Roma in Wales

The case for inclusion in the national strategy

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Introduction

Wales and Migration

The arrival of large numbers of continental Roma in Wales, from southern, central and eastern Europe, over the past decade has brought about a significant demographic change to the composition of this particular minority population in the country, in addition to changing the overall picture of diversity in Wales. Such diversity, in terms of the Romani and Traveller populations, may date back to the earliest arrival of itinerant groups from Ireland, amongst the settlement of the Irish *Déisi Muman* people (c. 350-550 CE) in early mediaeval kingdom of *Dyfed.* For those living outside the complex extended kinship and mutual obligation networks of Irish society – such as the *vassal* (the meaning of *déisi*) or tributary, rent-paying communities, part of the more general group of *aithechthúatha*[1] – migration and mobility were very much part of the picture of post-Roman period in the British Isles. Continued migration from Ireland, whether as part of settlement, raiding or fleeing the turmoil of attacks and occupation by Vikings, Normans and others, are likely to have further increased ancestors of Irish Travelling people in mediaeval and early modern Wales.

The previous arrival of significant numbers of Romani people to the coastal plains, valleys and mountain regions took place in the eighteenth century, with the establishment of *Romanichals,* speaking Anglo-Romani or *poggadi-chib* in the south and west. Prior to this, there had been smaller groups of *Egyptians* arriving in Wales in the mid-sixteenth century who had settled and who maintained an inflected form of *Rromani-chib* or *Romani language* that was close to that spoken in parts of Iberia, in the Finnish lands (then ruled by the Kingdom, or *rike* of Sweden), and in continental Europe. These formed the basis for the *Kalé* communities of north and north-western Wales, with the *Romanichals* in the south and south-west. Small numbers of continental *Roma,* such as groups of *Kalderash* or *Coppersmith Gypsies,* arrived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, following the emancipation of Roma slaves in the Rumanian lands of Wallachia and Moldavia. Further smaller movements of Irish Travellers, Scottish Gypsy-Travellers and Romani Gypsies in the 1930's and the 1960's, have added to the populations of Gypsies and Travellers,

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[1] Rance, P. (2001), "Attacotti, Déisi and Magnus Maximus: the Case for Irish Federates in Late Roman Britain", *Britannia*, no.32, pp244-70 for more details regarding the *aithechthúatha* and *Déisi Muman*

though historically none can be said to be 'indigenous' or even more or less Welsh than others, as all are arrivals at one time or another.

The same might be said of the wider population, as only a very small proportion are descended from ancient, Neolithic builders of Pentre Ifan, Bryn Celli Ddu and Parc Cwm. The Celts, spread from central Europe (the so-called 'Hallstatt culture') extended from Anatolia (the Galatians), across central and western Europe (Gauls) and Iberia (Celtici and Gallaeci), to the British Isles (Gaels and Brythonic), c.1200BCE - c.200BCE. Roman conquest and occupation of Wales (48CE - 380CE) and the Brythonic population (Welsh, Cornish and Breton) made up of *Silvers, Ordovices, Cornovii, Demetae, Deceangli,* brought further change, whilst the Irish *Déisi* migrations (see above), movements of western Romano-Celtic peoples in the face of Angle, Saxon and Jute invasions (c.400CE - 800CE) and Viking assaults (c.850CE) and settlement (c.900 - 1040CE), including in parts of Wales, and Norman conquest and settlement (c.1070 - c.1300), continued the pattern of change and diversity that was to go on through the centuries with later African, Caribbean, south and east Asian and English migration and settlement, contributing to the ethnic and cultural mosaic of Welsh society to the present.

Irish Travellers (*Pavees* or *Minceir*), who move between Wales and the Irish Republic on a regular basis are *not* deemed to be 'migrant' in the same way in the present, as previously (or indeed, as European Roma are 'migrant' in the terminology of the Welsh government's consultation documents), though arguably there may be similar motivations, in the lack of recognition for Irish Travellers as an ethnic group protected by legislation in the Republic and widespread discrimination, acting as 'push' factors, whilst the *Equality Act (2010)* and other protections do recognise Irish Travellers *as an ethnic group* in Wales (and the UK more generally). Similarly, Scottish Gypsy-Travellers (*Nawkins*) who migrate between south Wales and Scotland on a regular basis are not deemed to be 'migrant' under current Welsh policy. English Gypsies (*Romanichals*) who move across the UK from sites in Wales, some going beyond to Norway and Sweden in the summer months, are also not treated as 'migrant' though they may travel extensively and for long periods. Circus and fairground folk (*Showpeople*) who 'turn out' in May and 'turn in' in late October, *Bargees* and *New Travellers* are excluded from terminology that identifies them as 'migrant', despite what are clearly patterns of movement that could be described as 'migratory'. In terms of Wales and migration, the use of the term 'migrant' connected to Roma implies something different, yet it is unclear what that is and how it is distinguished from Gypsies and Travellers.

