

the Traveller
Movement

BESTIE

A toolkit for working with Gypsy,
Roma and Traveller young people

November 2022



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Acknowledgements

We want to thank our Romany Gypsy, Roma and Traveller peer researchers without whom this work would not have been possible. Their lived-experience, insights, creativity, and hard work was an inspiration to us all.

Thank you to our Advisory Board member Sally Carr, whose expertise and experience in youth work as well as her lived-experience was an invaluable add in writing this Toolkit. We would also like to thank Phil Regan as the principal author of this Toolkit.

Thank you to all the Gypsy Roma Traveller charities and stakeholder groups who shared their good practice with us!

Finally, thank you to Youth Futures Foundation for funding this project and supporting us in every step of the way.



About this toolkit



This toolkit aims to improve understanding and to support effective practice for those working with ethnic¹ Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people. It is produced by the Traveller Movement and is based on the 'Roads to Success' research project. This youth peer led research programme studied the views of young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, and organisations working with them. The research was funded by Youth Futures Foundation.

Who is it for?

This toolkit is aimed at all statutory, voluntary, private and independent sector organisations and their staff providing services and support to ethnic Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people.

Why is it important?

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of young people (aged 16-24) who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). For some young people this will be a temporary setback, while for others it will have a long-term detrimental effect on their future life chances.

Since the financial crisis in 2008, wage gaps between older and younger workers have been rising, leading the Institute for Employment Studies to conclude that "generational progress is grinding to a halt".

Young people are overrepresented in sectors which are unlikely to see significant wage growth in the future, and are presently dominated by low paid and precarious jobs. The overall youth employment rate has fallen significantly, and 170,000 young people have been unemployed for 6 months or more.

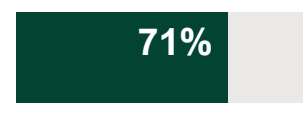
These impacts fall disproportionately across different demographics. Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are the ethnic group with the highest rate of unemployment and economic inactivity; with just 40% of Gypsies and Travellers aged 16-64 employed, compared with a national average of 71%.

Even when controlling for factors such as poor educational attainment, childhood deprivation, high rates of poor health and/or disability, Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people were still three times more likely to be economically inactive than their White British peers.

40%
of Gypsies and
Travellers aged
16-64 employed



71%
national average



¹ [Traveller Movement \(2022\) The importance of accurate data monitoring and data inclusion for GRT communities](#)

What do we know?



Our research found that youth services across the UK are not delivered uniformly or consistently.

Organisations in the public, private, and voluntary sectors – who are involved in the commissioning or delivery of youth work services with and for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people – are missing opportunities for partnership and collaborative working; leading to a disjointed provision of services. Pockets of good practice exist, and these should be lauded and used as an exemplar for best practice, but this is not the norm; leading to a 'post-code lottery' of youth service accessibility.

The provision of youth services frequently does not consider individual need or circumstances, often resulting in a disconnect between young people and youth organisations.

Funding pressures, the result of a decade of austerity and swingeing cuts to funding for vital public services, has made it increasingly more difficult for organisations to deliver sufficient and consistent provision.

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

The following findings highlight some of the key issues that youth services should be mindful of when working with young Romany Gypsies, Roma and Travellers:

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

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

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

Although majority of youth organisations provide mental health awareness and wellbeing services, they don't take into account the specific needs of Romany Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people.



What do young Romany Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people say?



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

(Romany Gypsy woman, 23)

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

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

(Romany Gypsy man, 19)

The influence of familial and cultural traditions and a lack of positive and visible Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller role models with degree level attainment and successful careers results in many young people viewing academic subjects as irrelevant for them, and our interviewees expressed a desire that schools could do more to take their cultural and individual preferences into consideration.

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

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

(Irish Traveller girl, 14)

When asked, most young Gypsies and Travellers said they would like to work for a family business or set up their own business. Self-employment within Gypsy and Traveller communities is a cultural tradition dating back centuries and that is what most young people know and are used to. Those who step out from the tradition can be considered disloyal to their family.

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

(Scottish Traveller man, 20)





“The effect [of schooling] is the feeling that you’re not good enough and it stays with you for the rest of your life...”

BESTIE – rules of working with young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers



In this section we share effective practice suggestions for local authorities, youth organisations and third sector organisations working with Gypsy Roma and Traveller young people.

Some common themes emerged from the interviews that we have broadly categorised into the mnemonic BESTIE

B

Be young people led in everything you do. Maintain a young people centred approach even when funding and organisational culture may try to pull you in a different direction.

