



Annual

Impact

Report

**Leading Change,
Empowering
Communities**

April 2024 - March 2025



Introduction from the CEO and Chairperson Pauline Melvin Anderson OBE

As we reflect on 2024–2025, we are immensely proud of everything the Traveller Movement has achieved over the past year. From advocacy at the United Nations to grassroots voter registration drives, we have continued to push boundaries, drive change, and amplify the voices of Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities.

A particular source of pride this year has been the make-up of our team itself: the majority of our staff now come from Romani (Gypsy) and Irish Traveller backgrounds, bringing lived experience, cultural heritage, and deep community connections to their work. This is no accident we have been steadily building towards this goal for many years. We know that authentic representation is critical to the success of our mission, and that real change must be driven by those with lived experience.

We are also especially proud of our longstanding Internship Programme, which has been running since 2010. This year, two of our Irish Traveller interns, Shaun Mongan and Lourdes O'Brien, progressed into employment with us – a testament to the transformative impact of investing in emerging community leaders.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our funders for their ongoing support. We could not achieve any of this without you. In a year where the funding landscape has been increasingly challenging – with fewer grants, more competition, and growing demand for services – your belief in our work has allowed us not just to continue, but to thrive.

There is still much work to do, but thanks to the passion, commitment, and expertise of our team, we are more determined than ever to meet the challenges ahead.

Yvonne MacNamara
CEO, The Traveller Movement

Pauline Melvin Anderson OBE
Chairperson, The Traveller Movement



Policy, Public Affairs and Campaigns: Operation Traveller Vote

The 2024 General Election reignited the Traveller Movement's Operation Traveller Vote campaign. Our staff worked tirelessly across the country to support Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities to register and use their democratic voice.

We launched the campaign with the release of our co-produced Manifesto, designed to put the priorities of our communities at the heart of political discussion. Post-election, the Manifesto remains the backbone of our ongoing advocacy and campaigning work.

Key highlights included:

- Voter registration events across the country, delivered in partnership with organisations such as Travelling Ahead, Connecting Roma and LeedsGATE.
- Training sessions on political engagement, media relations, and campaigning, empowering community members to become future advocates.
- A social media campaign with our Youth Influencer Network, featuring a major interview with Billy Welch, Shera Rom of Appleby Fair, on the importance of voting and representation.

These initiatives significantly strengthened political literacy among communities who have historically been excluded from mainstream democratic participation.

United Nations CERD Submission

In 2024, the team submitted a detailed report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

Our advocacy efforts resulted in several key recommendations being adopted, including:

- A call to repeal the criminalisation of unauthorised encampments under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.
- A call for urgent action to address racial disparities in educational attainment and school exclusions.



Fought not Taught: The Fight to End School Exclusions

In 2024, the Traveller Movement launched its groundbreaking report, Fought not Taught: Addressing Coercive Exclusions of Romani (Gypsy), Roma, and Irish Traveller Children.

The report exposes how many schools, through action or neglect, create hostile environments that force our children out a phenomenon we have termed "institutionally coerced exclusions."

Key highlights from this work include:

- The release of Fought not Taught, built on years of research and frontline experience.
- Parliamentary advocacy supporting the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, aimed at tackling systemic exclusion.
- A flagship event chaired by Baroness Morris of Yardley, with panellists from The Difference, Anti-Bullying Alliance and Hope Not Hate.
- Key appointments: our Chair, Pauline Melvin-Anderson OBE, becoming Chair of the Department for Education's Stakeholder Group, and TM being appointed Co-Chair of the Anti-Bullying Alliance's Race and Faith-Based Bullying Working Group.

This work will continue into 2025-2026, with the release of new policy proposals aimed at dismantling coercive exclusion practices once and for all.

In late 2024, we were alerted to a deeply concerning incident in Greater Manchester involving the use of a mass dispersal order that appeared to target children from Irish Traveller and Romani backgrounds disproportionately. The dispersal order issued by Greater Manchester Police resulted in the removal and displacement of a group of children, raising serious questions about racial profiling, safeguarding failures, and the misuse of police powers.

