stage_3__e_-3.pdf]

Statutory guidance to Welsh local authorities on the provision of independent counselling services

[<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130611-independent-counselling-services-en.pdf>]

“Show Racism the Red Card”

[<http://www.srtrc.org/>]

Skills that Work for Wales: A Skills and Employment Strategy and Action Plan

[<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/081217stfwstrategyandactionen.pdf>]

Statutory guidance to help prevent children and young people from missing education

[<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/101419missingeducationen.pdf>]

Tackling Hate Crimes and Incidents A Framework For Action

[<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/equality/140512-hate-crime-framework-en.pdf>]

Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012 - 2016

[<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/socialjustice/120625tackpovplanen.pdf>]

Travelling together Resources to promote the integration of Gypsy and Traveller culture into the national curriculum

[<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/docs/learningwales/publications/140304-travelling-together-guidance-en.pdf>]

Travelling to a Better Future’ - Gypsy and Traveller Framework for Action and Delivery

[<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/docs/learningwales/publications/121115gypsytravelleren.pdf>]

Learning Pathways 14 to 19

[<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/pathways/?lang=en>]

Healthy eating in maintained schools: statutory guidance

[<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/healthy-eating-in-maintained-schools/?lang=en>]

The Draft Education (Pupil Referral Units (Management Committees etc.) (Wales) Regulations 2014

[<http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/education/pru-management-committee-regulations/?status=open&lang=en>]

The Education of Gypsy and Traveller pupils An update on provision in secondary schools

[file:///C:/Users/pc/Downloads/The_education_of_Gypsy_Traveller_pupils_An_update_on_provision_in_secondary_schools_-_June_2011%20(1).pdf]

The Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Measure 2009

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2009/3/pdfs/mwa_20090003_en.pdf]

Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales)

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2013/1984/pdfs/wsi_20131984_mi.pdf]

Travelling Together

[<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2014/140724-young-people-not-education-employment-training-year-31-march-2014-en.pdf>]

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Implementation Plan

[<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/131007-ye-framework-implementation-plan-en.pdf>]

4.5 BEVERLEY STEPHENS

Head

Gypsy Traveller Education Service Pembrokeshire

Beverley Stephens is the Head of the Gypsy and Traveller Education Service in Pembrokeshire. She has been in this post for the last eighteen years. Bev originally started work with young Gypsy and Traveller children at one school and the project progressed to become a county wide initiative working with children from the age of two onwards and now covers four Gypsy and Traveller sites in the county (a fifth site having closed down recently). Bev has been working with and living amongst the Gypsy and Traveller community for the last twenty five years and finds that members of the community knock at her door when they need help, be it during work hours or out of work hours. Despite having an impressive academic record, Bev says that the community has given her the training that she needed to work with the community and she has adopted a collaborative approach in terms of listening to them and their needs rather than following a dictatorial approach. One of the School Governors is a member of the Gypsy and Traveller Community and Bev says that her Service also delivers a lot of training to the local police force, and members of the Gypsy and Traveller community help to deliver this training.

The school also has an arrangement with the University of Wales Trinity St. Davids which runs an undergraduate programme in Education and Social Inclusion. The programme is run at Monkton School and follows on from a

three-year foundation degree course which is also offered at the school. This programme has attracted some five young Gypsy and Traveller women who are currently reading for this degree programme (Batchelor of Arts). This is indeed remarkable progress, given that it all started with the appointment of one person some eighteen years ago to establish the reason(s) behind the high rate of Gypsy and Traveller children failing to attend school.

Bev and her Service currently support some 218 children across the county of Pembrokeshire and her work entails supporting and encouraging Gypsy and Traveller families to have their children enter formal education at the early age of two years. Last year, some 28 children aged two started the Flying Start Project based at Monkton Primary School, which attracts children from the nearby Castle Quarry Site and also from outside of the catchment area. The children start at nursery school, progress to foundation phase and then to primary school. A lot of Bev's work entails engaging with young people and encouraging them to enter into secondary school education, with the result that currently, there are some 70 children in secondary school and 17 attend the Priory Project. Six children have elected home education, which has been a recent development, but Bev is proud to note that every child has transferred this year into either mainstream secondary or into the Priory Project.

The Priory Project

When some eighteen years ago Bev was appointed to look into the reasons as to why young Gypsy and Traveller children did not attend secondary school, her plan was to work with 11 year old Gypsy and Traveller children and help their transition to secondary school. Bev discovered that parents were very happy with the primary school education provision, but they did not want their children attending mainstream secondary school. Parents said that they had an excellent relationship with the Head teacher and teachers at the Monkton Primary School and that they wanted the Head teacher to provide secondary school education at the primary school. He agreed to this request and once funding was secured from the Welsh Government, a class was set up for Gypsy and Traveller children within the junior school.

The class attracted 17-year-olds coming back to education after having left school at the age of 11 and transitioning 11 year old school children. The first two years attracted a lot of young children who had been out of main stream education for almost four or five years but over the years this gap in education has been eradicated with children transitioning direct either to the mainstream secondary school or the Priory Project. Initially, the curriculum comprised Maths, English, IT and Science, but over the years this has expanded and now offers a more broad based range of subjects. The impact of the Priory Project was far reaching, as Bev notes that once the initial fear of education had been

removed, there was a noticeable increase in the number of young 8 and 11 year old children enrolling into primary school for the first time.

Integration

Although children come into the Priory Project, integration is a priority and a lot of hard work and effort goes into encouraging children to remain in mainstream education and ensure that both parents and children recognise that coming into the Project is not an easy option. Bev recognises the limitation of the Priory Project as children are unable to take the GCSE examinations despite a curriculum that is varied but albeit vocational. Parents and children are unequivocally advised that children interested in specialist subjects or sports like rugby should opt for mainstream education.

Bev says that she had hoped that by now, some 18 years on, the Priory Project would have shut down with all children transitioning to mainstream secondary education; at the same time she is heartened by the fact that a project that started with some 3 children now has 70 children on its roll. Bev recalls instances where, for example, a father was not in favour of mainstream education but felt safe in the comfort that if matters did not work out in secondary school, his son could come into the Priory Project and proudly notes that the child was so happy in school that he did not exercise the option to opt out.

In the same vein, Bev acknowledges that those children who have enrolled in mainstream school have then opted out either because of poor attendance and / or behavioural issues and then done remarkably well in the Project. Good behaviour is a pre-requisite and whilst behavioural issues can be of concern, this is addressed jointly with the support of the parents and the Behaviour Support Unit, and Bev finds that matters are quickly resolved. Because the Priory Project is considered to be quite a privileged opportunity, any threat of exclusion is taken very seriously both by parents and the children recognise this.

The excellent relationship that Bev and her Service enjoy with the parents is patently obvious. The physical location of the Priory Project amidst the community has meant that parents seek advice and guidance on non education issues, for example, on housing issues and often tend to drop in to see staff on any other areas of concern. Bev notes that the community had become very reliant for help in non education matters over time, but this was recognised and a decision was taken to take steps to ensure that the community should become self reliant. Recent cuts in the education budget has affected resources, but some lottery funding has meant that the Service has been able to use the school as a base to recruit staff for non educational service that includes a full time health worker and advocacy workers.

Life after Priory

Bev says that the Gypsy and Traveller community is very keen to work, adding that they are committed and willing to work long hours. Many Gypsy and Traveller children have left the Priory Project with good literacy and numeracy skills and then gone into employment. Many have pursued further education and many young girls have trained as learning support assistants; in fact 30% of the school's learning support assistants are from the Gypsy and Traveller community and many are employed as learning support assistants in other local schools. Hairdressing is another course that is very popular and Bev proudly speaks of a former Gypsy and Traveller student who has since qualified as a hairdresser and recently set up a salon that attracts almost 80% of its custom from the settled community.

In addition, several young women work in a local store near a Gypsy and Traveller site, which employs as much as 25% of its staff from the community. Bev reckons that it is highly admirable particularly bearing in mind the experiences of the Gypsy and Traveller community of not being allowed into local shops. Because of the community's geographical location within a Communities First area, Bev and her Service have been able to secure funding to enable parents to gain learning and engagement skills which in turn have not only enabled them to learn with their children, but also to secure skills to help them gain employment with major local employers including oil refineries within the area. Bev explains that a pre-requisite for working on these oil refineries is a Site Safety Certificate which costs some £150. Bev says that she and her team have been able to arrange training for the attainment of such certificates for some 15 people (both from the Gypsy and Traveller and mainstream communities), and this in turn has then enabled them to secure employment at the oil refineries. Economic independence has meant that many families have been able to purchase houses and land for construction and secured jobs with stores like Tesco's and McDonalds which is a testament to the success and prosperity that the Priory Project and those working on it has been able to achieve.

