

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller experiences of Education in Prison



About the Traveller Movement

The Traveller Movement (TM) is a registered UK charity promoting inclusion and engagement with Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (GRT). The Traveller Movement seeks to advocate for the full implementation of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller's human rights.

Visit: <https://travellermovement.org.uk/>

Contents

Recommendations	3
1. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Ethnic Groups	5
2. Gypsy Roma and Travellers in the Criminal Justice System	6
3. Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Experiences of Education	7
4. Education in Prison	9
4.1 The purpose of prison education	9
4.2 Educational needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller prisoners	10
5. Addressing needs	12
5.1 Entry level programs and embedded learning	12
5.2 One to one and peer learning	14
Shannon Trust Turning Pages Case Studies	15
Case Study 1	15
Case Study 2	17
5.3 Digital literacy	19
5.4 Covid -19	19
6. Problems with Education in the Adult estate	20
7. Education in the Youth estate	22
8. Special Needs and Disabilities	24
9. Bibliography	26




Recommendations

Our proposed way ahead

- 1 There needs to be **a formal universal education offer for all prisoners, including those serving under a 2-year sentence**. Education should be an entitlement and all prisons should be obliged to make a clear recorded offer of education to all prisoners and to deliver on it. This must include an opportunity to discuss education options, what support an individual will need and duty on staff to support individuals who decide to uptake a program.
- 2 In line with the universal Education offer, on entry to prison, **all should be provided with an education learning plan** that establishes manageable goals and outlines what support the individual needs. This goes hand in hand with ensuring that the plan is user-focused, to ensure the courses offered are of the correct level. Prison education should be regularly advertised and uptake should be encouraged among all prisoners.
- 3 **Educational programs and purposeful voluntary activities should be offered to those on remand**. There should be an obligation for courses or activities to be offered, and support must be given to enable individuals to take up that offer.
- 4 **Embedded Learning Programs should be encouraged and offered to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in prison**.
- 5 **Digital literacy courses need to be established** in all prisons and should be encouraged. Courses that focus on basic to advanced digital skills should be offered.



- 
- 6 **Ensure that Prison Chaplains are up to date on what educational programs** are offered. Many Gypsy and Traveller people will turn to their Chaplain for advice and support and ensuring Chaplains are engaged with what educational programs are on offer can be a route to greater engagement.
 - 7 **Education needs to take a trauma-informed approach.** The high rates of school exclusions experienced by many in prison often go hand in hand with traumatic childhood experiences, such as discrimination, and bullying. In approaching education holistically, a more sustainable relationship with education can be built.
 - 8 For those serving short-term sentences, **any program they begin must be supported on release** or if individuals move facilities. Support and guidance must be given to enable individuals to continue the educational programs they have begun.
 - 9 **Prisons need to continue to support Shannon Trust's Turning Pages project**, which is a peer-to-peer project that assists prisoners who wish to learn how to read. The program has had high success rates and very high engagement from Gypsy and Traveller individuals. Emphasis should be placed on supporting and ensuring the uptake of this program by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller prisoners.
 - 10 A funded strategy to improve the experiences of Prisoners with SEND. This should include employing more SEND specialists in Prisons.
 - 11 **Data on the quality of prison education** and education outcomes needs improving. There needs to be more information on service users' experiences of the standard of education, and more research to consider the voices of those who are not taking education in prison, and why this is. For example, research needs to answer the following: what is the uptake of educational programs for those who may have language barriers such as Roma? What is the uptake of those with low literacy? How many serving short-term sentences (under 2 years) complete the programs they begin?

A special thanks to Francesca Cooney from the Prisoners Education Trust, Andrea Coadey from Nacro and Roger Grimshaw from The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, for their insight and input.

We would also like to thank our funder, the Lloyds Bank Foundation for making this possible.



Gypsy Roma and Traveller (GRT) ethnic groups

Gypsies, Roma, and some Traveller ethnicities have been recognised in law as ethnic groups protected against discrimination by the Equality Act 2010.

As Gypsies, Roma and Travellers share a protected characteristic of race under the Equality Act 2010 act, under s149 of the same act gives a **Public Sector Equality Duty** to:

- *Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;*
- *Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- *Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. [1]*

However, the lives of Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers are blighted by discrimination and social exclusion [2]. The 2019 inquiry by the Women and Equalities Committee found that successive governments had comprehensively failed Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities [3].

