

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT
ON THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES
BY ECC TO
GYPSIES & TRAVELLERS
(Consultation Draft as adopted by
Diversity and Equalities Board, 25
March 2009)**



Acknowledgements:

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Glossary of Terminology

AACM	Access, Assessment & Care Management
ACL	Adult Community Learning
AHCW	Adult, Health and Community Wellbeing
BME	Black and Minority, Ethnic
C&YP	Children & Young People
DCSF	Department for Children Schools and Families
ECC	Essex County Council
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
EREC	Essex Race Equality Council
ESH	Environment, Sustainability and Highways
EqIA	Equality Impact Assessments
GTAA	Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment
HR	Human Resources
HRCE	Human Resources and Customer Excellence
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PCPR	Policy, Community Planning and Regeneration
RES	Race Equality Scheme
RRA	Race Relations Act
SCF	Schools, Children and Families
SDS	Self Directed Support
SP	Supporting People

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Romany Gypsies and Travellers of Irish Heritage are recognised ethnic groups under Race Relations legislation.

Romany Gypsies have been in England for over 600 years and Travellers of Irish Heritage also have a long history of nomadism in this country. Indeed both groups have been part of the community of Essex for several hundred years. Another nomadic group to consider is Travelling Showmen. There are a high number in Thurrock, although other parts of Essex such as Chelmsford and Braintree are also home to Travelling Showmen, particularly when they 'Winter' in Essex. New Travellers also form part of the travelling community, although there are few recorded incidents of New Travellers residing in or resorting to Essex.

1.2 The majority of Gypsies and Travellers in England living in caravans are on local authority managed or on private sites. In Essex there are 11 County Council owned sites, accommodating approximately 170 families.

(Appendix1). Information of those living on private sites is limited to information from the caravan count, taken in January and July each year. The caravan count taken in July 2008 reports 497 caravans on authorised private sites. *(Appendix2)*.

There are a number of Gypsies and Travellers living in houses although the actual number is unknown, from knowledge and limited record keeping, it is predicted to be quite high.

There are a smaller number of Gypsies and Travellers living in caravans on unauthorised sites. The July 2008 caravan count records 266 caravans on unauthorised sites in Essex

Unauthorised sites are of two types - unauthorised encampments (where Gypsies and Travellers are trespassing on land not belonging to them) or unauthorised developments (where they are living on their own the land but without planning permission). In Essex there is the largest unauthorised development in England, it has been said that it is the largest unauthorised development in Europe.

- Taking into account both authorised and unauthorised groups, Essex has the third highest count of Gypsies' and Travellers' caravans in the Country (*CLG - Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans, January 2008 – Appendix 2- figures for Essex*). Gypsies and Travellers are, probably the largest minority ethnic group in the county (the number living in houses is unknown).

1.3 Gypsies and Travellers are often referred to as a hard to reach group, excluded from many services because of this. However, there is often a reluctance, and in many cases an unfounded fear, to engage with them. Exclusion leads to negative outcomes, such as:

- Poor life expectancy: on average, some ten (men) to twelve (women) years less than that of the settled community. *
- Increased child mortality: 17.6% of Gypsy and Traveller mothers experience the death of a child, compared to 0.9% of the settled community. *
- Low Educational attainment far below that of the settled community.

Lack of easy access to services plays a major role in contributing to these startling facts.

Exclusion leads to isolation, deprivation and, where there are pockets of bad behaviour, a negative reputation. Local strategies often fail to address issues which could encourage positive engagement with Gypsies and Travellers to address, for example, social inclusion which in turn would contribute to community cohesion. Work around community cohesion is often carried out without Gypsy and Traveller engagement. They are a community who are easier to ignore and keep 'under the radar' than address and make a difference to ALL communities.

Inclusion facilitates responsibility and accountability to others.

* Sheffield Hallam University Research - health needs of Gypsies and Travellers-2004.

1.4 On 2nd April 2004, at the launch of its Strategy on Gypsies and Travellers, the, then, Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) stated:

“Discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers is the last ‘respectable’ form of Racism”. There is more prejudice against Gypsies and Travellers than any other group.

Key points from the CRE strategy are:

- The CRE wants to work with Government and key agencies to improve the education, employment, and health of Gypsies and Travellers, as well as their treatment by police and the courts.
- The CRE will use its legal powers to challenge discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers, in areas that impact most on these groups and where successful cases will make the most difference
- The CRE wants to work for better ethnic monitoring at local and national level, and seeks to get a census category included for Gypsies and Travellers
- The CRE wishes to encourage fair reporting on Gypsies and Travellers in the media

A survey profiling the nature of prejudice in England by Stonewall (2003) found them to be **‘the most reviled group in society’**.

The County Council is mindful that all people in Essex should be able to access the services offered and no groups, including Gypsies and Travellers, should be excluded, as indicated in the Draft Corporate Equality Strategy, where the foreword from Lord Hanningfield confirms that, ‘Essex is a large and diverse County and our vision can only be realised if our services reflect the needs and aspirations of all the communities we serve’. This review focuses on the services offered by the County Council and how they are accessed and the impact they have on this community.

2. PURPOSE OF REVIEW

2.1 Legislative context

The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (the RRAA).

This Act places a statutory general and, in the case of local authorities, specific duty on all public bodies to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial groups and promote racial harmony between persons of different racial groups.

To this end this review will explore the delivery of services by Essex County Council to Gypsies and Travellers and examine how equitable it is.

2.2 It also considers the delivery of services to Gypsies and Travellers and how this contributes towards priorities identified in **EssexWorks** delivery programmes and in the **Local Area Agreement (LAA)**, which will become a central component of the Comprehensive Area Assessment framework from 2009.

The main priorities for the review are:

Our People - EssexWorks

- **Increasing educational achievement and skills –**
 - LAA priority **“Fewer children and young people missing education or not involved in education, employment or training” and “Children and young people realise their full potential in education”**
- **Promote health and leisure –**
 - LAA priority **“Better public health and longer lives”**
- **Supporting Vulnerable people**

2.3 To assist assessing the delivery of the above to the Gypsy and Traveller community, the review seeks to:

- Identify key recommendations for action within Essex County Council services to tackle any identified inequalities in service provision that may be experienced by Gypsies and Travellers.
- Make recommendations to guide a consistent and positive approach in the provision of services to Gypsies and Travellers, including meaningful engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller community.
- **Work towards reducing tensions between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community through the provision of services / policies and procedures that encourage community cohesion.**
- Make a positive contribution to equality issues.

3. REVIEW PROCESS

3.1 This has been split into four key stages:

- i. Initial contact with directorates / services across the county to identify what is already in place and identify services within each directorate.
- ii. Survey by questionnaire, sent out to services / directorates.
- iii. Consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community.
- iv. Collation of information gathered and recommendations.