E

Effective Provision that provides personal development and leads young people to realise their aspirations and potential in education, training, employment.

S

Stay community led. There is often added cultural capital brought to programmes where professionals employed are from the communities they are working with.

T

They are NOT all the same. Having a strong understanding of the Interagency working. Collaborative working across the cultures and the conscious and unconscious bias they face, is an essential starting point for any organisation or professional working with Gypsy Traveller and Roma young people.

I

Interagency working. Collaboration across statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors promotes greater opportunities for the young people.

E

Enough funding to ensure comprehensive, long term sustainable programmes that support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people to realise their aspirations and improve their life outcomes. Short-term funding approaches are seen as part of the problem, often setting young people up to failure, which perpetuates the inequality and justice.



BESTIE

Be Young People Led



“If you ever lose sight of a person-centred approach, then you’ve lost it. And what a lot of organizations have done, and this is my experience, is they become organisational centred, not person centred.”

Director of Youth Organisation

1. Young people centred approach should be at the heart of everything you do

“It’s a process of continual listening, learning, focus on what is important to a young person now, and for the future and acting upon this in full consultation with their family, friends, stakeholders and other experts only at the permission of the young person.”

(Youth Centred Approach [wordpress.com](https://www.wordpress.com))

“Nearly all the kind of projects we’ve had with Roma people, the starting point of building that trust and relationship has been about going to street level. In approaching groups, young people on street corners, sparking up conversation coming back the next night, doing it again, and getting to know them like that. Bringing a football, bringing some arts painting a mural on the local wall, taking a trip out somewhere, and that kind of thing.”

(Youth Organisation)

2. A diagnostic tool can be useful to agree young person’s aspirations and the means to achieve them

“So they get one to one sessions with that youth worker, maybe take them out for some food. We’ve got a mentoring pack which we would go through with them, it covers all the kind of key areas that you might want to think about in your life such as your health, your mental health, your finances, your relationships, things like that.”

(Gypsy and Traveller Organisation)

3. Purposeful activities, such as Driving Theory course, are shown as highly valued by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people

“It would mainly be through attending the driving theory course that 16- and 17-year-old young men, are more likely to engage for training.”

(Gypsy and Traveller Organisation)

“It could be a variety of things, we work on with them for things like working on a certification, they need to get into an apprenticeship. Sometimes they want to work on their driving licence theory. Other times, they just want to work on feeling stronger with reading and writing. It really just depends on their interests.”

(Gypsy and Traveller Organisation)



Effective provision



“To take the ideas of the young person, and then make sure it’s the kind of provision that will give them skills and equip them for the future.”

Gypsy and Traveller Organisation

4. Self-employment and entrepreneurship are a part of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history and culture

“...a lot of times, it’s maybe, that they [young people] don’t have the qualification to do the apprenticeship that would lead to the self-employment that they want. Filling that gap, so that they can continue on that path of learning through work, and kind of learning as they start their own business is a big part of it.”

(Rights Organisation)

“They [my children] only went to primary school, and didn’t go to any other school. So I educated them in the showroom, in my offices, but I also had a diverse plan of a format of education where they spent an hour or two watching CNN News, World News, they watched Bloomberg, they would read the Telegraph newspaper, or the Sunday Times newspaper, and they would work and listen to my PAs doing invoicing and letters. So they had that routine of education, but it’s real-life business education.”

(Businessman, Romany Gypsy)

5. To have a longstanding commitment to the communities

“...you can’t have an effective partnership that makes that generational change, unless there’s like commitment to it. And so, it needs to be a long-term thing, about building trust and relationships.”

(Gypsy and Traveller Organisation)

“I do think long term provision is key and stability of personnel... Lack of trust, or suspicion of outsiders sometimes means that it’s so important that you have non-Traveller people going to work alongside the community. I think it’s important that there there’s either financial stability or else a commitment made that this is long term, and this isn’t changing, and that they’re going to be around for as long as possible. I think that’s really healthy.”

(Local Authority)

6. It’s not all about education, employment and training

“It’s very rare that we’d ever do or ever run a project that’s all about employment, and training. So an example is; if someone’s unemployable, not because they can’t fill out an application form or do a CV, but because they’ve got more pressing issues at hand to do with mental health, or relationships, or whatever it might be. And actually, if you get a job right now, that’s not a win, because they’re not going to keep that job. Because they haven’t dealt with their own crap yet, in order to keep that job. So actually, let’s stop there for a second. And let’s make this about helping that young person with those needs.”