Sometimes young children join the Priory Project and then decide that they want to go to main stream school. Bev finds that young boys in particular are keen on learning new skills, even though they have the fall back position of joining their fathers in the family's scaffolding or metal businesses. Cooking is also a subject that does not go ignored, with young girls and boys keen to learn domestic skills. The focus is on broadening horizons; Bev recently took a

group of young women from the Gypsy and Traveller community to Auschwitz and some children were also taken to France.

Attendance

The level of engagement that Bev and her Service have with parents is very high. However, despite this, there is a very slight drop in attendance, when for example, in cases of family bereavement, sickness, family weddings or travel; however, this does not become a major issue. In the same vein, young children join school for short periods when visiting with family or friends within the local Gypsy and Traveller community. Bev believes that the best approach is to speak with parents and find out what the issues are and then work towards a solution.

Bev says that she and her Service have not encountered racist bullying in school, and whilst this may exist in the secondary school, it certainly is absent in primary school.

Voluntary Withdrawals/Home Education

Bev says that parents have initiated withdrawals of children from school and currently there are six withdrawals, two of whom will be returning on a part time basis. A lot of effort was made to encourage parents to allow children to continue with secondary school, but Bev feels that the distance some children have to travel to get to secondary school is almost eleven or twelve miles. Bev confirms that whilst provision of dedicated transport to and fro school was made, parents were not happy having young children travelling long distances away from home; in addition, the number of children concerned in that locality was considered to be too small to justify setting up a learning project similar to that at the Priory Project.

Bev says that the Service aims to get all children to school, be it mainstream schools or the Priory Project. Home Education is not something that she or the Service is willing to support or encourage. To discourage home education, no support is provided to home educated children but consideration has been given to the concept of flexi schooling where children would spend time both at home and at school, with an opportunity of working both at home and at school. This requires children to be registered at school, but Bev says that if children were to attend school only for a couple of days, then that would affect the school attendance rates. However, if the Welsh Government were to recognise a category for flexi schooling, then both schools and families would be happy and Bev feels that once children were to start school on this basis,

then many of them would wish to continue attending school on a more regular basis.

External Agencies

Bev and her Service engage with Citizens Advice Bureau, the Police, Save the Children, Communities First, the Local Health Board and Bereavement Counselling as part of the support extended to the Gypsy and Traveller community and help them to access various pots of funding. The Unity Project is a lottery funded project that commenced in January [2014] to facilitate community engagement and encourage the community to help themselves to access services and resources. The Local Health Board has also commissioned two projects specific to the Gypsy and Traveller community, both of which are noteworthy.

Bev is a member of the Gypsy Traveller Forum and the Communities First Forum and is an independent advisory group member for the Dyfed Powys Police, the Residents Association and also helps to train police in dealing with race hate crime matters. With a view to broadening horizons and knowledge, Bev has taken Gypsy and Traveller children to the Houses of Parliament; set up meetings with Members of Parliament; taken them to Brussels to meet with their respective Members of the European Parliament and arranged meetings with local town councillors and Welsh Government Assembly members and ministers.

Budgets and Finance

The Priory Project is part funded (75%) by Welsh Assembly Government and the remaining 25% comes from the local education authority.

Bev's Service has seen a reduction in budget, and this has recently resulted in the loss of one staff member. She says that whilst it is easier to manage without books and pens, it is tough to cope with the loss of a staff member who can work on the ground and engage with community members. Nevertheless, she hopes to encourage schools to continue to accept more responsibility in their role in encouraging young Gypsy and Traveller children to remain in education.

The Service had 1.4 teachers who worked part time in the secondary school with Gypsy and Traveller children five days a week, and they then went out to the schools; but the budget reduction has impacted on the Project and the work they undertook in the schools. As a result, the level of time the teachers

are able to spend in schools has been reduced, resulting in a more thinly spread service. Bev says that her team and the relationship they are able to build with the Gypsy and Traveller community makes the Service special. She adds that regrettably, there is a high turnover of staff who are employed on part time and temporary year-on-year contracts, which means that relationships which take time to build then become difficult to sustain.

Policies and Policy Framework

The policy framework that shapes the work that Bev and her Service undertake is shaped by the National Curriculum and "The Travelling to a Better Future" framework. Not only has Bev made a substantial contribution to the formulation of the latter, young community members who have been working with the police force have also contributed to the development of the framework. Bev advises that some of these young children were recently invited to participate in Equality and Human Rights Commission's Project entitled "Not just another statistic" which explores the life experiences of Gypsy and Travellers asylum seekers and refugees, transgender people and people with a mental health condition.

Bev and her Service tend to consult with the Gypsy and Traveller community on any proposals that are likely to impact the community and then given evidence to Inquiries on issues that affect education and community cohesion. This has often led to positive results, for example leading to an increase in funding not only for schools in Pembrokeshire, but also throughout Wales, particularly those with a large Gypsy and Traveller school population.

All community members have access to Bev and her Service on a regular basis and despite the fact that forums and conferences are held in Cardiff, some 100 miles away from Pembrokeshire, views are transmitted and presentations made at such events. Bev points out that many community members (including children) enjoy an excellent relationship with Assembly Members and Ministers, with many of them on first name terms.

Bev says accommodation and the recently introduced horse grazing and scrap metal legislation are issues of major concern to the Gypsy and Traveller community. Linked with accommodation and the high costs of fuel – there is water and electricity charges that are payable on the Gypsy and Traveller sites. With 50% of the children coming from Gypsy Sites, these are issues that impact hugely on families who are trying hard to provide a better future for their children.

Bev is pleased to note that the new Housing Bill proposes to impose a statutory duty on local authorities to provide Gypsy and Traveller sites across Wales and in relation to Pembrokeshire, Bev hopes that the statutory duty to

undertake an accommodation needs assessment will have a huge positive impact in terms of making housing provision for future generations.

Bev says that the Scrap Metal Act has had slightly less impact on the Gypsy and Traveller community in Pembrokeshire as many community members are gainfully employed in other trades and business which has been made possible because they have had the benefit of formal education. Bev believes that because community members are able to make a positive contribution to the development of policies, there is an upward and positive spiral which has worked for the benefit of the community.

Media

Bev says that "My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding" had become a major topic of discussion to such an extent that community members had approached her to see if a television programme could be produced to project their views so as to counteract what the programme was portraying. Bev recalls one young woman saying that she avoided going into Tesco the day after the programme was broadcast just to avoid being questioned on practices portrayed by the programme. Whilst Bev was able to negotiate the production of a television programme along the lines requested by the community, community members ultimately chose to produce a radio programme instead. Nevertheless, this is a reflection of the extra mile that Bev and her Service are willing to go in their work with the community.

Bev appreciates very much the sensitive and kind manner in which the local press has helped to publicise the work undertaken by the Priory Project and the success of local community members.

Outcomes

With the intention of getting as many young children into education, Bev measures the success of the Service on the increasing numbers of Gypsy and Traveller community members in paid employment outside of the community. In addition to the young hairdresser who has recently set up her own hairdressing salon, she notes that another community member has set up her own cleaning company. Success is celebrated and the local community and press have been willing to support achievements, be these small or large.

Whereas many years ago, living on a Gypsy Site was a bar to employment, now Bev notes that living on Gypsy Sites is no longer a barrier with many community members securing jobs with private businesses. Bev points out that the main street in the locality where the Priory Project is based has some five hairdressing salons, of which four employ young Gypsy and Traveller girls; McDonalds has employed three community members with at least two of them employed as managers. Bev says that when an employer was recently asked why he employed members of the Gypsy and Traveller community, he said:

“..because they turn up to work every day...their work ethic is absolutely amazing”.

Bev adds that such is the confidence that this employer places in his young employees, that he leaves them in charge when he is on holiday and entrusts them with the keys to his business premises.

Bev notes that some community members who have had formal training are now parents of children who currently attend school, and says that some of these parents have chosen to return to school, retrain and engage in new trades.

Aims and Objectives

Bev has great expectations of the Unity Project and feels that the community needs to continue to become more self reliant and have the confidence to deal with new situations and challenges. In addition, she feels that other agencies that can be of assistance to the Gypsy and Traveller community need to establish ways and methods of engagement but at the same time, be very cautious in terms of what they promise to the community as she believes that broken promises will inevitably lead to fractured relationships and loss of confidence amongst the community. Bev points out that members of different communities, for example, the Roma community, have different experiences and have issues specific to their circumstances which can often have no bearing on the experiences of those who live on Site.

Bev says that her wish is to see every young Gypsy and Traveller child make the transition into secondary school and whilst she accepts that there may be reservations over the ethos of the Priory Project, she feels that the Priory Project can be a good model for children from any community who have concerns or reservations in continuing with secondary school education. Bev believes that this is because the Priory Project can not only provide a safety net for any children who tend to drop out of secondary school, but because one of the net gains has been in young children wanting to return to mainstream secondary education.