3.2 Initial contact with directorates / services across the county to confirm what is already in place and identify areas for review.

Although all directorates were contacted and a request was made for information about the review to be disseminated to services within each directorate the responses to initial questions was minimal and patchy.

When referring to the intranet to determine relevant services to include within this review it was clear that some directorates were more thorough than others in providing clear information about individual services, and in publishing the structure of the directorate. The Adult Health and Community Wellbeing Directorate had the clearest pages with the most useful information, whereas information from other directorates had less clarity and was less informed. Although not directly related to the desired outcomes of this review, it is suggested that:

Directorates revisit the information provided on the intranet regarding the services they provide. Giving clarity to structure charts, services and sub-services delivered within the directorate.

3.2.1 After the initial contact with directorates and services across the County Council, this review identified what was already in place and considered the governance of delivery of services and the negative impacts that services may have on Gypsies and Travellers as follows:

Race and Culture:

- Exclusion of Gypsies and Travellers – Possible lack of overall commitment (with the exception of some services) to meet the needs of this vulnerable group who are perceived as ‘hard to reach’. Indeed it could be argued that little effort is made to reach even further to engage with them.
- **Some officers are unaware that Romany Gypsies and Travellers of Irish Heritage are recognised ethnic groups under race relations legislation. Work with BME groups should be inclusive of Gypsies and Travellers.**

- Potential difficulties balancing the needs of two very different minority ethnic groups (Romany Gypsy & Travellers of Irish heritage). Both 'nomadic' groups with some strong cultural differences.
- Lack of literacy skills means Gypsies and Travellers are disadvantaged when presented with written information. General lack of understanding of Gypsies' and Travellers' culture and lifestyle leads to difficulties in communicating and consulting with them.
- Gypsies' and Travellers' negative experiences leads to mistrust of 'authority'.
- Lack of research, planning and evaluation of services for these groups resulting in lack of understanding of the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.
- There is a need for commitment to address the inclusion of Gypsies and Travellers within work streams. It is fair to say that this can be a difficult area of work, both through fear of the 'unknown' and the fact that Gypsies and Travellers are not popular with the majority of the settled community. This in turn creates political nervousness in moving this agenda forward, although on the delivery side some services are wishing to move forward positively.
- Lack of appropriate accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers suggests a need for both permanent and short stay sites in the county. This leads, in turn, to difficulties in Gypsies and Travellers accessing services e.g. health, education etc. The delivery of new pitches is now a matter for the Local Housing / Planning Authorities. However, it is recommended that the County Council should continue to take a strategic overview of how the Districts are approaching this provision, for instance continuing to oversee Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs Assessments (GTAA), to provide guidance to the region as section 4(4) authority, and to co-ordinate policy on non single district issues, such as the provision of short stay sites. All local authorities in Essex are required to provide at least 15 pitches in their district / borough, (many districts / boroughs being required to provide more). Applications from Gypsies and Travellers should be judged in line with ODPM Circular 01/2006, Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites.

Recommendation 1.

The County Council acts in a strategic role to oversee the implementation of the provision of accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community by the local Planning and Housing Authorities, being mindful of planning applications and their outcome.

Disability

Accessibility to the County owned permanent sites is difficult as they were not originally built to cater for those who may be disabled. However, adaptations have been made where required and any potential problems managed.

3.2.2 It was quickly identified that some service areas were meeting the needs of some Gypsies and Travellers quite well, examples being:

- Dedicated officers within Gypsy and Traveller Services undertaking site management and supporting people duties.
- Traveller Education Service which operates solely to ensure that Gypsy & Travellers can access local schools, be they living on authorised or unauthorised sites.
- Library Services visit several county owned Gypsy & Traveller sites. Visits by the mobile library is integrated into their mainstream service.
- Some youth service work with Gypsies and Travellers, e.g. 'T Club' a Traveller project.
- Gypsy and Traveller services were approached by Disability Essex who organised on site health checks. Disability Essex is currently visiting all local authority sites on a twice yearly basis offering free blood pressure checks and health advice.
- Some individual health visitors working closely with the Gypsy & Travellers living on the local authority and some unauthorised sites.
- Access, Assessment & Care Management have a social worker, linking in with South West Primary Care Trust, visiting one unauthorised development fortnightly.

3.3. Survey by questionnaire sent to all service areas to be included in the review.

Questionnaires, (**Appendix 3**) were emailed to all Executive Directors and some service heads, with a request that they again be disseminated within their directorate to ensure that all County Council services received the questionnaire. The Equality and Diversity team also forwarded the questionnaires extensively across directorates.

Despite these attempts some service areas failed to respond in full. Extensions to deadlines were given in an attempt to ensure that the questionnaires reached all services and there was adequate time to respond.

Some services, where it was felt that delivery of the service was less applicable responded through email. Other services responded to telephone questions rather than complete the questionnaires.

Completed questionnaires were returned by 19 Service areas, as follows:

Directorate	Service Area
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Adult Health & Community Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access, Assessment & Care Management ▪ Strategic Planning & Commissioning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supporting People ▪ Libraries x 2 ▪ Adult Community Learning ▪ Business Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self Directed Support - Carers
Schools, Children & Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integrated Youth Services ▪ SENCAN ▪ School Improvement & Early Years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Traveller Education ▪ Early Years & Childcare ▪ Traded Service ▪ School Admissions and Transport ▪ Student and Pupil Financial Support Service ▪ Vulnerable Children & Young People
Policy, Community Planning & Regeneration	One questionnaire on behalf of whole directorate returned
Environment, Sustainability and Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gypsy & Traveller Services ▪ Waste & Recycling ▪ Road Safety
Human Resources & Customer Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human Resources ▪ Customer Standards, corporate compliments & complaints

The responses received were then collated (**appendix 4.**)

Email exchange and separate individual meetings to discuss the questions raised, and associated issues, were held with officers from the following internal and external services:

- School Planning & Organisation
- Partnership Delivery & Quality of Life
- Elective Home Education
- Capita
- Mid Essex PCT
- North Essex PCT

3.4 Consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community.

Fordham Research has recently consulted with the Gypsy and Traveller community for the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA). Part of the work they are doing involved questions regarding Gypsies and Travellers accessing services, therefore further in depth consultation with the community was not necessary.

A more informal approach was adopted, with site visits and focus groups to find out in face to face discussion whether Gypsies and Travellers could identify any specific difficulties in accessing services provided. Only Gypsies and Travellers on local authority owned sites were visited for the informal consultation although Gypsies and Travellers on all types of site and some in housing were engaged in the earlier formal consultation, interviews being undertaken by members of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

3.4.1 Outcome of Fordham Report

Fordham's full report is expected to be published in autumn 2009, although some of their preliminary findings are set out below:

"Participants were asked about their ability to access local services, including shops, health and education."