The acronym GRT refers to numerous different ethnic groups and cultures. The background of people within each of these three collective terms should be considered on an individual basis, as people within any defined category will have different experiences based on their specific cultural, ethnic and religious background.

[1] Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Equality Act 2010

[2] <https://travellermovement.org.uk/reports?download=88:sep-2017-the-last-acceptable-form-of-racism-the-pervasive-discrimination-and-prejudice-experienced-by-gypsy-roma-and-traveller-communities>

[3] <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/360/360.pdf>

Gypsy Roma and Travellers in the Criminal Justice System

Gypsy Roma and Travellers are overrepresented in the Criminal Justice System. Due to weak ethnic monitoring across the criminal justice system, it is difficult to know the exact number of Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers (GRT) in prison, or on probation. According to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons' (HMIP) prisoner survey, in 2018/19 5% of men and 6% of women of the prison population in England and Wales identified as Gypsy, or Irish Traveller [4]. Of course, this is higher in some locations. 10% of women at HMP Peterborough self-identified as Gypsy/Irish Traveller, and GRT boys making up 17% of some Young Offender Institutions [5].

However, in reality, this is likely far higher [6]. This is because the statistic does not include Roma. Additionally, levels of self-reporting are low across the Gypsy/Irish Traveller due to issues of mistrust, and poor practice to encourage understanding around ethnic monitoring. There is a range of estimates for the population of Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers in the UK, but despite the census recording 0.1% (just for Gypsy/Irish Traveller) this is an undercount, and the more likely estimate for GRT people is around 0.8 – 1% of the population [7].

[4]HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Annual Report 2019-20, 20 October 2020

[5]Prison Reform Trust, Counted out Black, Asian, Minority ethnic women in the criminal justice system (2017) <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Counted%20Out.pdf> and The Traveller Movement, Overlooked and Over Represented (2016) for youth stat <https://www.travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/userupload/criminal-justice/Overlooked-and-Overrepresented-Gypsy-Traveller-and-Roma-children-in-the-youth-justice-system.pdf>

[6] Irish Chaplaincy, Voices Unheard: A Story of Irish Travellers in Prison, (2011)

[7] Ibid and 2011 Census data at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/articles/whatdoesthe2011censusstellusaboutthecharacteristicsofgypsyoririshtravellersinenglandandwales/2014-01-21>

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Experiences of Education

A 2020 Traveller Movement publication outlines that from an early age, experiences of education are **defined by discrimination and bullying** leading to early leaving, exclusions, and a consequential lack of educational attainment [8]. A further report by The Traveller Movement (TM) in 2017, found **that 70% of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people had experienced discrimination in every aspect of their education** [9]. The research found that Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people, at all levels of education, were confronted with **ill-informed stereotypes, and in many cases, blatant racism**. The outcomes of this are seen with the Race Disparity Audit that confirmed the high rates of exclusions, and the low rate of attainment and outcomes for Gypsy/Traveller people [10].

The outcomes can be seen when Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller children's attainment is compared to their peers. In 2016, 53% of all pupils reached the expected standard in all of English reading, writing, and mathematics. Of children identifying as Gypsy/Roma, only 13% met the expected standard. For those identifying as Irish Travellers, the figure was 18% [11].

Secondly, there is an enormous disparity in GCSE attainment for Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller kids. In 2016 only 9% of Gypsy and Roma pupils and 18% of Irish Traveller pupils had attained 5 GCSEs (or equivalents) at grades A* to C, including English and maths. Nationally, 57% of pupils attained these qualifications [12]. It is worth noting that we widely consider these statistics to be an undercount, as many GRT pupils opt into elective home education [13].

[8] [TTM Good Practice Guide Education_web.pdf \(travellermovement.org.uk\)](https://travellermovement.org.uk/ttm-good-practice-guide-education-web.pdf)


[9] *ibid*

[10] Race Disparity Audit Microsoft Word - [Revised RDA report March 2018.docx \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/625443/Revised_RDA_report_March_2018.docx)

[11] Department for Education, National curriculum assessments: key stage 2, 2016 (revised), last updated 22 June 2017.

[12] *ibid*

[13] <https://travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/TM%20EHE%20report%20final.pdf>



These poor outcomes are carried through life. The 2011 Census recorded Gypsy/Irish Traveller for the first time and revealed some stark disparities and inequalities across a range of social indicators, including housing, health, employment, and education. Regarding the latter, Gypsies and Irish Travellers are three times more likely to have no qualifications and are significantly more likely to be economically inactive compared to the average population for England and Wales.