(Youth organisation)



BESTIE

Stay community Led



“A strategy would definitely be family intervention. The whole family’s understanding of what their sons and daughters are involved in, the steps that they’re taking and why they taking them”

(Gypsy and Traveller Organisation)

7. Employ Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people in positions delivering youth work provision increases cultural capital

“Bringing in Roma professionals, who’ve got the cultural capital and the language to help you out, and who can answer the questions of the Roma parents who don’t have the same kind of English, accelerates your work 10 times over... When we started working with Roma mentors and bringing them in to support our projects, our credibility in the community sped up and grew. And suddenly we became the trusted people of that Roma community.”

(Youth Organisation)

“When we do the recruitment, or when I’m looking for people, I am looking for Roma speakers, and people that have knowledge regarding Roma. At this stage, I only have Roma people that came forward that can speak Roma and that have the knowledge of Roma... And, you know, the Community Interest Company, concept of being led by the community for the community goes as far as recruitment.”

(Roma Organisation)

8. Family Approach

“There was a specific project for Gypsy and Traveller communities. And then there was a specific project for Roma communities as well. We started work with families to support those families to kind of settle into the country. And I think as that work developed, that’s when we started identifying issues with young people. So, for example, there was a trend for young Roma people, who got excluded from school. So, we ended up in a position where we were having to inform the families of what that meant, making sure that they had sufficient support if they were transferred to pupil referral units. We were getting involved in meetings with the family, when these exclusions were taking place as well and negotiating with the schools to see what was the best position for the young people. And I think as a result of that, we then started looking at things like training for young people and, you know, trying to get them involved in, in other things.”

(Rights Organisation)



BESTIE

They are NOT all the same



9. Age Range – organisations indicated working with young people from 9-25

“We generally speaking, stick to that 11 and up, simply because the type of service that we provide isn’t really well suited to the younger siblings. But we are in contact with younger siblings and know that they might be coming into our service in the next couple of years.”

(Rights organisation)

10. Cultural capital gained through experience and training

“So probably we entered the community before we booked on to the training with the Roma Support Group. But it took us three years to feel like, right, we’ve learned enough, we’ve understood enough. And we’ve shown that understanding enough to this community to get them to trust us.”

(Youth organisation)

“I can think of pictures that I’ve seen of old Traveller education staff, dressed up as Gypsies wandering around schools, and that’s so gross. Just like no, everything about that is wrong. But then also, I can think of ways in which some of our staff have gone and done really powerful empowering assemblies and stuff to kids. And that’s been amazing.”

(Gypsy and Traveller Organisation)

11. Diversity in the Communities

“As a as a Romany Gypsy person myself, GRT young people are high on my agenda and they’re ever present in my thinking. But I’m also LGBT plus. And I see sometimes the dichotomy of that, in that some people embrace the GRT. And some people will embrace the LGBT. You have to carefully navigate where you’re out on either of those aspects of your identity, because both can lead to people’s prejudices and discrimination. So, I spent a lot of my life kind of tiptoeing around about when I can be out and adopted a kind of code-switching approach to being able to get things done.”

(Youth Organisation)

12. Unconscious and Conscious Bias

“I was talking to a colleague earlier who works in the targeted youth support service. That’s the young people who got particular identify needs to be really aware off. And they also work with young people who are involved with youth justice. They have reflected in the sadly significant proportion of the young people are Gypsy Roma and Traveller. And there’s all sorts of reasons and I guess, things to explore and understand more about in in that relationship, you know, about how people perceive a Gypsy Roma Traveller young people how preconceptions and unconscious bias, different young people responded to, in different ways in the antagonistic relationships, maybe between professionals and young people and community members.”

(Local Authority)



Interagency Working



"I am a great believer that you don't do things on your own, you do things together, and you do things in collaboration with people. I do foster allies, and I to also foster the idea of accomplices as well."

(Director of Youth Organisation)