Modern European Roma Migration

Push factors

The terms 'migrant Roma' or more recently 'east European migrants' (frequently used as a euphemism in politics and the popular media for Roma, particularly by the Conservative/Liberal government in the period 2011-2015) have been established to create or frame a discourse around legitimacy, entitlement and immigration to the UK. The earlier history of Roma migration in the

mid-1990's saw a similar discourse emerge, though terminology was then around 'bogus asylum-seekers', 'economic migrants' and ultimately, 'Gypsy thieves and pick-pockets', under the Conservative government, whilst the Labour government from 2007 saw some similarities with this discourse and the older notions of the 'real Romani' as opposed to the 'fake Gypsies' who were seen to be a criminal under-class, organised internationally. These racist stereotypes were deployed in the ongoing debate about immigration to the UK and rights and responsibilities of minority ethnic communities in British society. Expansion of the EU to 27 member states and the concomitant prospect of visa-free travel for EU citizens from newer members, especially those with large Roma populations, were at the heart of this discourse, persuading the British public that unchecked, 'hordes' of east European 'Gypsies' would travel to the UK and establish themselves as 'benefits scroungers' accessing health, welfare and housing on a massive scale. Such 'concerns' allowed the delaying of the principal of free movement of labour across the EU for a time and the refusal to uphold European agreements regarding EU citizens' rights, by the UK government.

The most recent migration of Roma communities from central, eastern and south-eastern Europe, since the end of these delays to full accession for newer EU members, has brought new communities of people into Wales as *both* migrants and Romani groups, for a variety of reasons, though there has not been the huge wave of migration of Roma that was 'predicted' by popular media and populist rhetoric (best estimates suggest that between 600,000 to 800,000 Roma have migrated to the UK since the mid-1990's. By comparison, 1,000,000 Poles alone are estimated to have migrated to the UK since the accession of Poland in 2004). The migration of Roma from these regions to the UK has been a fluctuating trend since the early 1990's, when the collapse of *soviet* systems dramatically heralded a return to the nationalist and populist movements and policies that had emerged in the period 1918-1939, themselves based on nineteenth century ethno-nationalist independence movements that grew under the Habsburg (Austro-Hungarian), Romanov (Russian) and Ottoman (Turkish) Empires. Similarly, the resurgence of these movements in the guise of democratisation and liberal economic reform (from state capitalist controls), sought to reimpose notions of ethnic separateness, implicit notions of pseudo-scientific racial hierarchies (usually under the rubric of 'culture') and territorial integrity conterminous with homogeneous population – the nation-state. The identification of religious and ethnic 'minorities' within previously mixed communities, closely associated with notions of the Other, brought competitions for resources, power and control between cliques and elites, to the battlefield in some cases (Bosnia-Hercegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Kosovo) and to the process of redefining borders in these and others (the separation of Czech and Slovak Republics, Serbia and Montenegro), leaving some territories in political indeterminacy (Trans-Dniester and Karelia, for example).

The redefinition of the political and social order saw the key identification of a significant Other against which to measure the strength of ethnic 'solidarity', the cohesion of the 'imagined community'. Once the dominant *ethnos* or majority community had been identified and, to some extent purged (cleansed), the remaining significant Other in all these emergent ethnic, nationalist states were the Roma. As a critically vulnerable series of populations in the Balkan wars (1990-2000) and during the process of political break-up in central, eastern and south-eastern