Health

It was interesting to note that the results of the research showed that permanent registration with a GP surgery was high, at 94%, although despite this high percentage registered with a GP Service, "50% had at some point used accident and emergency facilities because they were unable to see a GP"

Fordham in their preliminary report state that:

"Those that were dissatisfied with the health services mostly felt that this was due to discrimination against Gypsies or Travellers:"

"[Doctors should] see children when they need to see them, and not turn them away because they are Gypsies"

"The local surgery's receptionist is biased against Travellers so we go further away"

"[They] could treat travellers the same as everybody else – I had to lie about my address and identity"

Fordham asked a series of questions about specific disabilities and illness. "Respondents could report more than one issue so the figures did not sum up to 100%. Overall a total of 58% of respondents reported some form of disability or illness, with the most common being asthma, reported by 27% of respondents, with long term illness reported by 21%"

“.....among those reporting one of the disabilities or illnesses, 4% required handrails in their home, while 3% required other alterations, e.g. ramps, low level shower units, support services and help maintaining their home.

Of those who thought help from the Council or Health Service would be relevant to the disability or illness they, or a member of their household suffered, slightly less than half (45%) stated that they were already receiving help.”

Education and Skills

The following text in quotation marks is quoted directly from the emerging Fordham Report.

“Of participants with children of school age, about three quarters (76%) said they were all enrolled in school, and 88% had some children enrolled in school. 21% of children attended vocational training outside school; however it should be remembered that these groups overlapped; only two of the respondents who had children not attending school had children attending vocational training.

Overall 51% of respondents stating that they had children school age had experienced a situation that prevented their children from going to school.”

The most prominent situation preventing children going to school was bullying, closely followed by evictions.

“35% of those who responded felt that further education or training would help their family in finding work, although not all agreed (*“I already have lots of training and qualifications, but no good at all as prejudice stops me gaining work”*). Among the group interested in such training, the most commonly mentioned form of training was literacy-based or vocational. Computing, building related skills and farming were among those suggested by respondents”

“Reading and writing and anything else on offer”

“I would like to go back into education and do GCSEs, as I left school at 15”

“A training course to work with animals!”

Employment

Fordham found that 39% of those interviewed “believed they had been denied employment because of their being a Gypsy or Traveller, in some cases on multiple occasions.” In the majority of cases it was believed that the discrimination had come through the means of potential employers recognising their address as a caravan site; also those on unauthorised sites with no official address faced problems in applying.

“As soon as the address is given it’s the end of the interview.”

“When I lived on a site, the site address would give my identity away.”

“As soon as your address becomes known, you’ve no chance of work.”

“We have to lie about our address – I give my sister’s instead.”

“I don’t have an address which can be a problem.”

Fordham went on to point out that: “It should be remembered that some of the remaining 61% who had not experienced such discrimination are likely to be self employed or looking after the household.”

Council Services

“More than half (51%) of respondents felt that the best way for the Council to keep in touch with Gypsies and Travellers would be via a newsletter,* although 24% thought that a voluntary group would also be a useful way of maintaining relations, and 15% favoured visits by liaison officers or support workers”

Fordham reported that: “Of all the respondents 44% stated that they had suffered discrimination of some sort when trying to access services. Respondents were asked to describe the nature and source of that discrimination. While some respondents did state that they had suffered discrimination from multiple services, each response was classified according to the service given the most emphasis. The results are shown in the table below (*N.B. not all of the services referred in the table are council services*) Healthcare services were by far the most likely to be criticised in this area.”

Source of discrimination in service provision	
Service	% reporting discrimination
Healthcare	35%
Education & Training	11%
Council Services	9%
Postal or courier services	9%
Transport services	9%
Police	2%
Other	13%
Not stated	18%

Source: Essex GTAA SURVEY (2008)

Recommendation 2

Further investigate the nature of discrimination faced when accessing our services and develop actions to address any inequalities. This could be by using appropriate focus groups to determine the nature of the discrimination. In particular, gain an understanding of the nature of the discrimination experienced by children in school and determine whether existing harassment and bullying policies on the grounds of race are effectively working in schools.

Recommendation 3

In view of the evidence that the community appears to experience disadvantage when accessing health services, work with and influence partners in the health services to address any concerns/inequalities in service provision

3.4.2 Outcome of Informal site visits

Informal conversations on site with Gypsies and Travellers further supported issues identified in the Fordham research.

Education:

One main area of concern was children in 'Elected Home Education' (EHE), as in many cases it resulted in little or no education at all. No fault lies at the door of the Services provided by the County Council, but fault does lie in the guidance given by Central Government and this should be challenged.

* "Essex Works" are delivered and received at all local authority sites

On one site visited, an officer from elected home education was also on site. They had visited a child on this site previously some fourteen months ago and there is no legislation that stipulates visits should be made more frequently. This child was keen to progress her studies and had been in full time education at primary school, but had experienced bullying on several occasions at secondary school until she found it unbearable to carry on attending. She had been out of school for over two years. Her comments were:

"The teacher at my other school made sure we weren't bullied. I made friends easily when I started secondary school, but then some of the ones I went to my first school with told them I was a Gypsy and then they all stopped talking to me and I had no friends. 'They' tried to stop the bullying, but it didn't happen."

She was trying to teach herself, with help from her mother and this was considered adequate, under the elective home education guidance.

Some four to five years ago there became an increasing number of Gypsies and Travellers taking their children out of full time education and opting for EHE particularly for children of secondary school age.

Because of Gypsies' and Travellers' lifestyle and general lack of academic attainment of the adults there were concerns that Gypsies and Travellers could opt for EHE and there was nothing in place to assess what HE was actually going to be. All it seems that parents have to do is to opt for HE without further thought. There is no blame at the door of ECC or other LAs, but there is concern that guidance from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) is inadequate to successfully monitor a scenario where illiterate adults can opt for EHE, with no realistic boundaries in place to ensure anything meaningful will actually happen.

There is reference made in the DCSF guidance* to 'suitable' education being one that "primarily equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member....." This is another concern, as being streetwise may certainly equip a Gypsy or Traveller child for 'life within the community of which he is a member', but could hardly be appropriate 'education' to give a child choices in life.

The legal route of taking parents to court in cases where EHE is deemed unsuitable is potentially long and laborious and it is rare that cases proceed to the final stage, as provision of HE may be established quite easily. It may be that a tutor is employed for a short period, hence potential delaying tactics on the part of families, with local authorities being unable to do anything further until perhaps a year or so later when visiting again.

The current guidance is not robust enough in addressing the HE of certain communities and some children whose parents have opted for HE are receiving little or no education. There is no evidence of effective parental support.