13. Be part of a Multiagency Forum

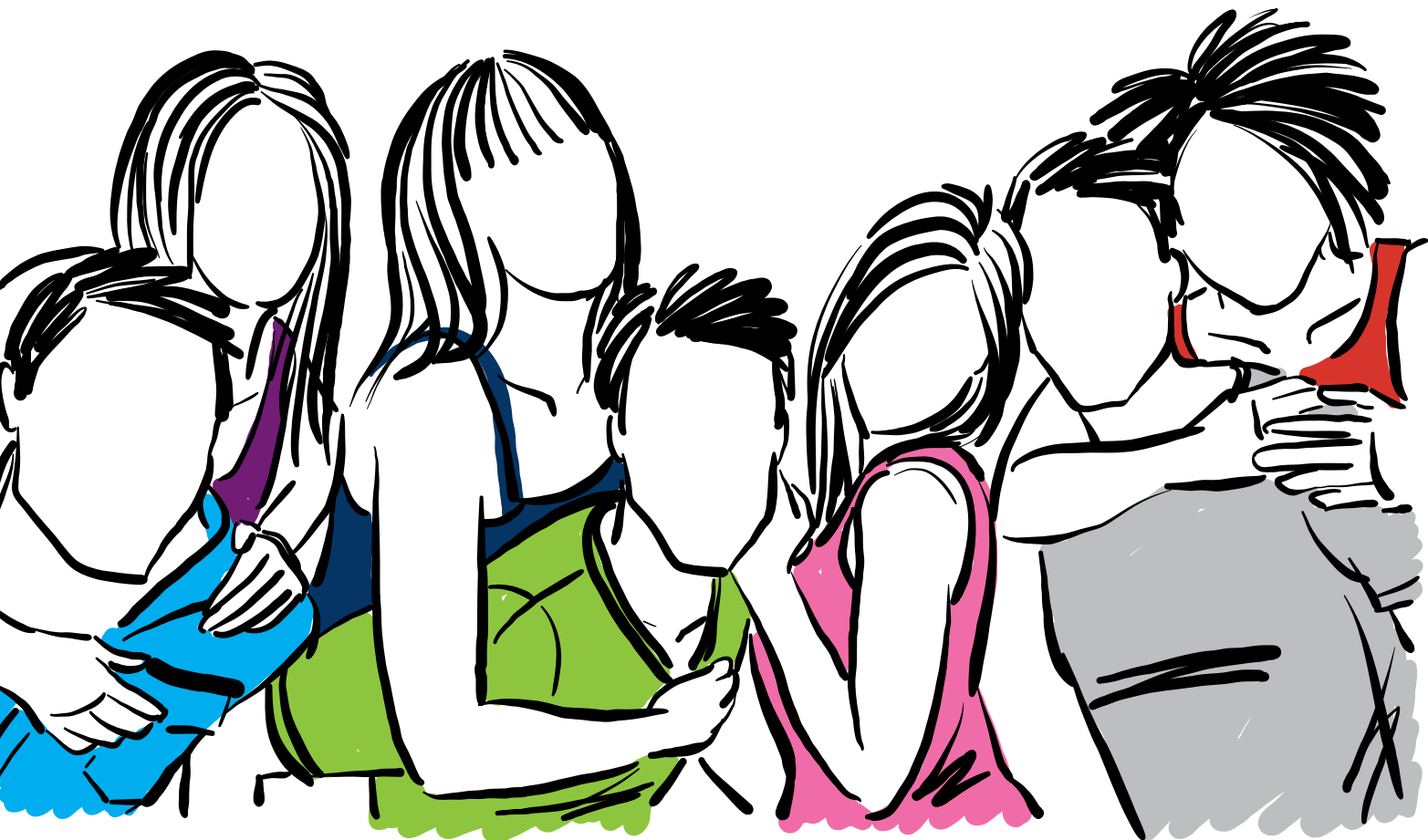
Multi-agency working is key to effective safeguarding and child protection (Sidebotham et al, 2016). Children and their families will access a range of services throughout a child's life. It's vital that practitioners work together to gain a full overview of a child's situation and have a co-ordinated approach to support. ([NSPCC Learning](#))

"So for me, I will deliberately build relationships with a variety of different organizations. So I will work with education, work with health, I'll work with the police and I'll work with sports organisations and I'll work with those organizations, because I want to change the agendas, and I want young people to feel that they can come forward. So having a partnership and a networked approach, actually then leads to other people who know GRT LGBT young people."

(Youth organisation)

"And then I think collaboration is key. So I think primary schools need to work with secondary schools. And I think family support workers need to be working with youth workers so that everyone is playing off each other's strengths"

(Local Authority)



Enough Funding



“This is generational work and you’re not talking about funding a project for a year. You’re talking about being around for like 20-30 years and helping like to make that long term shift.”

(Director of Gypsy and Traveller Organisation)

14. Sustained and targeted funding to build relationships and provide a continuity of service to young people

“... the thing that we really need to make sure happens, because you get so many projects that are funded for like a year, or like three years to like, go engage, you know, some people and try and build that trust and relationships, and give people information and help people have choice. And then they disappear. Right. So that is that’s like anti building trust and relationships, it’s like building people up and letting them down.”

