



Rt Hon David Pinto-Duschinsky MP

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

18 September 2026

Dear Mr Pinto-Duschinsky,

Re: Work Experience (Schools) Bill

I am writing from the Traveller Movement to express our strong support for your **Work Experience (Schools) Bill** and to welcome your efforts to ensure that all young people have access to meaningful opportunities to engage with the world of work during their education.

The proposed extension and strengthening of work experience provision has the potential to make a significant contribution to improving aspirations, educational engagement and future employment outcomes. We believe this is particularly important for young people from Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities, who continue to experience some of the most severe educational inequalities of any ethnic groups in England. These inequalities are reflected across attainment, progression, exclusion and post-school outcomes.

Research consistently shows that 'Gypsy/Roma' and 'Irish Traveller' pupils have the lowest educational attainment at every key stage up to and including Key Stage 4. It highlights that young people from Roma and Irish Traveller backgrounds are between 2.5 and 3 times more likely to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) than their peers. Furthermore, 2021 Census data shows substantially lower qualification levels and progression into higher education among these communities compared with the wider population.

Of particular concern is the marked decline in participation as children move through the education system. Evidence from School Census data has identified a consistent reduction in the number of Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller pupils throughout secondary education, including an average decrease of 22 per cent between Year 6 and Year 7. This transition into secondary school represents a critical point at which many young people become disengaged from education.

Against this backdrop, we believe your Bill has the potential to play an important role in strengthening engagement with education and supporting smoother transitions into secondary schooling and beyond.



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Many Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller communities have long traditions of entrepreneurship, family businesses and self-employment. Self-employed occupations remain an important source of economic participation across many of these communities. As a result, practical skills, enterprise and work-based learning often hold particular value for young people and their families. Providing early exposure to workplaces, employers and entrepreneurial pathways can help young people understand how educational participation can support their future aspirations and economic independence.

The evidence also suggests a strong demand among Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Irish Traveller young people for more practical and vocational opportunities. Research has found significant support among parents and pupils for increased access to vocational learning, while Office for National Statistics research highlighted the value many community members place on practical and work-related education.

Meaningful work experience opportunities can provide a vital bridge between education and employment. Such opportunities can help young people develop skills, confidence, networks and aspirations while demonstrating the relevance of education to future careers and self-employment. They may be particularly beneficial for pupils who do not see traditional academic pathways as reflective of their strengths, interests or ambitions.

Importantly, greater engagement with employers can also help challenge misconceptions and stereotypes which continue to affect Romani (Gypsy), Roma and Traveller communities. Work experience programmes that are inclusive, accessible and culturally sensitive have the potential not only to improve outcomes for individual young people but also to strengthen understanding and inclusion across wider society.

The Traveller Movement therefore warmly welcomes the objectives of the Work Experience (Schools) Bill. We believe that, if implemented effectively, it could make a meaningful contribution to improving educational participation, strengthening transitions into secondary education, and supporting progression into employment, apprenticeships, technical education and self-employment for some of the most educationally disadvantaged young people in the country.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage further with you and your office as the Bill progresses through Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

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