Bev also believes that new staff that is recruited must be sensitive to issues that affect the Gypsy and Traveller community and have the awareness necessary to effectively perform the task that they are charged with, and notes that a rigorous staff recruitment and interview process is essential for building relationships with the community and effective delivery of the Project aims and objectives.

Having Gypsy and Traveller community members working in schools alongside staff from the mainstream community has helped to nurture good relationships with the community and this together with a team of dedicated staff, who genuinely wish to engage with the community., This is an asset but Bev feels that simply ploughing money into any project, aim or objective will achieve little in the absence of a sense of purpose, objective, commitment and the right attitude are not present. In this connection, Bev proudly speaks of some of her pupils who are now working towards becoming teachers, studying for degrees or successful hairdressers.

DATA

Pembrokeshire

i. **The number of Gypsy and Traveller children on roll in 2014:**

Pre - School:	48
Primary:	112
Secondary:	81

ii. **The number of Gypsy and Traveller children on roll in the five previous years:**

As above (more or less)

iii. **The number of children that have been excluded from school over the last five years:**

None: 0

iv. **The number of children that have elected home education during 2013 and 2014**

Six: 6

THE PRIORY PROJECT

Set out below is an excerpt from the **THE PRIORY PROJECT** website [<http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/content.asp?id=10226>]

This has been included to demonstrate the aims, objectives and the commitment behind the project:

We have amalgamated Monkton Priory Infants and Junior schools, and have built a new extension to the school building. The extension contains two new classrooms; a hi-tech IT suite; a community room; and a suite for the Priory Project. This project was set up for secondary age Gypsy youngsters, who traditionally leave formal education at this age, and provides learning opportunities based on a curriculum to suit their needs. The new extension provided an excellent venue and facilities for the project, and is also available to the entire Gypsy community, as adult learning opportunities are also provided.

At the learning centre for secondary learners, the whole curriculum is based a Gypsy Traveller learner. Learners with no previous education start with basic levels of literacy and numeracy and so the first objective is to improve reading skills. The centre provides as full a curriculum as possible to suit learners of different ages and abilities and takes account of learners' previous experiences. Learners also take part in a pilot scheme called the "Tripartite Award" that aims to teach basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The teaching approach is through a modular form. The modules include: driving; citizenship; food hygiene; Wales, Europe and the world; leisure; health and safety; what do you think?; and sport.

Learners who attend this centre achieve excellent results in both academic and social attainment and talk positively about their future aspirations.

What are we trying to achieve and why is it important?

We want to ensure that all young people in Pembrokeshire get equal access to opportunities to fulfil their potential. The Monkton Priory project ensures that gypsy youngsters remain integrated within the education community. The youngsters are taught life skills, such as reading, computing skills or how to pass a driving theory test. We want to equip these young people with the skills necessary to join the labour market. The adult learning that is provided at the unit is also intended to help adults within the gypsy community to find employment opportunities, in a climate when traditional opportunities for them have diminished.

How is it benefiting you?

It is important to have an education system based on equality for all. Diversity within society should be a matter for celebration. Everyone within the community in Pembrokeshire has equal rights and opportunities to develop to the maximum of their capabilities.

Evidence

Estyn has recently published a survey of provision made by schools and local authorities to meet the needs of gypsy traveller learners.

The following statements apply to the Priory Project.

Where secondary schools are unable to respond effectively to the learning needs of gypsy traveller learners, a minority of local education authorities have established learning centres in primary schools for gypsy traveller learners of secondary school age. This is generally a more efficient and effective way of educating learners who are unable to cope in mainstream classes in secondary school.

In some learning centres the local education authority provides teachers and support workers who are experienced in working with gypsy traveller learners. These staff members are able to offer an education effectively adapted for gypsy travellers. The centres are generally well resourced with books, equipment and good-quality educational software. Typically, these centres build up materials that reflect the gypsy traveller culture, and arrange outings for gypsy traveller learners. These centres have proved very successful in keeping learners in education. Learners taste success and gain certification and qualifications. A few learners have continued into further education where they have gained NVQs in hairdressing. Others are studying bricklaying and business administration.

In the best practice, local education authorities have trained members of the gypsy traveller community to work with gypsy traveller children in schools and nurseries. They work effectively, act as positive role models for the rest of the community and for learners in the school, and provide a strong link between the school and the community.

5. Success Stories

This Section sets out a snapshot of the experiences of young Gypsy and Traveller people from a range of backgrounds who have chosen to pursue further education and have made progress in their chosen fields.

5.1 **CHERELL BOSWELL** **Hairdresser and Salon Owner** **Pembrokeshire**

Cherell is a hairdresser and who has her own hairdressing salon. Cherell is based in Pembrokeshire and qualified as a hairdresser some six years ago. Cherell says that she wanted to become a hairdresser for as long as she could remember and the most significant factor that played a major role in helping her decide on the career of her choice was that hailing from a Gypsy background, she:

“...wanted people to know she was capable”.

Cherell grew up in Pembrokeshire and spent her childhood in the area of Monkton. Growing up on a Gypsy site where she describes the conditions on site as “...good – all facilities are okay. Just not enough pitches...” Cherell comes from a family of four; she has a brother, her father is a mechanical fitter and her mother is a housekeeper.

Cherell attended Monkton Priory Project and says that she owes her interest in school and education to her parents who have always supported her. She recalls her memories of school as:

“...good... [I was] accepted for who I am...”

Cherell’s favourite subject in school was art and she says that her experience with the teachers was “excellent”. She adds that she did not feel that the teachers behaved any differently towards her than they did towards her class fellows and in particular pupils from the settled community; and neither did she feel marginalised in any manner. Cherell says that she was never excluded from school, temporarily or permanently and states that her school provided specialist support for Gypsy and Traveller children via the local authority Gypsy and Traveller Education staff.

Cherell says that her talent and potential was recognised by her teachers and is grateful for the mentoring and coaching she received, adding that after finishing with school, she attended college. She says what helped her to get the focus and direction to excel in her chosen career was:

“... being encouraged and loving what I do...”

Cherell says that her path to qualifying as a hairdresser was “okay” in that she did not encounter untoward difficulties in achieving what she had set out to achieve. She categorises her experience in trying to qualify as a hairdresser and opening her own salon as “probably similar” to that of her counterparts within the settled community and neither does she face more obstacles and difficulties because of her ethnicity because:

“... people are pleased with the job I do”.

Cherell assesses her own success when compared with her contemporaries either from within the Gypsy and Traveller communities or the settled community as “very successful”. Now an employer herself, Cherell says that she has similar hopes and aspirations for Gypsy and Traveller children growing up today although she cannot help but feel that her life could have been made better had improved measures been put in place in terms of health, work, education, welfare benefits, accommodation and rates as equally important:

“being listened to and being involved in decision-making”

Elaborating further upon her success, Cherell says that she received “excellent” media coverage when she set up her own hairdressing salon and adds that the settled community has supported her and continued to support her in making her business a success.

5.2 **KIRBY JONES** **Learning Support Assistant** **Pembrokeshire**

Kirby also hails from Pembrokeshire and grew up on a Gypsy site where she describes conditions as “good”. She attended Monkton Priory Community School and then the Priory learning centre and says that she had always wanted to be a teacher, an aim which her parents also supported. She comes from a family of six; she has two brothers and a sister, her father is a mechanical fitter and her mother is a cleaner. Kirby says that it was the fact that her parents had not attended school or achieved any educational qualification that gave her the focus and direction to excel in her studies and work. Kirby says that the settled community have been very supportive of the work that she does as a Learning Support Assistant and says that they are very “grateful” for what she does.

Kirby attended Pembrokeshire College Carmarthen, Trinity University and describes her further education experience as “excellent”. She says that she was greatly influenced in choosing teaching as a career because of her teachers and because:

“...I loved [it] at school”.

Having studied for a foundation degree, Kirby has been working as a Learning Support Assistant for some eight years. She says that the secondary education support and opportunities that she received played a significant factor in helping her decide on her career choice. Despite being faced with certain personal challenges, Kirby has nevertheless achieved her ambition to make her career in the teaching profession.

Kirby has “good memories” of school and notes that the school made special provision via the services of the local Gypsy and Traveller Education staff. Her

favourite subject in school was English and she says that she had a very "close relationship with her teachers". She says that she was treated no differently than her class mates and was never excluded from school. Kirby considers herself "very successful" particularly as some of her contemporaries did not continue with education. However, she feels that she has had to encounter a lot more obstacles and difficulties as a member of the Gypsy and Traveller community than perhaps she would have had to as a member of the settled community.

Kirby's hopes and aspirations for Gypsy and Traveller children and young people growing up today are that:

"... they all go on to achieve and gain professional [qualifications]."