Europe and the Baltic region, the Roma, Ashkali and Balkan Egyptian communities were victims of all sides, many of them seeking protection as refugees (1990-2005). Continuing persecution and profound prejudice contributed to the increasing numbers of Roma who sought asylum in the middle to late 1990's from Poland, Czech and Slovak Republics. The expansion of the European Union sought to improve, as part of the conditions of entry, the situation for Roma in the accession states, with a variety of initiatives, binding conventions and strategies that recognised the rights of minorities and the responsibilities of governments - *Article 2, Treaty on European Union* specifically defines respect of minority rights as an European value, to which all Member States are signatories. The Council of Europe's *Framework Convention on National Minorities (1998),* is another such legal mechanism, to which the UK and 38 other Council of Europe member states are signatories. The particular measures that the European Union and Commission have sought to bring to bear upon all 27 EU member states include the *Communication on the economic & social integration of the Roma in Europe (2010);* the *EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies by 2020 (2011);* the EU's *Council Recommendation of 9 December 2013 on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States* and the review of implementation of the EU Framework, 2014 (http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_implement_strategies2014_en.pdf) and its subsequent progress report, *Report on the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies 2015* (http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_communication2015_en.pdf). Needless to say, the Welsh government is a signatory to these legal measures and abides by the recommendations, as an EU member and beneficiary (in the sense that EU support for regeneration, culture and development is often given on the basis of Welsh concerns, underpinned by a recognition of the value of strengthening identity).

These reviews of the impact and success of the measures that promote Roma inclusion indicate, quite strongly, that a significant lack of coordination and implementation has continued to contribute to very little progress in five EU member states with large Roma populations: Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Furthermore, the continued segregation of Roma children in education, of significant obstacles in accessing basic services and provision in health, housing, employment and training and the increase of hate-speech and incidences of racist violence towards Roma in these countries has led the European Commission (EC) to insist upon country specific recommendations (CSR's) for these EU member states, with regard to Roma and the lack of progress with National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS). Other reviews of the progress in implementing NRIS, such as *Beyond Rhetoric: Roma Integration Roadmap for 2020,* in these member states and across a range of other indicators, carried out by the NGO and civil society sectors, strongly suggest that there is little in the way of positive encouragement to be seen and sets out specific recommendations for the same five countries that the EC later identified with a series of similar CSR's (https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/beyond-rhetoric-2011-0616.pdf). Negative stereotypes, anti-Gypsy prejudices, media disinformation, discriminatory practices, populist and racist discourse in national and local politics in a significant number of EU member states, not only in central, eastern and southeastern Europe, have ensured that the conditions that the majority of Roma live in, within the EU, remain extremely poor and in terms of personal security and safety, similar to those in countries where large numbers of Roma refugees originate (i.e. camps in France and Italy, as an example). These

'push' factors have contributed to the continuing migration of continental European Roma to the UK, including Wales.

Pull factors

The process of migration for any individual or community is one in which the considerations of economic opportunity, safety (both personal and for the future family), significantly improved access to basic services (such as health, housing, employment) and education for children and young people, all play a significant part in the decisions of largely segregated, ghettoised and semi-rural Roma populations from impoverished localities in Bulgaria, Rumania, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary, to move long distances. Predominantly low-skilled, with little education (resulting from recent generations being excluded from mainstream education systems in these countries) and poor health, largely from living in extremely degraded environments (often highly polluted), these individual and extended family groups have migrated to the UK and Wales in particular, in order to gain access to mainstream, quality education for their children, to find better accommodation and an improved environment to live in, to access basic health services unavailable to them, as Roma, in their countries of origin and to access employment and work opportunities that are beyond the cycle of marginal economic existence and generational poverty that they are caught in.

Whilst the over-crowded housing conditions, a lack of permanent employment opportunities (largely due to low educational levels and a lack of competence in English or Welsh language), continuing discrimination from members of the national community that are also migrant – majority Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Bulgarians and Rumanians have also migrated in significant numbers – and hostile reception from local receiving communities, especially if they are identified with the negative discourse about 'Gypsies' and the continuing discriminatory attitudes towards Roma that are cloaked in the euphemisms of 'east Europeans', 'Rumanians' and 'Bulgarians' identified in the national press and political debate about EU migration to the UK, impact upon Roma, the critical opportunities of inclusive education for children, access to basic health services and short-term employment (often in the so-called, 'grey economy') outweigh the disadvantages. Put simply, the prospect of returning to their countries of origin, with high levels of racism and prejudice, poverty on an unimaginable (to UK citizens) level that is impossible to rise above for Roma and to the kind of environmental degradation that condemns families to live alongside highly polluted refuse dumps, sewage-infested derelict housing blocks or in shanty-towns on industrial wastelands, is not to be countenanced, if the opportunity to remain, or even to shuttle back and forth, is available. To give one small example, the average life-span for Roma people in eastern Slovakia (Kosice) is 50 years and falling, according to national Roma NGO *Way Of Hope*; migrating to the UK will add fifteen years to that figure. In Croatia, the population of Roma (about 200,000, according to the best estimates of NGO's in the country) is predominantly younger, with 50% under 25 years old. Less than twenty people, according to a census carried out by the *iDemo* and *Korak po Korak* NGO's in the country in 2013, were older than sixty years. The chance of growing older and approaching what might be considered to be a 'normal' life-span for

Roma, compared with the majority population, have been significantly increased in groups that arrived in the mid-1990's, through migrating to the UK.