We moved swiftly to investigate and challenge the decision. Our team coordinated a formal response, gathering statements from families, liaising with local allies, and raising the issue directly with senior decision-makers. We secured a meeting with the Mayor's Office and senior representatives from Greater Manchester Police, where we pressed for transparency, accountability, and an immediate review of the circumstances leading to the order.

Traveller Movement in the Media

Our Partnerships Manager, Olivia Morrisson, spoke to JOEPolitics in April 2024 for International Romani Day, calling out anti-Traveller hate speech and promoting Operation Traveller Vote.



Partnerships and Advocacy: Building Power from the Ground Up

From April 2024 to March 2025, the Partnerships Team delivered an incredible calendar of events, workshops, training sessions, and campaigns, including:

- Know Your Rights sessions on SEND, discrimination, adoption and more, delivered with partners such as Howe + Co, Simpson Millar, Ben Hoare Bell Solicitors, Bindman LLP and Southwark Law Centre.
- The launch of the Wandering Words competition to celebrate cultural heritage among young Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller people.
- Presence at major events such as Appleby Horse Fair and Cambridge Fair.
- Hosting the final Connecting Communities event at Essex Record Office.
- Delivering Women's Empowerment Network activities, including the Beauty and Business Masterclass and a powerful event in Parliament celebrating women's achievements.
- Starting the Dignity Campaign to highlight poor living conditions on Traveller sites.
- Providing peer research training and intensive campaigns training with the Sheila McKechnie Foundation.

Trainings delivery

The Traveller Movement have both availed of and delivered a range of impactful training initiatives aimed at empowerment and advocacy. Community staff members have participated in training provided by the Sheila McKechnie Foundation focussing on influencing Local Government campaigning strategies and effective use of social media. They have also undertaken training with the British Institute of Human Rights, deepening their understanding of rights-based approaches. In preparation for their peer research project, participants received target peer research training, alongside development and media training to enhance communication and public engagement skills.

In addition to receiving this training, Traveller Movement continues to deliver their widely respected 'Never Going to Beat You' training to professionals, fostering greater awareness and understanding of the Travelling community



Women's Empowerment Network (WEN)

The Partnerships team delivered a Beauty and Business Masterclass Event as part of the Women's Empowerment Network calendar of events designed to upskill and support Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller women and girls. The Masterclass began with a step-by-step introduction to full glam make-up and was followed by a session on identifying existing skills amongst the women and girls attending, with the view to explore potential careers and training opportunities aligned with these skills.

Following on from this initiative, a Flower Arranging and Business Start Up Workshop in partnership with Ignite Business Consultancy was organised. This workshop was delivered in response to calls from members of the Women's Empowerment Network for training sessions on both flower arranging and on setting up businesses.

The Women's Empowerment Network continued throughout the year, by organising an event in Parliament to celebrate the achievements of the Women's Empowerment Network with the launch of the Women's Empowerment Network Annual Review 2024-2025. The event was sponsored by Mary Kelly Foy MP and was well attended by community organisations, women's sector organisations and funders.

Attendees had the opportunity to hear from inspirational Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller women including Charmaine Abdul Karim (Founder and CEO of Pride of Romany), Mary-Ann Stephenson (Director of Women's Budget Group), Padmini Ravi (Bright Futures Lead at London Gypsies and Travellers), Mania Malik (Roma Rough Sleepers Support Worker at St Mungo's) and Jenifer Kovacova (Support Worker at Connecting Roma in Bradford).

In addition to the panel speakers, the attendees also heard from a group of young girls from Harris Academy Orpington. The girls, who were all from the Romani (Gypsy) and Irish Traveller communities brought with them several pieces of artwork that they had created about empowerment and its relation to their identities as girls from the communities.