5.3 DANIEL BAKER, PhD (Gypsy Aesthetics) World renowned Artist

Daniel is a world-renowned artist who has, since leaving school in 1983, been working as an artist. In addition, for the last several years he has also been working as a theatre scenic artist. He holds an undergraduate degree in Fine Art (1983) and graduated with a Master's degree in Sociology in 2001, both of which he says were enormously influential in his professional and personal development. He also holds a Ph.D. in Gypsy Aesthetics.

Daniel's success is illustrated by much of his noted work. He made appearances in 2011 and 2012 at the Venice Biennales both as exhibitor and advisor to the first and second Roma Pavilions which have proved to be important and historic in terms of promoting a wider understanding of Roma culture and the meaning of Roma artistic practice. Daniel commenced reading for a doctorate in Gypsy Aesthetics at the Royal College of Art in 2006 and graduated in 2011. He says that the intervening five years proved very stimulating and productive and laid the foundation for his current work which includes the publication of a book (which he has co-edited with Maria Hlavajova, curator of the second Roma Pavilion) on the subject of Roma's influence on wider social and artistic practices; and the development of new strands within his own art work.

Daniel says that he knew from a very young age that he wanted to become an artist and he recalls the encouragement from his family and teachers which he says played a very important and significant role in helping him pursue the career of his choice. Daniel enjoyed drawing from an early age at home and at school, and he says that:

"...when you show promise at something and it gets attention you tend to do more"...

He adds that with practice he got better and found that he enjoyed what he did. Daniel's family and community members encouraged his interest in painting and drawing and he believes that this was predominantly due to the fact that he was using a visual language that was readily accessible to those who found reading and writing difficult, including his parents for whom literacy was an issue. Daniel says that his father had painted wagons in his youth and made flowers out of paper and wood for the rest of his family to sell.

Daniel says that visual culture is taken very seriously by Romanies and any such or related skill is "...highly prized" and he believes that this is partly due to the Romany community's historic lack of attachment to the written word. He recalls that when he was growing up as a child, they had no books at home and says that:

"...our histories didn't seem to be contained in books so they were not seen as important..."

Daniel believes that the rich visual culture of his community has been the single most important influence on his choice of career. The ways in which the artistic and the functional combine to convey the spiritual and the everyday concerns of Romani life is a source of constant fascination for Daniel and he believes that had he not gone down the more academic art route, he would have ended up "...making things anyway".

Speaking about difficulties that he encountered when pursuing his career, Daniel notes that the art world is "...notoriously precarious, [whilst] ...talent is a factor, luck plays an enormous part - being in the right place at the right time counts for a lot and can mean the difference between being seen as relevant or not". Having said this, he believes that his achievements within the artistic and academic strands of his career, the artistic and the academic, have been made through focused work and application with a set of goals in mind. He says that it is difficult to say whether this achievement has been smooth sailing or difficult because in order to make progress, a lot of work is involved and overcoming obstacles is part of that process. He adds, however, that his career path has been smooth sailing at times and difficult at others.

When considering the impact of his ethnicity on his career, Daniel says that:

"..I don't think that my ethnicity has impacted negatively on my later career because part of the currency of my academic and artistic work is tied up in the very fact of my ethnic and cultural identity. If anything, this has been a positive factor. However, the situation was different during my early education where from early on, it seemed beneficial to hide my ethnicity. Looking back, it seems that the main factor informing this was a lack of any positive reference to Gypsy Roma and Traveller life within the schooling system. As a child, if you don't see your experience mirrored in your surroundings (i.e. school) you are unlikely to feel that you can bring your experience into the open. This is [a] major

factor in inhibiting learning and integration and has significant impact on the education of young Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people...

"...Personally I would say that the obstacles that I have experienced have been partly the result of my own perception of what was possible for me to achieve. By this I mean that the absence of role models and positive portrayals of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller life encouraged low expectations in me at an early age...

"...Only later in life, after an education which enabled me to see that the limitations on my progress were imposed from the outside and that I had a right to an equal say in the world and my destiny, did I start to take control of my life and develop ambition for myself..."

Assessing his success when compared with his contemporaries, whether they are from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community or the settled community, Daniel says that:

"...I would say that I have been relatively successful in terms of career recognition and satisfaction [when] compared to my settled and non-settled contemporaries. However, this does not translate into financial success, but I was aware of this possibility when I embarked on my chosen path..."

Speaking about his experiences with the press /media, Daniel says:

"...The press and media have received my work with general enthusiasm and encouragement particularly in parts of Europe outside the UK where there seems to be much more interest in Gypsy Roma and Traveller culture and in particular Roma issues and their potential to inform wider political, social and cultural issues...

"...my ethnic and cultural identity informs both my work and the projects that I am invited to participate in. This means that my ethnic positioning is central to press/media interest in my work. Were I not from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community, my work may not be of as much interest, but then I would probably be making different work..."

Speaking about the settled community's response to his work, Daniel says:

"...The reaction to my work by the settled population has been generally positive. Most seeing it as informative and engaging. The critics that write about my work and the curators that exhibit it are generally non-Gypsy and I think that they see my work as allowing insight into the experience of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities that might not be accessed otherwise. This possibility

for art to offer new ways of approaching familiar or complex questions is very interesting to me...”

Daniel was born in Orpington, a suburb of London on the Kent border. His family is part of the large population of Romani Gypsies that have lived in and around the Kent area for many generations. The majority of these families live in houses now but many still live on Gypsy sites within the area. Daniel’s family lived on a long term Gypsy site but by the time Daniel was born, the site had been sold for redevelopment into an industrial site; thus when Daniel was born, his family lived in a house within the settled community. One of six children, Daniel’s father was a horse dealer and later, a scrap metal dealer. His mother was a farm labourer as were the many other Romani women in the locality.

Daniel attended infant, junior and secondary school near his home and when he passed his eleven plus exam, he had a range of grammar schools in the area to choose from. He states:

“...I chose the nearest one which in hindsight was probably not the best choice. ...I didn’t like school at first but after a while I began to look forward to the activities in early school and particularly the art lessons. I enjoyed learning and eventually realized that school could help achieve my goals, but this was not till my early teens when I had a good idea of the career path I wanted to follow...”

“...school was important to my parents. They both had difficulty reading and writing so wanted their children to be literate at least. They made sure that all their children attended school. This was relatively straightforward because we lived in one area for a long time. The situation is more complex for families on the move like my brother and his children, for example, because they were regularly moving to different parts of the country. This made continual school attendance difficult for them and their education suffered...”

“...My memories of school are relatively positive. I think I focused on what I could get from it and just kept my head down till I could do what I wanted to with my life. This meant going to art school as soon as possible...I liked art and physics best [favourite subjects in school]...”

“...As far as I remember most of my teachers were pretty good. There were some not so helpful or good at teaching but also some that were exceptional and inspirational. These were usually the art teachers in my experience...”

“...All of my art teachers were instrumental in my decision to become an artist. They all recognized and encouraged my abilities from infant school to secondary school. Their support made me

work harder and so impacted upon my future achievements within the field...

"...I don't remember feeling that I was treated differently from the other pupils.

In terms of his relationship with other children in his class, school and the settled community, Daniel recalls that:

"...There were quite a few Traveller children at my school. There was name calling but this was on a par with other names that circulated the playground. Children will focus on any kind of perceived difference, whether imaginary or otherwise, in order to reinforce their own sense of belonging...

"...I think the 'Gypo' thing was used as a general term of abuse whether someone was Romani or not. My memory of bullying may not be representative because there were a large number of settled Travellers in the area that I lived so our presence was relatively commonplace..."

Speaking about his experiences going through the education system, Daniel says while he was at secondary school:

"...I never took any of my school mates back to my home during this time. This was because our street housed only Romani families. I didn't want my school mates to know too much about me or my background. I must have felt I would be disadvantaged or seen differently had they known I was a Gypsy. I had a cousin at the same grammar school in the same year but in a different class. As far as I remember we never acknowledged each other in school the whole time we were there. Looking back this must have been quite stressful for me. I suppose feeling I had to hide who I really was must have been the biggest obstacle going through the education system...

"...When name calling happened I completely blanked it out and did not engage at all with the perpetrators. This furthered any sense of isolation I suppose and increased my desire to leave school as soon as possible".

Daniel says that he was never excluded, whether temporarily or permanently from school.

Of his high school and university experiences, Daniel says:

"...During the latter years of secondary school, I was really just waiting to go to art school. My art teachers were very encouraging although I remember the Deputy Head teacher trying to persuade me to follow a different path as he thought that Art School would

be a dead end. I applied at age 15 but had to wait another year because I was not old enough to attend. My time at Art School was very important in forming grounding for my future career and interestingly now, looking back, I can see that many of the concerns dealt within the work I made at that time still resonate within my current projects. Even during my time at Art School, I was pretty secretive about my background and my family. I really could not see how I could reconcile my "Gypsiness" with my experience in higher education. This seems a shame now, particularly in an art school environment where you would think difference would be embraced and valued. I didn't feel this and consequently part of me was quite isolated from my peers...