*DCSF Elective Home Education, Guideline for local authorities

It is questionable as to whether the DCSF guidance has been subjected to a Race Impact Assessment as it certainly discriminates against the Gypsy and Traveller child having an adequate education?

The educational attainment of this community is appalling and it is in fact far worse than that recorded, as those in EHE are not included in the statistics.

As part of this review it is recommend that:

Recommendation 4.

Understand whether there is a disproportionate number of children being excluded from school and if so how we can work with the community to reduce the numbers (part of LAA targeting). Guidance from DCSF on EHE needs to be clearer and taken into account in respect of Gypsies and Travellers, (as well as other BME and hard to reach groups) when drafting new guidance. ECC to follow this up with DCSF-

Employment:

*“They offered me the job and then rang to say they didn’t need me”
“My school gave me a good reference and they seemed keen at first then said they didn’t need anybody after all”*

Further to consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community a second area to highlight is that of employment and the barriers there are for Gypsies and Travellers trying to access the workplace. Because of an ‘adverse’ address they may not get interviewed, not be successful at interview or, even if successful, may then be told that the job is no longer available.

Accessing the workplace is not made any easier when potential employers only advertise vacancies on the internet. This is now the case with vacancies advertised by Capita for the County Council.

This will exclude the majority of the Gypsy and Traveller community in being able to apply for a job with the County Council, as even adults who may have some literacy skills are most probably not computer literate and would have no idea about accessing job adverts or completing application forms online. This is not an issue exclusive to this community and many older people will not have access to, or interest in computers. Having a caveat of accessing this information via the library is not sufficient.

The following two recommendations should assist the Gypsy and Traveller community and, in the case of recommendation no. 4, many others in accessing the workplace.

Recommendation 5

Work with key stakeholders to agree and put in place actions to avert the stigma attached to current addresses and to overcome the discrimination experienced by the community e.g. create opportunities to promote community cohesion and consideration be given to changing the postal address of the local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites . (e.g. Gypsy Lane, Caravan site etc.). ‘Ordinary’ addresses would attract far less attention to a site and may assist with job applications.

Recommendation 6.

Appropriate vacancies within the county council should be advertised in local newspapers as well as on the intranet to ensure equal access to this information for all groups / communities.

3.5 Collation of information gathered and further recommendations.

Once information gathering was complete and questionnaires collated (**appendix 4**), the key findings and recommendations were identified.

4. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 In general it quickly became clear that the delivery of services to Gypsies and Travellers varies across directorates. There are pockets of good practice across the county, although not necessarily joined up cross directorate work. Those services which have a dedicated role in delivering the service to Gypsies and Travellers are in a far more advantageous position to be successful in engagement and delivery than other services.

It is also clear that although this review was specifically aimed at assessing services delivered to the Gypsy and Traveller community, it would also, in part, apply to delivery to other Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and hard to reach groups and should therefore be considered when reflecting delivery to all.

The main consideration was whether or not services were being delivered in a way that means Gypsies and Travellers could be excluded or disadvantaged, therefore the main emphasis was on Race and Culture although, in some cases, some of the other equality groups were explored.

Although respondents may have answered positively to questions asked, it was apparent from comments made that, in some cases, certain procedures were not yet in place although were planned for. Engagement, inclusion and consideration of Gypsies and Travellers in other important areas of work, i.e. Local Area Agreements (LAA) was seriously lacking at the time of starting this work, although officers have identified that exclusion of this minority ethnic group was an oversight and they should be considered, particularly where the LAA is related to educational achievement and public health.

Taking all this into account the following points need to be resolved and managed so that all communities in Essex are catered for and so that there is an equitable approach to service delivery. Those services, who did not complete the questionnaire for whatever reason, should also, where applicable, respond to the recommendations within this report.

4.1.1 Question 1: Is Ethnic Monitoring in place for your service, which includes categories for Gypsies and Traveller?

Most of the services that responded did engage in recording ethnic monitoring data, although in some areas there was no data on ethnicity kept at all. One service area commented that although ethnic monitoring was in place that 'Currently a percentage choose not to record their ethnicity'.

It was noted and agreed that the 2001 census and earlier ones, did not include categories for the Gypsy and Traveller community and this contributed to missing data.

However, it should also be noted that the CRE in their recommendations in the report 'Common Ground' published in April 2004 stated that local authorities should:

“add two separate categories for Gypsies and Irish Travellers in all ethnic monitoring arrangements, and take steps to encourage them to provide information about their ethnicity.”

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) proposes to include a category for Gypsies and potentially Irish Travellers in the ethnicity question in the 2011 census.

Recommendation 7

All Service areas to review their monitoring information to reflect the Census 2011 categories.

4.1.2 Question 2: Are you aware of Gypsies and Travellers using your particular service? (If yes, how are you aware – please give evidence)

Response to this question varied greatly and in some cases no robust evidence was produced to support the positive response given. Where evidence was given it often related to one isolated incident and identified good work was not necessarily disseminated to other areas.

Gypsy and Traveller Services record the ethnicity of all those living on sites. Traveller Education is another area where supporting Gypsies and Travellers to access schools is strong. Some services quoted anecdotal evidence. However, Access, Assessment and Care Management within the Adult Health and Community Wellbeing Directorate produced a poignant case study of how they successfully engaged with Gypsies and Travellers using their service, with the aim of providing “equal access to services for Older Travellers.”

Case Study 1

Case Study Title: Travellers Project
Owner: S.F.O.P Billericay and Wickford Team
Version No: 1
Updated on 16-05-2008

Summary:

Against a background of Political Action and neighbourhood conflict the team has worked with other statutory and independent agencies to overcome barriers of prejudice and mistrust between Travellers and Independent Care Providers.

South East Essex has the highest concentration of Travellers nationally and the site in Billericay is the largest in Europe. As with the rest of society it is a rapidly aging population and the demand for services is set to increase. We have to be able to respond in a culturally sensitive manner.

Background and Context

Our main aim was to provide equal access to services for Older Travellers.

Our first referral from a Travellers site was for an 82 year old woman in Billericay Community Hospital. An assessment was carried out and a care package agreed to support her return home but as soon as the provider realised the address was a Travellers site they refused to visit.

We realised the refusal was borne out of fear and prejudice which we knew we had to overcome in order to support this woman and other vulnerable older Travellers.

Gypsies and Travellers seem to be the last minority group to whom it is still perceived to be legitimate to exclude and discriminate against.

Notices abound in Basildon, Billericay and Wickford pubs, shops and restaurants refusing to serve Travellers. Neighbourhood tensions are fed by local and national media.

Key Issues:

The key issue was the perceived risks and difficulties of attending the site.

The Carers reported groups of men who stared at them. Numerous stray dogs and risks of theft and damage to vehicles.