It is worth noting here that the discriminatory stereotype that Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller children will not be as engaged with education, is not grounded in truth. Across our [tutoring project](#) and research, there is a high uptake and commitment in our tutoring program by both children and parents, and a clear want and dedication to educational obtainment [14]. However, the running theme is that support and access are limited.

[14] For more information on the Traveller Movement's Tutoring and NEET Program see: <https://travellermovement.org.uk/advocacy-support/young-people>



Education in Prison

The purpose of prison education

Education in prison is essential. The evidence that supports this is overwhelming. A large-scale national study by HMPPS in 2018 cites robust evidence that prisoner learning has positive impacts. These impacts include reducing proven re-offending and improving post-release employment outcomes among domestic offenders. The report states a 7.5% reduction in one-year reoffending rates if prisoners engage in some form of education [15].

The benefits of prison education should also be understood in broader terms.

This is because it forms an **essential part of rehabilitation** through **confidence building, purposeful activity** that supports positive behaviour and attitudes to education and employment for the rest of people lives. Nacro's submission to the inquiry, with this in mind highlights that prison education provides the following:

- *Improving employability*
- *Developing basic and life skills such as numeracy, literacy, communication, and IT, which enables individuals to access services such as housing, financial and health support.*
- *Building personal skills such as resilience (the ability to handle life both in and out of prison), supporting wellbeing, mental health and the development of social skills.*
- *Enhancing the ability to make positive contributions to their family and community, such as parenting and other family responsibilities, contributing to communities by volunteering or mentoring, or pursuing further studies or skills acquisition [16]*

We believe this holistic approach to building life skills and overall capacity building can be essential in improving the rehabilitation of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people.

[15] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/708156/evaluation-of-prisoner-learning-initial-impacts-report.pdf

[16] <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/19551/pdf/>

Educational needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller prisoners

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers tend to have worse experiences in prison compared to non-Travellers. They are more likely to report having mental ill health or mental illness and are kept in isolation more frequently than non-Travellers [17]. In terms of relationships with staff and services, they are more likely to record feeling unsafe and are more likely to have negative interactions and experiences of discrimination from staff [18].

The intersecting needs of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller prisoners at present have gone unaddressed in prison educational programs. These needs include understanding that education levels among Gypsy and Traveller prisoners are also low. Research by Thames Valley Probation Service found that:

59% of Traveller offenders in that area had problems with numeracy, compared to **9%** of other offenders according to OASys data

65% had problems with reading and writing compared to **14%** of other offenders

Only **12%** of Traveller offenders possessed any such qualifications, compared to **57%** that had some form of educational or professional qualification [19]

[17] HMIP 2019/20 Annual report

[18] ibid

[19] https://irishchaplaincy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Working_With_Gypsy_and_Traveller_Offenders_Final_15_7_14_x.pdf

Although there is a lack of data on the experiences of Roma people's educational needs in prison, there have been studies undertaken by Roma organisations that provide an understanding of the literacy and qualifications Roma people may have when they enter prison.

20% of European Roma self-declared as illiterate in 2014, compared to **1%** of the wider EU population [20]

Further, a large majority of Roma respondents had not completed upper secondary education. On average, 89 % of the Roma surveyed aged 18 to 24 had not acquired any upper secondary qualification compared to 38 % of non-Roma living close by [21].

[20] https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2014-roma-survey-dif-education-1_en.pdf

[21] *ibid*



Addressing needs

Addressing the well-documented problems of underfunding, lack of accountability and poor support will improve the outcomes of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller prisoners' experiences of education in prison. However, in addition to these improvements, a 'culturally competent' approach to developing education programs needs to be taken to support minority groups, including Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers.

Entry level programs and embedded learning

A report from the Irish Chaplaincy proposed actions for change to better include what Gypsy and Irish Travellers want from education in prison. These included providing **entry-level literacy and numeracy, embedding literacy and numeracy in vocational courses, facilitating Traveller prison forums, appointing a Traveller Prisoner Representative to foster interest in courses and disseminate information, and encouraging Travellers to participate in educational and vocational initiatives more generally** [22]. Although the study did not research the needs of Roma, a model of good practice is also including entry-level numeracy and literacy, alongside language courses if needed.