"...I [read for] my "MA" fifteen years after leaving Art School. This was a totally different experience thanks not least to my Professor at the time; Thomas Acton, Professor of Romani Studies at Greenwich University. I contacted Thomas after reading a newspaper article about his inaugural lecture at Greenwich. I phoned him to ask about his course and he encouraged me to enrol for an introductory unit. After the first few weeks of study I was encouraged to stay on and complete the MA. This was a very empowering experience for me. Learning the 'official' history of my people, and realising that I could have a say in the continuing narrative of my community, had a profound effect on me, not only on my understanding of how I fitted into the world but also how I could impact upon the world around me. During this period I felt that I developed a real sense self and my potential as an individual. Education is a powerful thing when the circumstances are right...

"...A year or so after MA graduation I was accepted onto the PhD program at Goldsmiths in the Department of Cultural Studies. After one year of part time study I realised that my art practice was going to be an important element of my research. Goldsmiths did not run a practice led doctoral research program at the time so after my first year I decided to take some time out to decide how to proceed. During the following year I contacted the Royal College of Art to see if they would be interested in my project. I was eventually offered a place on the research program in the Department of Painting. My PhD research combined my art practice with my sociology training gained during my MA; a combination that was enthusiastically received and encouraged by my supervisors at the RCA. My subject matter was seen as novel and my research methods innovative and the project seemed to chime with the priorities of the research department at the time. I was lucky to arrive just at the right time as cut backs in research funding and increases in tuition fees were just round the corner.

Speaking about negative experiences, Daniel says:

"...I only experienced one episode of blatant racism during my time at the RCA. I was giving a talk about my work and during my presentation I mentioned the town that I had grown up in and one of the MA painting students said that he was living there at the moment and that he had recently been mugged by some Gypsies on a bus in the area. He went on to ask "why I was making work that celebrated these people" and [used] words to the effect that it was a waste of tax payers' money and shouldn't be happening. I said I was sorry to hear that he had been mugged and asked how he knew the muggers were Gypsies. He said he just knew... I quickly drew the exchange to a close and eventually finished my presentation. None of the tutors present made any reference to the event after the talk. I felt very let down by my tutors and the institution. I spoke to some of the other research students later that day and decided to lodge a formal complaint against the student in question the following day...

"...Immediately the Head of Department and my Supervisor contacted me by telephone to express their outrage at the incident and proposed ways of addressing it. I think they had not experienced this kind of thing before and clearly had no procedure to deal with it. It was a steep learning curve for them. Eventually the student was cautioned with the possibility of expulsion. I made it clear that I did not want to be responsible for him losing his degree but that I wanted there to be some consequences for his behaviour. He did graduate and hopefully will think twice in the future before spouting more racist nonsense. It showed me that prejudice can be found in any environment, even those where most believe that such behaviour is a thing of the past. Apart from this incident my experience of doctoral research was generally positive.

Daniel outlines his career path and the factors that influenced him along the way as follows:

"...After I left Art School, I worked in an office for a while to pay off my student debts. I then became a freelance scenic artist working on productions for the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Royal Opera House and the Coliseum. After freelancing for a few years I joined the Royal National Theatre as a staff scenic artist. I worked on some very interesting productions. During my time as a scenic artist I learned lots of techniques that I now use in my own work. After a number of years at the RNT I left to pursue my own art practice. It took a number of years to find my own voice with various breakthroughs coming along the way both in terms of the development of my art work and exhibiting opportunities...

"...One key turning point was the completion of my MA and my subsequent decision to combine my artistic and academic experience for my PhD research. This prompted an important shift

in my artwork resulting in the coalescence of a number of preoccupations. Another important point was the inclusion of my work in the first Roma Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2007. This gave my work an international platform and led to a number of interesting and productive artistic and academic collaborations ranging from exhibitions to publications. My work continues to develop in the light of these events...

Hopes and Aspirations

Daniel says that:

"...I still have lots of things that I want to achieve. These may or may not come to fruition but I have made reasonable progress towards them so let's see what happens..."

He says that what gives him focus and direction to excel in the work that he does is:

"...Encouragement from others, like family and teachers...has been a very significant factor in helping me pursue the things that I believe in.

As for young Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children growing up today, Daniel says:

"...I hope that more [Gypsy and Roma and Traveller] children are able to take advantage of the Education system and use it for their own benefit. No matter what you want to do in life, it can only help to have grounding in the basics of learning; without this we are all disadvantaged..."

Whilst accepting that he has not lived in a trailer or on a site for any significant length of time, he says that legislation, for example, that which removed the duty of local authorities to provide sites has not impacted upon him personally but says that he knows people who were affected by this change in legislation.

In terms of Welsh, Central and Local Government and the role each can play to improve conditions, Daniel says that consideration ought to be given to:

"...spending more money on [areas like health, work, education, welfare benefits, accommodation, being listened to and involved in decision making] by raising revenue through taxes and cutting down on tax evasion instead of badgering those with the least material wealth in society..."

5.4 **JAMES** **Academic Student** **Wales**

This section of this report focuses on the achievements of a young post graduate student who is now in the third year of reading for a PhD in Human Geography at the Centre for Migration Policy Research at a University in Wales. For the purposes of this report, this young individual will be referred to as James.

James was born in Sofia, Bulgaria where he spent his childhood, away from the Roma segregated community in Sofia. He comes from a family of four; his parents are business people who own and run their own business in Bulgaria. James graduated from an English language school in Sofia and speaks native Bulgarian, fluent English, intermediate Spanish and intermediate Romani.

James first arrived in the UK in 2007 to read for a Master of Arts degree in International Relations at the London Metropolitan University, after having already studied for an undergraduate degree in Political Science with a minor in Spanish language from the Northeastern Illinois University. James received an Honorary Scholarship awarded by the Political Science Department of Northeastern Illinois University as well as a scholarship based on academic excellence from the Department of Liberal Arts, Northeastern Illinois University.

James says that he always wanted to reach a higher level of education:

“...for my own sake, on the one hand, and because I love the intellectual and academic enquiries and pursuit of knowledge, on the second...the more I read the more questions started to come up and that is how I ended up in my current post-graduate degree...”

but he adds that it was not easy to get where he is today in terms of his educational achievements. James says that he had not planned to read for a doctorate but that:

“...it was simply the natural order of things. I tend to never plan in my life but tackle circumstances as they come...”

James identifies the most significant factor that played a major role in helping him on the path to his current academic path as the award of a scholarship from the Roma Education Fund's Roma International Scholar Programme, which he says has “lightened the burden of finances related to my studies here...”

James says that he has:

"...always given my best in undertakings and even though I have had many tough times, these are the times which are dearest and most sweet to me. These are the times which I recall and remind me that in order to achieve anything, I need to go the extra mile..."

James states that:

"...even though I am not a Traveller, in the sense that Roma people are travellers, I consider myself a world traveller. I have been personally away from my home country before I was 20 and studying and living in countries such as Germany, USA, UK and Spain – in that sense I believe freedom to travel has been the cornerstone for me to be here now. I maintain that is a characteristic of the 21st century and I do not consider myself as any exception..."

Of his school days, James says:

"...It was a great time for me; an enjoying time with friends – a time when I never took school seriously... do not think I used to have favorite subjects. What I enjoyed was Bulgarian language and literature, English language and Spanish language..."

He adds that his experience with his teachers was on the whole "positive" and he did not feel that his teachers behaved any differently towards him when compared with their behaviour toward his class mates. He also says that he did not feel marginalised either in or out of school in any respect, and does not recall facing any particular obstacles/adversities when going through the education system.

Speaking in detail about his educational achievements, James says that the factors that help give him focus and direction to excel in what he does is his:

"...genuine interest in a subject or any matter [which] is enough to keep me awake and make me give my full potential..."

James adds that:

"...Both in High School and during higher education I have always tried my best to learn and perform well. It was not because of any life aspirations which I hold; but simply it is a matter of trying my best in learning and performing well. I still do not have a high

opinion of any of my educational 'achievements'...I consider it just as a matter of a life chance and I am convinced that any person can do it, given they have the same chances..."

"...the first time I received a scholarship based on my academic performance was while I was doing my BA in Chicago. I was a recipient of an honorary Grant provided by the Political Science Department based on an essay competition. That was one of my first great achievements..."

Hopes and Aspirations

James says that:

"...I never had any goals in my life but always followed my passion, inner feelings, and true interests..."

and says that at some stage, he would like to:

"undertake work for the betterment of my community".

He hopes that his current research will contribute to knowledge and that:

"...I would love to work with Roma and other similar groups which face similar challenges, marginalisation and exclusion. I would really love to spend my energy and knowledge towards bettering my own people and others who are facing similar challenges".