The national context for Roma in Wales

The case for inclusion relies on a range of key arguments that have been made at number of national events over the previous five years, supported by a variety of evidence that demonstrates a *de facto* recognition of Roma, as members of a community that are related to and with Gypsies and Travellers in Wales, in a number of instances and examples. The principal of separating the Roma from the Gypsy and Traveller communities and excluding them from the Welsh national strategy, *Travelling to a Better Future (2011),* is unclear and confusing and this is demonstrated by the clear association between Gypsies, Roma, Travellers that has been accepted by Welsh government ministers and Assembly Members (AM) who have participated in these national events and made concrete references to Roma, in the context of the national strategy (June 2012), initiatives such as the Housing White Paper (2011) regarding the private renting sector and Roma, the Community Cohesion Fund report carried out on the needs of the Roma community in Cardiff (2011) and the establishment, for a period, of Roma advocacy and support (through co-operation with the Welsh Migration Partnership) through national consultation events (September 2012). The recognition of a clear association between Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities was made explicit by Jane Hutt, AM, Minister for Finance and Leader of the House, in the context of supporting inclusion and equality measures in Wales, in June 2012, at the national Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month event:

> *"The Welsh Government is committed to greater equality and inclusion for all people in Wales including the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities."*

The question of a dedicated strategy for Roma in Wales, defined as 'migrant' in the language of the October 2015 consultation process, is, in this context somewhat beside the point, as the need is for the inclusion of Roma in Wales, in the national strategy that currently exists, *Travelling to a Better Future.* The notion of 'migrant' Roma, to distinguish Roma from Gypsies and Travellers, would suggest that there are more factors in common with other migrants from the EU countries than with Gypsies and Travellers in Wales, yet there is no suggestion that 'migrant' Roma are the same as migrant Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Bulgarians and Rumanians. Clearly, Roma in this context are treated as a group regardless of national boundaries and associated by virtue of being Roma, that is sharing linguistic, cultural and ethnic ties.That these ties also exist with Welsh Kalé and English Romanichals needs to be recognised. As described above, the 'push' and 'pull' factors for Roma in Wales that encourage their migration, are vastly different to that of Czechs, Bulgarians, Rumanians, Slovaks and Hungarian EU citizens who migrate to Wales, from the majority communities, as they are not (unless they are part of vulnerable minority communities, such as Hungarian Jews) migrating in the face of hate-speech, racism and prejudice in a culture of increasing intolerance and the rise of right-wing, nationalist parties that have power in national parliaments, such as *Jobbik* in Hungary and the Czech Republic, *Attaka* in Bulgaria and others. These migrants are entirely 'pushed' and 'pulled' by economic factors (international student travel

is not treated as migration, in this context, though post-study employment may, in fact, result on occasions); better employment opportunities for Hungarian IT specialists, Czech and Slovak doctors and medical professionals, Bulgarian engineers and Rumanian metallurgists (in addition to the large numbers of Polish hotel and catering workers, construction workers from across eastern Europe and dental technicians, teachers, railway managers and crews and many other professional, skilled and semi-skilled people from central and southeastern Europe).

Welsh Traveller Education Support services have, as a matter of record, associated Roma with Gypsies and Travellers, in responding to the UK government's annual school population survey by the Department for Education, delivering figures that have been recorded under the headings of "Roma/Gypsy" (white Roma/Gypsy or WROM) and "Irish Travellers" (white Irish Traveller or WIRT) before 2015. Latterly, the combined figure for "Gypsies/Roma" has begun to be disaggregated to "Gypsies" and "Roma", recognising that these are three distinct, but inter-related communities who need to be supported through similar learning strategies and having common needs in education:

> *Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils were said to face a range of social, cultural, economic and systemic barriers to maximising their experience of school and education… Anne Wilkin et al. Improving the Outcomes for Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Pupils: Final Report, DfE*