The study outlined what programs Irish Travellers in prison wanted:

48% of all respondents wanted specific training that would lead to employment;

45% of male respondents wanted training in construction or mechanical engineering;

26% of all respondents wanted classes in literacy and/or numeracy

In researching this, they raised concerns for Travellers accessing the right kind of educational programs, and the programs they wanted. For example, the Voices Unheard report cites that one Irish Traveller man held:

“

All these men are used to hard work, labouring, and landscaping and they expect us to go into a classroom like children. The men want to learn... they know they need it [education] but it's got to be right for them...not treating them as children, they won't take that [23]

- Irish Traveller prisoner, London

”

However, it is worth noting that many vocational training courses need level 1 or 2 Maths and English as a prerequisite. Not everyone will have this, and for those that did not finish school, obtaining Level 1 is essential. However, some GRT prisoners' education may need to start before Level 1, with foundational linguistic/basic literacy skills.

To combine the need for basic functional skills and literacy skills, alongside a want for practical courses, embedded learning courses should be prioritised and made available to Gypsy and Traveller prisoners. The opportunity to combine basic functional skills, in an applied environment is one solution to the outlined engagement issues noted above.

[23] https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/voices_unheard.pdf

One to one and peer learning

The Chaplaincy study found that many participants in the focus groups stated that access to literacy and numeracy courses in prison was limited or unsuitable, as it does not accommodate prior access need (pre-level 1 linguistic and literacy skills). This is concerning as reading, writing, and numeracy skills are essential to successful engagement with rehabilitation programs, finding employment, and any resettlement work that may be undertaken [24].

Assessment of literacy should be undertaken discreetly as to not undermine trust, and create othering by placing individuals in classes they are not prepared for and reinforce internalised beliefs that formal education is not 'for Travellers':

“

You don't want to be the stupidest in the class.
When you go to the literacy classes the others
can all read, they're more advanced [25]

- Irish Traveller prisoner, Midlands

”

The anxiety around a classroom environment, and for some the associated trauma means peer learning or one-to-one tutoring may work better. We have found on our NEET program, which is a one-to-one tutoring program for NEET (Not in Education Skills or Training) Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller young people aged between 16 and 25 that one-to-one tutoring has worked well [26]. The one-to-one model has overcome the anxiety of a formal classroom environment and allows for wrap-around support. See the footnote for more information, but we hope for this to be used as an alternative to custody model. Secondly, the Shannon Trust's Turning Pages, which is a one to one, peer-led model has worked extremely well for Gypsies and Travellers in Prison [27]

[24] <https://www.irishchaplaincy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Traveller-Ed-Report-Nov-2015.pdf>

[25] https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/voices_unheard.pdf

[26] <https://travellermovement.org.uk/advocacy-support/young-people>

[27] Recommendation 9.



Case Studies

Shannon Trust Case Study 1

For confidentiality the name of individuals have been redacted and changed. The name of the student in this case study has been replaced with [XI] and the tutors names have been exchanged for [ST]

[XI] is a Traveller in his 50s. He has been in prison for a year and been a Shannon Trust Learner for 8 months. We met [XI] to celebrate his completion of Turning Pages.

He told us:

'It is really emotional. When I started, I could only read my name and it was a bit embarrassing, just small words like cat and dog. I never really went to school, as soon as I could earn money I was out working. I have never been without money. My grannie used to send me off to school every day and I would walk the opposite way to work, she was soft with me really. I always wanted to read and I was frustrated a lot.

I was always living on trust. I had to ask people to help. When I was young, my grannie sent me to work on the roads. I found my way there and when the work was finished I had to make my own way home and got lost. I had no idea where I was and just desperately wanted to get home. I had to keep relying on the good will of people to help me out.

On the house block, people I asked were writing things on apps and menus for me but I knew that what they were writing wasn't what I asked because the words weren't the right length. I ordered

some trainers but they never turned up.

I was so frustrated all the time. I used to go to the library and talk to the Mentors and staff with all sorts of problems. I knew I could talk to them and it helped a lot.

Now I like to read, I look in the dictionary and try to find a word from Turning Pages or just go through and find words that I know.'

2 Mentors who worked with [XI] told us:

'I told you this on your first day XI, don't feel embarrassed if you don't know, it's because you haven't been taught.'

'If everyone had the same determination as you, they would go far.'