A visit was carried out by the Social Work and Provider Team Managers and a risk assessment completed. During this visit the managers introduced themselves to the Travellers and explained the purpose of the visit. The Travellers were keen to reassure carers of their safety; they understood the need to support vulnerable individuals.

Like other minority groups, younger generations of Gypsies and Travellers are not now so likely to take responsibility for caring for older relatives, added to which their transient lifestyle means that older travellers are sometimes left behind with little or no support network and marginalized from the wider society. Access to mainstream services is problematic, some GP's refuse to visit, passengers on hospital transport have complained when Travellers are picked up from the site. Travellers have an inherent mistrust of intrusion.

What we did:

We had to act quickly to avoid risk for the Service User.

First we completed a detailed risk assessment involving Travellers representatives.

As a result of this carers grudgingly agreed to attend the site.

Travellers agreed to take control of the dogs at night. The dogs were not aggressive but not easily seen and difficult to avoid when driving onto the site. Lighting was slightly improved and homes more clearly marked.

Two Travellers volunteered to take a lead role in negotiating between the care providers and travelling community and have been very instrumental in ironing out difficulties.

We contacted the Travellers education team and arranged a series of Cultural Awareness training sessions. This was delivered to Social Work teams, Home Care Providers, Occupational Therapists and Health Staff.

Regular discussion forums were held including Travellers and Provider Managers and the Equalities Unit attended to point out legal obligations and advise ways of working with carers to break down prejudicial barriers.

The PCT had negotiated the use of a Police Mobile Unit once a fortnight to carry out immunisation programmes and Social Workers also attended to share information about services and signpost people to other agencies.

Contact was made with Age Concern, Citizens Advice and the Dept of Works and Pensions and they also visited to hold 'Surgeries'.

Key Outcomes:

Since that first referral we have supported a number of Older Travellers.

We have worked with two different Care Agencies and Meals on Wheels and although there continues to be difficulties from time to time there are now positive relationships between providers and Travellers. There is a commitment on both sides to discuss and work through problems. There has never been any incident or threat to safety of personnel or possessions.

Travellers have been warm and welcoming.

As a team we became aware of our own lack of knowledge and understanding of the Gypsy, Traveller culture and have undertaken extensive training. It is included as part of all inductions of new workers. Care agencies similarly arrange a cycle of training for their carers.

We have attended local and national conferences on providing better services to Travellers.

We continue to work closely with Health, Libraries and Education.

Current political action has resulted in Travellers living with the threat of eviction.

If this event takes place there are a number of individuals who although not using our services at present will become vulnerable.

We have developed a Strategy Plan in order to be able to respond as an emergency and are in a strong position to take on a lead role for all the client groups.

We have team representation on a number of multi agency forums.

Learning:

The crucial factor in the success of this project was early engagement with the Travellers themselves. Within the discussions we were able to recognise the prejudice and mistrust on both sides and find a common purpose.

We have questioned our own prejudices and in examining and overcoming these will have in a small way influenced family and friends and therefore the wider community.

What we intend to do next:

The Police Mobile Unit is no longer available to us and at present we have very few service users on site. Teams have been depleted and other issues have taken priority.

We intend to re-focus our efforts on maintaining a dialogue and finding new ways of sharing information.

We will continue to use every opportunity to promote the rights of Travellers and challenge discrimination both within our own organisation and with partners.

Last week the Service Manager, Team Manager and Senior Practitioner attended the Developing services for Travellers conference at Earls Court and we have come away inspired with ideas which we have yet to discuss properly and formulate into an action plan. One of these is the distribution of a myth busting leaflet.

All the team are booked on and will be expected to share the content of this training in presentations to the rest of the SW Teams.

We have faced challenging situations – some were hilarious consequences, some profoundly moving.

All of those who have worked with the Travellers agree it has been a personally and professionally enriching experience.

Key contacts/Further information:

Contact details: Mark Neville – Equalities Unit
Andy Payne

Kathy Abbott – Health Visitor
Sue Watson – Community Matron
Richard Sheridan – Traveller representatives
Kathy McCarthy
Kanta Wild-Smith – Traveller Education
Gaujon Gulcan – London Care
Noreen Fry – Team Manager
Anna Kahts – Senior Practitioner

Documentary Evidence:

Case recordings
Meeting Notes
Award Presentation
Community Care Magazine
Risk Assessment

Recommendation 3 above will facilitate recording the use of a service by Gypsies and Travellers.

Recommendation 4, which follows the second case study, will ensure that evidence is kept to show that Gypsies and Travellers are accessing a service.

4.1.3 Question 3: Are there any records giving feedback from Gypsies and Travellers on the service being delivered? & Question 8: Do you have a monitoring system in place that records the effectiveness of the service in reaching all communities, including Gypsies and Travellers

Some good examples were found on the local authority sites where a 'Supporting People' programme is in place and where there is a thorough and comprehensive monitoring of the service provided on a three monthly basis.

- Traveller Education 'Go For it' project, where parents and pupils views were sought and recorded.
- Access, Assessment and Care Management have notes on individual reviews and "Travellers were included as part of the Self Direct Report consultation."
- Libraries conducted a survey specifically asking Gypsies and Travellers how the service was used, how valued it was and what impact it had.

Case Study 2

Review of Mobile Library Service to Traveller Children and Families – Executive Summary – Sarah Moth, Audience Development Officer, ECC Libraries, July 2008

Introduction

Since 2001, the Mobile Library Service to Travellers project has promoted the use of libraries by Traveller children and families. Developed in partnership with Traveller Education Service (TES) and Essex County Council Gypsy Services with funding from the Children's Fund, the project has become a mainstream part of the library service with fortnightly visits to 7 sites as well as schools with Traveller children as part of the mobile library timetable.

Aims of the Review

- Review where we are now, use of service, impact achieved and highlight best practice
- Gather feedback from Traveller children via a survey
- Make recommendations for developing and sustaining the service

Use of service

- Over 150 children use the mobile library every month
- Library visits are now an accepted part of life on the sites visited: *"The bus is good and when I come home from school it just arrives on site"* (boy 11, Hovefields)
- Feedback from a survey conducted in April 2008 (see Appendix) showed that:
 - 100% of the children who responded looked forward to the library visits
 - 100% use the survey for borrowing books
 - 77% do the Summer Reading Challenge

Impact of service

- Our partners in Traveller Education Service (TES) and Essex County Council Gypsy Services agree that the mobiles visiting the sites have been a big success. Schools have told the TES that the project has had a positive effect on the children that go on to the mobile and use it. Children have had books in their homes where they haven't had books before and this has had a knock on effect on their performance at school
- Ann Lee (the site manager of Hovefields) is very positive about the project and reports that Travellers are now using community libraries as a direct result of the library mobile visiting the sites
- Ann says that in some cases it has broken down barriers to Travellers doing other things, for example some Traveller mothers on Hovefields are about to do some basic skills training in literacy and numeracy. Also many families are now regular users of the Pitsea Children's Centres