The case for recognising Roma as significantly different to warrant both a dedicated strategy and not to be included in a revision of the Welsh government's *Travelling to a Better Future* strategy, is confusing when compared to the presence of Travellers in the strategy for Wales. As Foster and Norton ("Educational Equality for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children and Young People in the UK" in *Equal Rights Review, 8*, 2012) point out, the progression of terminology over the past few decades has meant that the umbrella term "Travellers", used prior to the 1990's was very general and included *Nawkins* (Scottish Gypsy-Travellers), *Minceir* or *Pavees* (Irish Travellers), *Showpeople*, *Bargees*, and *New (Age) Travellers*. These groups are hardly connected by anything other than a perceived, shared aspect of their economy and life-style, i.e. mobility. Clarity improved with the arrival of Roma from eastern and central Europe in the mid-1990's and the development of terminology that recognised this change; Gypsy, Roma and Traveller. The common factor here is addressing obstacles to educational equality, not suggesting that Gypsies and Irish Travellers and Roma share the same culture, language and ethnicity – clearly Irish Travellers do not, as they claim no Roma heritage, but they have close links with Romanichal, Kalé, Lowland Travellers (Scottish Romani groups) and Highland Travellers (Scottish Travellers with roots in northern European, Celtic populations). Romanichal and Kalé groups in Wales (and across the UK) *do* have cultural, linguistic and ethnic links with Roma, as they are descended from older Roma populations that migrated to the British Isles in the mid-fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Thus, custom and practice in education, the voluntary sector and government has, through a process of complex associations, brought together differing communities with links, but not homogeneous connections, in recognising that common obstacles to inclusion exist in the common *perceptions* of these differing groups, by the majority, as 'Gypsies', sharing negative stereotypes, prejudices and racism ascribed to this composite image. Challenging these and improving outcomes and opportunities, promoting inclusion and social cohesion, and developing inter-cultural dialogue to promote diversity and equality in Wales requires, as has been recognised in

the 2015 review of the implementation of the *EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*, will improve coordination and coherency at national and local authority levels. The Welsh strategy, *Travelling to a Better Future,* recognises this principal and the diversity of the groups currently identified as within its remit, without distinguishing *Kalé* from *Romanichal, Minceir* or *Pavee* from *Nawkins, Showpeople* from *New (Age) Travellers.* The case for inclusion of Roma in this strategy and the associated initiatives – *Travelling to Better Health: Policy Implementation Guidance for Healthcare Practitioners on working effectively with Gypsies and Travellers (July 2015); Undertaking Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments: Guidance (May 2015),* is to be made on this basis; that there are historical precedents for doing so (common notions of origins between Gypsies and Roma), that custom and practice has associated quite different groups with less connection (ethnically, culturally and linguistically) in policy and strategy, that education policy and strategic initiatives to improve outcomes and access has long associated Roma / Gypsies and Travellers, that Welsh government has acknowledged the relationship between these groups in statement and by participation in initiatives that explicitly associate these groups, without demur and finally, that the logicality of the Welsh government's own national strategy and policies is itself undermined by the separation of Roma, from Gypsies and Travellers, on an unclear basis, as all three general groups are migrant (both historically and in the present) and settled to similar degrees.

An inclusive strategy for Wales: Gypsies, Roma, Travellers

The case for inclusion in the Welsh national strategy

The case being made here is that the exclusion of Roma from the Welsh national strategy for Gypsies and Travellers, and the need for a dedicated Roma strategy separate to that, is confusing and the basis for such is extremely unclear. There are no absolute arguments as to the definition of 'migrant' being used in this particular association or the purpose of doing so, that would impact upon strategy and policy, when it comes to Roma. The basis for establishing dissimilarity of Roma from Gypsies and Travellers is not at all apparent, as Gypsies and Travellers are themselves differing and there are greater ethnic, linguistic and cultural similarities between Gypsies and Roma, than Gypsies and Irish Travellers, who are brought under one strategy. The use of the term 'migrant' would appear to add little in the way of positive ground for considering a dedicated strategy and implies a 'transitory' or 'temporary' state which, in fact, exists no more for this community than it does for Gypsies and Travellers. Mobility is clearly recognised in the existing strategy, as regards Gypsies and Travellers and it would be consistent to treat Roma in the same framework, emphasising the similar approaches to strengthening equality and diversity, rather than a strategy based upon hard to differentiate ethnic specificities or impractical definitions of mobility.