'People were always winding him up on the house block. They'd shout out 'ABC' when they found out he was learning to

Shannon Trust Case Study 1

read. He would come to the session really stressed but it was so good for him, he would have a chat and then we would go through Turning Pages and by the end felt good, it was like stress release for him.'

The prison librarian has noticed a difference in [XI]:

'We are so pleased with [XI]'s progress and his attitude to learning. Today in the library, he was sat with another man who recently completed Turning Pages, they were each reading different books and helping the other out when they became stuck.'

As has [XI]'s Key Worker:

'[XI] was embarrassed, he couldn't use the kiosk or read letters. He has been here a year now and is a completely different character. He shows his emotions and is much less frustrated.'

[XI] read out a letter that his Mentor sent to him then his reply:

I started with Shannon Trust thinking I would be able to help in a small way, helping those who needed a hand with their reading. I did not expect to feel proud of that person that I helped. However, it is my feeling towards you. I am very proud of you and the standard that you have reached. I think I was lucky. You turn up to every session. You

fully engage with the work that we do and are now reaping the rewards. I have to disappear for 9 months to complete a course. By this time you will have finished your final book.

I wanted to say thanks for being such a cracking Learner and all-round good egg. I also wanted to wish you good luck in finishing the final book. Keep doing what you have been doing and I can't see there being any problems. Well done [XI]. Just look how far you have come since we began.

All the best pal

See you soon
Your proud Shannon Trust Mentor, [ST].

Reply:

Dear [ST],

Thank you for your kind letter, it was nice of you to appreciate my efforts. You made learning to read interesting to me. It has made such a difference to me. I can't thank you enough. I look forward to seeing you when you get back.

Best regards,
[XI]



Shannon Trust Case Study 2

What was life like before you started to read ? What difficulties did you have ?

I was unable to communicate both inside and outside prison. It was really embarrassing and frustrating and I just had to rely on others. My wife had to read everything for me. I had a few business and could read numbers but had to get my wife to check everything as people could pull the wool over my eyes. I often made it look like I was reading it so I didn't look like I didn't know. I used to just sign things so I could have been easily conned. I never went to school it wasn't the travelling way; I think I went for one week once. Reading was never part of my life.

What can you do now that you couldn't do before starting to learn ?

I can help my wife now and not rely on her. I don't have to get my solicitor to send two copies out now, one to me and one to her. I can help the kids. I was **** poor as a kid (old school you know) so I thought it was all about making money for kids. Now I can read I see that's not what kids need they want me to read to them. I can write to them now and they all write to me. I get loads of letters and emails from my nieces they call me 'brain box' now.

What difference is it making to you ?

I don't feel so angry now I was always on the attack before and on edge. I don't feel like a twat and I have privacy now and can read my own stuff. I know where I am going now and what I need to do. It helps me to be a dad and I am making my kids go to school now- no excuses.

What's going to be easier for you now you've started to read ?

Reading with my kids, my little one cant wait for that so I have signed up for Story Book Dads. My older kids never went to school and I didn't see the point but now I can make the little ones go as I really believe it helps. I am reading the words now not just making them up. I am appealing my sentence and now I actually know what is going on.

What are you looking forward to doing now you can read ?

Sitting down with my kids and reading to them. I have less pressure in life now as it gives me more choices and options. Shannon Trust has opened up a whole new world for me and I can show my kids that world" I have loads of animals and never know what is going on at the vets so even that will help. Always been

Shannon Trust Case Study 2

a worker and would never have got involved in any job that involved reading and writing and that and now I can do both.

How does this make you feel ?

Over the moon and not like a **** anymore. It's a brilliant think.

Who have you told about learning to read ? What have they said about it ? How did they react ?

I have told my wife and she is thrilled my whole family are. **I have started to tell other Travellers and they are trying it now.** Everyone says I am much calmer and more aware of the world now. They cant believe it!

Are you finding it easier to take part in education, training, rehabilitation courses/ get support ? If you are, what ?

Yeah when I was asked before I told them to **** off and I am not doing it. I would rather have been banged up all day than do that. I did the Shannon trust and realised its not a waste of time like other things in here. This opens up gates (not literally) and I have just passed my English E2 and Maths E1. I have also completed job skills and food hygiene.

What are hopes ? What next ?

Keep going and I want to be a mentor. I want to help other Travellers and get rid of the 'he is a traveller' idea from officers and prisoners. I know other Travellers who won't be taught by a Gorger as they don't trust them. I want to show Travellers that its life changing to read.