Strengthening Networks: Connecting Communities and Empowering Futures

The Traveller Movement continues to lead the way in building strong, inclusive networks that empower Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities across the UK. A recent highlight was the Connecting Communities Big Conversation event held at the Essex Record Office, which brought together over 100 attendees including community members, service providers, and partner organisations. This event offered a unique platform to reflect on the Connecting community's programme's progress to date, celebrating the series of grassroots events that have fostered understanding and unity across communities. Attendees were particularly inspired by powerful testimonies from Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller individuals who shared their journeys into education and employment – stories that underscored the resilience, ambition, and talent within these communities.

As part of its ongoing work under the Propel Pan-London partnership programme, the Traveller Movement has launched a new initiative in collaboration with Open Doors Education and Training: a series of free driving theory sessions aimed at young Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller people aged 16-25 based in London.

This initiative has already made a significant impact, enabling participants to access tailored support – both private and online – as they prepare for their driving theory tests. Beyond promoting mobility and independence, the sessions have also helped build confidence and open new pathways to employment.

Together, these efforts illustrate a broader mission, to break down barriers, nurture talent, and ensure every member of the Traveller communities has access to the opportunities they deserve.

Listening, Learning, Leading; Our work on Travellers Sites

The Partnerships team began work on the Dignity Campaign, a project funded by the WestWay Trust to support residents on Stable Way and to raise awareness around the poor living conditions experienced by Irish Traveller and Romani (Gypsy) residents on local authority sites across the country.

There have been close working relationships with MP Joe Powell (MP for Kensington and Bayswater) and his caseworker on issues relating to the residents on the Kensington and Chelsea site around expanding the site due to overcrowding – and the challenges the residents were facing in getting their Qualifying Residents Association acknowledged by the Council.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month

As well as attending other GRTHM events, the Partnerships Team hosted a paper flower-making workshop which was delivered by a Romani (Gypsy) activist and poet, Chris Penfold-Brown. The Traveller Movement were offered the opportunity to attend the Fair with the Blue Cross, RSPCA and other animal welfare charities. The team drove up to Appleby-in-West-Moreland in Cumbria to attend Appleby Horse Fair, one of the oldest and largest Horse Fairs in Europe. The team set up a stall and engaged with members of the Romani (Gypsy) and Irish Traveller communities, as well as other Fair attendees and promoted the work of the Traveller Movement. The Partnerships team also attended Cambridge Fair several weeks later.



A Royal Honour: Our Experience at the King's Garden Parties

Last summer , and remarkably, the summer before , we had the distinct honour of being invited to His Majesty the King's Garden Parties at Buckingham Palace. To be included not once but twice still feels like something of a mystery to us, but we accepted the invitations gladly and with genuine appreciation.

The experience was as memorable as you might imagine. Stepping through the gates of Buckingham Palace and walking across the perfectly manicured lawns of the royal gardens was surreal. The palace, the pageantry, and the people all combined to create an atmosphere that was both grand and welcoming.

The garden parties are a longstanding royal tradition, a way for the monarch to recognise and thank individuals from across the UK who have made a positive impact in their communities. It was a lovely surprise to be counted among them especially for Bridget McCarthy and Tina McInnery who have been with the Traveller Movement for just shy of two decades. Being surrounded by so many others from all walks of life volunteers, community organisers, public servants, and unsung heroes made the occasion even more special.

We were treated to live music from the palace band, a beautifully laid-out afternoon tea (yes, the sandwiches were crustless and the cakes exquisite), and even a glimpse of the royal family as they mingled among the guests. The sense of inclusion and celebration was palpable.

For many of us, especially coming from communities that are too often overlooked or marginalised, being present at such a quintessentially British event felt quietly powerful. It was a reminder that Romani (Gypsy) Roma and Irish Traveller communities belong in all spaces including the grandest gardens of them all.

We're not entirely sure how we managed to receive an invitation two years in a row but we like to think it's a reflection of the work we do, the voices we represent, and the quiet persistence with which we continue to push for equality, recognition, and dignity for our communities.

It was, truly, a lovely experience and one we will remember with pride.





Celebrating connections

Towards the start of the Summer, the Traveller Movement team hosted the annual BBQ at the organisation's office in Stockwell. Individuals from the different communities, as well as representatives from support organisations and/or organisations the organisation has strong referral pathways with were invited to attend.