In terms of his hopes and aspirations for young Gypsy and Traveller children, James says:

"...What I really hope is all Roma groups – young and old - have the chance to travel the world and pursue the satisfaction of their most immediate needs. I am of the opinion, also, that we are witnessing a unique time for our communities. This stems from greater rights and freedoms regardless of the rise of obvious xenophobic rhetoric and right-wing policies across Europe; Roma youths are now able to get education, learn and most [of all], meet other Roma from other parts of Europe. I would like to see a process which will give rise to a revival of Romani Identity, challenging stereotypes, and ultimately greater representation..."

"... I would like to see a greater representation of Roma in all spheres of business and employment..."

"...We all agree a lot needs to be done so that Roma get better education. I personally would like to see a more interactive system of learning for Roma pupils...Something of the kind of "learning

communities” where both parents and children learn and help each other to learn...

“...Being listened to and involved in decision making – this is the key if we are willing to see a tangible result in our efforts. I believe decision-making and people talking are the sole integral factors when it comes to policies of integration, empowerment and inclusion. In my eyes, this must be a two way street and a joint effort. I like to see an open and multicultural approach which would respect the cultural integrities of society and an approach which would strive to respect both the normative orders of society as well as its various cultural specificities...

“...What I would really wish to see is a greater involvement of Roma in all areas of life. This will help combat stereotypes and will also give us a chance for greater recognition. I believe we should shift the focus away from integration [to] empowerment, because I fear the former is often linked with assimilation while the latter with greater cultural recognition and representation. I believe that once we have a greater representation in the decision-making and the policy-making in our countries, as well as [at] EU level, the age-old hurdles in the areas of health, work, education, accommodation will gradually be tacked and properly addressed...”

6. Summary of Findings

This section summarises the findings based on contributions of the research participants; summarises conclusions from these findings and highlights issues or practices that could benefit from a closer examination, further consideration or action based on these findings.

6.1 Shirenewton Site Children and Young People

6.1.1 One half (50%) of the children said that they did not want to attend school and all but one of these children said that it was not their “belief” to attend school. The other half said that they wanted to go to school but that they stopped going to school because they were being bullied. Only one of these children gave travelling away from home as a reason for not attending school.

6.1.2 Three quarters of the children complained of being bullied at school and just under half reported that they were called names relating to their ethnicity at school. Only a quarter of the children said that they felt supported by their teachers, and only one eighth reported having a positive relationship with their teachers.

6.1.3 Just under half of the children interviewed said that their teacher did nothing to resolve any issues or problems that they were encountering in school, with only one eighth confirming teacher intervention to stop racist name calling. Only one eighth of the children stated that they felt that they were treated the same as their counterparts from the settled community and one quarter confirmed that their teachers did not engage in name calling. However, this does not suggest that the remainder experienced name calling by their teachers; nevertheless, this question was not answered by three quarters of those interviewed.

6.1.4 All children were very complimentary of the assistance they receive from the Traveller Education Service in helping them access vocational training, with three quarters confirming that they were very pleased with the help they receive from a female Traveller Education Officer and one eighth said that they were very pleased with help received from a male Traveller Education Officer. Only one eighth of the children interviewed felt that the Traveller Education Service could do more to help.

6.1.5 Half of the children rated education as being very important and three quarters confirmed that they could read and write and could use a computer. Three quarters of the children linked the importance of education to securing jobs.

6.1.6 Half of the children were either already training as hairdressers or waiting to commence such training. Just under half of the children interviewed were not in education, employment or training and a quarter of those interviewed said that in the past, they had had no luck in securing a job once prospective employers had found out about their ethnicity. One eighth of the children said that they did not mind what they did as long as they were not racially bullied.

6.2 Roverway Site Children and Young People

6.2.1 None of the children interviewed currently attend school. Only one quarter of the children said that they could read and write and use a computer; one sixth stated that they could not read or write at all and one sixth rated their ability to read and write as "not really well".

6.2.2 Over three quarters of the children interviewed reported experiences of being bullied in school; one sixth stated that they did not believe in school and one sixth said that they did not attend school because no one from their community did so.

6.2.3 One quarter said that they had plans to finish school; one sixth confirmed that it was their personal decision not to attend school and only one sixth confirmed that they liked attending school as they were being taught to read and write.

6.2.4 Just under half of the children interviewed said that their teachers made it difficult for them to attend school and just under three quarters said that their teachers did nothing to protect them from being bullied. One sixth of the children reported being hit by their teacher and only a sixth of the children confirmed being supported or listened to by their teacher.

6.2.5 One third of the children interviewed said that they had either received or were expecting to receive assistance from the Traveller Education Service and despite having bad experience in a training placement, one sixth of the children hoped to secure further assistance from the Traveller Education Service with a view to enrolling on an alternative training programme.

6.2.6 Half of the children interviewed wanted to secure further education/training and jobs, and one of them wanting to specialise in the field of education. One sixth of the children interviewed did not know of the nature of help that was available in terms of accessing further education and did not know how to access help from the Traveller Education Service.

6.3 Shirenewton Site Adults/Parents

6.3.1 Two thirds of the adults had personal experience of attending school (including high school); one third quoted cultural reasons for not being sent to school but said that they would now like the opportunity of some formal education to help secure a better future. One third had experienced segregated teaching and playtime at school. Two thirds said that they could read and write, with one being computer literate.

6.3.2 Two thirds of the adults that were interviewed said that their children were happy in school with one third stating that their children did not continue with secondary school because this was not the practice within the community. Two thirds reported that their children faced bullying in school with one third alleging that not only did teachers make it difficult for their children to attend school, but that there was no support from teachers and the Head Teacher when their child faced racist bullying at school.

6.3.3 One third of the parents had their children either home educated or attend Travellers only classes because of racist bullying at school. One third of the parents felt that their children were being treated fairly in school. Only one third of the parents felt that home education was a viable option.

6.3.4 Two thirds of the parents confirmed that education was important for their children, and one third emphasised the importance of a more "culturally aware" education provision. One third had a child about to commence a further education programme at a further education establishment.

6.3.5 Two thirds of the parents were in contact with the Traveller Education Service and one third had personal contact with school teachers. However, one third felt that the Traveller Education Service believed that their obligations towards the Gypsy and Traveller Community extended only to providing help with completing forms.

6.4 Roverway Site Adults/Parents

6.4.1 Of the adults that were interviewed, two thirds stated that they did not believe in school, with one quoting cultural differences and the exposure to "non-Gypsy" habits and another quoting racist bullying as a reason for not sending their children to school. One third of the parents in favour of education expressed concerns over the safety of their children when at school.

6.4.2 Only two thirds of the parents interviewed had personal experience of attending school; one third quoted bullying as a reason for not continuing with their schooling and one third expressed lack of belief in the system. One third of the parents had a very negative personal experience of school and two thirds said that they could not read, write or use a computer. One third confirmed that they could read, write and use a computer and one third hoped to re-engage with education.

6.4.3 Two thirds of the parents wanted their children to secure education and two thirds quoted bullying as a major problem that their children had faced in school. Only one third of the parents interviewed confirmed that their children were happy in school.

6.4.4 Two thirds of the parents said that some education was important for their children, with one third emphasising the importance of secondary school. One third of the parents felt that measures should be put in place to stop bullying in school and one third felt that Traveller children should attend separate classes in school.

6.4.5 All parents had hopes for their children securing jobs; however, two thirds said that their children were offered no training or information to enable them to gain employment when they left school. All parents also referred to the poor living condition on the Roverway Site, with one third making specific reference to the adverse impact that this had on their children's health. Two thirds of the parents pointed out the lack of play facilities on the Site, and all wanted an after school club to be operated on the Roverway Site.

6.5 Assumptions

6.5.1 Based on these responses, bullying at school appears to be a predominant reason that has prompted children to discontinue their education and this reason is closely followed by what they quote as cultural reasons or lack of "belief" in schooling. A high number of children also report being called names based on their ethnicity, the words "Gypsy", "Gypo" and "picky" being common terms of abuse. In addition, some children report having the word "Gypsy" prefixed to their name when being addressed by other pupils, for example "Gypsy X". Children also complain of a lack of support from teachers particularly in relation to addressing racist bullying behaviour perpetrated against them.

6.5.2 A majority of children recognise the role that education could play in helping them to secure employment; nevertheless, they believe that their prospects are hindered because potential employers hold their ethnicity against them.

6.5.3 Children and young people at the Shirenewton Site are highly complementary of the assistance that they receive from the Traveller Education Service staff and those at the Roverway Site are hopeful of receiving assistance in accessing the vocational training of their choice. Hairdressing appears to be the most favoured vocational training and child care and teaching are also mentioned as options. However, a high proportion of children do not appear to have a clear idea of the kind of training or education that they would like to pursue and neither do they appear to have an awareness of the options that could be available to them. Some older children who had left school without much education expressed regret in not pursuing their studies and this sentiment is also echoed by parents, some of whom would like to secure for themselves, an opportunity of accessing further education.