What do you like about Turning Pages manuals and reading books ?

Think they are great not childish and very varied. I love that the repeat a lot and that you use different skills. It was hard work but straight forward to use. I play scrabble using the turning pages words. I like that I chose how it works.

What have you liked about learning with a Mentor ?

[ST] is sound and what you see is what you get. If he had been a teacher type I wouldn't have done it. He made me feel like an equal not like someone who was thick. I built trust with him which is really important to me. I felt respected nit pressured and never forced. I like that [ST] didn't talk crap to me just said it how it is. I think it's a brilliant thing. [ST] needs to be on the radio to tell others about this.

Digital literacy

Digital literacy and the prioritisation of programs that give digital literacy skills should be rolled out in prisons. Alongside Maths and English, digital literacy is becoming essential to everyday life, and poor digital skills can be a barrier in prison and a barrier to rehabilitation. Our previous report on Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Women in Prison highlighted that digital literacy forms a persistent barrier to engagement, particularly for older Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma people. Due to this, Digital Literacy, particularly courses that would embed this learning and apply it to everyday life [28]

Covid-19

From March 2020, education, skills, and work activities in prisons stopped completely to control the spread of the virus, leaving prisoners with very few learning opportunities [29]. Some activities have resumed, but the impact will be ongoing. This will undoubtedly impact education in prison for some time to come, and the loss of purposeful activity has enormously impacted mental and physical health during this time. An interview from our report, A Record of Our Own highlights how this loss of purposeful activity has impacted Traveller Prisoner [30].

“

No work or education has had a big impact on my mental health. Being a Traveller, we like to keep busy, we are taught this from a young age, so not being able to do this is very difficult and my mental health has suffered [31]

- A 26-year-old male prison leaver, questionnaire completed on 13 July 2020

”

[28] https://travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/TTM%20GRT%20Women%20in%20Prison%20Report_final.pdf

[29] <https://travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/TTM%20GRT%20Women%20inhttps://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201920-education-childrens-services-and-skills/the-annual-report-of-her-majestys-chief-inspector-of-education-childrens-services-and-skills-201920>

[30] A Record of Our Own 2021 – Interview with a Traveller Man

<https://www.travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/ZMT%20report%20final.pdf>

[31] ibid

Problems with Education in the Adult Estate

The funding, quality and quantity of education in prison has been on the decline for the past decade, and the system is in dire need of intervention.

The Prisoners' Education Trust's highlights a range of problems, including:

- *The impact of population overcrowding on the ability to deliver education effectively cannot be underestimated.*
- *Scant resources and in particular, a reduction in the number of prison officers, makes accessing education in some prisons extremely difficult. For example, from 2010–2017 the number of frontline operational prison staff (officers at bands 3–5) was cut by 26%.*
- *The infrastructure in many prisons is inadequate – there is too little space for new classrooms or workshops, due to overcrowding [32]*

The Prison Reform Trust points to a significant decline with just 200 people in prison achieving a level 3 qualification (AS level equivalent) in the 2017-18 academic year, a 90% decrease from 2011-12. This has led to a 'glass ceiling' beyond Level 2 for prison learners, with anything above that seen as 'at best an optional extra rather than a coherent progression route for students' [33]. The implementation of an obligation to offer education and provide an education plan would help form a progression route.

The quality of education depends on the type of institution, and the governance of that institution. The Prisoners' Education Trust states that the quality of education varies widely. With women and open prisons tending to score higher, and male local prisons by far the worst [34]. This disparity in quality is a problem itself, and **many call for greater cohesion, governance, and accountability over the quality of education across all institutions.**

[32] <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/19739/pdf/>

[33] Unlocking potential,

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf

[34] <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/19739/pdf/>



Further, **there is a lack of cohesion when prisoners have to move location or are released.** Prisoners can transfer from one prison to another, without notice and assignments, course completion, or exams make no difference to the decision to transfer someone. This 'churn' disrupts the routines, relationships, and activities of prisoners, and is particularly problematic when a prisoner is partway through a course not offered at the receiving prison [35].

Also, there is little support for prisoners to continue education on release and those serving short-term sentences will likely not be able to begin a program, and then continue it successfully on release. This is due to lack of support in this area.

Regulation must be provided to ensure that prisoners receive the support needed to continue programs they have begun.