- Some Travellers would never go to a static library and so for them and their families the mobile is a vital link to the wider community: *“The children would not have used the local library as I don’t drive and we are a long way from Pitsea, they wouldn’t have had the opportunity that your service has provided.”* (Mother, parental survey April 2008)
- The library liaises with TES to distribute the Bookstart bags ensuring that Travellers have access to books and reading from an early age
- Pitsea Children’s Centre has used the mobile library as an informal venue where staff have been able to speak to Traveller families about the health and developmental needs of their children

Recommendations

1. Commission ADO to:

- Continue the partnership with TES and Gypsy Services by attending occasional multi-agency meetings
- Work with site managers to promote the service to those who don’t use it and keep in touch with the changing population of the site
- Investigate working with other agencies, for example Youth Bus, Children’s Centres and various agencies which are keen to get their services to Travellers
- Monitor the use of the service, keep in touch with all parties and keep strategic managers informed

2. Stock

- Buy more stock for the Travellers collection, this is a much appreciated and used collection across the sites with the results of the survey confirming how well used the collection is.
- Mobile managers to be proactive in recommending stock for purchase when asked for items we don’t have in the county.
- A significant number of Travellers home school their children and the TES suggest developing collections of study guides. To avoid promoting home education, recommend a collection of year 9 SATS material be bought. Possibly pilot this at one site.

3. Training

- Investigate sharing best practice by mobile managers shadowing experienced staff as part of training

4. Best Practice

- Spread to all sites the best practice that has been developed at Hovefields of interactive storytelling.
- Investigate publishers’ sites for book character colouring sheets and activities linked to reading and stock

Appendix

An evaluation was carried out to gather feedback on how the service is being used and how it is valued and to inform the recommendations.

Results from child survey

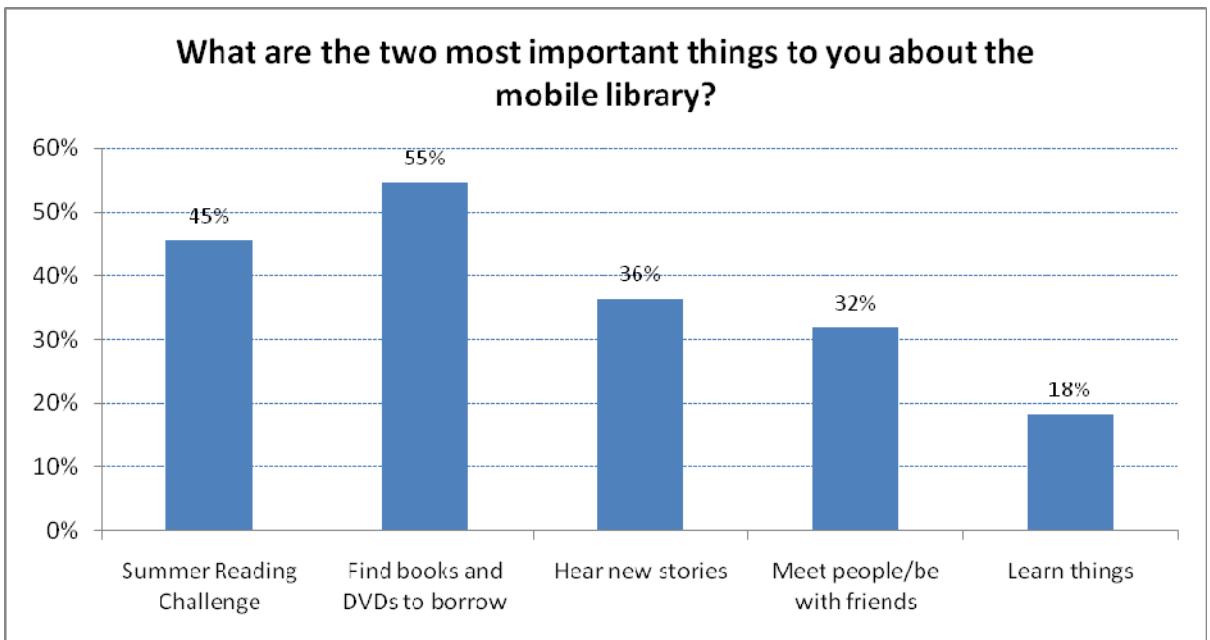
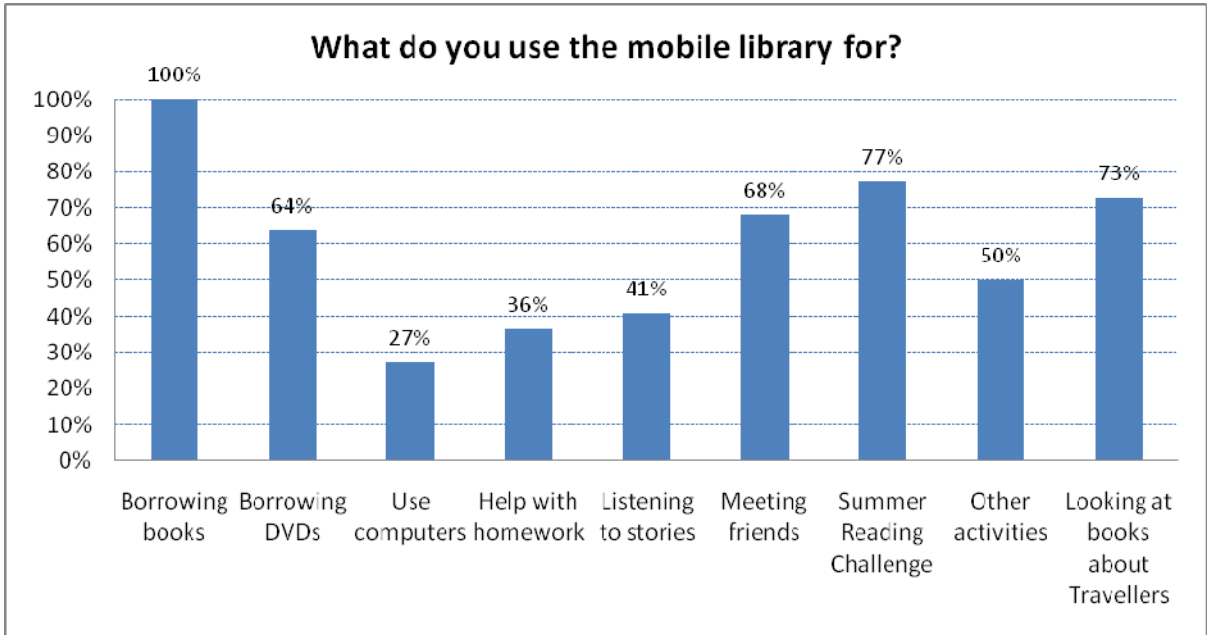
There were 24 child respondents (but only 22 provided full enough answers to analyse). The average age of the respondents was 9 years old and ages ranged from 3 to 15. Nine adult questionnaires were filled in. The full results can viewed in the appendix to the main report.