6.5.4 The number of children who have signed up for vocational training (predominantly hairdressing) appears to be higher at the Shirenewton Site than at the Roverway Site; however, this disparity could be attributed to the range of ages of the children interviewed and the lower number of the children that were interviewed at the Roverway Site. Nevertheless, a high proportion of the children interviewed at the Roverway Site are very keen to commence

vocational training and are hopeful of receiving assistance in this connection from the Traveller Education Service.

6.5.5 There is a degree of positivity when these young children speak about their hopes and aspirations. A number of children at the Shirenewton Site expressed a preference for gaining qualifications that could prove to be useful later in life as well as a hope for separate classes for Gypsy and Traveller children. One concern that emerged as being paramount for parents was the safety and wellbeing of their children, with the majority believing that they had to protect their children against bullying, discrimination and prejudice at school. This concern appears to be the predominant reason for parents withdrawing their children from school and either home educating them or having them attend special classes. Lack of confidence in teachers safeguarding their children against bullying is prevalent with many parents saying that they find that teachers do not take any action to stop such behaviour.

6.5.6 Several parents felt that teaching at school lacked "cultural awareness" and that the choice available to children in terms of further education did not accommodate the Gypsy "way of life" or relevant to the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community. Nevertheless, a high proportion of parents recognise the importance of education beyond primary school level, and call for more awareness of the Gypsy and Traveller culture. The majority of parents want their children to secure jobs and a life free from discrimination and prejudice.

6.6 Key Considerations Gypsy and Traveller Community

6.6.1 The concerns of the children, young people and the parents who participated in this research focus on allegations of racist bullying and lack of support from teachers. At the same time, a high proportion of these research participants do not give much credence to education or its benefits, citing lack of "belief" in the education process.

6.6.2 There is no doubt room for solutions to address the factors that have been quoted as reasons for not attending school which could lead to an improvement in the educational attainment of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people. However, if the Gypsy and Traveller community itself (adults, children or young people) places little if any importance on the concept of education, then regardless of measures that are put in place by stakeholders, be it the Welsh Government, Cardiff Council or the Third Sector, little if any progress is likely in this respect.

6.6.3 Nevertheless, based on the concerns expressed by the Gypsy and Traveller research participants, the Gypsy and Traveller Community may benefit from:

1. Attending workshops on the benefits of higher educational achievement. Ensure that workshops are run by experts with a proven track record in the area of Gypsy and Traveller attainment (See the approach adopted by Beverley Stephens of Pembrokeshire Council and Jane Jenkins of Moorland Primary School).
2. Engaging in face to face, full and frank discussions with stakeholders and putting forward suggestions that will facilitate collaborative working to secure increased transition of young children to secondary school education or to a form of education or training that will arm Gypsy and Traveller children and young people with qualifications to enable them to secure gainful employment.
3. Instil the value of higher educational attainment in children and young people against the backdrop of declining traditional Gypsy and Traveller trades and skills.
4. Access to a wide range of advocacy services on the Sites so that the Gypsy and Traveller community can receive guidance and assistance on educational and related concerns to help them resolve issues with relevant stakeholders, for example, the Traveller Education Service or schools.
5. Spending time on a regular basis (for example a few hours each month) at schools attended by Gypsy and Traveller children (subject to the agreement of relevant stakeholders) with a view to gaining first-hand experience of life in primary and secondary schools and familiarising themselves with the environment that their children are exposed to. This may help increase awareness of the measures schools have in place for the welfare of children and to help build trust and confidence in the school system.
6. Working in collaboration with Head Teachers/ teachers/ education providers to establish a programme of engagement/interaction with local schools with a view to promoting children's interest in higher educational attainment.
7. Volunteering as classroom assistant(s) (with the consent of relevant stakeholders) and participating as fully as possible in the education process of their children.
8. Adults/Parents improving their literacy and /or IT skills (where appropriate and relevant and preferably on each Site) to make themselves more self-sufficient in the provision of home education, if that is indeed the only education option that parents are willing to consider for their children (at least until such time that they have full confidence in the school education process).

9. Help with family and /or child care responsibilities to enable adults, children and young people to gain qualifications and access learning/ training/ apprenticeship opportunities by taking advantage of Government sponsored / fully funded training.
10. Easily accessible help, guidance and support to enable young people and adults to secure vocational qualifications and jobs. This need is particularly pronounced on the Roverway Site.

6.7 The Welsh Government

6.7.1 The Welsh Government has a range of initiatives to help promote education and wellbeing of children and young people. A small number of these are designed to specifically target and help promote educational attainment of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people, whilst the majority is applicable to all children and young people, irrespective of their respective ethnicity or cultural background. The Welsh Government has in previous years, made available a range of grant funding to schools and local authorities and continues to provide funding to help these stakeholders to meet or address the specific needs of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people.

6.7.2 Practices or measures (if any) to improve attainment levels of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people put in place by Cardiff Council or primary and secondary schools in the catchment area (other than at Moorland Primary School) have not been considered in this report save for references made by research participants. Hence, the impact of such measures (if any) on attainment levels of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people has not been discussed.

6.7.3 A summary of the initiatives and policies that have been specifically referred to by Welsh Government officers participating in this research are set out in Section 4 above. Resources have not permitted a detailed analysis of the effectiveness of these initiatives.

6.7.3 In the absence of evidence or information from Cardiff Council or the schools that were approached and have declined to participate in this research, it is not clear to what extent if any, such initiatives have been/are being implemented to help deliver the Welsh Government's commitment to the educational attainment of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people and as set out in the "Travelling to a Better Future" Framework, which document encompasses the Welsh Government's vision in this respect as follows:

"The Welsh Government is committed to promoting an inclusive approach to education and learning that is responsive to individual

educational needs and which supports all children and young people to reach their full potential”.

6.7.4 The 2011 Estyn report “The education of Gypsy Traveller pupils An update on provision in secondary schools” indicates that the grant funding allocated to Cardiff Council for use for projects that seek to improve and broaden provision for Gypsy Traveller pupils and enable Cardiff Council to support the education of Gypsy Traveller pupils for the period 2010- 2011 was £181,302.

6.7.5 The findings (across Wales) of the 2011 Estyn report are summarised as:

“...very few schools have policies or practices that specifically address the needs or views of these pupils and their parents, and nor do they offer a curriculum that actively promotes Gypsy Traveller culture. Too few local authorities and schools use attendance, exclusions or attainment data to measure the impact of their support for Gypsy Traveller pupils. National data collected on Gypsy Traveller pupils is not always accurate and this can lead to inequalities in funding. Most local authorities use aspects of the Welsh Assembly Government’s circular ‘Moving Forward – Gypsy Traveller Education’ to inform their policy and provision, but its overall impact has been limited.

“Of the five recommendations made in the 2005 Estyn report on ‘The Education of Gypsy Traveller Learners’, only one has been addressed. The Welsh Assembly Government has established an All-Wales Co-ordinators group. It meets regularly and provides a forum for sharing good practice, but its work has not yet impacted widely on the work of most secondary schools”.

6.7.6 The 2011 Estyn report makes inter alia, the following recommendations:

Local authorities and schools should:

- i. continue to find ways to improve the attendance rates of Gypsy Traveller children at secondary schools;
- ii. ensure that all schools have policies that address the specific needs of Gypsy Traveller pupils; and
- iii. ensure that the curriculum promotes the positive aspects of Gypsy Traveller culture, particularly in schools where this group of pupils is on roll.

The Welsh Assembly Government should:

- i. ensure that the data collected on Gypsy Traveller pupils is accurate and consistent; and
- ii. consider ways in which funding can be allocated so that it places greater emphasis on the needs of secondary age pupils (Estyn 2011).

6.7.7 To address the concerns expressed by the Gypsy and Traveller participants in this research, implementation of Estyn's recommendations will be a positive and much needed move in the right direction. In addition, based on discussions with those who chose to participate in this research, the following aspects could benefit from further consideration, examination and action:

1. Officers within Welsh Government whose policy areas impact upon Gypsy and Traveller communities could benefit from direct experience of working with the Gypsy and Traveller community.
2. Review of the consultation process with Gypsies and Travellers as envisioned in the "Travelling to a Better Future" Framework:

"...To ensure that public bodies and agencies consult with the Gypsy and Traveller community in culturally appropriate ways and that they have the opportunity to contribute and shape public policy and the debates that surround policy development"

and development of a process that facilitates and encourages the Gypsy and Traveller community to participate in consultation processes and works around their availability by using an appointment system for meetings and/ or such other methods devised in collaboration with the community.