[35] ibid



Education in the Youth Estate

There is a disproportionately high representation of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller children in the youth estate. For these children, it is concerning that the standard of education in young offender institutions has shown an aggressive rate of decline this past year. Of the 32 prisons and young offender institutions inspected this year, only 9 were judged good or outstanding. Additionally, there has been a significant decline from an already poor standing. Of the 13 previously judged good in the previous year, 7 declined to require improvement, and 1 declined to inadequate [36]. In fact, nearly two-thirds of inspections this year showed poor management of the quality of education, skills and work [37].

In the youth estate, the education standards are monitored by Ofsted, along with a range of other educational establishments for Children. In February 2020 four prisons were inspected under the EIF, Education Inspection Framework. For these, the key issues affecting education in prison are:

- *Poor management of quality in education and skills*
- *Slow progress with improving the provision since the previous inspection.*
- *Only a third of prisons inspected since September 2019 deliver an appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of their prisoners.*
- *The number of activity spaces available in education, skills and work is insufficient for the number of prisoners, or spaces are poorly allocated and used.*
- *Prisoners with additional learning needs receive insufficient support and the range of education, skills and work activities that vulnerable prisoners can access is poor [38]*

[36] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201920-education-childrens-services-and-skills/the-annual-report-of-her-majestys-chief-inspector-of-education-childrens-services-and-skills-201920>

[37] *ibid*

[38] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201920-education-childrens-services-and-skills/the-annual-report-of-her-majestys-chief-inspector-of-education-childrens-services-and-skills-201920>

On a more positive note, the previously mentioned ambition to succeed has been in our 2016 report, *Overlooked and Overrepresented*, which found GRT boys were far more likely than the other boys to be in education or purposeful activity whilst in YOIs [39].

78% compared to **76%** were currently taking part in education,

19% compared to **10%** were taking part in vocational or skills training,

26% compared to **16%** currently had a job.

Gypsy Roma and Traveller boys also had a more positive outlook toward education:

70% of those who had taken part in education believed it would benefit them when they left (compared to just **58%**).

More than half of those who had taken vocational or skills training were also much more likely to believe it would benefit them when they leave (**52%** compared to **37%**) [40].

[39] The Traveller Movement, *Overlooked and Over Represented* (2016)
<https://www.travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/userupload/criminal-justice/Overlooked-and-Overrepresented-Gypsy-Traveller-and-Roma-children-in-the-youth-justice-system.pdf>

[40] *ibid*



Special Needs and Disabilities

The rate of prisoners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is extremely high. In 2014, the Unlocking Potential: A review of Prison Education, found that nearly one-third of prisoners self-identified on initial assessment as having a learning difficulty and/or disability [41].

This rate is even higher again for Gypsy/Travellers in prison as the 2019-2020 HMIP annual report held that 53% of Travellers in prison recorded having a disability, compared to 35% of non-Travellers [42].

The statistics for individuals with SEND in society and naturally prisons is likely far higher than self-reporting rates as many children go without a diagnosis in school, and continue with a range of needs into adulthood and beyond [43]. This is again, only more concerning for minority groups such as Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers who face higher levels of exclusion and may have not been diagnosed at school.

[41] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf

[42] HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Annual Report 2019-20, 20 October 2020 at https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisoners/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/10/HMI-Prisons_Annual-Report-and-Accounts-2019-20-WEB.pdf

[43] <https://patient.info/news-and-features/is-adhd-in-adult-women-underdiagnosed>

For the prisoners that have their SEND needs recognised, the funding and consequential support is poor. As noted above, the Ofsted annual report outlined that the support for prisoners with SEND is poor. This is further echoed in the written evidence for the Prison Education Enquiry in 2020, from a group of tutors who work across a range of prisons in England. They paint a picture of lacking support and funding for prisoners with SEND [44]. They held that support for SEND and LLD's is a significantly under-funded area.

“

Currently, we have one SEND specialist covering an entire region. Locally, there are ALS Practitioners (in our case, we have one practitioner spread across two sites) but prisoners with LDD's need greater support than the one meeting every 2-3 weeks that an ALS tutor is able to offer.

”

In terms of ways to move forward, there needs to be increased funding to support SEND students in prison. Secondly, prisoners acting as 'Classroom Assistants' could offer a valuable service [45]. By supporting other prisoners, they are in turn helping those they assist, but secondly, *“it helps change prisoners' mind-sets from one of an inward self-serving attitude to that of an outward appreciation of the needs of others”* [46].