- 100% of children that completed the survey use the mobile for borrowing books.
- Children's comments included:
 - *"I like to change my books and choose my own"*
 - *"Like to order book that are not on the bus"*
 - *"Lots of different books, you get to borrow them for a longtime, get to read them and then bring them back"*
- 73% look at the books about travellers
- 77% do the Summer Reading Challenge
- Where listening to stories is available (Hovefields) 80% of children said they listened to stories
- When asked to indicate the two most important things about the library mobile the most popular was "Finding books and DVDs to borrow" (55%)
- 70% of the Hovefields children that took part in the survey choose "Hear new Stories"

Results from parent questionnaire

- **There was a high level of satisfaction with the service provided**
 - *"It has been very beneficial to have the bus on site."*
 - *"The children would not have used the local library as I don't drive and we are a long way from Pitsea, they wouldn't have had the opportunity that your service has provided."*
 - *"The service has been invaluable to the children and parents alike as they had never been to a library now they are using main library as well."*
- **Parents replies endorsed how much borrowing books was valued**
 - *"I go on the bus with the children to get books"*
 - *"He likes to order books"*
 - *"He loves to come on the mobile because he likes to look at all different books and what he is interested in, it is all here for him."*
- **In reply to the question "Do they show you the books they borrow?" comments included;**

- “Yes we look at the pictures together, they read to me as I cannot read and write”
- “Yes, dinosaurs, borrows books about dinosaurs and Dad reads them to him”



There is evidence of good practice in record keeping as referred to. However, this could be improved if more detailed monitoring of the experiences of service users was in place within all directorates.

Recommendation 8.

Feedback on the quality of service provision experienced by all service users, including Gypsies and Travellers, be logged and records kept. In particular, experiences of discrimination when receiving services should be explored further possibly using focus groups to determine the nature of discrimination and any further training and support that may be required for employees

4.1.4 Question 4: Do you have a Complaints and Comments procedure in place? If yes are there any recorded complaints or comments from Gypsies and Travellers?

Many services referred to the corporate Complaints, Comments and Compliments (CCC) procedures without logging those they may receive outside of the corporate system. There appeared to be some confusion as to what is and isn't recorded within individual services. Should there be a central system recording all CCCs received or should service areas record their own without reference to the corporate system. New corporate complaints, comments and compliments system is currently being introduced.

Recommendation 9

Clarity needed on how Complaints, Comments and Compliments are recorded. The new CCC system being introduced should make clear how ALL CCCs received are recorded, be they received corporately or by the individual service area. Explore a central system that all services could feed in to and methods to identify ethnicity of complainants.

4.1.5 Question 5: Are Gypsies and Travellers involved in stakeholder consultation? (If YES please give evidence, if NO then please comment as to why they have not been involved)

A variety of mixed negative and positive responses, although positive responses not always evidenced. As Gypsies and Travellers are probably the largest minority ethnic group in the county it should be expected that, Gypsies and Travellers are involved in stakeholder consultations. To help facilitate this Gypsy and Travellers Services and Traveller Education have both agreed to act in a 'sign posting' role to introduce other services to the Community on various sites.

Recommendation 10.

Services to ensure that Gypsies and Travellers are included in stakeholder consultation and evidence of their inclusion recorded.

Contact for further information to access sites:

Gypsy and Traveller Services Manager – Steve Andrews 01245 437645

Manager – Traveller Education Service – Jackie Nesbitt 01376 340360

4.1.6 Question 6: Are Equality Impact Assessments in place on existing policies and procedures?

The duty placed on local authorities by *The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (the RRAA)*, requires local authorities to have in place Race Equality Impact Assessments on existing, and new, policies and procedures.

Some services already have them in place, having undertaken more general Equality Impact Assessments which take in to account other equality strands. This is acceptable as long as “issues around race equality are sufficiently examined and considered”. Others have a framework in place with a scheduled timetable for the completion of Equality Impact Assessments; some just do not have anything in place.

As a matter of urgency, it is not just a recommendation but a legal requirement that Race Equality Impact Assessments are in place, through general Equality Impact Assessments that are being carried out across the council, but ensuring that race equality issues are ‘sufficiently examined and considered’.

Recommendation 11.

Prioritise the relevant policies and procedures that have a high impact upon race equality and carry out an EIA on those which are outstanding.

4.1.7 Question 7: Do you have a Directorate / Service Race Equality Action Plan in place?

Although there are some Race Equality Action Plans (also known as Race Equality Schemes) in place, many are out of date as these should be reviewed every three years.

There is a corporate Essex wide Race Equality Scheme, but all directorates/services should have their own Race Equality Action Plan in place to show how they are going to meet both its general and specific duties? The Diversity and Equality team are working to this end and will be

developing a Single Equality Scheme for 2009/10. To further support the work they are doing the following recommendation is made.

Recommendation 12.

All Directorates / Services to develop an equality action plan as part of the Single Equality Scheme, which is reviewed every three years.

4.1.8 Question 8: - see Question 3

4.1.9 Question 9: As part of the induction of new staff, does it include training in the general and specific duty on public bodies as detailed in the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000?

On the whole, as part of the induction, no reference is made to the duty placed on local authorities

“to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial groups and promote racial harmony between persons of different racial groups.”

It should be noted that this is a legal requirement and something that all employees should be aware of.

In December 2008 the County Council achieved level three of the Equality Standard for Local Government. To progress further and in order to show full commitment to embedding diversity and equality across the organisation and to achieving excellent equality outcomes for all of our people it is vital that all employees are made aware of the importance of this work, both on a legal and humanitarian front.

“The way a country treats its ethnic minority communities is a measure of its civilisation” *

Recommendation 13.

The corporate Induction should include information regarding the duty on all public bodies to promote race equality and good race relations, with examples from different services and ethnic groups including Gypsies and Travellers.

*Sarah Spencer, CRE Deputy Chair – 2 April 2004

4.1.10 Question 10: When receiving Equality and Diversity training did it include cultural awareness training of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

As Gypsies and Travellers are probably the largest minority ethnic group in the county all staff should be aware of this fact. Gypsies and Travellers should be presented in a true light, rather than relying on portrayal in media reports, to encourage a positive approach to working with this community.

Equality and Diversity training has never regularly included cultural awareness of the Gypsy and Traveller community. The Traveller Education service has for many years offered this service where interest has been shown. Their offer should be taken up and their input included in all training and development.

Recommendation 14.