(Gypsy and Traveller organisation)

“...a lot of projects that get funded are short term, they go to people with no relationship. And then it ends, like the one with Children’s Society. They’ve got some funding to do some work around social media and Gypsy and Traveller young people. ...They came to us, and they were will you deliver this work with us. And yeah, we got our group young people together etc. And that video, it is a really good video and one of our lasses worked on it is really, really good. But like, why, why was that money given to the Children’s Society? What experience do they have of working with Gypsy and Traveller young people in West Yorkshire that enables them to deliver effectively on that work? And like, how much of that is happening? Like up and down the country.”

(Gypsy and Traveller organisation)

“But unfortunately, funding came to an end, and we weren’t able to continue it. Which is a shame, because in some ways, it’s even worse, you know, giving somebody something and then taking it away once they’ve got used to it and enjoyed it.”

(Local Authority)





“To take the ideas of the young person, and then make sure it’s the kind of provision that will give them skills and equip them for the future.”

Youth work models, methods and curriculum



Based on the interviews undertaken and our experience in running projects with and for young Gypsies and Travellers for over 20 years, we have identified the following as good youth work models and methods for use in practice and curriculum when working alongside ethnic Romany Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This is by no means an exhaustive list.

Model

We are recommending the Advocacy Model blended with the Empowerment Model of youth work. This mixed model approach enables the promotion of human rights and social justice whilst supporting young people to obtain skills, experiences and competencies to thrive individually and collectively.

Methods

The methods used by youth workers to reach, engage, and support young people should be tailored to each specific context and the identity of young people.

Being aware of cultural competencies is necessary, as what may have worked in one context may not work in another context. For example, the identified need, and support required, for a young Roma person living in bricks and mortar accommodation may vary quite significantly to the need and support of a young Traveller living on a caravan site.

In many situations it is important take a community youth work approach as often families will need and want to understand and be involved in any work with young people. There are, of course, times when young people do not want to have family involved and may want to talk to a youth worker alone.

In all contexts a review of the methods to be practiced should be considered with care. This might include detached youth work whereby working with young people in the situation you find them is needed; or outreach work where young people are encouraged to access building-based provision. There may be the opportunity for pure building-based work from the offset. However, it has been found that it takes up to two years for young people and their families to feel some trust in outside workers.

One to one work and small group work should also be considered, alongside the options for day trips and residential which help to build experiences that support young people to learn informally.

Many young people may have lower literacy levels and using creative methods such as film making, podcasts, music and art could be useful in developing expression and communication skills.

Consideration should be given to gender, and working with mixed gender and specified gender groups. This needs to take place through negotiation with young people and their families so that, wherever possible, curriculums are developed in a collaborative manner

Curriculum

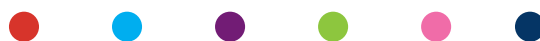
The National Youth Agency (NYA) youth work curriculum is a good resource for basing a curriculum for work with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people.

See: <https://www.nya.org.uk/quality/curriculum/>

The key themes that the curriculum covers can be applied to effective youth work with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people when considered through a lens of cultural competency and delivered in a community youth work way.

In collaboration with the Traveller Movement and Open Doors Education and Training, National Youth Agency (NYA) has developed a free 'Working with Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Young People' CPD course. You can find it on their website: <https://www.nya.org.uk/academy-cpd/>

Good practice



There are good practice projects in working with young Romany Gypsies, Roma and Travellers happening across the country, below we have identified eight of them.

1. The Traveller Movement Internship Programme

Traveller Movement's paid (monthly stipend) Internship programme was established in 2010 and has had over 30 interns to go through the programme to date.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller young people are overrepresented in NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) figures and NS-SEC routine/semi-routine occupations; meaning that experience of office-based employment is not common amongst these communities. This results in a lack of peers/role models for this type of employment. In fact, many young Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller people do not think office-based jobs are relevant to them.

TM internship programme is a soft introduction to office administration and project delivery skills (public speaking, networking, presentations etc.), office etiquette, and working culture for 16–25-year-old Gypsies, Roma and Travellers with differing starting levels and skills. The programme is tailored to each intern's individual needs.

The programme lasts for 3 - 12 months to allow for comprehensive personal and professional development. Interns generally work one bridged day (10-4) in the TM office, with occasional evening events & remote work as required. Flexibility is key. The programme is primarily office based in order to allow interns to develop confidence in an office environment. Every intern has their own desk and working space for duration of the internship.

TM Interns are trained on phone systems, email systems and other relevant transferrable skills. Interns work to a structured workplan and are mentored on a 1-to-1 basis by a member of the Traveller Movement team, depending on their interests and future plans. Interns have monthly one-to-ones with their mentor where they are supported to be proactive in evaluating their own progress, and identifying other areas for development. The whole TM team is expected to provide pastoral and professional development support as part of the charity's ethos.