Usage in a variety of UK and Welsh government contexts acknowledges and even explicitly recognises the association of Roma, with Gypsies and Travellers, whilst practice in education in Wales strongly associates all three groups as facing very similar obstacles to access and challenges

to improving outcomes, in line with the picture across the UK. The Welsh government, as part of the EU, has accepted the legal basis for European Commission initiatives regarding Roma inclusion and, unlike some EU member states (Malta for example), has not declared that there is no Roma population, together with the Gypsy and Traveller communities. The national strategy, *Travelling to a Better Future (2011),* was the first such strategy from the UK and can be said to partially meet the requirements for a national integration strategy for the European Commission. A revision of this, to ensure the inclusion of Roma, would fully meet with EC's *NRIS*. The advantages of such a revision and inclusion, rather than producing a dedicated Roma strategy are significant, in terms of additional resources from the *European Social Fund* and other social inclusion programmes. The political capital gained from producing a clear strategy for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller inclusion, as part of the *EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies,* particularly in the current climate of UK politics, is also a factor that can be leveraged into the overall policy landscape. Meeting the equalities commitments, described by Welsh AM's in the past, adds tremendous 'value' to the Welsh government, in the context of the wider European equalities directives.

A consistent policy context across services and provision – education, accommodation/ housing, health, employment and training, gender, early years, culture and social services – would strengthen social cohesion and build upon existing coordination in national and local government. It would develop new expertise and extend current knowledge amongst service managers, professionals and practitioners, attracting significant support from the European Commission, the Council of Europe and international donors, strengthening the voluntary sector in Wales and empowering Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities to work jointly and cooperatively, in partnership with government, to deliver equality for all in Wales.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from this consultation document and previous RCAC reports that have highlighted Roma related issues, as part of the wider context of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller recognition and rights. The need for a dedicated Roma strategy has, it is hoped, been addressed in this response to the call for consultation; the need is for an integrated Welsh strategy for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities that recognises the historical continuities and shared experiences of discrimination between these groups and majority societies, the consistent experience of marginalisation and oppression arising from prejudice and negative stereotypes about 'Gypsies' (the rubric under which all these groups have experienced racism and exclusion), and the association of all these groups in equalities and social justice legislation, initiatives and conventions through international institutions (EU, Council of Europe) and agencies (Save the Children, UNICEF, European Roma Rights Centre, Roma Education Fund), and as recognised by the wider Gypsy, Roma, Traveller political institutions (the European Roma Traveller Forum, the International Romani Union and the World Romani Congress). *Travelling to a Better Future* provides an excellent *basis* for such a coordinated, coherent and comprehensive strategy, meeting

equalities commitments for the Welsh government and providing the basis for strengthening diversity, equity and social justice in Wales to 2020.

- The accommodation needs of Roma, need to be included in the assessments of accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers, as part of the process and to ensure that the difficulties many Roma families face around cramped, insalubrious and insecure accommodation, are effectively addressed, in line with the recommendations from the Welsh government's Housing White Paper;

- The health needs of GRT communities must be addressed, to effectively improve the health outcomes of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller people - especially amongst young children, women and the elderly. Access to services needs to be improved, using successful models developed in Wales and elsewhere in Europe (Ireland, Rumania, Serbia, Slovakia) for working with Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, with health education being brought into community settings and at an earlier stage, using culturally relevant materials, community mediators and partnerships with GRT NGO's and voluntary sector organisations;

- The management and teachers of educational provision, at preschool, primary and secondary levels in Wales, need to have access to effective training and resources (INSET and

curriculum materials for use at differing levels) to enable them to successfully accommodate Roma children in their settings and ensure a successful transition into mainstream, inclusive education, thereby improving educational outcomes for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller children in line with national and UK targets, as detailed in the relevant DfE reports;

- Mother-tongue education for Romani language speakers and Traveller speakers of *Gammon* and *Cant*, should be supported (whether through community language learning courses or as additional to the preschool and school curriculum), for strengthening confidence and self-identity, improving communication skills and promoting a multi-cultural, multi-lingual learning environment for all children and young people;

- Work with young people, particularly young women, in the GRT communities is an essential part of building social inclusion and strengthening community cohesion in the future and significant investment needs to be made in this area, building upon the excellent work and experiences of a number of projects and programmes aimed at supporting GRT communities. Partnerships between youth organisations and GRT voluntary sector associations, to ensure the implementation of 'best practice' and innovative, joint approaches, need to be encouraged through innovative funding strategies and government supported networking opportunities.