3. Subject to favourable evaluation of the Framework Implementation Plan, the provision of sufficient financial resources to Cardiff Council (and other Welsh local education authorities) to facilitate continuation of measures with a proven track record that have resulted in a positive impact on educational attainment with specific reference to Gypsy and Traveller children and young people.
4. Ensure that Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators receive cultural awareness training from those suitably qualified or experienced in working with the Gypsy and Traveller community to enable them to effectively work with the community and
5. Monitor and secure accountability of work undertaken by such Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators.

6. Assist schools in raising awareness of the traditions and values of the Gypsy and Traveller community by incorporating teachings that celebrate Gypsy and Traveller culture in schools to help develop an ethos of inclusion and give effect to the 2005 Estyn report that recommends that local authorities and schools should "...ensure that the curriculum promotes the positive aspects of Gypsy Traveller culture".
7. Consider rolling out a fully funded short term programme based on the "behaviour management" module of the Masters in Educational Practice (MEP) programme as part of a continuing development programme for the benefit of teachers at schools with Gypsy and Traveller children on roll and (a) promote this study amongst teachers at all levels to enhance their ability to interact with children from diverse cultural backgrounds, (b) make available additional resources in terms of finance and support to schools to enable teachers to undergo this training and (c) offer incentives to teachers to promote uptake of such study.
8. Examine if there is any causal link between teacher attitudes in primary or secondary schools and school drop-out rates.
9. Develop a strategy to combat early school leaving and explore means of building better engagement with Gypsy and Traveller families to maximise school attendance. Research in this area has already been commissioned by the Welsh Government and any guidelines or recommendations should be effectively implemented and monitored.
10. Put measures in place that will help instil and /or improve the trust and confidence that Gypsy and Traveller parents currently have in the education system and education providers by encouraging face to face engagement and dialogue with the Gypsy and Traveller community; identify, examine and take into account what parents say they require and in collaboration with parents, devise a programme of education that accommodates such needs and requirements with reference if appropriate to inclusive approaches adopted at Moorland Primary School and the successful Priory Project.
11. Given the absence of monitoring and review measures in relation to home education at the Sites, work in collaboration with Gypsy and Traveller Parent educators and devise a curriculum to a standard that, at a minimum, gives Gypsy and Traveller children and young people choices and options to "...adopt some other form of life if the child wishes".
12. Examine (a) to what extent if any, the Welsh Government Education Grant is applied by Cardiff Council to secure incentive measures to ensure that Gypsy and Traveller children remain in secondary school and (b) whether such measures stand up to scrutiny and (c) in the absence of effective measures, work towards the development of a more effective

delivery of such measures and/ or (d) provide good practice guidance to develop such incentive measures.

13. Consider the extent to which the “14 to 19 Learning Pathways” Programme could be adapted to provide vocational training that is suitable in terms of the nature of training, mode and location of delivery to address the needs/ interests of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people.
14. Establish or improve any existing reporting framework or mechanism for monitoring outcomes of the education services provided to Gypsy and Traveller children and young people by Cardiff Council and other external stakeholders that are in receipt of Welsh Government funding and where appropriate suggest good practice measures to improve outcomes.
15. Publicise extensively to stakeholders including Cardiff Council, all available funding programmes to promote advancement of collaborative work with the Gypsy and Traveller community particularly in so far as this relates to education and related issues. This is relevant as previous baseline budgets have been reduced because of ‘under-spend’ by local authorities.
16. Promote interaction/ collaborative working between the Gypsy and Traveller Forum and Gypsy and Traveller parents. Inclusive measures, for example, inviting Gypsy and Traveller parents, children and young people to attend such forums and engaging in exchange of views or ideas will help to build upon an inclusive ethos and nurture relationships based on trust and confidence. This could play a crucial role in helping stakeholders to achieve the common purpose of improving educational attainment and job prospects within the Gypsy and Traveller community.
17. When discussing educational issues affecting Gypsy and Traveller children and young people at a national level (for example the All Wales Conference on Gypsy and Traveller Attendance Issues), adopt an inclusive approach by inviting representation from, and listening to, the views of Gypsy and Traveller parents /children whose interests are the subject of discussion.
18. In relation to allocation and application of grant funding/ resources, examine or review the practices or measures that Cardiff Council, external agencies and the Third Sector have in place that seek to deliver educational attainment; thereafter assess the effectiveness of such initiatives and “...consider ways in which funding can be allocated so that it places greater emphasis on the needs of learners...” (Estyn 2011). This is in light of Estyn’s findings that “...the system still fails to ensure that the data collected accurately reflects the level of need and ages of Gypsy Traveller pupils within each authority. This continuing problem can lead to inequalities in the allocation of resources...”.

19. Promote (via the Traveller Education Service or otherwise) the resources available to Gypsy and Traveller children and young people under the Youth Guarantee Scheme and if appropriate, put measures in place to help them access the benefits offered under the Scheme.
20. Consider whether home education is an appropriate or valid reason for allowing parents to withdraw their children from compulsory secondary school education against the backdrop of current literacy levels of relevant home educators; and where relevant, examine and provide alternative means for the provision of education "other than at school" as an interim measure until at least such time that the Gypsy and Traveller community acquire confidence in the education provision in secondary schools in Cardiff.
21. Examine the effectiveness of measures in place (if any) by schools using the Pupil Deprivation Grant to help the Gypsy and Traveller children and young people in securing higher attendance and attainment levels by tackling the link between poverty and low attainment.
22. Ensure that the relevant Engagement Progression Coordinator (if any) responsible for the area of Cardiff has access to and attains cultural awareness training to effectively deliver the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework Implementation Plan in so far as it relates to the Welsh Government's initiative to promote education for Gypsy and Traveller children and young people (unless such Coordinator already has suitable relevant experience).
23. Establish stronger links between Cardiff Council, individuals within the Education Welfare Service(s), the Traveller Education Service and the Gypsy and Traveller community, to ensure that the right provision is put in place for children when they attain the age of 16 with a view to identifying appropriate training or apprenticeship programmes that Gypsy and Traveller children and young people could benefit from or be interested in undertaking.
24. Provide counselling services to Gypsy and Traveller children and young people on the Sites to help identify specific issues or areas of concern in schools and liaise with the relevant school(s) with a view to alleviating any barriers or perceived barriers. Engage with parents where appropriate.
25. Examine the prevalence of bullying and racism in schools and any anti-bullying /anti racism measures in place in schools; consider the effectiveness of these measures and if appropriate, put in place improvement measures to counteract bullying and racism based on ethnicity by adopting an inclusive approach that "...supports the value and success of celebrating diverse cultures as a way of bringing different

cultural groups together and promoting racial harmony through better understanding and tolerance of differences.” (Estyn 2011).

26. Make provision for play facilities, after school clubs and a higher presence of the Traveller Education Service staff or other suitably qualified and experienced educational personnel on the Roverway Site to assist and guide children and young people on site.

Conclusion

The success of the work carried out at Moorland Primary School under the leadership of Jane Jenkins and the Priory Project under the leadership of Beverley Stephens, respectively, and the educational attainment and positive experiences of the members of the Gypsy and Traveller community whose respective success stories are recorded in this report, point to one fact: that given the right conditions, professional support, resources, will and determination, Gypsy and Traveller children and young people resident at the Shirenewton and Roverway Sites could have the potential to achieve higher educational attainment. This potential remains untapped.

It is evident that whilst racist bullying and lack of support from teachers is perceived as a major concern by the Gypsy and Traveller children, young people and the parents who participated in this research, their expressed lack of “belief” in the education system cannot be discounted as a major contributory factor in the low educational attainment of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people. Resources have not permitted a detailed examination of the factors that have contributed to this attitude but disengagement with the education system, local schools and the local education authority is widely evident.

Whilst the Welsh Government has some noteworthy policies and initiatives that can be implemented to help increase educational attainment of Gypsy and Traveller children and young people, lack of monitoring and available data has made it difficult to assess the impact of these policies and initiatives. Nevertheless, it is apparent that a lot of work is required to build the trust and confidence of the Gypsy and Traveller community in an education system / processes which many community members believe do not respect or meet the current needs of the community.

Cardiff Council’s lack of participation in this research has meant that it has not been possible to identify the issues or areas of concern which impede Cardiff Council in its capacity as the Local Education Authority to play its role and legal duty in enabling or facilitating Gypsy and Traveller children and young people to attain their full educational potential. Whilst this report garners evidence

from the Gypsy and Traveller community and seeks to highlight areas of concern and suggests practical solutions as a way forward, a major step forward would be for all stakeholders to focus on the implementation of the recommendations made in the 2005 Estyn report.

Collaborative working between education/ training providers and the Gypsy and Traveller community, a major component of which is increased involvement of the Gypsy and Traveller families in training and supporting their children's learning could help unlock the wealth of learning potential and aptitude of these children and young people, which in turn could help them to become self-sufficient and confident adults, and give them the tools that they need to secure employment and survive in the current economic times.

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