The internship is flexible and designed to be responsive to the interests and skills of each intern. For example, where an intern who starts on an office admin programme but shows interest in politics/policy, the senior management team will liaise in order to revise the outputs & focus of the internship role to ensure interns can develop skills and experiences that are relevant to their aspirations and interests.

The programme is tailored to provide young people with a 'soft' introduction to office working, which is ordinarily a novel experience. We do not assume any pre-existing knowledge about generalised expectations of working in an office-based role.

In addition to the formal element of the internship programme, TM also provide pastoral support for our internship; including support in securing other employment/training/education opportunities independent of TM – including university and college applications.

We maintain contact with previous interns to assess the programme's effectiveness based on interns' subsequent career, personal, and academic development.

Our previous interns have gone to working in law firms and setting up their own charities!



2. Open Doors Education and Training (ODET) – An approach for Equity – remote complementary and alternative learning

Open Doors Education and Training (ODET) is a not-for-profit Community Interest Company. It was born out of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 when schools were closed. Initially established to support ethnic Romany Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller young people, it now has a much wider remit to support all ethnically diverse communities and wider programmes. They provide children and young people with opportunities to access professional digital one-to-one education and advocacy. These programmes are also used by some Probation and Youth offending teams for alternative to custody models and community sentence planning for at risk young people. Their online formats have been carefully designed to offer tailored support every step of the way.

Their approach is to support children and young people to unlock their potential and provide and promote alternative or complementary streams of flexible education that work for them and accommodate their needs. It takes a human right informed lens and each child's heritage is actively embraced and celebrated through the work.

They have a growing programme of support of enabling learning content:

'Tutors for Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers' Project

This intervention is a complement, not an alternative, to mainstream schooling. ODET match up a young person and a professional online tutor, offering one hour of additional support per week to focus on any aspect of education the child would like further assistance with through their online portal.

Career Advice and Employability Skills Project

Participants are matched with a professional online career advisor. Through their online platform participants are initially consulted about their career aspirations and educational needs, which is followed by tailored advice and information. Types of advice and information provided include: help with application forms; applying for apprenticeships or internships; starting up a business; CV writing; interview skills; and help to access further training and courses.

Functional Skills for NEET (Not in Education Employment and Training) and Alternative to Custody models

Young people are matched with a professional online tutor and work towards their Maths and English GCSE and Functional Skills exams. In addition, 10 hours of career guidance and employability skills are offered to each student as part of the programme.

Though relatively new the programmes have already delivered remarkable successes. When initially launched between Sept 2020 – July 2021 the 'Tutors for Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers' project enrolled 120 students (children and young people) nationwide, with an average attendance of 80%. This year one of those children, a primary age pupil was awarded pupil of the year in his school.

"I found that with one-to-one learning, I could go at my own pace and this meant I learned a lot faster than in school and felt much more comfortable with asking questions than I would in a group. As someone who struggles within groups of people, I felt this really helped me concentrate on my learning and I could get much more done."

(16-year-old student, enrolled on the Functional Skills for NEET programme)

"The teachers have commented that they have seen both children's confidence grow, and that they have seen improvement in their abilities. They are both enjoying school more as they are not so far behind"

(Parent of siblings enrolled on the 'Tutors for Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers' project)

Further information: <https://www.odet.org.uk/>



3. Leeds Gypsy and Traveller Exchange (Leeds GATE) – Long term investment in community Ownership

Leeds GATE is a community member's organisation for Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers, Scottish Travellers and Welsh Travellers that has existed in Leeds for 18-years. Members get a vote in the AGM, and make up the executive board. It is embedded into the model and ways of working that the people who come to Leeds GATE have ownership of it.

Leeds GATE have two arms to their organisation; one being around advocacy and support; and the other is their community team that work on community and youth development projects. They employ two youth workers, a Romany Gypsy and an Irish Traveller, who run a program and activities for young people, including weekly groups (usually face to face, but since lock-down some have been on zoom). They administer a mentoring scheme for young people working one to one through bespoke built mentorship. They also organise yearly residentials for young people and take them to the countryside and other exciting places to do caving, raft making, etc.

Another area the youth team focusses on is education. Their youth workers sit alongside a community tutor who is employed to develop education opportunities for the young people. They run a homework club, which currently has around 50 young people signed up to it.

Educational guidance and careers advice is provided which involves working with families over longer periods of time to ensure that, when the children get to around 14, families and children can start thinking about college. A key goal is to maintain the young people's functional skills so they can access further education opportunities.