This was a good opportunity to meet with colleagues from a range of sectors.

The team delivered the organisation's Annual Conference titled "An Era of Change," in Lambeth Town Hall in November. Community members of the team were involved in chairing the conference as well as panel discussions around identity alongside chairing workshops on a range of themes including women's empowerment, identity and heritage, and education.

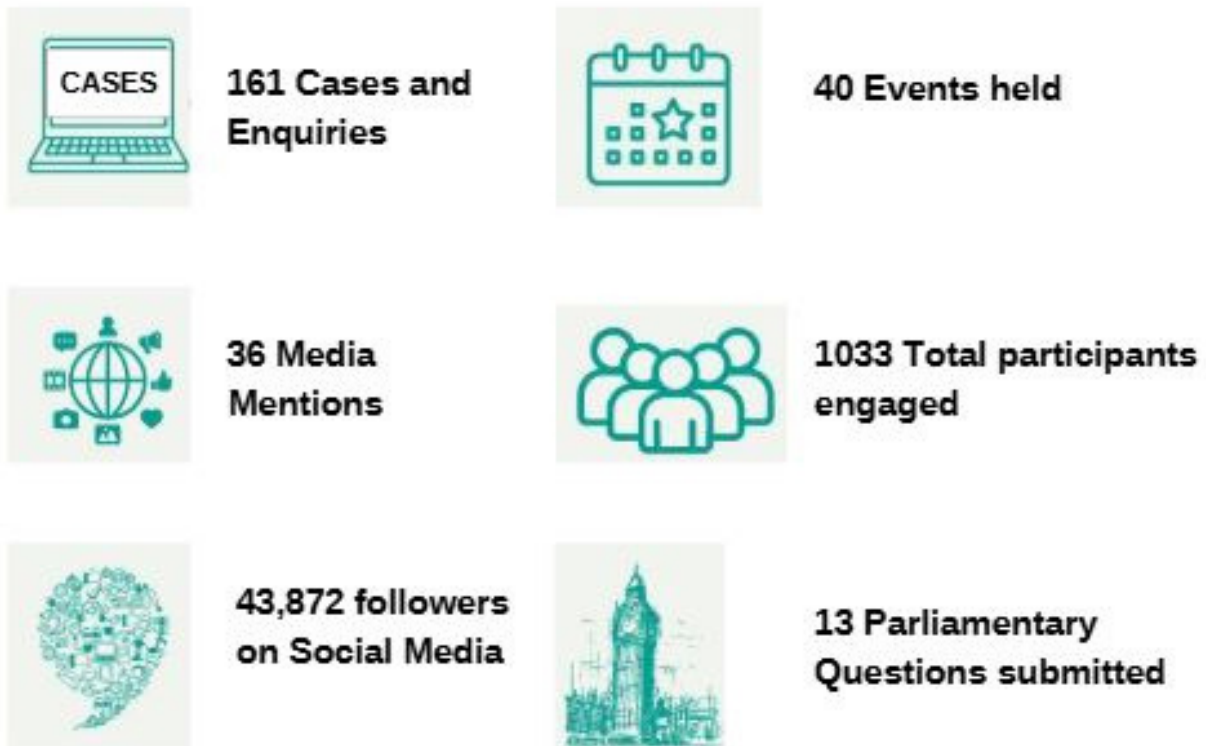


Running Smoothly: Operational Highlights

During 2024–25, the Operations Team has worked diligently to ensure that the Traveller Movement's online presence remains current and accessible. This effort has included regular updates across the main Traveller Movement website, as well as the dedicated Education and Women's microsites.

As a result, we have seen a rise in the use of accessibility tools on these platforms and an increase in orders for the Traveller Movement literacy cards. These developments reflect the positive impact our work is having in improving accessibility for our communities.

In addition, we have continued to maintain a strong presence on social media, with the invaluable help and support of our team members, volunteers, and social media influencers, further extending our reach and engagement across key audiences.





With Thanks to all of our Funders

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