This can also be important in engaging marginalised groups within prison, such as Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers, who may be more comfortable engaging if peers are present. Again, this model of peer to peer learning has worked well as part of the Turning pages project.

[44] <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/19555/pdf/>

[45] *ibid*

[46] *ibid*

Bibliography

1. Written evidence submitted by the Traveller Movement Submission to the Education Committee Inquiry - Education: Are Prisoners being left behind? (2021) <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/19575/pdf/>
2. The Traveller Movement, Overlooked and Over Represented (2016) <https://www.travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/userupload/criminal-justice/Overlooked-and-Overrepresented-Gypsy-Traveller-and-Roma-children-in-the-youth-justice-system.pdf>
3. Traveller Movement, Scoping Study on Elective Home Education, 2018 <https://travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/TM%20EHE%20report%20final.pdf>
4. The Traveller Movement, The Last Acceptable form of Racism, (2017) <https://travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/userupload/equality-human-rights/last-acceptable-form-of-racism-traveller-movement-report.pdf>
5. Zahid Mubarak Trust, A Record of Our Own (2021) <https://www.travellermovement.org.uk/phocadownload/ZMT%20report%20final.pdf>
6. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Education: the situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States Roma survey – Data in focus https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2014-roma-survey-dif-education-1_en.pdf
7. MoJ, Guide to Offender Management Statistics England and Wales (2016) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/585871/guide-to-offender-management-statistics.pdf
8. BASW, Gypsies and Travellers Briefing Paper (2017) <https://www.basw.co.uk/resources/gypsies-and-travellers>
9. https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/basw_35012-5_0.pdf
10. Ewan Kennedy, HM Inspectorate of Prisons Youth Justice Board, Children and Young People in Custody 2012–13: An analysis of 15–18-year-olds' perceptions of their experiences in young offender institutions <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/prisons/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/03/hmip-children-young-people-in-custody-12-13.pdf>
11. Shannon Trust, Turning Pages at <https://turningpages.shannontrust.org.uk/>
12. Irish Chaplaincy, Traveller Education Report, 2015 <https://www.irishchaplaincy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Traveller-Ed-Report-Nov-2015.pdf>
13. Conn Mac Gabhann, The Irish Chaplaincy in Britain, Voices Unheard: A Study of Irish Travellers in Prison (2011) https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/voices_unheard.pdf
14. Report on an independent review of progress at HMP Pentonville by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, (2020) <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisoners/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2020/03/Pentonvilleweb-IRP-2020.pdf>
15. Ofsted, The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2018/19 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/859422/Annual_Report_of_Her_Majesty_s_Chief_Inspector_of_Education_Children_s_Services_and_Skills_201819.pdf
16. 6. Ofsted, The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2019/20, (December 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201920-education-childrens-services-and-skills/the-annual-report-of-her-majestys-chief-inspector-of-education-childrens-services-and-skills-201920>
17. 17. Cabinet Office, Race Disparity Audit Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures website October 2017 (revised March 2018) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/686071/Revised_RDA_report_March_2018.pdf
18. 18. <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/817/education-are-prisoners-being-left-behind/publications/written-evidence/?page=2>
19. 19. Tutors submission to the inquiry 'Education: Are prisoners being left behind?' 2021 <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/19555/pdf/>
20. 20. Education Committee Inquiry – Prison Education Submission by Catch22 2021 <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/19559/pdf/>
21. 21. Dame Sally Coates, Unlocking Potential, A Review of Education in Prison (2016) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf
22. 22. Joe Cottrell-Boyce, Working with Gypsy and Traveller Offenders: A Thames Valley Probation Case Study, Irish Chaplaincy, https://irishchaplaincy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Working_With_Gypsy_and_Traveller_Offenders_Final_15_7_14_x.pdf
23. 23. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Annual Report 2019-20, 20 October 2020 at <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/>
24. <https://travellermovement.org.uk/advocacy-support/young-people>

The Traveller Movement

Copyright 2021 The Traveller Movement

Registered Charity: 1107113

Company limited by guarantee no. 4038939

Stockwell Methodist Church, 44-50 Jeffery's Road, London SW4 6QX

Tel 020 7607 2002 | Fax 020 7607 2005 Charity no. 1107113

www.travellermovement.org.uk

Email: policymanager@travellermovement.org.uk