With a team of around 20 people, Leeds GATE employs 50-50 of Gypsy and Traveller people and non-Gypsy and Traveller people. Gypsy and Traveller staff members are important role models for the young people and add value to every project. Some Gypsy and Traveller staff members have gone through the youth work programme, and gone to university via non-traditional routes. They are invaluable role models for the young people in their communities.

Further information: www.leedsgate.co.uk



4. Youth Association – Cultural capital to build understanding and trust

Established in 1904 and excepting uniformed youth organisations like the scouts, Youth Association is the second oldest youth charity organisation in the world, after the YMCA. Based in Wakefield they are very much rooted in Yorkshire and deliver programmes of youth work through satellite projects in Leeds, Bradford, Doncaster, Barnsley, and Wakefield. They deliver a lot of street-based (or detached) youth work; youth advocacy and participation; and youth voice work.

Underpinned by a strong set of principles and ethos, which is driven and motivated by the nutritional values of youth work, the services provided are based on the voluntary participation of young people – they choose to be there.

All their work is done in a group and in the young people's social setting. Their work is concerned with tipping the balances of societal power in favour of young people wherever possible, recognising that they don't have much power in society.

In 2014 they began working with Roma young people in Wakefield. Following social tensions stemming from cultural disparities between newly arrived Roma people and local residents, the council, police, the local church, other organisations and Youth Association, came together to take a proactive approach to solving some of those tensions. Since then, they have worked with Roma young people across South and West Yorkshire.

It was a key for the Youth Association to build its cultural capital as part of its engagement with Roma young people. They undertook cultural awareness training, delivered by the Roma Support Group, to gain a good understanding of the community, their history and culture and so to have a strong contextual background that helped understand Roma people, their beliefs and behaviours. They also engaged in an inter-agency exchange with Roma Community Care and a children's centre in Bradford, where they shared experiences of their work, visited one another's programmes and learnt from each other's practice.

Key to supporting this cultural capital was the employment of Roma staff. In employing Roma staff and bringing them in to help support their projects, they saw that their credibility with the communities grew as they became trusted people of the Roma community.



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5. The Dukes Theatre – Creative spaces as vehicles to empowerment

The Dukes Theatre is Lancaster's only independent cinema, and is an Arts Council funded national portfolio organisation. They produce two theatre shows in house each year. The Dukes Creative Communities department roughly engages with around 4000 to 6000 people annually with participants from across the district of Lancaster, Morecombe and beyond. Some of their provision is free and other is by subscription or paid for, however all activity has bursaries to help enable those who cannot access or cannot afford to access the opportunity to be in the room.

Supported by Lancaster University the work with Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities across the district has been an evolving relationship since around 2015. They have built up an enormous amount of trust with the communities locally, with projects that historically have entailed the communities finding their own voice and their own place in the world; using drama, art, fashion, music and storytelling, to make their mark and to be seen and heard.

More recently, to take this initiative to the next level, they worked with the Local Authorities Minority Ethnic Achievement Service, Lancaster and Morecambe College, Bryony Kimmings, and Amy Hart to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young women around autobiographical storytelling. Initially planned as face-to-face, with the pandemic this moved online to zoom sessions. The zoom experience has worked well, providing the young women with the opportunity to be in their own home environment, doing drawings and examining things such as why women should be treated equally and talking about their identities. The hope for this project is a brand new commissioned verbatim piece of theatre that Amy and Briony have curated and will perform, based from their work in person and on zoom with the young women.

Further information: www.dukeslancaster.org



6. Article 12 – The rights of the child

Article 12, in Scotland, is named after the 12th Article of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; which establishes the right of every child to freely express their views in all matters affecting them, and for those views to be taken into account in decisions that affect them. The underpinning right drives everything that they do.

The organisation has a two-pronged approach to their work. On the one side they work on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) reporting; gathering the views of young people in regard to their rights and reporting those to the UN CRC. This includes working with a variety of marginalised groups of young people, including young Scottish Gypsies and Travellers. The second prong is solely focused on young Scottish Gypsies and Travellers, building up their capacity, supporting them with non-formal education, formal education, helping them find pathways to work, and other kinds of educational opportunities that they'd like to pursue.

Article 12 have a great reputation with the communities they serve, and many young people come to the service through word of mouth or referrals from partners. Once the referral is made a development worker will reach out to the family and speak with the young person about what they're interested in. An Individual Learning Plan for each person is created based, essentially, on whatever they'd like to be working towards. Now in its sixth year, their young Gypsy and Traveller lives project has helped a huge number of young Scottish Gypsies and Travellers build confidence, build their educational capacity and build their capacity for work.