Gypsies and Travellers should be specifically discussed in Equality and Diversity training and integrated within all relevant training and development programmes. This training should include representatives of Gypsies and Travellers and other BME groups.

Case Study 3 re-inforces the importance of good Equality and Diversity Training. Teachers are in a position best equipped to 'make a difference' and should be given the tools that allow them to do this. That includes being fully trained in Equality and Diversity issues.

The case study also highlights the importance of the work of Traveller Education Service, in going that extra mile.

Case Study 3

CASE STUDIES

R T Year 8

S P Year 7

W P Year 9

Three lads who live on a local council site have been difficult to persuade to attend school.

R's mother wanted him to remain in primary school and when she found that this was impossible was initially reluctant to send him to secondary school. In conversation with R and the other young people on the site last summer, when promoting local youth club activities, The Secondary Development Worker found that most of the young people were receptive to the idea of going to school as they were bored on site and would like to get a job later.

She helped the parents fill in the application forms – five initially and hoped that they would be able to start in September. This was not straightforward as the families travel a lot and the applications were not submitted until the beginning of September 2008. One year 11 girl was refused a place and one year 7 boy is staying with relatives at the moment although the school offered him a place.

TES have supported the families by helping the school make contact to arrange meetings, assessments, and timetables. The Advisory Teacher has liaised with the school to ensure that the three boys, who have very low literacy skills, have as much support as possible within the school. She has organised support from TES to help the boys settle in. The Advisory Teacher and two Specialist Support Assistants will be supporting in class, intensively at first.

The Advisory Teacher has found that some teaching staff know very little about the Traveller culture and are interested in learning more. She is going to provide some literature for their use and explain what training the TES can offer.

This really demonstrates how important it is to persevere with encouraging Traveller children and their parents to attend school and not fall at the first hurdle.

4.2.11 Question 11: Do you have any case studies which show positive work with the Gypsy and Traveller Community?

Some services responded positively to this question, but only a few actually provided case studies. Three case studies received have been included in the report, a further one attached (**appendix 5**).

Although not a case study it is helpful to those reading this review to see some of the services provided on ECC Gypsy and Traveller Sites in conjunction with those working in ECC Gypsy and Traveller Services (**Appendix 6**)

4.2.12 The final statement at the end of the questionnaire related to a statement made by the CRE at the launch of their report 'Common Ground'* in April 2004. The statement being:

“Discrimination against Gypsies and Travellers is the last ‘respectable’ form of Racism”

There is more prejudice against Gypsies and Travellers than any other group.

A further piece of research undertaken in 2003 by Stonewall found Gypsies and Travellers to be

“ the most reviled group in society.”

Comments on these statements were invited.

The majority of services responded by commenting on the statements. Their comments can be read in *Appendix 4*. There were many well thought out responses.

The response that has been selected to highlight is one that probably sums up why inclusion, acceptance and working with the Gypsy and Traveller community continues to be fraught with difficulties.

(I agree with the statement) “To some extent, but I believe that over the 24 years that I have worked in Essex I see greater awareness throughout the county council.....However, the down side is that there is an increasing level of prejudice and racism in the wider community, which seems to be growing.....”

* CRE strategy on Gypsies and Travellers following two months of consultation with Gypsies and Travellers, community and public organisations and local authorities.

5. Conclusion.

This review sought to identify how the services of Essex County Council reach the Gypsy and Traveller community, how effective they are and ways in which the provision of services could be improved. Twelve recommendations have been made, as attached.

The review also sought to go some way towards meeting the requirements of the CRE (now EHRC), set out in the report "Common ground", which includes better ethnic monitoring and to meet the legal requirements of The Race Relations Act 1976, as amended by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, which places both a general and specific duty on local authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and racial harmony between persons of different racial groups.

During the course of the review it has been apparent that the recommendations given will not only benefit the Gypsy and Traveller community, but will go some way towards ensuring that all BME and hard to reach groups are catered for in the delivery of the County Council services.

5. Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1.

The County Council act in a strategic role to oversee the implementation of the provision of accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community by the local Planning and Housing Authorities, being mindful of planning applications and their outcome.

Recommendation 2

Further investigate the nature of discrimination faced when accessing our services and develop actions to address any inequalities. This could be by using appropriate focus groups to determine the nature of the discrimination. In particular, gain an understanding of the nature of the discrimination experienced by children in school and determine whether existing harassment and bullying policies on the grounds of race are effectively working in schools.

Recommendation 3

In view of the evidence that the community appears to experience disadvantage when accessing health services, work with and influence partners in the health services to address concerns/inequalities

Recommendation 4.

Understand whether there is a disproportionate number of children being excluded from school and if so how we can work with the community to reduce the numbers (part of LAA targeting). Guidance from DCSF on EHE needs to be clearer and take in to account Gypsies and Travellers, other BME and hard to reach groups when drafting new guidance. ECC to follow this up with DCSF.-

Recommendation 5.

Work with key stakeholders to agree and put in place actions to avert the stigma attached to current addresses and to overcome the discrimination experienced by the community e.g. create opportunities to promote community cohesion and consideration be given to changing the postal address of the local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites . (e.g. Gypsy Lane, Caravan site etc.). 'Ordinary' addresses would attract far less attention to a site and may assist with job applications.

Recommendation 6.

Appropriate vacancies within the county council should be advertised in local newspapers as well as on the intranet to ensure equal access to this information for all groups / communities

Recommendation 7.

All Service areas to review monitoring information to reflect the Census 2011 categories.

Recommendation 8.

Feedback on the quality of service provision experienced by service users, including Gypsies and Travellers, be logged and records kept. In particular, experiences of discrimination when receiving services should be explored further possibly using focus groups to determine the nature of discrimination and any further training and support that may be required for employees

Recommendation 9.

Clarity needed on how Complaints, Comments and Compliments are recorded. The new CCC system being introduced should make clear how ALL CCCs received are recorded, be they received corporately or by the individual service area. Explore a

central system that all services could feed in to and methods to identify ethnicity of complainants.

Recommendation 10.

Services to ensure that Gypsies and Travellers are included in stakeholder consultation and evidence of their inclusion recorded.

Recommendation 11.

Prioritise the relevant policies and procedures that have a high impact upon race equality and carry out an EIA on those which are outstanding.

Recommendation 12.

All Directorates / Services to develop an equality action plan as part of the Single Equality Scheme, which is reviewed every three years.

Recommendation 13.

The corporate Induction should include information regarding the duty on all public bodies to promote race equality and good race relations, with examples from different services and ethnic groups including Gypsies and Travellers.

Recommendation 14.

Gypsies and Travellers should be specifically discussed in Equality and Diversity training and integrated within all relevant training and development programmes. This training should include representatives of Gypsies and Travellers and other BME groups.