“When we are talking about things like a national strategy, for instance, things get talked about, in theory on a national level, but they're actually funded and acted on a local level. This can be a problem for a Traveller community who's not always in the same local authority. And so, something that we've seen repeatedly in terms of services, is that they're not prepared for dealing with a family or dealing with a young person on a national level. There needs to be this picture of how you deal with a family, for instance, that might move between local authorities, and how you continue support for them”

Further information: www.article12.org



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7. London Gypsies and Travellers – Bright Futures

London Gypsies and Travellers (LGT) aim to support Gypsies and Travellers living in London as they seek to gain greater control over their lives, more influence on the decisions that affect them, more opportunities and an end to the discrimination they experience every day. LGT have a whole community approach to their practice and a long commitment to working with the communities in London and wider. Offering a range of services including Bright Futures, working with young people; the accommodation advice line, providing welfare and accommodation advice to families; and Phoenix, working with families, who experience domestic violence. They are involved in strategic work locally, regionally and nationally around areas like planning; and continue to campaign and protest for the rights of Gypsies and Travellers.

Through their Bright Futures Programme they are working with young Gypsies and Travellers who have either dropped out of education, and now want to get back into education, but may not want to go through mainstream. The programme also supports young Gypsies and Travellers who need support to staying in education and progress to further education, with a view to going into employment. As part of the programme they offer young people vocational taster courses. This is sometimes provided by external specialists delivering block workshop of 4-sessions on e.g., hair and beauty or plumbing. The main aim is to develop skills, personal development, and to support young Gypsies and Travellers to have choices when making decisions in their lives. Getting an education to go on to employment, or self-employment, is part of this. LGT predominantly with young people aged 13-25, but if family or sibling referrals are made for younger children they will seek to support or signpost to an organisation that is able.

“A lot of referrals will come through the accommodation advice service, where it could be a family has got a young child, now turning 16, and they’ve had letters from child benefits or child tax credit? What is your child going to do? So through that, we then pick up that young person, and we start working with that young person and seeing what does this young person like to do? ... Once you work with the family, it starts, kind of the next child will then come up, and then the next one, you know, I mean, so when you’ve worked with kind of all the siblings in that family, so if a family’s got five children, eventually you’ll have worked with all five of the children and also worked with the parents as well.”

Further information: www.londongypsiesandtravellers.org.uk

**LONDON
GYPSIES &
TRAVELLERS**



8. Save the Children – Supporting Roma families

Established in 2018 by Save the Children UK, Kent County Council, the Margate Task Force and Cliftonville Primary School, the Margate Early Learning Community (ELC) regularly brings together the collective capacity and knowledge of local families, services and organisations to review and work to improve early learning outcomes for children aged 0-5 growing up in Margate. Save the Children have made [this short video](#) summarising the work of the Community and the impact it has had on the lives of families in Margate to date.

Since late 2021, the Margate ELC has been collaborating with the Margate Primary Care Network and several other local partners as part of our efforts to engage with and support Roma families in the area, many of whom do not regularly make use of local services for families. So far, this collaboration has been very successful, resulting in two well-attended community events which have given many local Roma families an opportunity to engage with services including children's centres, health visiting, GP surgeries, charities, schools and nurseries. Plans are in place for these events to continue being held on a termly basis.

Since summer 2022, this partnership work has also led to the trialling of termly 'Breakfast Clubs' based at two primary schools. During these sessions, which are aimed primarily at Roma families and attended by trusted school professionals and representatives from local charities, health services and children's centres, families are encouraged to share their feedback on local services and help services plan improvements and further support for the community. The Margate Primary Care Network plan to expand their school-based support for Roma families over 2022-23 and run additional sessions including healthy cooking and first aid classes for families in local schools. Feedback from partners and families involved in this work to date has been very positive, and the feedback from families has already helped informed developments to local health service delivery.

In August 2022, the Margate ELC awarded funding to the health visiting team based at Kent Community Health Foundation Trust to pilot monthly health drop-in events aimed primarily at Roma families living in Margate. The drop-ins began in September 2022. At each event, free fresh fruit and vegetables are distributed, healthy cooking tips are shared and access to local health services is promoted. This project is already showing promising results, with higher-than-expected engagement from local families, leading to a high number of GP registrations and appointment bookings.

Further information:

<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/child-poverty/uk-child-poverty/in-communities>



Save the Children



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 [Traveller Movement](https://www.youtube.com/TravellerMovement)

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